



Issue 1, June 2009

ACS ALUMNI Magazine



ACS 1992 - 2009
*A Story Over
Seventeen Years
Told in Pictures*



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for the Class of 2009

Photographs by Daniel Lekov



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the *ACS Alumni Magazine*. This publication is part of our larger effort to stay in touch with American College alumni and to give you news about what is going on at the American College. In the “Class Notes” section you should also be able to see what your class mates have been up to: Who’s in school? Who took a new job? Who’s getting married or having children? Our plan is to produce two issues of the magazine each year.

The publishing of an alumni magazine is not the only way we’re trying to reach out to alumni. Two years ago we initiated an annual schedule of class reunions. In what is now our third reunion summer, the classes of 1999 and 2004 have been invited to a reunion event to be held at the Floyd Black House on July 3rd. The other important alumni event at the College is the annual Alumni Christmas Reception held after the ACS Christmas Concert. This past year more than 250 alumni of the College, from the modern era as well as the Floyd Black era, attended the event. It was a wonderful evening to reminisce and to catch up with old friends and teachers. Finally, one of the great joys for me during my first two years as president of the College has been the times when alumni informally drop in to say hello. Please, if you are in Sofia and would like to visit the College, I’d be delighted to meet you. And if you haven’t been back to the College in a few years, I’m sure you will be surprised and quite pleased with the improvements we’ve made.

I’m also happy to announce that we have created a new Alumni Relations, Development and Admissions Office. Natalia Manolova, who worked in the College for the past 4 years, 3 of which in the Public Relations Office, is the coordinator. Joining Natalia this year was Petia Ivanova, ACS ’97. Natalia and Petia have worked tirelessly to re-connect with alumni, to plan alumni events, and to develop alumni outreach programs. They will soon be improving our alumni portal on the website, which will make it easier for alumni to stay in touch with each other and with former teachers. If you have any comments or suggestions related to Alumni Relations, please feel free to contact Petia (p.mironova@acs.bg) or Natalia (n.manolova@acs.bg).

In the fall of 2010 the American College of Sofia will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the school’s founding. What started as a small school for boys in Plovdiv in 1860 has become one of the leading secondary schools in Bulgaria. I should note that for the past two years American College was ranked the number one school in Bulgaria based on results on the Bulgarian Language and Literature Matriculation Exam administered by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education. We continue to attract some of the best young students from Sofia and across the country, and our graduates have gained admission to the top universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and continental Europe.

But the American College is about far more than simply making sure that students are prepared for university study. Our goal is not just to develop the minds and improve the skills of our students; we are also working hard to make sure our students will be good citizens as well: honest, disciplined, hard-working, socially responsible, and tolerant. We want our graduates to stand out not just because they are talented students but because they are also good people.

We will do our best to keep you informed about special events related to the 150th Anniversary of the American College. It will indeed be a memorable year for our ACS.

Sincerely,

Tom Cangiano

President, American College of Sofia

ACS Alumni Magazine

Issue 1, June 2009

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Office

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Letters may be edited for publication.



Petia Ivanova and Natalia Manolova

Dear Alumni,

As I am writing this note, the image of a bunch of you flipping through the pages of this first issue of the *ACS Alumni Magazine*, pointing at something inside and laughing free-heartedly together, is what guides me. In my mind, you're on campus, and everything is green and beautiful around you, so it must be the reunion party of the Classes of 1999 and 2004 on July 3rd, 2009. That means no less than that we have managed all deadlines, so I can breathe out and enjoy a beer. (Unless, of course, what I am seeing are the Classes of 2000 and 2005 instead and that would be a totally different story).

Be it as it may, while going through its pages, you will find out that our magazine's main feature uses pictures to tell the story of the College in the past seventeen years. Twenty-six pictures times a thousand words - you do the math. We certainly hope this story will act as a foretaste to those of you who haven't been on campus for some time now and will make you break this bad habit of yours and come visit the soonest possible. Even those who don't come though, can see on the pages of this issue that all original school buildings have been restored, not the least the craved dormitory, gardens have arisen of what used to be overgrown fields, and even more students have filled the school corridors with their contagious laughter and their teenage drama.

Further on, you'll come across the speech of Iain McClinton, the faculty speaker chosen by the seniors, in addition to a student speaker, to address them on their Senior Dinner. That's correct, you didn't have such an event, and you have every right to be jealous as it turned out to be a rather successful one. On the occasion, the seniors had the opportunity to be together one last time on campus before their official graduation ceremony, departmental awards were presented to the students with special achievements in the various fields, and last, but we all know not least, they tasted the school chef's mastery at its best. We publish Iain McClinton's speech as it caused tears and laughter, and has been quoted on several occasions since, including the welcome address of Mr. Cangiano at the graduation ceremony of the Class of 2009. Additionally, you can also read about the accomplishments of the graduating class in the article written by Kate McKenna, Director of College Counseling.

Lately, ACS students can not complain of a lack of diversity in the school's visitors. This spring we had 2-year-olds running around on campus when Maria Mircheva '97 and then Delyana (Burdjeva) Glover '97 came, each bringing along their child. That's when we found out how child-friendly our campus actually is (for children who don't like swallowing tiny stones, that is), especially compared to anything our city has to offer otherwise. Later on, in June, we had a visiting group of alumni from the classes of 1942 and 1946 and their families, which puts more than 80 years of age difference between our youngest and our oldest guests. You can read in this issue our humble attempt to grasp and put on paper the touching emotions of these senior alumni.

At the request of those of you who filled in the class notes form, we contacted the former teachers that interested most of you. Kalinde Webb, Bill Fisher and Gorden Crumbie were kind enough to share what they've been up to in the years after they left ACS. We were moved to find out to what extent they remember and cherish their time at ACS.

And finally, we have the Class Notes I've been bugging you about. It is my most sincere hope that you will enjoy the few notes that we managed to gather for this issue to such an extent, that they will inspire the remaining 1000+ of you to send us their stories as well, and we'll end up having a grand Class Notes section in the second issue of the *ACS Alumni Magazine* just in time for Christmas.

But first, have a great summer!

Warmest regards,

Petia Ivanova '97
Editor

ACS 1992 - 2009

A Story Over Seventeen Years Told in Pictures

By Natalia Manolova

Seventeen years have passed since the reopening of the American College of Sofia in 1992. Thirteen classes, or more than 1300 students, have successfully met the requirements of the school and graduated. Hundreds of academic successes and extracurricular achievements of our students have made us feel proud to be members of this school community during those years. Many things have changed since 1992 when Dr. Roger Whitaker was sent by the Sofia American Schools, Inc. with the mission to reopen the college. We have heard the story of how he was given access to one building only, had no teachers, no school supplies, no books, and no students.

Recently, we had a visitor - an alumnus who had not returned to ACS since his graduation in 1997. He shared with me that yes, this is his school, and still it looks different – somehow bigger, changed, and more beautiful. This gave us the idea to tell you in pictures about the most important changes and renovations on campus, as well as to remind you of some of the most touching events during the past years.

