



**ZUROUNA**

**زورونا**

www.tucsonmedclub.org

A publication of the Tucson MED Club

Issue 53

Winter 2018



## **Wish You All The Best for the Holidays and For the New Year**

**Dear fellow members and friends of the Tucson Med Club:**

As the 2018 about to end and bring a fresh new year, it is the time of the year, where we look back at the year activities so we can see what went rights and those that went wrong so we can avoid them in the incoming year. We are continuously evaluating our activities and seeking ideas to reach out for our MED Club members and friends in southern Arizona. I am sure all of us like to project a positive role model for our children and future generations. In fact, The MED Club was created to be a viable instrument to educate our kids and the community about our roots, culture, and values. I am sure you agree with me, this gives more accurate picture about who we are than what they receive from the public media.

As you can read from Casey Kasem's article "I want my Son to be Proud" on page 4, that shucked him when his 12 year old son told him "Dad, I hate Arabs." I am sure none of us like to be in this situation and to avoid that, it is important to keep reminding ourselves and our kids that Arab-Americans played an important part in building the New World and contributed significantly to our nation in science, medicine, sports, arts, politics, business. Just look around you see many you know who are doctors, lawyers, teachers, elected officials, businessmen, poets, philosophers and entertainers. In fact, when I was a graduate student at The University of Southern California, I learned that the College of Engineering was built by a Syrian Professor from Aleppo. We need to remind ourselves and the community we live in with John F. Kennedy famous quote "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country", these words that inspired Americans of generation after generation and of all heritages were first written by the Arab American author of "The Prophet," Kahlil Gibran.

As you read the articles in this issue about the History of Arab-American Immigration to United States, Casey Kasem article, and samples of Kahlil Gibran's Quotes, you will be able to see the many outstanding contributions our people have made and continue to contribute without any hesitation. The Arab American community came to the new world to be an active partner in the growth and the prosperity of America. No one can describe the commitment of our people to contribute better than Kahlil Gibran when he wrote "I am the descendant of a people that builded Damascus and Byblos, and Tyre and Sidon and Antioch, and now

With this reminder note of who we are and where we came from, I like to urge you all to help us to continue serving our MED Club community and friends, and achieve our mission to preserve our traditions, and heritage through social events and community involvement in the spirit of friendship and love. If we do that together, I am sure our children will be proud of our values, culture and our roots.

**Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year,**

**Salim Hariri, Med Club President**



***I am the descendant of a people that builded Damascus, and Byblos, and Tyre and Sidon and Antioch, and now I am here to build with you, and with a will.***

**Kahlil Gibran**





## History of Arab-American Immigration to United States

The first generation of immigrants from the Middle East began arriving in the late 19th century. They were mostly Christians from the Greater Syria province of the Ottoman Empire, which comprised modern day Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Some came to escape religious persecution in the Ottoman Empire, but most came for economic opportunity, as, like most immigrants, they felt that the United States would offer them the opportunity to build a better life. The typical Arab immigrant of that period was young, male, single and Christian. Most were illiterate and spoke little or no English. Many planned to stay in the United States only until they had saved enough money to return home with more money and greater status. Many moved to major cities, like New York, Los Angeles, Detroit and Boston, and became peddlers. Among other things, they peddled religious items, embroidery, baked goods and confectioneries, which were often made by their wives. As it became clearer that women and a family were an economic asset, more men returned to the Middle East to marry and come back to the United States with their wives. Over time, Arab immigrants saved money and invested it in small businesses. As their financial conditions and personal lives became more stable, Arab Americans settled in cities and established communities, which included churches, clubs, societies and publications.

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By the 1920's, there were an estimated 250,000 Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians in the United States. Most were engaged in commercial activities, but some worked in the industrial plants of an emergent Detroit, as well as other cities. The community continued to advance economically, with peddlers establishing stores or small manufacturing plants, while importers imported items from the Middle East, ranging from rugs to olives.

During the First World War, immigration from the Middle East dropped, but a second wave of migration began in the 1920s, as relatives of those already living in the United States began to immigrate and, seeing the success of those living in the United States through their remittances back home, new immigrants decided to join them. The second wave of immigrants was different than the first in that it contained a significant number of Muslims.

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## History of Arab-American Immigration to United States - continue from Page 1

By the 1950s, Arab immigrants had settled in major cities across the United States. From the 1950s on, a new type of Arab immigrant began arriving – literate, qualified and bilingual. Immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s pursued white collar or professional vocations, or sought educational opportunities. This group was about 70 percent Muslim and came from across the Middle East, particularly Egypt, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. In the late 1960s, following Palestinian displacement in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, a large number of Palestinians emigrated to the United States. Given their unique circumstances, they brought with them a greater ethnic pride and political awareness that would ignite the development of an Arab American identity and spark the community's political activism in the 1970s and 1980s. Even for some second- and third-generation Arab Americans, who had few remaining attachments to the Middle East and barely spoke Arabic, the ethnic and political consciousness of the new arrivals helped generate a greater awareness of their Arab heritage.

