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UPCOMING EVENTS

International Women's Day
March 8, 2010

AACO Women's lunch
April 4, 2010

AACO Summer Picnic
June 5, 2010

AACO Open Community Meeting
August 7, 2010

Columbus International Festival
1st Weekend in November

AACO Elects New Board of Directors



Some members of the AACO Board of Directors welcoming Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy

The 2009 general membership meeting of the AACO was held on March 27th and a new board of directors was elected. Over 75 members and their families attended, shared ideas, enjoyed the evening, and listened to the guest speaker, Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy.

The meeting was opened by the master of ceremony, Jamal Sadoun, who welcomed the attendees and then introduced the outgoing President, Barakat Saleh. Mr. Saleh spoke of the progress made by the AACO during the last two years and urged members to continue their support. He then introduced Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy to the audience. The congresswoman passed out a range of information pamphlets about her various legislations in congress to serve her Ohio constituents. She spoke of her hard work along with other U.S. representatives in

supporting President Obama's efforts to improve the U.S. economy, as well as her effective advocacy for her 15th Ohio district. She also spoke of her continued support and good relations with the members of our Arab American community in central Ohio.

After a brief recess in which attendees were invited for appetizers and coffee, Mr. Saleh announced the recognition of three AACO past presidents for their service to our Arab American community. The following accepted a plaque for their contributions.

*Marcell Anthony
*Andy Amid
*Suhail Zedan

Finally, the election committee conducted the Board of Directors elections and a vote was performed by the present AACO members. After counting the ballots, the following names were elected:

*Marcell Anthony
*Samia Al Zier
*Omar Al Omari
*Dr. Ishaq Al Qutub
*Husam Al Qutub
*Harith Al Katib

*Muhanned Abu Laban
*Ghassan Hashim
*Mazin Rasoul
*Sam Saa
*Rod Skaf
*Barakat Saleh

In their next meeting, the new board of directors elected Rod Skaf as their new AACO President. Our congratulations to the new president. The board also elected two associate members, Dr. Hani Saqr and Jumana Thaher, who volunteered to work with the new board and the new president.

President's Message

By Rod Skaf



Doing the right thing is always the optimum goal and the precise distinction between the good, the bad, and the ugly. People with common goals, ethical background, and elite status... They lead by example, flourish by design, and prevail by default. They even think with the end-in-mind.

Most of us, as Arab Americans, were raised to consciously do the right thing, care about others, positively impact our surroundings, and ultimately build a good name for ourselves. We even take pride in having our actions and accomplishments classified as the right thing, regardless of self benefits. We love others, we are smart, and we know how to reach the top of the clouds. Yes, we know..!!

Our assets are not necessarily the business, the real estate, or bank accounts.. It's precisely our name.

My dad used to tell me that one's name is the real asset in this life, and the good memorabilia after life.

In every nation, every society, and every group, there are distinguished people and the ugly ones. So if that natural law applies to us (as Arab Americans), then our concern should be, how to protect our names from the wrong-doing of others with similar names..!!

You see, when some of us do something ugly; either against the law, or contrary to our heritage (haven't we all heard such stories)... when that happen, we feel small, we want to hide, we want to distance ourselves from them... But we can't... we might have an accent, have similar names, have a common background. What a pity.. What if you and I, what if Hashem, Halide, Jamaal, Miriam, etc. would lose pride in their good names, because of the wrong-doings of some in our community, that may radiate, pollute, or shame our heritage.

Since we can't change the world.. we have to change our relationship with these people. First, we need to pinpoint the wrong actions, even if it may cost us the relationship. We should enforce that caring about others is a Godly law. Second, we need to collaborate, using our strength and leadership, to isolate the black sheep. We shouldn't allow these people to hide behind their religions, and pretend to be who they are not. Third, we need to work hard to guard our lifestyle, enforce education among us and our children, establish the rules of belonging. Let's all remember that respect and caring are not to be compromised at any price.

That's who we are.. AND let's help "them" to get there.

Nadi Abu-Rayyan

Sam Abu-Rayyan



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New Immigrants to the United States: Challenges, adjustment and future for the Children

By Ishaq Y. al-Qutub, Ph.D.

From a sociological perspective, when an individual or a family decides to immigrate to the United States there is a need to critically analyze the "push" factors that propelled the move from the village, the city or refugee camp to the chosen country for settlement. The choice of intended destination is largely determined by the "pull" factors that impacted the preference of the new residence.