1992



In September 1992 The American College of Sofia was reopened, after staying closed for 50 years. This was made possible thanks to the mutual efforts of alumni of the College, the American Ambassadors to Bulgaria, and leaders of the first reform Bulgarian government. The first principal of the college sent by the Sofia American Schools, Inc. was Dr. Roger Whitaker. 2679 youths sat for the admission exam and the 50 boys and 50 girls with the highest scores enrolled for School Year 1992-1993.

1997



At the graduation of the first class of ACS after the reopening in 1992, 94 students received their diplomas in May 1997.

2001



The American College of Sofia celebrated 140 years since its founding. The culmination of the special events dedicated to this anniversary, was a Gala Concert in May 2001 with the participation of Margarita Duparinova '41, Yildiz Ibrahimova, The Radio Children's Choir, Antony Donchev, The Sofia Soloists, Academic Brass, Iskra Angelova, and Peter Poppyordanov.



Margarita Duparinova '41



Yildiz Ibrahimova

2001



Building #5 was renovated in 2001 with the financial support of ASHA (American Schools and Hospitals Abroad), a division of USAID.

2002



10th Anniversary of the Reopening of the College was celebrated.

2003

ACS starts enrolling 42 students at full rate in addition to the standard 100 students.

2004



The space between Arts Building and Abbott Hall in April 2004

Dafina Garden was officially opened on November 4. The garden was created by classmates and friends, teachers and relatives in memory of the 14-year-old Dafina Georgieva who tragically died in a car accident a year earlier. The beautiful garden contains rare botanical species, as well as art works especially created and donated by famous Bulgarian artists. Today, Dafina Garden is one of our students' most favorite places on campus for rest or classes outside.



...and after Dafina Garden was opened in November 2004

2002-2003



The Gym, or as we call it The Bubble, was constructed. It is a 1276-square-meters multifunctional sports hall. It can be transformed into two basketball courts, two volleyball courts, two tennis courts, two badminton courts, or a handball field. The Bubble accommodates the practices of the ACS teams, as well as the ACS Open tournaments in which many Sofia schools participate.

2005

ACS introduced the International Baccalaureate Program for international students at the beginning of fall 2005.



In March 2005 the renovated dormitory opened. It was officially named Perske House in June 2007. The dorm can accommodate 28 students who live in a comfortable, friendly environment and are supported by a Dorm Manager and a Dorm Activities' Coordinator.



Final meeting with the MSA Accreditation Team

2005 ACS was fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)

2006



C for Creativity

During the second semester of school year 2005-2006 the CAS (Creativity, Action, and Service) Program was implemented at ACS. The CAS program provides opportunities for ACS students to develop their many talents further in a more meaningful and well-documented manner. The successful fulfillment of the program is another requirement for receiving an American diploma at ACS.



A for Action



S for Service

2006 and 2008



During the renovations

Ostrander Hall was renovated in two stages - the exterior during the summer of 2006, and the interior during the summer of 2008. The renovations were financed by ASHA.



...and today

2006



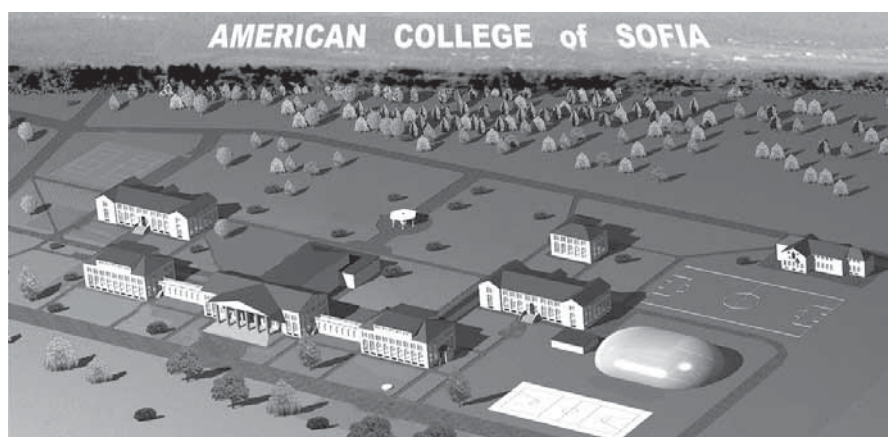
One of the three computer labs in Abbott Hall



The renovation of Abbott Hall took place in the summer of 2006 financed by ACS. In addition, the History and Social Sciences Department was equipped with multimedia projectors (financed by ACS) and the new Computer Labs were opened thanks to an ASHA money grant.

1992-2006

It took fourteen years to have ACS students use all original school buildings of the College.



2006



H.E. John R. Beyrle, Louis Perske and Dr. George Lazar at the unveiling ceremony of the statue



In October 2006 the Dedication ceremony for the statue of Miss Abbott and Dr. Black took place. Miss Inez L. Abbott was the Principal of the American Girls' School in Samokov from 1908 to 1926 and Dr. Floyd H. Black was the President of the American College of Sofia from 1926 to 1942. The statue is situated in front of Abbott Hall. It was made by the sculptor Danko Dankov, and Dr. George Lazar, Chairman of the St. George Foundation in Baltimore, MD, was the sponsor of this project.

2008



In the summer of 2008 Science Building underwent complete renovation with the financial support of ASHA.



Photographs by Daniel Lekov, Tsviatko Chetiov, and various contributors to the ACS archive.

2008-2009



Students from the different blocks - Red, Green, Orange, Burgundy, Yellow, and Blue- participated in sports competitions on the first day of school

Lotus Notes system was introduced at ACS as our school management software linking attendance, academic reports, transcripts, schedules, and school e-mails in one system.

An advisory program was launched at ACS. Each group of eight to nine students now has an advisor – a teacher from the College, who monitors their social, academic, and behavior progress, advises the students if problems occur, and acknowledges students for their academic and extracurricular achievements. The small advisory groups are combined into different units - Preps, Seniors, and Blocks (or Houses) including students from Grades 9 to 11.

Our Newest Alumni - The Class of 2009

Iain McClinton's Address to the Graduating Class of 2009: **On Studying and Learning**

Iain McClinton is an English Language Teacher at the ESL Department as well as a College Counselor. He was chosen by a students' vote to be the one to address the Class of 2009 at their Senior Dinner.

There are very few moments in a teacher's life quite as rewarding as being given the opportunity to play a role both at the beginning and at the end of a complete cycle. I have known most of the graduates here this evening from the very first day they entered this school and have had the pleasure of working closely with many of them as they brought their high school education to a close. I have never been the most ambitious of people and very seldom have I looked ahead to see what was coming round the next

corner, which makes the unexpected honor of being asked to speak in front of you this evening all the greater.

