

## **Ek, Do, Teen, Char - This Is Who We Are!!!!**

### Our Alumni Association Story

**A**s with most "happily-ever-after" stories, this one also starts with "once upon a time."

Once upon a time, there was an AIS student, KC Gray Siebert ('70), who – like most students who attended the school - loved AIS so much that after leaving New Delhi she was determined to stay in touch with her AIS friends.

KC and her circle of friends reached out to tens, then hundreds, of alumni; and she soon began collecting news from them and sending out newsletters. This, dear children, was in the days before the Internet and personal computers! Contact information was slowly collected from siblings, friends and parents (no web searches in those days). Newsletters were typed on typewriters and then later in 'PC Write' on the computer. Newsletters were delivered by postal mail.

Also in this early time period (unbeknownst that this was happening simultaneously), another small group of alumni began an alumni newsletter program. Recognition needs to be given to Raynah Salenius d'Onofrio ('73), Manolito Adan ('73), and Mary Flanagan Williamson ('74), who worked with Mrs. Joyce Williams (AIS/AES English and Journalism teacher) on these early newsletters. Eventually, Mrs. Williams' group and KC combined their contact lists; and KC continued the alumni newsletters.

KC and her circle of friends continued visiting each other when they came back to the States in the years following their graduation. In 1975 KC and her classmates had their first dinner party at a little Indian restaurant in Alexandria, Virginia. Five years later, they met again, inviting more alumni to join them. Anyone who had ever attended AIS/AES, former faculty, parents and friends were welcomed. Word quickly spread about the gathering and to everyone's surprise, the attendance was larger than they expected. At the 1980 reunion, alumni were spilling onto the sidewalk outside of the little Indian restaurant, and the proprietor ran out of food!! He even had to replenish his liquor supply.

With the success of the 1980 reunion and the interest from AIS/AES alumni to stay in touch, the AIS/AES Alumni Association was born. Over the next several years, association members hosted three reunions: the first one in Washington, DC in 1985; the second one at Lake Tahoe in 1990, which was organized by Judy Newberry Ashley ('69); and the third one in New Delhi in 1995, which was organized by Jeff Campbell ('73). The newsletters continued, keeping alumni up-to-date as classmates married, had children, got jobs and experienced all the joys and heartaches that go with life.

With the advent of the Internet, searching for alumni and sharing news became easier. Tim Corey ('62) built the first online AIS/AES alumni web site. In 1993,

Adarsh Carter ('93) and Marc Wollemborg ('92) developed and maintained an online e-mail directory of alumni and former faculty known as AESZ.

In 1999 the AIS/AES Alumni Association Board of Directors consisted of five officers and three Members at Large. The Board held monthly get-together dinners at various Indian restaurants in the local DC areas where it became the norm to have a meeting first and then feast on an Indian meal. In addition, Anne Beattie Kerr ('66) began hosting picnics in her lovely home in Castleton, Virginia, every year and has faithfully kept the tradition up. The Board also grew larger over time with new members who joined. The first major all-classes reunion hosted by the Board itself was in Washington DC in 2001, the second one in 2005, and our most-recent one in 2010. Because all three reunions were very successful, the Board intends to continue hosting major all-classes reunions every five years.

After Anne's annual picnic in 2004, webmaster extraordinaire, Tim Brown ('70) re-designed and re-launched Tim Corey's original aisaes.com project. Along with KC, Suzanne Bakey Fricke ('72), Taka Yamanouchi ('70) and other enthusiastic contributors, Tim's new site, aisaes.org, went live in late 2004. Hundreds more alumni were found (or they found us) and the alumni membership list has exploded currently to approximately 5,000 members - to include alumni, parents, faculty and AIS/AES friends.

Critical to the success of the site was the desire to put an extensive database of alumni names and email addresses online and have it password protected to keep the information secure.

Letters, photos and mementoes from alumni bring new material to the site nearly every week. Participants tend to be older alumni, mostly graduates in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. The site averages approximately 150 visits each day, with each visitor viewing more than three pages.