The migrant should try to answer the following basic questions:

- 1) What are really the main reasons for migration.
- 2) What is the most preferred place to live, considering other countries?
- 3) Is migration cost effective? Meaning, will the migrant improve the socio-economic status of oneself and the family? Taking into consideration the economic and social aspects.
- 4) When is the right time to make the move? Age, opportunities, family size, employment, season, etc..
- 5) Who will migrate? The family head, parents, children, this will mean cost, expenses and scope of adjustment?
- 6) What is required to facilitate the migration, both at the sending and receiving countries such as laws, regulations, specific location.
- 7) Who and how the migrants will be received, family members, government authorities, friends, organizations etc .
- 8) Financing the migration process.. the entire cost of movement, arrival and cost of living in the first one or two years at the new location? What are the sources, amounts, flow, and reliability?
- 9) Prior preparation to migration, such as knowledge and meaningful understanding about the country of destination: culture, society, economy, religion, politics and environment, ethnicity. More informed migrants tend to have less adjustment problems.
- 10) Laws and regulations that govern various aspects of life including housing, credit, insurance, citizenship and taxation. Abiding to these laws, is a reflection of various forms of security and benefiting from the system.
- 11) How much the new migrant is willing to sacrifice and make concessions in various aspects of living as a result of changing locations such as: habits, values, norms, beliefs, job and career, concept of freedom and democracy..

The above constitute the frame of which migrants need to evaluate during the decision process of making this very important decision. This requires true responses and realistic answers and the will to accept the new challenges.

The second important phase of migration is the adjustment to the new environment. This will be discussed in a future article.

Arab Christians to Celebrate Birth of Jesus Christ

By Marcell Rose Anthony

The season is fast approaching for Arab Christians to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, called the Epiphany. The Orthodox Arab Christians celebrate their Christmas on January 6, and other Arab Christians on December 25.

There is fasting for six to eight weeks prior to Christmas where depending on the Church, meats, chicken and fish, and most dairy are not eaten. This leaves imagination for the meals for all of the delicious Middle Eastern vegetable and fruit dishes, with rice.

The Feast of the Epiphany is a joyous occasion, usually celebrated with gifts for the children, normally hand-crafted items including toys. Most Arab Christians hand make a nativity scene with displays of paper mache figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Three Kings from afar, and the shepherds and their flocks.

For more information of when liturgies will be held, please contact Father Harrington at Holy Resurrection Melkite Catholic Byzantine Orthodox Church, Father Sedarous at St. Mary's Coptic Church, and Victor Ghanem for the Maronite Catholic Church in Columbus at 614-791-1876.



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Enjoy the Summer Ethnic Festivals

By Marcell Rose Anthony

Summer and early Autumn are the times for attending the ethnic festivals around Franklin County. The Greek Festival, the Egyptian Festival, the Irish Festival, the Asian Festival, the Italian Festival, are but a few of the fabulous ethnic festivals that the public can attend. Please watch your local media for information on each of these festivals. Many of them include the best ethnic food, dancing and bazaars for purchase of items imported from the host country.

The AACO Board encourages each member to attend at least two of these ethnic festivals this summer and autumn. They are truly the epitome of family fun for a small entrance fee. Be sure to tell everyone you meet at the festivals that you are Arab American from your particular country so that we can spread the good-will of the Arab American community to other ethnic communities.

International Festival

By Marcell Rose Anthony

The first weekend in November of each year brings the International Festival sponsored by the Columbus Chapter of the United Nations Association.

Last year, and for the past fifteen years, AACO has participated in the International Festival with a booth reflecting Arab artifacts, literature and displays relating to Arab contributions to religion and civilization and the American dream.

Each year, AACO depends on volunteers to assist in the presentation of the Arab culture and to answer questions from the public about Arab history, peoples, religion, and geography. AACO encourages each of its members to spend four hours Saturday or Sunday of the festival as volunteers at the AACO booth.

During breaks, you will enjoy the other sixty or so booths of ethnic and educational perspectives, in addition to wonderful ethnic foods from all parts of our wonderful world.

We guarantee family fun and an opportunity to educate your children about other countries, and to take pride in the AACO booth.

To volunteer for the AACO booth, contact Samia Al-Salahat, Vice President of Social Affairs, at (614) 850-9363.



Women's Initiatives and Outreach



The Governor's office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach invited AACO Vice President, Samia Al Zier to the holiday reception at the Governor's residence on Sunday, December 20, 2009.

profile

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Some Common Issues for Green Card Holders Applying for U.S. Citizenship

By Fatin Saleh Askar, Esq.
Zeidan & Associates, LLC.

Throughout the years, our firm has worked with many people who hold Green Cards –referred to as Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs)- and who have applied for their U.S. citizenship through naturalization. Many of these LPRs had their applications denied by Immigration as a result of their failure to meet legal requirements that the LPRs were unaware of.

Prior to obtaining our firm's advice, most of these LPRs who encountered problems were only aware that they must: (1) Spend a number of years as a permanent resident prior to applying for citizenship; and (2) Pass a test during their naturalization interview. Although, there are a number of legal requirements for becoming a citizen, this article will briefly discuss three of the most common issues that an LPR, should be aware of prior to applying for naturalization.