Few teachers are confident that all is well in the school system at home and abroad. Much as we'd like to believe that our schools are fashioning enlightened, capable and responsible adults, many of us fear that they aren't. I hope that, if not now, at some point in your lives you will come to understand how much this school and its faculty has tried to give you the necessary tools to continue in life; tools that will help you to find your place in society as competent, accountable and well informed citizens.

When I recall my own school days, I am well aware that I don't remember very much at all. This is not because my school days were boring, bad or full of teenage torment. In fact, if anything my time at school was incredibly unremarkable. I had great friends – we thought we would remain friends forever, great grades – I never

questioned what they signified in the big scheme of things, great teachers – my basis for comparison was pretty limited, and my first great love – we thought we would remain in love forever and I never questioned what that might signify in the big scheme of things and my basis for comparison was pretty limited.

The truth is that most of our school day memories very quickly fade, or rather concentrate themselves into a simple essence. I don't remember much of most of my classes but I remember where I sat in particular classrooms. I have forgotten almost everything about chemistry but remember a particular moment when the teacher caught my imagination when describing the structure of atoms. I don't want to even think about school lunches but there are still certain puddings that bring a smile to my face. I have probably confused the face of my P.E. teacher with that of my History teacher but I still remember the aching pain in my legs after cross country running and the aching pain in my head after a history exam.

There is a moment, normally at high school, when something happens that changes us all; we learn the art of thinking on our feet. Most of us are never really sure at what moment this phenomena has occurred. Did it happen because of the buildup of lactic acid in my leg muscles during those cross-country runs? Was it those words used to describe the structure of atoms? Was it the fact that I had randomly chosen to sit at the front or the back of a particular classroom, or was it just that steam pudding that they always served on Wednesdays in the cafeteria? For whatever reason, whenever the moment, we learn to think on our feet. We learn how to learn; learn what to learn. We learn how to use information for our own personal gain.

I walked away from my school days with a clear idea of what I wanted to do, to study, to achieve. Of course, the "what I want" part of a person's life changes all the time as we grow and take on new challenges, but the enjoyment in learning, discovering, being challenged and challenging oneself never changes.



Iain McClinton an hour before delivering his speech



The Class of 2009 at their graduation ceremony

Continuing your studies abroad is a bit like falling in love; at first everything about it seems amazing. Then you gradually discover the little faults. Then you start to find these faults charming. Later on, you adopt these faults yourself and start to irritate old friends with your foreign habits and new cute foreign accent. Studying abroad can be a lonely experience, especially in the first few weeks. So, make a point of socializing and pushing yourselves into new situations. Don't work so hard that you never leave your student accommodation.

Learning how to think is really the whole point of going to university because, to be honest, it is one of the few periods in your life when you are given enough time to think at all. Unfortunately, it is also a period when you have a lot to think about - from the possible origins of the universe to how a can of Red Bull and a jar of marmalade could make such a nutritious meal.

Like any skill, successful thinking takes practice and the secret is in knowing what you are supposed to be thinking about and why. Spending too much energy on the Red Bull and marmalade dilemma might not really help you

understand the origins of the universe.

If you get really good at thinking while at university, you may be able to think of a way to carry on thinking - and thus avoid actually doing anything - once you leave.

Unfortunately, the art of thinking and gathering information so that you can think even more can become so addictive you never get around to doing anything with it. Just remember that no one will realise how competent and well-informed you are if you keep all the information to yourself. One of the hardest tasks for first year students is to get to grips with the way university differs from school. Your lecturers may encourage more disagreement with their views than you are used to. It can be a shock when teachers start being really pleased if you answer them back, and, it's true that you don't have to hand in your homework for weeks and weeks. One of the biggest differences from school is that teachers won't keep on at you about deadlines, or even tell you how many hours of study you should be doing. Indeed, you may find that no one bothers to tell you what you are expected to do in terms of academic work - or even whether

you are expected to do any at all.

You will have to work all this out for yourself starting with how to read. Learning how to read is largely about knowing what's worth reading and what's not. The booklist given to you by the professor probably is worth reading - but only so that you can get rid of most of its suggestions. A quick scan through various introductions and conclusions will probably be sufficient for most of the stuff on the list. Everybody knows that much of what academics write is pretentious nonsense. It is your job to find out what is really interesting and necessary. The important thing is to think about what the books might contain without actually having to read through all of them and anyway just remember, the best way to avoid plagiarism is to avoid reading anything written by somebody else.

On behalf of the faculty of the American College of Sofia I wish you all the greatest of success in every new venture that you undertake. I hope we have prepared you well and that you, in turn, will represent your country and the college well, as you continue through life.

THE COLLEGE COUNSELORS REFLECT ON THE 2008-2009 SCHOOL YEAR

By Kate McKenna

Kate McKenna came to ACS last fall to become the Director of College Counseling. She has previously worked in college admissions office, and as college counselor in the United States, as well as in American schools in Italy and Paraguay.



Kate McKenna

There was much fervor this September when we began the year with a newly renovated Counseling Center and a revamped department. Noticing the needs of the students, ACS decided to increase the counseling staff, denoting two full-time counselors, one part-time UCAS specialist, and an Office Assistant. Working steadily throughout the fall, the counseling staff helped seniors create 791 applications, which were sent to 239 colleges and universities around the world. Overall the Class of 2009 received 455 acceptances, which is a testament to their overall academic and extracurricular talent. We are proud of each senior in the Class of 2009. As our most recent graduating class, they have a difficult, but exciting, task ahead of them: excel academically, explore passions, and live according to the ACS mission, which

challenges graduates to demonstrate sensitivity to the global human condition and environment, cherish democratic values, and become responsible citizens and leaders.

In looking back on the year, we observe the educational choices that the seniors made. People often ask me about the “trends,” but I hesitate to use that word, as it signifies a type of pattern, which perhaps then unconsciously dictates a set path for the class that will follow. Instead, each year, I celebrate the *choices* that the seniors explore, knowing full well that the next year’s class could produce a different, yet equally as exciting, outcome. As we tell our seniors, there are no right or wrong choices—it is more finding the best fit, which then leads to successes in future endeavors. For the Class of 2009, 80 students will head to the UK, 18 to North America, 20 to Europe (excluding Bulgaria), 3 to Bulgaria, and 9 will make their choice over the summer.

The school year 2008-2009 was a year of change and, at the same time, uncertainty. Many professionals in the college counseling world wondered how the economic crisis would affect students who were seeking funding for their post-secondary education. While colleges and universities in North America certainly had to make careful decisions, we, at ACS, are proud of the fact that 100% of our students who applied for funding in the US received some type of scholarship or financial aid award. In fact, for the Class of 2009, the average aid/scholarship award was \$41,129 per year. This statistic perhaps reminds us that ACS students compete successfully with top students worldwide.