The greater ethnic and political consciousness of the late 1960s and early 1970s became institutionalized in the 1970s and 1980s with the creation of several Arab American organizations, including the Arab American University Graduates, the National Arab American Association, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the Arab American Institute, as well as a number of other local, professional and family organizations. These organizations would consolidate and transmit Arab American identity for future generations, promote an accurate and positive image of Arab Americans and protect the rights of Arab Americans. These functions became increasingly necessary, as events in the Middle East, from the oil embargo to hijackings, combined with well organized media campaigns to link Arab Americans with terrorism, made Arabs and Arab Americans increasingly stereotyped and suspect to many Americans.

These functions grew in importance in the 2000s, following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. In the aftermath of that event, Arab Americans were subjected to hate crimes, racial profiling and discrimination. In responding to these circumstances, in the 2000s, Arab Americans became a leading voice in the civil rights community of the United States. They have also become a major force in helping to bridge the chasm of misunderstanding that separates many Arabs and Americans. In pursuing these roles as a community and in contributing to the United States in a myriad of other ways as individual citizens, Arab Americans have become a vital and valuable thread in the beautiful tapestry that is America.

*NOTE: Much of the information from this section is drawn from, and can be found in, the Arab American Almanac*

# I want my Son to be Proud

## Casey kasem

When he was 12, my son, Mike, walked into our living room and said to me, "Dad, I hate Arabs."

I was shocked. My parents' background is Lebanese. I thought I'd taught Mike to be proud of his Arab heritage. Of course, like most kids born here, he thought of himself as American, period.

I asked why he hated Arabs. Mike said it was because of what he saw in films and on TV.

As a student at Detroit's Wayne State University, I'd learned how media stereotypes can create public attitudes. But that lesson only hit me emotionally when I saw how it had affected my son's self-image. I became more aware of how traditional Arab stereotypes get full play: from Rudolph Valentino's 1921 portrayal of *The Sheik* (with its memorable line, "When an Arab sees a woman he wants, he takes her"); to bad Arabs with big swords pursuing everyone across the desert, from The Three Stooges and Hope & Crosby to Beatty & Hoffman; all the way to recent films, where Arabs appear only as terrorists. At the same time, the *positive* contributions of Arabs throughout history -- and of the Arab-American community -- are skipped over as if they didn't exist.

That imbalance creates racism.

Americans with Arab heritage who have contributed to our nation include innovators in science and medicine like Dr. Michael DeBakey, the pioneer heart surgeon, and Prof. Elias Corey, winner of the 1990 Nobel Prize for chemistry; entertainers like Paula Abdul and Paul Anka; political figures like John Sununu, President Bush's former chief of staff, George Mitchell, the Senate Majority Leader, and Donna Shalala, President Clinton's Secretary of Health and Human Services; and sports figures like Doug Flutie, the 1984 Heisman Trophy winner, and Rony Seikaly, the pro basketball star.

Recently, I asked prominent Americans of Arab descent how they had dealt with racism. The answers ranged from confronting it head-on to staying silent. But, in every case, they rose above it.

**James Abourezk**, a former Senator who today heads the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), confronted the racism. Abourezk, whose parents were Lebanese, was called a "damn Jew" by some people in his hometown of Wood, S.D., who knew nothing about Arabs or Lebanese.

Arab-bashing ballooned in the '70s. After the Abscam scandal, where FBI agents posed as oil sheiks to "sting" law-breaking members of Congress, outraged Arab-Americans asked for Abourezk's help. Turning down another term as Senator, he founded the ADC in 1980. The organization, which calls attention to instances of bias, today has 30,000 members in more than 70 cities. Abourezk, who once was nicknamed the "Syrian Sioux," also defends the rights of Native Americans.

"You look at the popular media," he says, "and you don't find any Arab or Arab-American portrayed in a positive light. The last one was Danny Thomas in his TV shows [in the '50s and '60s], and then they were called Lebanese. I think the only movie where I've seen a positive Arab was Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood*. But 99.95 percent of all portrayals of Arabs are vicious. *That's* why Arab-Americans are invisible.

"We've found in ADC that some Arab-Americans have changed their names to make them sound more Anglo, because they just don't want to get in trouble," he adds. For example, F. Murray Abraham - the American born, Oscar-winning actor (*Amadeus*) - uses an initial because, as he told one reporter, his Syrian name, Fahrid, "would typecast me as a sour Arab out to kill everyone."