First, you must have the right type of Green Card before you can apply for naturalization. Immigration issues two different types of Green Cards to LPRs, depending on the basis for their Permanent Resident Status. The first type of Green Card, called a Conditional Green Card, gives the holder "Permanent" Resident status, but only for a limited period of time. Before the 2 year expiration, the LPR must submit an application for removal of the conditions on their Green Card in order to maintain their legal resident status. Failure to apply for –and be granted– removal of these conditions can result in severe consequences, such as Immigration initiating deportation proceedings. Once Immigration has granted removal of conditions, the LPR is given the second type of Green Card, which is called a Permanent Green Card.

The second issue of concern is the amount of time you have spent outside the U.S. The law requires that most LPRs must be physically and continuously present in the U.S. for at least half the time that they have had their Green Card. It also states that if the LPR leaves the U.S. for more than 6 months without approval from Immigration, they are considered to have disrupted the number of days they spent in continuous residence. This disruption means that any amount of time that has been spent in the U.S. before travelling will not count as time spent in continuous residence.

However, Immigration offers two kinds of documents to solve the problems that a future naturalization applicant will encounter as a result of an absence from the U.S. that is greater than six months. These are the Re-Entry Permit and Application to Preserve Residence for Naturalization Purposes. Additionally, you should submit your application prior to traveling outside the U.S. in order to avoid any complications due to an unexpected denial.

The third issue relates to good moral character. For instance, committing certain types of crimes such as aggravated felonies, multiple misdemeanors, or drug related offenses, just to name a few, may cause you to be ineligible for naturalization. Since there are many complex issues involved in determining whether your criminal background disqualifies you from naturalization, it is important to consult an attorney who is familiar with both immigration and criminal law. Some of these concerns include: when the crime took place, whether Immigration has correctly categorized the crime, whether you are eligible for a waiver, or whether the conviction was based on a plea bargain or verdict by trial.

When dealing with immigration it is very important to be honest regarding any criminal offenses. If you have ever been convicted or arrested for a crime, it must be noted on your naturalization application, regardless of whether or not you believe there is any record of it. This includes all of the following: Arrests (whether or not charged or convicted); Convictions (even if the record was cleared or expunged); Crimes you have committed for which you have not been arrested or convicted. I highly encourage you to include any evidence in your favor concerning the circumstances of your arrests, convictions or offenses that you would like Immigration to consider in your defense. Keep in mind that even if the crimes you committed were minor, your application may be denied if you do not include it on your application.

While these requirements create challenges when preparing for the naturalization process, consulting with an attorney will often save you the time, money, frustration and in some instances spare you from deportation proceedings, if in the future you are denied citizenship.

Getting Counted in the Census

Arab Americans trace their roots to 22 countries in Africa and Asia that share a common Language and heritage. There are many religions the majority are Christian but Islam is the fastest growing segment of the community. The majority of Arab Americans are native-born Americans and 82% are U.S. citizens.

The Arab American Institute (AAI) believes there are more than 4 million Arab Americans. But the Census data report for 2000 showed that of 281.4 million people in the U.S.A approximately 850,000 reported Arab. AAI explain that they were undercounted in the 1990 and 2000 censuses, because being of Arab heritage is an ethnicity so they are not counted separately in the race question for Arab.

When it comes to counting people in the U.S.A Censuses (so they can participate and share in government programs like grant funding, awards, defining the borders of election districts like for congress, state legislature or municipal council) the U.S Government pretends American Arabs do not exist, and that is exactly what is happening now in the 2010 U.S Censuses.

The Censuses form asks if you are White, Black, and African American are you American Indian or Alaskan native, and they give you a place to write in your tribe name. They also ask are you Asian, Indian, Japanese, Native Hawaiian, Chinese, Korean, Guamanian or Chamorro Filipino, Vietnamese or other and they give you space to write your race like Latino, Thai, and Cambodian. Not only that they also ask you if you are pacific islander and they give you space also to write your race like Fijian, tungan

And way in the bottom, in case they missed some one, they ask you to check here if some other race and that's where you have to write (Arab). Now the U.S Government argues that Arab are not race so they can not be counted they consider us "Caucasian" and some Arab Americans make the mistake of choosing (White). You need to make sure that you write (Arab) all the way in the bottom, and let's hope we will be counted this time as (Arab).

Samia al zier

HEROES OF HUMANITY

AACO had the honor to be part of the heroes of humanity event in November 2009 by nominating Mr. Anas Deifallah to be the hero of humanity for 2009 in Ohio.

Mr. Anas has been a trust worthy, dependable and much utilized member of our community for long time. He is the president of the Muslim family services and the founder of the widows and orphans support program.