This site primarily exists to help alumni find their friends. Crucial to this has been Mary Flanagan Williamson's ('74) drive to recruit class secretaries and to create/update, publish and maintain rosters for all class years between 1962 and the present day. Mary's work and the efforts of the class secretaries have been invaluable to achieving this goal.

In 2008 we started an ongoing web project of scanning yearbooks for each class year. Doug Taylor ('86, known as Doug Hammond then) was a key player in getting this project started by scanning his yearbooks from the 1970's for publishing as PDF files for Tim to post onto our web site. And brothers Malcolm ('75) and David Garg ('76) kindly loaned a nearly-complete set of 1960's yearbooks to Doug. From New Delhi Deepak Sen ('74) and Bandana Sen (AES Librarian) provided scans of more than 20 yearbooks. As of May 2010 we have on our web site all but two of the yearbooks that AIS/AES has ever published.

The past few years we have said hail and farewell to several Officers and Directors on our Board. We are happy to welcome Mary Flanagan Williamson ('74) as our new association President! Mary served as our Vice President for the past two years and assumed the position of President on 30 January 2011.

Please allow us to reintroduce our current members on the AIS/AES Alumni Association, Inc., Board of Directors:

**Mary Williamson**, President; **Anne Weathersby**, Vice President; **Susan Carew**, Recording Secretary; **Suzanne Fricke**, Corresponding Secretary; **Anne Kerr**, Treasurer

**Sophie Lafaille**, Director; **Judy Ashley**, Director; **Julie Marquis**, Director; **Christopher Dunn**, Director; **Eric Peterson**, Director

We would also like to introduce our new webmaster, Stefan Rykowski, who is the son of our Vice President. Stefan assumed the position from Tim Brown, who retired from it to focus on his job and family.

A few notes:

- Although we are "headquartered" in the DC area where the association originated, our current Board members come from different states – California, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and outside the United States, from Canada and Germany. Alumni from all classes, from across and outside the United States are welcomed (and encouraged) to apply for positions on the Board. Board positions are ad hoc, and there is no set limit on the number of directors.
- We are a non-profit organization and with no rich benefactors to date, invite any and all contributions! Membership dues pay for the Alumni News web page, mailings, deposit money for events (like reunions) and festivities. We suggest \$25 per calendar year although we gratefully accept whatever you can contribute. Please make your dues check payable to our treasurer, Anne Beattie Kerr. See [Dues Drive](#) for details.
- We rely on our Alumni web site, class secretaries and email for communication to members to save money on home-mailings. Our snail-mail list minimally consists of those who cannot access the web, and their mailings are limited to upcoming reunion notices. Please provide Mary Williamson [MaryWilliamson74@aol.com](mailto:MaryWilliamson74@aol.com) with your email address (if you have not already done so) and advise when either your email or postal address changes.
- Some alumni have requested that their email addresses be omitted from our password protected online database. If you do not want your email address in this database, please let Mary know. Also, we understand and share the concerns of distributing the email addresses in the database (as well as other contact information held by the association that is not posted online). Please know that in respect for your privacy (and to save you from potential spammers!) our policy is to not distribute the master alumni database or online e-mail database. If you are coordinating a class reunion or an area reunion (such as West Coast or New Delhi) and want to reach alumni with snail-mail addresses only, you may request a limited contact listing for

invitees in writing to Mary Williamson [Marywilliamson74@aol.com](mailto:Marywilliamson74@aol.com). Your request will be considered by the Board before a final decision is made to release information and information will only be provided to the event coordinator, who will be asked to safeguard it and only use it for the area event purposes.

In closing, thanks again to everyone who helped us with our reunions, newsletters and web site. Please keep your news and photos coming, and remember to visit our website <http://aisaes.org/> often!

*Namaste.*

AIS/AES Alumni Association, Inc. Board of Directors, June 2011