# The Antiochian Through The Ages

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When I was asked to write an article for this newly designed version of The Antiochian, it made me curious about what this magazine, which I assumed was always for Alumni only, was all about. When did it start? What was the content? What could it tell us about Antiochians of the past and the College we love?




My first step, of course, was to contact Scott Sanders, Antioch College Archivist and make time to visit Antiochiana, on the second floor of the Library. And ask questions.

And go down the proverbial rabbit hole that took me back to Volume 1, Number 1, from April 1, 1869. I skipped to the 1870'/80s, then to the early 20th century, onto the 1920's, then to the late 1930's, next the 1940's, particularly 1944, the year I was born, onto the 1950's and 60's, as I entered in 1962 and graduated in 1967.

## Themes Emerge

There are some themes: the Antiochian we
magazine for everyone on campus, but mai
for alumni. It started out very big (11x14), b
being very big and is now a completely diff
online publications.

It always reflected the issues of the times.
numerous references to the importance of
In the 1920's it had a "rah rah" feel, reflect
there was much talk about the effect that t
the later part of that decade, there were ful
organization, urging peace as the world was moving toward World War 2. The ads were very graphic as you will see.

The issues from the 1940's were focused on the War, with numerous photos of Antiochians, both men and women, in uniform. There was even a report from an alum who had landed on D Day. The 1950's had articles about the House on Un-American Activities hearings in Dayton to investigate "subversive" activities in Yellow Springs and Dayton.

By this time, I was seeing familiar names and faces, both students and faculty. A photo of the Kettering Foundation Solar Energy Lab with a young Irwin Pomerantz '57 in a white coat looking at some kind of machine, the announcement that a new professor was joining the faculty in 1937, George Geiger, who was still teaching Philosophy at Antioch when I was a student 30 years later. And Rod O'Conner, who had run the dining halls from the 1930's when there was still a Tea Room and who was also still there when I entered.




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As I looked for themes what I found was a very Antiochian combination of continuity and change. At first, the magazine did not focus on alumni, but by April 1, 1870 the first Class Notes appeared called "The Old Students Column" (!) and by October of that year there were two pages of them.

They all had a "chatty" feel, like "Wm. A. Bell '60 [that's 1860, folks] has been traveling in Europe this summer and writing able, racy, and characteristic letters for the Indianapolis Journal." William Bell went on to be President of Antioch in the 1890's

In the issue of June 1887, it was announced that this was Antioch's "most prosperous year since re-opening". As you remember, Antioch almost shut down in 1861. That issue also had a big article about the clash between liberalism and conservatism and a call for women to be paid the same wage as men. As I said, plus la meme chose.

## Formats change with the times

By 1905, the magazine was much smaller, 5x7, and Stephen F. Weston '79 was president of the Alumni Association. Weston Hall, formerly the Horace Mann Building, was named for his family who sent generations of men and women to Antioch.

By this time, there was something called, Alumni Night, which took place the Tuesday before Commencement. This was the forerunner of Reunion, which for decades took place for two days before Commencement. In 1907, there was a call to raise money from Alumni to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first graduating class. The beginning of Alumni Giving.

And in case you are curious, the tuition in 1906 was $30/ year, Incidentals were $10/year and room and board was $2/ week. According to Google, that's $3,297 for tuition in 2023 dollars. If only . . .

By the late 1920's, the Antioch Alumni Bulletin, began to be published, specifically for alumni. The first issue talked about how innovative the Bulletin would be and that it would be focused on:

> ". . . improving solidarity and knowledge of the College".

By this time, Arthur Morgan had arrived and the transformation of Antioch into a liberal arts college with a fully integrated co-op program began.

And in the category of plus cą change/meme chose, there are many articles about the "Autonomous Plan of Study" that was part of the College's educational model. I asked Scott whether that was similar to the Self- Designed Major and he agreed it was. As I said . . .

Class Notes, called "From Many Ways" filled pages and pages and there was the beginning of Chapters. The Antioch College Alumni Association was formally organized with a Constitution and Bylaws. We still have such documents – the Constitution is the governing document for the Association and the Bylaws are the governing document for the Alumni Board.

And the familiar names kept coming. J.D. Dawson is the Associate Dean and the Fels Study of Children is founded. The Antioch Industrial Research Institutes are also developed to do research on scientific developments that can have a commercial application. Paul Treichler writes an article on the Theatre, and there are many photos of theater productions from that time.

Antioch weathers the Depression, noting in one issue, that the effects of the Depression on Co-op are "negligible".

By 1936, the publication is back to the familiar large format, there is an ongoing report on Community Government and a letter from the CM. And there are reports from a Conference called "Life's Meaning" led by three outside scholars, one of whom is Charles Spurgeon Johnson, A.B, Ph.B, the then Director of the Institute of Race Relations at Swarthmore, to go on to be the first Black president of Fisk University.