Our advice to current ACS students continues to be: *cast a wide net*. Few students in the world receive the type of education that ACS offers. Therefore, we encourage our students to use their American and Bulgarian diplomas in order to explore a plethora of post-secondary options. This most likely means that students will apply to schools in a variety of regions worldwide; then during the spring of the senior year, they will make thoughtful, informed, and exciting decisions. Ultimately, the college counseling process is about creating and

cultivating *choices*.

Since this article will appear in the first edition of The ACS Alumni Magazine, we are posing a challenge from the College Counseling Office to our ACS alumni. It is an important, but easy assignment: **we want to hear from you!** There is a variety of ways that you can give back to our school community. During the 2009-2010 school year, the College Counseling Office will launch the *College Connection* campaign. Through this initiative, we hope to connect students to alumni so that stories can be shared. Certainly, our students are interested in hearing about your university experiences and the challenges you faced studying either at home or afar. In addition, for older alums, we want to know where you are and how you have begun your professional career. Such information is important to our current students as they explore career ideas, new markets, and global opportunities. If you are one of the ACS alumni, and you would like to get involved in our *College Connection* program, please contact Kate McKenna, Director of College Counseling (k.mckenna@acs.bg). We, at ACS, look forward to reconnecting with you and hearing your story.



A college fair was held in the Bubble on November 13, 2008. Representatives from 17 colleges from the US and Europe were represented on the fair

Ladies and gentlemen, Ms. Kalinde Webb and Mr. Bill Fisher!

Kalinde Webb and Bill Fisher came to ACS in 1993 and stayed till 1999. Each of them played an important role in the life of ACS students during those six years by taking on numerous roles in the school. Instead of listing them all, we'll just mention a few of the most important here. Both Kalinde and Bill taught English Language and Literature and served on Faculty Council; she was the Chair of the English Department and in 1996 he became the first full-time ACS Dean of Students. He was the advisor of several years for College Life as well, and she impressed nation-wide with her devotion and talent in Bulgarian folk dances. At your request we turned to them and asked about their memories from ACS and their life afterwards.*

It's been ten years since we left Sofia in August of 1999, and it's hard to look back over that time and think it was so long ago. We came to Sofia two years after our wedding, and spent six years defining our marriage and ourselves there and through travels around the country and Europe.

When we first spoke with Dr. Whitaker about the job at a recruiting fair in Orlando, Florida, in February of 1993, Kalinde was thrilled to hear that she would have only 100 students, one third fewer than she had in Oxford, Ohio. But as she quickly found out, where about two thirds of her students at Talawanda High School would write their assignments, all of the ACS students did, and they wrote more than they were asked. The energy, and volume, of those fifteen-year-old Bulgarians caught both of us by surprise, but it also led to active and fun (and exhausting) Green School experiences of softball, drama,

classes and orienteering in Kovachevtsi, Kostenets and Panichiste.

Working at the College so early in our lives together did much to define how we see things. The two of us being the entire English Department in 1993-94 was a bit odd, but it allowed us to get to know the students better than we could later in our time at ACS as we discussed classes and students often; we would find ourselves wondering about a student and whether any cultural differences between America and Bulgaria might account for certain behavior or responses in their essays, or if that student was just expressing him or herself as an individual. We did have a number of disagreements, but Kalinde was chair, so....

At times those disagreements showed up in Faculty Council. Kalinde served on the first Faculty Council in 1993-94, and Bill joined later in 1994-95 and was chair of the committee from 1996-99 as Dean of Students. While the Council



Kalinde Webb and Bill Fisher with their daughters Emma Claire, 10 and Katya Eleanor, 6

was formed to supply advice to first Dr. Whitaker and then Dr. Charles, it quickly became, as far the students were concerned, the end of the line regarding behavioral and academic disciplinary matters. Every semester seemed to bring in another odd event, peculiar explanations and numerous cases of cheating. Tears, arguing, considering the broader effect of the Council's decisions on students' lives took up much more time than anyone probably ever thought it would. Keeping up on who was on one kind of probation or another, and the specific details Faculty Council created for each probationary case, was something of a headache. And while some students eventually found themselves dismissed from the College, others, like Vasil Topuzov, quickly turned around and became shining stars.

We certainly share better memories, the most important of which has to be the birth of Emma Claire at Sheinovo Bolnitsa on a very snowy evening in March. Our malka blondinka is now ten and seems to be three meters tall. If she gets her math skills down, she might have a chance at the entrance exam for the College in 2013. Our other daughter, Katya Eleanor, was born in Oxford in 2003. Both have been to Sofia (and Istanbul) on our two trips back to Bulgaria in 2002 and 2007.

We also recall with much fondness the warmth and hospitality of the Bulgarian teachers. The Easter trip to Vanya Angelova's village of Shivachevo was a joy of smashing eggs together and eating (and eating, and eating). Being at Vanya Dimova's home and talking politics, at Bozhana Chakalova's and talking politics, at Maria (Shoteva) Angelova's and talking about everything, all these joyous occasions taught us much about the grace of Bulgarians. Eating out at the local cafes and pizza joints with the American (and Canadian, and the odd English) teachers helped defuse the day with a bottle of Zagorka and maybe a cold glass of rakiyah, with sirene po shopski i kartofki sas sirene.

One of our sharpest memories would

be the Liberation Day Holiday in 1994, traveling the country with Lee Cunningham and Kathryn Davis, taking in Plovdiv, Gabrovo, Veliko Turnovo and Trojan Monastir. The last was so impressive, we had Emma baptized there the day after graduation in May of 1999.

There were also disappointments. The wish to see certain students make it to universities in the States could end in sadness. A couple of presidents of Student Council who we knew to be unique, hard working, if opinionated, students did not make it and could have done so well. One wonders what else could have been said or done to help their applications.

We could go on and on about the time we spent in Bulgaria, and perhaps we left too soon, seeing how great a place the campus is for a little girl to grow up in. But we did come back home and fell back into our alternative lives here, awkward as it was for a while. The College intruded itself into our minds every other minute, it seemed—Bill told his students that, if they ever wanted to get him off track from the lesson plan, just ask about his daughter or Bulgaria.

In the past ten years, our time has been spent creating a home. When we left for Bulgaria, we didn't own much, and what we did have we sold. When we came back, all we had were Turkish rugs and clothes. So we have bought a house, filled some of it with furniture, and the girls have filled the rest with stuffed animals and other toys. As Kalinde and Bill have taken up their musical instruments of trombone and tuba again for the local community band and a brass quintet, we've added a room in order to handle the instruments, their cases, and the piano. We play at churches as well as small concerts at old age homes and special events.

Kalinde has kept up her running, tackling marathons from Boston to the mountains of California, though more recently she has shortened her distances (or risk losing her knees). She has co-written a young adult book with her

father and continues to take classes at Miami University when she can in order to keep up with her Honors American Literature students and her role as the Talawanda High School English Department Chair. And, of course, she is as beautiful as ever.

