



The American University of Paris  
Alumni Chapter of Greater Washington, DC (AUPDC)  
November 2011 Newsletter

## American College in Paris Sixties Alumni Meet in Washington, DC

by Joe Ruth (class of 1965)

Alumni of The American University of Paris often choose the word "transformational" to describe their college experiences. Over the weekend of November 11-12, two dozen of these alums from the school's first decade gathered in Washington, DC to rekindle old friendships.

David Brewster and Barbara Williams Thorsen (both class of 1966) initiated the event, which was enthusiastically supported by AUP and President Celeste Schenck, who flew from Paris. Most attendees live on the East Coast, but the event drew alumni from as far away as Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and California.



Trustee Gretchen Handwerger again graciously opened her home to AUP. She hosted a Friday evening reception that offered a wonderful opportunity for alums to reconnect, in some cases, for the first time in almost 50 years.

### SAVE THE DATE!



AUPDC  
Holiday

Reception


Tuesday, Dec 20, 2011

Check the website for  
details soon.

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President Schenck asked alumni to share what AUP had meant in our lives. Alumni told moving personal stories, reflecting on the worlds that opened up for them at AUP. Graduates had been or still are Peace Corps Volunteers, international flight attendants, business men and women, bankers, professors, teachers, psychologists, government officials, and diplomats.

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Some participants spent the following morning at Arlington National Cemetery, in some cases visiting the graves of parents and other family members.

Later that morning members of AUP's DC Chapter joined reunion participants for an Italian lunch at the National Gallery of Art (NGA). The gathering provided an opportunity for local attendees to learn about AUP's DC



Chapter and the activities we host in the Washington area. We hope that those who have not attended previous AUPDC activities will join us in the future.



After lunch NGA Chief of Exhibits Dodge Thompson guided us through highlights of the museum's French collection, including works by Manet, Monet, Renoir, Rodin, and Degas. The chalice used in the coronation ceremonies of French kings over seven centuries was particularly memorable. Abbot Suger commissioned the chalice's jeweled gilt mount in the 12<sup>th</sup> century for a cup carved of sardonyx in the first or second century. After asking whether the group had read *The Da Vinci Code*, Thompson said that if there had been a Holy Grail, the Suger chalice was it. He also noted the high security around this precious object. (Thanks very much to President Schenck for arranging this wonderful tour!)



The reunion wrapped up with a Saturday evening dinner at Petit Plats on Connecticut Avenue. Carol Brewster's lovely decorations, featuring The American College in Paris' 1960s logo, offered the appropriate hint of nostalgia. In

my opinion, the restaurant exceeded expectations in turning out so many delicious meals and going to great lengths to meet individual diner requests.

As we ate, Eric Elbot (1966) recounted some humorous and moving experiences as AUP founder Dr. Lloyd Delameter's personal assistant and chauffeur. He linked these experiences to his memories of Dr. Daniel Spicehandler, one of AUP's favorite early professors and a member of author James Jones' literary group. I particularly enjoyed hearing how Jones used to edit some of Eric's short stories.

AUP Board of Trustees Chair Judith Hermanson Ogilvie and President Schenck briefly outlined their vision for the University's future. In preparation for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2013 **(please mark your calendars**



**for Memorial Day weekend 2013**), they hope to see a series of 50 regional celebrations all around the world beginning in September 2012.

After the 2013 anniversary is behind us, AUP will launch a capital campaign to put the University's campus on a more solid footing as it grows to 1200 students. A Student Union is an important element of the campus plan. Both Ogilvie and Schenck thanked the group for their strong support of AUP over the years. In addition to requesting financial support, Schenck urged us to share our own personal stories with high school students and to encourage them to consider four years of study at AUP.

Overall attendance for the weekend included approximately four participants from the class of 1964, seven from 1965, nine from 1966, and others from 1967-1969.

Many, many thanks to Barbara Williams Thorsen and David and Carol Brewster for making this reunion happen. We participants would like to express our appreciation as well to President Celeste Schenck, Trustees Judith Hermanson Ogilvie and Gretchen Handwerger, and Kristina Ver Foley, new Director of University Outreach and Advancement, for their participation in and support of this wonderful reunion weekend.

To see these and other photos from the reunion weekend, see the AUPDC website at [aupdc.org/eventphotos.aspx](http://aupdc.org/eventphotos.aspx).



**Save the Date -- December 20:**

## **AUPDC Holiday Reception**

Details will be provided soon, or check the AUPDC website at [aupdc.org](http://aupdc.org).

## Other Local French Activities



Check out the websites of the French Embassy ([www.la-maison-francaise.org](http://www.la-maison-francaise.org)) and the Alliance Française ([www.francedc.org](http://www.francedc.org)), which host frequent cultural events.

If you're looking for an opportunity to enjoy a variety of outings while practicing your French, check out the meet-up group, French Language and Culture in Northern Virginia, at <http://www.meetup.com/French-in-Nova/>.