And, as usual, there is much controversy on campus in the late 1930's as World War II looms. Along with the very graphic full page ads from the Peaceways Institute, there is this photo, purported to be a "satire" mocking both sides in the Spanish Civil War.



CORN-FED KID FROM THE WEST

He joined up in '17. Didn't quite know what it was all about, but it seemed the thing to do at the time.

Then the front—and suddenly War lost every vestige of its glamor. He was scared. He was bewildered.

He and another kid, who had become his best friend on earth, were out on a patrol. Something hit them. His friend was instantly transformed into a filthy mass of blood and bones and slime. He himself was too weak to move, or call for help, or groan.

He looked into the sinister eyes of a rat that [illegible] on his chest, waiting [illegible]

"To Make the World Safe for Democracy" . . . "Protect the Rights of Little Nations" . . . "A War to End Wars"—proven to be the empty notes with which Pious Pipers had lured so many kids like him to their deaths.

He didn't live to learn that millions of dollars were spent by various interests to "educate" our people to the necessity of entering the war on the "right" side.

And he didn't live to see the whole world [illegible]

The covers of the magazine in this decade were mostly photographs taken by Axel Bahnsen, who was a world famous photographer who lived in Yellow Springs.

I was particularly taken by a description of Comcil discussing drinking on campus in the March 1937 issue as follows:

> "Discussed: Drinking on campus. Accomplished: A good deal of talking."

Ah, this feels familiar.

## As ever… change at the Antiochian

And then in 1941, things change again! The Antiochian becomes the Antioch Alumni Bulletin once again, and the President of the Alumni Association, Walter Kahoe, who went on to be Yellow Springs Village Manager in the 1970's, announces that this is the "official publication of the Alumni Association of Antioch College." The issues from just before the War have extensive Class Notes (four pages of them), mostly about marriages and babies. In 1942, we have entered the War and the Quarter Plan is adopted originally designed to reduce the time to complete college, so that men could enlist, but it remained a fundamental part of Antioch for decades. Thirty Antiochians died in World War II.

Lots of Alumni Chapters by then in Massachusetts, New York, Dayton, Detroit, Buffalo, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. We still have some of those but have added (and subtracted) a few.

By the May 1951 issue, the Antioch logo appears on the cover. Alumni are elected to the Trustees in the 1950's as well as to the Alumni Board, but Reunion still takes place just before Commencement. This allows alumni to give a dinner for graduating seniors. Also in 1955, the Alumni Admission program is announced, which is very similar to the one we had more recently. Twelve Alumni are working with the Dean of Administration, William Boyd Alexander, to work on the "aims of Antioch Education."

Looking at the February 1953 issue, the one that celebrates Antioch's 100th birthday [sic], I see lots of familiar names among the faculty: Irwin Abrams, Walter Anderson, Paul Bixler, Clarence Leuba, Barry Hollister, Al Stewart, Morris Keeton, Nolan Miller. They were all still there when I entered in 1962. And it turns out Antioch was actually chartered in 1850.

And that brings us to my era, the 1960's. In January 1963, the publication reverts back to the name, The Antiochian and there are four pages of Class Notes. There is also an article bemoaning the "lost sense of community."



Alumni are still raising money for the College and there is something called the Annual Fund Committee, made up of 12 men and one woman, the secretary. And there is a large Reunion Committee made up of 11 alums from all decades, not just Alumni Board members. We are actually working to get back to that format as organizing Reunion is practically a full time job for ten people. There are 9,300 alumni in the 1960's compared to over 15,000 currently.

## What to make of it all?

Certainly, change is the byword, re-invention also comes to mind. But so does continuity. One of the things that particularly struck me, thanks to a discussion with Scott Sanders, is that so many of the faculty taught at Antioch for decades, thereby connecting with students over long periods of time, as they become alumni. Similarly with the staff. JD Dawson was still Dean of Students when I arrived in 1962 – he had been there since 1927, having known generations of Antiochians. And other faculty, like Manmatha Nath Chaterjee who was a friend and confident of Mahatma Ghandi and taught at Antioch for 31 years and Henry Ferenghi, who while gone by my time,

had revolutionized science teaching at Antioch. Both were still talked about and had a "presence" on campus. Actually, Scott falls into that category as well, having started at the College as an intern, in 1994, almost 30 years ago.

As I reflect on this journey back in time, I wonder if one of the challenges we all face now, students, faculty, staff, and alumni, is that lack of continuity with a living and breathing past. Continuity can be a mitigating factor as we are buffeted by current realities. Looking back is not just nostalgia for a long-ago "fantasy" world, but a way of connecting and linking ourselves together across time and space.

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