Bill teaches half time at Miami University and, in his first year had the unique and unexpected pleasure of teaching Milena Staneva, a student he had also taught in eighth class at ACS. The girls had the great joy last year of being flower girls at Milena's wedding in Washington, DC. When not cooking or taking care of the house, gardening or making sure we don't go broke, he works on a number of committees at our church. He is currently chair of the endowment committee, which has no end of headaches in developing new by-laws, investment policies, and keeping the church's trustees from getting too nervous.

Our daughters are noisily insane. We have had to create a rule that says no singing at the dinner table just so they will actually eat something. Both love school and do wonderfully at reading and making friends—Katya has four boyfriends, but seems a little unsure of just what that means. Unlike many Americans, we are fortunate to have two sets of grandparents in our town, the girls enjoy them to no end, and to stay sane, we need them to spend some time out of our house.

It has been important for us to have the girls, especially Emma, visit Bulgaria, and her godmother (Maria Angelova) and we will come back again, no matter how traffic-clogged and crazy Sofia gets.

* As a guest on The Todor Kolev Show, Ms. Webb danced Bulgarian folk dances on national television.

GORDEN CRUMBIE: "I really never left"

Mr. Gorden Crumbie taught History at ACS from 1993 to 2002. He was also advisor for the Model United Nations Club. At your request we contacted him and asked about the years in the United States after he left Bulgaria as well as his memories of the time at the College. We were touched to find out to what extent Bulgaria and ACS are still on his mind.

Mr. Crumbie, it's been seven years since you left ACS to move back to the United States. In what direction has life taken you since? What are you doing currently?

First of all let me just tell you how very happy I was to receive an email from ACS. And to your questions: When I came back from Bulgaria I was supposed to teach at a local high school here (Belleville, Michigan) but I got caught up in the aftermath of 9/11, specifically the Patriot Act. I had to have lived in the United States for at least 3 years before they could conduct a criminal background check (necessary to be hired as a teacher). So, I scrambled for the first decent paying job possible and that was with Guardian Industries - a glass manufacture. For most of my 6 years there I have done almost everything possible.

You see, I was gone nearly a decade and when I came back to USA I felt like an immigrant, everything had changed beyond my recognition. So, I did feel very out of place, and for the most part still do today.

What gives you strength or makes you happy in this situation?

For a number of years I was satisfied making good money. But, wouldn't have said I was happy. I guess put into perspective I enjoy the conversations with my friend Alx (spelled correctly). **Is there something that you regret?**

I regret leaving the College and Bulgaria!

What does ACS mean to you?

Nadezhda (one of St. Sofia's daughters).

What is the most vivid memory you have from your time here at ACS?

The first day, meeting incredible colleagues, and the best students a teacher could hope for. The last day, in the auditorium, crying

on stage to a standing ovation from students and colleagues. And, everyday I can possibly remember in between.

Latest news from Bruno the Baker* might also interest the alums – how is he?

That someone remembered me and especially remembered Bruno literally brought tears to my eyes. For me the College and Bulgaria (the time you guys never knew about) were the best moments of my life. And, will never be replaced by anything.



Gorden Crumbie at the graduation ceremony of the Class of 2000

And to your question, on 2/16/08 Bruno died. Actually, I had all my notes emails, ICQ chats, and pictures from my time at ACS on the hard drive of my laptop. My daughter had borrowed my laptop to write some resumes and that night her apartment building burned to the ground. In other words, Bruno the Baker up toast.

We are sorry to hear that but we offer to help you retrieve at least some part of what you lost in the fire with the help of your former students and the school's archives. Now what about your future plans?

My immediate plans are just to survive the current economic hardships here. I literally live in the shadow of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. My area is suffering about 20% unemployment and 29 of my neighbors have just moved out and left their house to the bank. As a historian I saw something like this coming but never thought it would be this bad.

We do hope that things will start improving soon. Earlier you mentioned that you regret leaving the College and Bulgaria. Have you thought of coming back here some day?

When I left the College and got on a plane to leave Bulgaria I could take only 30 kilos of my 10 years in Bulgaria. I think that that didn't include my heart and a good portion of my thought process which got left behind. So, I am sure I'll come back to try to reclaim them.

I also go to a Bulgarian Orthodox Church here though, which reminds me of another long story (that I better leave for another time) how I got to Bulgaria in the first place in 1980 – 82.

Plus I learned how to make Rakia on my stove.

Also, everytime I look at my watch I see the time here and in Bulgaria. I think it is 5th period, or a sunny lunch time. So, (if you understood the above answer) I really never left.

Bulgaria and ACS do seem to have a strong presence in your life. And as far as that story about your first visit to Bulgaria in the early 1980's goes, we definitely want to hear it whenever you feel like telling it. Now, what would your message to ACS alumni - those that have met you and perhaps even to those that haven't - sound like:

Never ever forget you are in one of the most incredible places on Earth! Never ever forget you are one of the most fortunate people on Earth! Give back some way what God has given you! And, that's why I became a teacher.

And finally, with the sincerest honesty possible the College, its staff, and students who I haven't met, don't wane from my thoughts or heart for even an hour. I do as much as it is possible love you all, the ones I know and yet to know.

Thank you so much, Mr. Crumbie! We are looking forward to meeting you when you decide to come back and reclaim that thought process and heart of yours.

The interview was taken by Petia Ivanova (who also had the privilege of being Mr. Crumbie's student 1993-1995).

Gorden Crumbie encourages ACS alumni and friends to contact him at: crumbie@wildblue.net.

* Bruno the Baker was one of several characters Mr. Gorden Crumbie used to employ during classes to help his students understand the world history processes and their influence on the small to middle entrepreneurs. Mentioning their names never failed to get the students' attention.

A Different Kind of Reunion

By Petia Ivanova '97

It was a sunny morning in the beginning of June when a curious group of nine people came to visit the College. Curious, as most of them struck the usual ACS inhabitants with neither being the age of ACS students, nor this of ACS staff. Slowly making her way up to the Library, one of the group bragged to the others with a new pacemaker (exactly, not an iPod). At the same time, their eyes sparkled no differently than those of ACS seniors on their last day of school – with overwhelming joy inevitably mixed with sadness. The ACS alumna Hilda Dormont '46 and her husband came from Israel, Golub Golubov '42, his wife Violeta and their daughter Lydia – all the way from Canada, Golub's sister Ceca Bachvarova '46 – from the United States, while Veska Fikova '46 and Hristina Dobрева '46 stood for the whole organization of this reunion from here in Sofia. They sighed, they talked and joked endlessly but most of all they laughed. And we laughed with them. Below is a small part of what we managed to transfer on paper from the happy emotions this moving reunion arose.

We were at the library, looking at the *Bor*

Yearbok from the far year of 1940, when the following short conversations took place:

"Well if that isn't the bell!"

"The bell, indeed, it was placed next to the boys' dorms. What was his name, Gogo Bakardjiev '44, he used to ring it. The first one rang at 5.50h in order to wake us up. By the time the second one rang, 15 minutes later, we had to be ready – combed, dressed and all... Can you imagine?"