What made him deserving of this nomination is not only his selfless jesters to better society as a whole but the fact that no one will know that he is the leading hand behind all these great programs unless you are directly working with him in these efforts. God bless him and his family. And we are hoping he will inspire others in our community to follow his steps.

SAMIA AL- ZIER
AACO Vice President



Outgoing AACO president Barakat Saleh recognizing Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy for her service to our community during the AACO general meeting.

JamI Sadoun also shown, served as the MC for the occasions.



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The 2010 AACO Community Resource List

Listings in this directory are free. Send additions or changes for the year 2005/2006 list to

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P.O. Box 115, Hilliard, OH 43026

ARAB-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

AACO: Arab-Americans of Central Ohio
P.O. Box 115, Hilliard, Ohio 43026
aaco@yahoo.com

President: Barakat Saleh 619-8885
VP Community Affairs: Marcell Anthony 221-2400

AAI: Arab American Institute

1600 K Street NW, Suite 601, Washington DC 20006
(202) 429-9210
www.aaiusa.org

AAUG: Arab-American University Graduates

P.O. Box 2436, Chicago IL 60690

ADC: American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

4201 Connecticut Ave NW #500, Washington DC 20008
(202) 244-2990
www.adc.org

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Fax (216) 688-0993
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CAIR-Ohio: Council on American-Islamic Relations

Dr. Asma Mobin-Uddin, President, 614-451-3232
Adnan Mirza, Director, 614-451-3232
1505 Bethel Rd Suite 200, Columbus, OH 43220
www.cair-ohio.com

NAAA: National Association of Arab-Americans

1212 New York Ave NW, Washington DC 20005
(202) 842-1840

NAABA: National Arab American Business Association

25480 Aurora Rd
Bedford Heights, OH 44146-1901
(440) 735-0290
(440) 735-0294
www.naaba.org

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

ALSAC: American Lebanese-Syrian Associated Charities

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
501 St. Jude Place, Memphis TN 38105
(800) USS-JUDE
www2.stjude.org

Hariri Foundation

1020 19th St NW #320, Washington DC 20036
(202) 659-9200
www.haririfoundationusa.org

The Holyland Foundation

www.hlf.org
PCRF: The Palestine Children's Relief Fund
Stephen Sosebee, President
P.O. BOX 1926
Kent OH, 44240
www.wolfenet.com/~pcrf/

LANGUAGE

To learn Arabic:

Ohio State, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages, 292-9255
Sunrise Academy, 527-0465
Islamic Center, 253-3251

To learn English:

Ohio Dominican College, International Office, 251-4645
University Baptist Church, 294-6333
Columbus Literacy Council, 275-0660
Second Languages II, 882-5454
Community Refugee & Immigration Services (CRIS), 235-5747

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Christian Churches

Byzantine Catholic: Holy Resurrection Church, 4611 Glenmawr Ave.
c/o Father I. Harrington, 761-7975
Catholic Diocese of Columbus: 228-2453
Coptic: St. Mary's Coptic Church, 200 Old Village Rd, 853-0565
Orthodox Church: St. Gregory's Syrian Orthodox
c/o 271 Brevoort Rd, 268-4186

Islamic Masjids

IFCO Cooke Road Mosque, 1156 E. Cooke Rd., 221-9449
Islamic Center, 1428 E. Broad St.: 253-3251
Masjid Al-Islam of Columbus, 1677 Oak St: 252-0338
Muhammad Mosque 43, 1204 E. Main St.: 252-2626
Omar IbnulKhattab Mosque, 580 Riverview Dr.: 262-1310
The Islamic Society of Greater Columbus (ISGC): 470-0792
Masjid Isa Ibn Mariam 1436 Indianola Ave. crossing E. 8th Ave.

Islamic School

Sunrise Academy: (Islamic/Elementary Curriculum) 527-0465

INTERNET RESOURCES

AACO E-mail List, Central Ohio's "Online Neighborhood":
AACO@yahoo.com (to send e-mail);
www.yahoo.com/group/AACO (to visit website)

Listing of Arab-American Print Media:
www.hanania.com/arabpap.htm

Online Overview of Arab World:
www.arab.net

Cafe Arabica "The Arab-American Online Community Center":
www.cafe-arabica.com

Aida Hasan's Website, with an Emphasis on Arab Culture, Cooking,
and Links to Other Useful Sites:
www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/arab_culture_and_identity

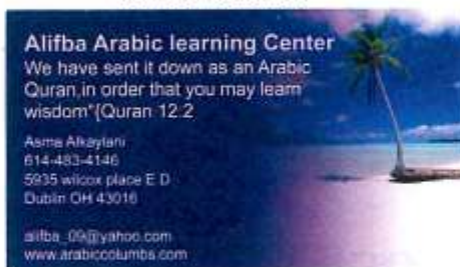


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