## I want my Son to be Proud - Continue from Page 4

**Joseph Jacobs** grew up in Brooklyn, where the goal was to blend in as Americans. He worried less about taunts like "camel jockey" and more about whether his mother spoke Arabic in front of his friends. Today, he says he feels lucky to have his heritage: "The ethics, pride and sense of honor I learned in my ethnic community were important contributors to my business career."

Businessmen and intellectuals were Jacobs' role models. He recalls that many uneducated immigrants like his dad made great successes of themselves: "What business are you in?" was a question I invariably heard asked when a Lebanese came to visit us.

Jacobs became a professor of chemical engineering, but his mother insisted he'd never be a success until he went into business for himself. So, in 1947, he started a one-man consulting firm. Today, Jacobs Engineering Group, based in Pasadena, is one of America's largest professional service firms - a billion-dollar international corporation.

Any racism he experienced as a youth, Jacobs says, gave him "additional incentive" to *accomplish* something and get the respect of your peers." He adds, "Being accepted and respected in the American culture was a powerful motivator for me."

**Candice Lightner's** Lebanese-American mother was taught to "mainstream" and wouldn't teach her daughter to speak Arabic. But there was still Arabic culture at home. Lightner first experienced the pain of discrimination at 13, when a school friend's parents refused to let her visit Lightner because she was Lebanese. "I remember telling my parents and being very hurt," she says.

In 1980, after losing her daughter in a car accident caused by a drunk driver, Lightner founded MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), lobbying across the nation for tougher laws. Today -- 2000 new laws later -- "drunk driving is no longer socially acceptable," she says.

"The press would never *print* that I was an Arab-American," she asserts. "So, when I started doing live media, I'd bring it up." When Lightner protested the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, her boyfriend called her "anti-Semitic." The relationship ended. Her non-Arab father knew better. "Honey, you *are* a Semite," he said. "That's the way I was raised," says Lightner. "We [Arabs and Jews] are *all* Semites."

Prejudice may have held back **Fawaz "Tony" Ismail's** dream of a pro football career. As a high school student in Texas, the Palestinian-American got good grades and excelled in soccer, track and weight-lifting. But, for three seasons, a new coaching staff didn't start him in a football game. "I felt I was being discriminated against because my name was different," he says.

In 1985, Ismail joined his father, selling flags on the road. Today, his Virginia-based Alamo Flag Co. is the largest retailer of flags and flag-related items in the U.S. Ismail has sold Swedish flags in Minnesota, Italian and Irish flags in New York, and flags to citizens whose ancestries reach around the globe. Last September, he supplied the Palestinian flags and lapel pins for the historic signing of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord at the White House.

**Kathy Najimy** grew up in San Diego proud of *her* heritage. The actress says she thought being Lebanese "was the coolest thing to be."

One of her feminist role models was Marlo Thomas, Danny's daughter and star of *That Girl* on TV (1966-71). "She was the first actress in [television] history whose character was single, *independent*, had a job and didn't live with her parents!" says Najimy.

As an aspiring actress who wasn't built like a "Barbie doll," Najimy succeeded through comedy. She wrote and co-starred in a feminist cabaret it, *The Kathy & Mo Show*. She played a bubbly nun in the popular film *Sister Act* and its recent sequel.



## I want my Son to be Proud - Continue from Page 5

While she didn't suffer racism as a child, Najimy ran into bigotry in the late 1970s, when anti-Iranian sentiment swept the country. Technically, Iranians aren't Arabs, but it made no difference. Angered by the intellectual stupidity expressed in anti-Iranian bumper stickers, Najimy went around ripping them off cars.

People "need to have...someone they can feel *better* than - or hate," Najimy says. It's "sad," she adds, "because it comes from wanting to belong, to feel like part of a group."

The actress believes that all ethnic groups benefit from knowing their own heritage: "Identifying yourself as something strong and positive helps you to overcome the things that you're going to meet along the way as a woman."

**Farouk El-Baz** identified himself as a conservative Muslim raised in Cairo when he came to the United States in 1960 to earn a Ph.D. in geology. He soon learned that the beliefs of Egyptians about Americans were as incorrect as those of Americans about Arabs. "Americans did not really know about the Arab world - except for what was presented in the media, especially the movies," he recalls.

His accent was no hindrance when he joined America's space program in 1967. "In social settings, it even served as an icebreaker," he says. El-Baz worked on Apollo missions 8 through 17, helping to select landing sites, training astronauts in visual observations and photography, and naming features of the moon. He pioneered the use of space photography to locate ground-water and petroleum in the Earth's deserts. Today he directs Boston University's Center for Remote Sensing.