"Well, some people didn't bother to wake up anyway. (*Hilda winks at another lady visitor we chose to leave nameless, even if her sense of humor wouldn't possibly allow any offence to be taken*) I, on the other hand, did so **every** time."

"Oh, look at those beautiful girls!"

"That's Elena, she lives in Plovdiv now."

"She was in love with Mrs. Leech's brother, wasn't she? (*To Natalia and myself*) You see, girls, we were once in love, too!"

They continued to flip through the yearbook pages, taking their time to make sure they didn't miss anyone and everyone was impatiently awaiting Golub's picture.

"Here is my brother finally!" Ceca exclaimed under loud cheering and laughter from the rest of the visitors.

"That's me indeed – such a young man! The most handsome of all, aren't I! Just look at my tie!"

"God, how beautiful everyone was!"

"Well, actually some of us are still

beautiful!" Everyone looked towards Hristina and indeed they're not exaggerating: Catherine Deneuve would kill to look like Hristina when she is her age.

"Ms. Moskovska. God, was she strict!"

"Tell me about it! She was switching off the lights so early! At 10 p.m.!"

"Shall we tell them how the boys sneaked in at night in our dorms afterwards though?"

"Wait a minute, wasn't that forbidden?" I asked naïvely.

"Oh, come on, don't you know that there aren't forbidden things in love?"

"What about me, I carried your secret love letters around and then I got caught and had a penalty instead!"

"But oh, it was great times we shared here at ACS. A great start of even greater friendships."

Our stroll through the campus gradually brought us to the Auditorium. Entering it, Hilda was reminded of something:

"Here's an embarrassing story for you that took place at this exact place – the Assembly Hall is how we called it back in the days! One of our teachers – the strictest one actually – was standing on stage talking to us and all of a sudden her panties fell off – you see, girls, at that time panties were tied with an elastic band and apparently hers broke in the middle of her speech. Do you think that anyone laughed or dared make a comment? No, not one. She pretended that nothing happened and so did wall of us. That's how much we both feared and respected her".

While we were at the museum, Veska approached me and told me about the difficulties Hilda has had due to her Jewish origin: "You know how Jews were forced to wear stars? Well, that rule didn't apply here at ACS. Still, Mr. Black always told our Jewish students to wear it when they leave the campus to avoid trouble. The strange times and those rules didn't stop us from being best friends and staying this way for so many years. And you know, when times were hard for us here in Bulgaria, during the so called Lukanov winter, Hilda sent us packages with food and presents via various Jewish organizations. Actually,



Golub Golubov '42, Hilda Dormont '46, Ceca Bachvarova '46, and Golub's daughter Lydia

she still sends us those every Christmas and Easter”

We were still at the museum, when Golub told me about his fleeing west. Apparently, he took the Orient Express train to the Yugoslavian border. A friend of his family helped him with tips where and when exactly to cross the border to avoid running into border guards. From Yugoslavia he and his family got to Trieste and intended to go to the USA from there, but his father died and the procedure for getting a visa which was under the father's name had to be started anew and was going to take up to two years, so that forced them to change their destination to Canada instead, and that's where he had lived ever since with his family. We also found out that, strangely enough, Golub and I come from consecutive classes even if 55 years stand between our graduations; Golub comes from the last class that actually had the chance to graduate ACS, the Class of 1942, and I come from the first one after the school was reopened, the Class of 1997.

We continued with a small lunch in the canteen. Hilda told Mr. Cangiano the story of how she won a masquerade contest dressed up as a butterfly and remained a butterfly for the school's master ever since. We were deeply impressed by how after loosing touch with each other during the war, the best friends Hilda, Hristina, Veska and Ceca find one another again 50 years later in the early 1990's, when Hilda's blast-from-the-past phone call almost gave Hristina a heart attack. Those ladies have now known each nearly 70 years, and in Hilda and Hristina's case – 76 years! It is incredible that after spending just a couple of years together, here at ACS, those girls have grown so fond of each other. Or as Hristina's husband had jokingly put it: “This American College of yours! I really don't understand how you can talk more than 50 years now about something that only lasted less than 5!” Yes

During lunch Golub was encouraged by the ladies to make a speech, so he told us the story of how he ended up at ACS: “I come from Dragoman, you see, and when the time came for my parents to choose a high school for me a friend of

my father's advised him to send me to this school in Sofia, which has its own dormitory and is known for its strict rules. In this way even if a child is away from their home and parents, still the parents can be sure that the child is safe and taken care of, a little like prison, you know. That's how my parents sent me to this charming prison, the American College of Sofia. Here I spent probably the best six years of my life, and I grew so close to those people; we were like a family, really.”

Ceca, Golub's sister, currently living in the United States, shared how terrible her first days were here at ACS: “You know, I came from a small town, so I didn't know any of the girls, and I was crying every evening. I met my brother before going to the girl's dorm in the evening, it's true, but I cried in front of him, as well and he had only one thing to tell me “Sis, whether you cry or not, you're still staying here till you graduate in 5 years, so you better stop crying and start making friends instead. And so I did.”

At parting Mr. Cangiano turned to the alumni: “I would just like to thank all of you for coming to the College today. I know I've met some of you before, but some of you I am meeting for the first time. I am a person who believes in schools having long story histories. And ACS is one of those schools. I've worked at a few schools like that and I know how

special this place is to you. To talk to you and to hear your stories about what it was like here when you were students really means very much to me. I appreciate you sharing your stories with us, so thank you and please feel free to visit any time.”

Afterwards, our continued walk around the campus brought us under the windows of Abbott Hall, once the girls' dormitory. All four women pointed and exclaimed: “Up there on the second floor, you see, these are the windows to our dorm room. Here on those same stairs, we had a picture taken about hundred years ago. The reception was on the first floor, visitors and guests came here for meetings.”

While seating themselves around the sculptures of Mr. Floyd Black and Ms. Inez Abbott for a picture, the girls couldn't help taking up the subject of their school master: “He was very strict but very good-hearted. In our last year, he invited everybody from the senior class to come and have dinner in small groups with him and his wife.”

Then, I got goose bumps when Hristina told me what Mr. Floyd Black did for Hilda and her boyfriend Aaron, also an ACS student. When it became clear that Jews are being forced to leave the country, and Hilda knew that she would have to leave the College, as well, Mr. Black not only allowed her to meet her boyfriend against all school rules, he



Hristina Dobрева '46, Veska Fikova '46, Hilda Dormont '46, and Golub Golubov '42 by the statue of Dr. Floyd Black and Ms. Inez Abbott

actually arranged their last date. Hilda and Aaron met in the canteen, where they took their tearful farewell just days before they both left Bulgaria.

Towards the end of their visit, while everyone else is taking pictures in front of the grand façade of Ostrander Hall, Golub remembered fleeing school to go the cinema in Sofia. Fifty hours community work was the punishment he got when the dean found out about his misconduct. Golub was supposed

to clean some campus area, but a good friend of his father (actually, that same one who advised his parents to send him to the ACS in the first place), an employee of the school, offered to help him by doing the work for him in secret. While he was telling me the story, we spotted some students cutting the one mile loop short by running in the shade close to the buildings, instead of running by the road. I couldn't help but think that some things haven't changed in the nearly seventy years that separate Golub

and the current ACS students. And once again I laughed.

Three weeks after the visit, we received Hilda Dormont's generous donation to the school that she remembers with such fondness. Hilda, who is an artist, sent ACS one of her paintings and two of her drawings. Thank you!

A Word from the Alumni Representative on the ACS Board of Trustees

By Nikolai Mazing '97

As some of you know, about two years ago I was selected to be the first alumni representative on the ACS Board. I would like to give you an overview of what the Board does as well as my role there.

The school's governance is typical for a non-profit organization in the United States. The Board meets two times per year to discuss various "big picture" issues that are faced by the school, while the day-to-day decisions are made at the school level. We will be meeting three times starting this coming year. The composition of the Board is very diverse in terms of experiences represented: there are educators, diplomats, businessmen, lawyers, a former ACS parent and others.

I was very impressed by how deep the Board is, as well as how accomplished its members are. From the current Board members, most alumni would recognize Dr. Roger Whitaker, who reopened the school in 1992, the former U.S. ambassadors to Bulgaria Mr. Sol Polansky and Mrs. Avis Bohlen, as well as Dr. Whitaker's ACS deputy director,



Nikolai Mazing '97 and Stanislav Andreev '07 at the ACS alumni meeting in New York this spring

Mrs. Nellie Gentcheva Gipson. I would like to assure you that ACS is in good hands and that the institution is stewarded with great care as it evolves through the years. None of the Board members are compensated for his or her work or expenses.

Over the course of the year, the Board is kept apprised of all important developments at the school. I will list them to give you a better understanding of what information the Board looks at as well as the issues it votes on.

- Budget for the following year (including tuition rates and financial aid)
- Capital improvement projects (including funding)
- Land/property issues
- ACS admission process
- SAT and AP test results
- College placement results

- Teacher recruitment
- Succession planning

I was brought on when the Board felt that the time was ripe to have an alumni representative serving on it. While this is my "official" role, there have been no restrictions on the discussions I participate in or whether or not I can vote on a certain issue. It has been a great way for me to give back to the school, and it has also been a good learning experience as I had never sat on a board before. Otherwise, my responsibilities revolve around alumni relations, such as organizing meetings in the US. The school has made great strides towards building out its alumni relations which has made my job easier. This is probably the right time to encourage you to make sure that the Alumni Relations office has your current contact information, and join us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

CLASS NOTES

'97

Delyana (Burdjeva) Glover writes: "I met my husband in Japan eight years ago when we were both doing a year-long culture program at Kanazawa university. In 2007 our son Kai was born in Tokyo, where I was doing a professional language training program once again. In the meantime, I lived in the US, received an MA in Japanese linguistics and taught Japanese at the Ohio State University. Although Japan will always play a major role in my life, I am currently living in Dublin, Ireland, exploring Europe (looking for a better home?), and getting increasingly interested in environmental issues and sustainable planning".

Petia Ivanova shares: "Instead of my first wish Psychology I ended up getting my MA in Scandinavian Studies. Met the love of my life nine years ago in Sweden (so there you go) and some years later managed to trick him into moving to Sofia. I worked in the purchasing department of IKEA for five years to recently start in ACS Alumni Relations Office - few steps closer to my dream job of teaching, at really the most beautiful working place. I saw Jamiroquai, Beastie Boys and Brooklyn Funk Essentials live in concert, and by the time this is published will have added Tricky to this list. I travel all the time, mostly Europe. I started a book club with friends, ran two half-marathons, and still dream of running the full 42K some day".

Katya Kormusheva-Markova says: "Not only did I have the longest and strangest last name in my class, but in 2003 I decided to add another family name and became Kormusheva-Markova. My name could never fit in name slots, so I decided to publish a book on my travel adventures in Japan and gave my name all the space it needed. The book is called „Япония от Я до Я", sorry - in Bulgarian only. Because my name is hard

to pronounce on the phone, I work at M-Tel, the biggest mobile operator. The thing that ALWAYS makes me happy: my two girls, Marina, 5, and Yana, 1. And everything else you can see at stefanmarkov.com/family".

Maria Mircheva writes: "I live in South Lake Tahoe, CA. My husband John and I lead a pretty active outdoor adventure lifestyle, hence the reason we to live at 2000 m elevation. We just went back-country skiing in the Eastern Sierra by Yosemite National Park. We both work in the environmental field, trying to save the world one project at a time. I work on policy related projects such as implementing a water pollution crediting system for Lake Tahoe or reviewing fire suppression costs in CA. John coordinates fuel reduction (fire prevention) logging projects. We also have a small non-profit organizing forest restoration from invasive species and fire (www.sugarpinefoundation.org). Last but not least, we have a beautiful 2 year-old daughter, named Sasha. She loves the beach and also going on our boat on Lake Tahoe. We are also expecting a little boy in August. So far he is just kicking".



Maria Mircheva '97 and her daughter Sasha on the shore of Lake Tahoe in March this year

Afraid not to end up in a black list somewhere on the walls of Sanders Hall (No such list will be created or posted, the editor assures!), **Emil Raytchev** writes: "It isn't exactly recently but about 3 years ago I moved my life to London. It's a nice place that's always cloudy but almost never rains. Have no kids and no cats. I am making the world a slightly better, or a much worse place, depends how you look at it, by spending time and

effort in service of the global financial system – work in structured credit at an investment bank – ABS, CDOs and other fun stuff. Bad people say that's where the crisis started – it ain't true. Today, on a rare weekend of British summer, I just realized one of the biggest beauties of winter – you have real football on TV".

Mina (Stoeva) Porell lives surrounded by an urban forest in Atlanta, GA with her husband Chris and their 18-month-old son Ian. After receiving her MA in Art History at the University of Georgia, Mina worked as a director and manager of two art galleries in Atlanta. In January 2009 she left the art gallery scene and now teaches art history as an adjunct professor at Oglethorpe University. A few of her latest (and most obsessive) passions are wine, cooking and diving. This summer Mina is busy teaching Ian to swim, anticipating a family reunion in Madrid and planning the next Caribbean dive vacation.

Milko Todorov shares: "After six years in NYC and the infamous Bear Stearns, I moved to LA in 2007 and I am finishing my MBA at UCLA and getting ready to start working at Apple."

'98:

Mariana Abdelfatah writes: "What makes me happy lately is my son Alexander. He is now 16 months old and running all the time instead of walking, talking all the time, even though we only understand about half of what he says, and he is the cutest, nicest baby ever. He also understands Bulgarian and English equally well and points where Bulgaria is on the globe".

Pavel Blagov says: "I end my clinical psychology internship at Columbia University Medical Center at the end of June of 2009, and I am set to receive my Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Emory University in August. I defended my dissertation on personality subtypes in highly psychopathic prisoners in the summer of 2008. At the end of August of 2009, I will assume a tenure-track assistant professorship in Psychology at Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA. I

also hope to get licensed to do clinical work in WA. Send graduating ACS seniors who are looking for admission at a prestigious liberal arts college that way!”

Yassen Fingarov had just one positive answer to the questions from our Class Notes Form; he did find the meaning of life.

Neli Koleva is finishing up her Doctoral Dissertation at Rice University in Houston, TX and will be moving to France in September. She has accepted a position as Visiting Professor at the Universite de Rennes.

And here's **Gergana Vassileva's** letter: “Hello, It is Gergana, class of '98. Gergana Vassileva, but I do not recall having another Gergana in our grade. Quite unusual. Just wanted to respect this initiative and really just say 'hi' to the high school that meant so much to us and that made so many of us friends for life. As a matter of fact, I hang out having a nice little beer with people from the class of 97 rather than my own, but that's even moooooore fun. And life for me is going well; I am truly enjoying it. Located in Sofia for now, as you might have guessed it”.



'99:

Boryana Rossenova writes: “I just finished my PhD in Biophysics at Berkeley and will soon be looking for another research position. My husband

and I will probably relocate somewhere else in the US but don't know where yet. I can't believe it's been 10 years since ACS. But it's always great to catch up with old classmates, at least on facebook. Also, new name: from Rossenova to Manz.”

Upon graduation from ACS, **Milena Staneva** went to Miami University where she earned a degree in International Relations. She then spent 5 years working at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a foreign policy think tank in Washington DC. In May 2008, Milena earned a Master's in International Economics from George Washington University and then became an international trade lobbyist for a large trade association in DC. She is married to William Sullivan and the two of them will be moving back to Bulgaria in August 2009, where William will be a Fulbright scholar.



Milena Staneva '99 at her wedding

'00:

'01:

Tina Dimtrova says: “Since graduating from Middlebury College in 2005, I have been living in New York and working for a small private equity firm located within walking distance of Central Park. Most recently, I spent two months in San Francisco studying financial modeling and doing consulting for a biotechnology firm in our portfolio. At the end of July this year, I will be moving to Durham, North Carolina to begin my Duke MBA in Health Sector Management, and I look forward to a career in biotechnology post-graduation either in the Bay Area or in Europe”.



Tina Dimitrova '01 with the Duke Blue Devil, the mascot of the business school she will be attending this fall

Ivan Genadiev shares: “I just completed a 3-year stint in investment banking in New York. I am about to join Global Crossing, an international telecommunications company, where I will be serving as Chief of Staff to the CEO.”

Nelly Mihailova wrote ACS a letter:

“Hello dear ACS ☺

Well, I haven't written a book or something like this, but I just wanted to say hi. Right now I am living in Germany, Bavaria. I am working at ESPRiT Engineering, in Human Resources and this is great. I love my work. If you come to Munich, please let me know. My workplace is exactly where Oktoberfest is (maybe you have heard of Oktoberfest :)). I just need to cross the street, so I will be happy to drink a beer (ein Maß-Bier) with you. Otherwise I am OK. Right now I am writing my final thesis, which I have to hand in on the 2nd of July. I am deeply in love with my friend Felix and in general I am very happy here. Hugs from Munich, Nelly”



Nelly Mihailova '01

'02:

Milena Evtimova, now Velez writes: "I graduated from Oberlin College in 2007 with a degree in Politics and Creative Writing, concentration in poetry and translation. I am not published yet, but I am working on it whenever I have time from my job. Since 2007 I have been working as the coordinator of international admission at Knox College, in Galesburg, IL. I moved here in July 2007 with my then-boyfriend of four years, Joel Velez, and on July 18, 2008 he asked me to be his wife. With a huge grin on my face I, of course, said Yes. We are getting married on September 5 this year, and there will be a number of ACS alums present at the wedding. I am attaching one of our engagement photos, and will be more than happy to send you a few of the wedding photos with smiling ACS-ers as well :)"



Milena Evtimova '02 and Joel Velez at their engagement

Valeria Panayotova shares: "I just got my MA in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University. I am taking the summer off to spend some time in Paris, where my boyfriend lives, to travel around Europe and to see my family in Bulgaria. After that, I will be going to London where I am starting a new job as an International Manager with HSBC. It is a very exciting and interesting position as a generalist banker. I will be working on projects in private, retail, and corporate banking and I will be moving to a different location all over the world every 1-2 years".

'03:

Nedko Kyuchukov is brief: "TBU"

Minna Paunova moved to Barcelona sometime in the fall of 2008. **Mina Prokic** got here in February. Minna P is doing a doctorate in organizational studies, Mina P has a scholarship for research in international cooperation. Both try to avoid cooking and tough choices. We live together but barely see each other on weekdays. As soon as we get some time on our hands, we hit the beach. The people that we meet find it entertaining, that we share a name and a flat, and that - apparently - we've grown identical laughter.

Mina Prokic & Minna Paunova
c/ Manila 45, 5-1
Barcelona 08034

'04:

Alexander Shpatov says: "I have no idea why the form starts with [the wrote-a-book] question, but yes - as I matter of fact in the past five years I did manage to get published - and even not once, but twice. Surprisingly enough, neither of my books managed to make the world a better place, but all in all I think they offer some pleasant time reading. If anyone's interested Google (or any decent bookstore in Sofia) would certainly be ready to tell you more than enough."

'05:

'06:

Veselina Kracheva writes: "During the last eight months I did an exciting internship in the sphere of Marketing and Business Development at Intel, Munich. It is great to be trusted with important responsibilities in a big international company, where cultural differences often lead to numerous

"interesting" :) situations, but I also got another appealing "bonus" - I traveled all over the world. Starting with a biz trip to Portland, OR in the second month of my internship, I later participated in conferences in Barcelona, Berlin and Paris. If any of you is looking for an exciting internship opportunity, I fully recommend Intel :)"



Veselina Kracheva '06

Vesela Nedkova shares: "I have only one semester left of my Bachelor's at my current university in Holland and I recently was accepted for a study abroad at Australian University of Canberra. Life is still a strange place to be".

'07:

'08:

Dear Alumni,
as you can see, there's nothing to fear,
so let us hear from you next time!

Wrote a book?
Recently changed your city or country of residence?
Found the meaning of life?
Just married?
New baby?
Made the world a slightly better place?
Your career just took an unexpected turn?

Or you simply want to share with us what makes you happy lately?
Please send your entries to
p.mironova@acs.bg
(preferably up to 100 words),
feel free to attach photos (300 dpi, in .tif or .jpg format),
and don't forget to mention your class.
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