In 1971, El-Baz was interviewed for a TV special. Rick Berman, the sound man, was so impressed that in 1989, as executive producer of TV's *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, he named a shuttle craft *El-Baz* in the scientist's honor.

Arab-Americans are more visible today than when he was starting out, El-Baz says, but they still experience racism. "Racism originates from fear of the unknown or lack of knowledge," he says, adding that this is "usually alleviated by the spread of information on the Arab culture and its diversity."

Information is **Helen Thomas'** life. She fell in love with journalism in high school and has pursued it ever since.

A 50-year veteran with UPI, Thomas has covered eight Presidents and was the first woman admitted to Washington's Gridiron Club for journalists (1975) - as well as its first woman president (1992). She alternates with the AP reporter in opening Presidential news conferences and closes them with the words, "Thank you, Mr. President."

Thomas, whose parents were Lebanese, was raised in an ethnically mixed neighborhood in Detroit and doesn't recall feeling set apart from others. Her parents were determined to be American, says Thomas. They taught her "a sense of justice, love of freedom, democracy...really cherishing and appreciating what this country had given them and their children."

Thomas rejects labels and hyphens. "I think everybody who was born here or becomes a naturalized citizen is an American, period," she says. "You shouldn't have to have a hyphen between your nationality and your ethnic background or your religion or anything else." To improve race relations today, Thomas says she would teach tolerance in the schools, from kindergarten on.

In the years since my son said he hated Arabs, I've

confronted Arab defamation in our society by highlighting positive contributions made by Arab-Americans. "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Those sentiments, spoken by President Kennedy, were expressed earlier by, among others, an Arab-American philosopher and poet -- Kahlil Gibran, author of *The Prophet*. He was proud of his Arab heritage *and* a champion of U.S. citizenship. Arab-Americans have reflected that sentiment ever since they first arrived, more than 100 years ago.

*This article was prepared with the help of Jay Goldsworthy, a colleague of Casey Kasem. It first appeared in Parade magazine and is reprinted in The Arab American Dialogue with the permission of Mr. Kasem.*



# Kahlil Gibran — Quotes

\* “You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts.”

— **Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet**

\* “If you love somebody, let them go, for if they return, they were always yours. If they don't, they never were.”

— **Kahlil Gibran**

\* “Let there be spaces in your togetherness, And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together, yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart, And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.”

— **Khalil Gibran, The Prophet**

\* “Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”

— **Kahlil Gibran**

\* “One day you will ask me which is more important? My life or yours? I will say mine and you will walk away not knowing that you are my life.”

— **Khalil Gibran**

\* “When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.”

— **Kahlil Gibran**

\* “I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet strange, I am ungrateful to these teachers.”

— **Kahlil Gibran**

“Some of you say, “Joy is greater than sorrow,” and others say, “Nay, sorrow is the greater.” But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.”

— **Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet**

\* “Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution.”

— **Kahlil Gibran**

# A PEEK AT MED CLUB ACTIVITIES IN 2018

The Tucson MED Club Invites You:



**BINGO KARAOKE**

**Date:** Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm  
**Location:** ZA'ATAR Mediterranean Restaurant  
 2310 N. Country Club Rd, Tucson AZ 85716  
 Enjoy Middle Eastern Food Dinner  
 (Cost as in Menu)  
**Bingo Card: 1 Card for \$5 or 5 for \$20**

For more information, please call/text:  
 Sonia Hariri at (520) 977-7936 or  
 by email at hariri21@gmail.com  
 Lydia Sahyouni: 520-370-2218 or  
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TUCSON MED CLUB INVITE YOU TO A FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Starts 7 pm

May 19 2018

Fun Dance

DJ Music

**KARAOKE NIGHT**

Mixed Grill or Vegetarian Dinner  
 Adult: \$15, Kids: \$8 (12 or less)  
**Zaatar Restaurant**  
 2310 N. Country Club Road

RSVP to by Call/text or email to  
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 Lydia Sahyouni: 520-370-2218 or  
 larmaleh@gmail.com

The TUCSON MED CLUB INVITE YOU TO

**Family FUN NIGHT**



**Date:** Saturday August 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm  
**Location:** ZA'ATAR Mediterranean Restaurant  
 2310 N. Country Club Rd, Tucson AZ 85716  
**Middle Eastern Food Dinner (Buffet)**  
 Adult: \$15, Kids: \$8 (12 or less)  
 For reservation, please Call/text

Sonia Hariri at (520) 977-7936 or by email at  
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 Lydia Sahyouni: (520) 370-2218 or  
 By email at larmaleh@gmail.com



# Upcoming Event

**THE TUCSON MED CLUB**  
PRESENTS  
**2019**  
**NEW YEARS PARTY**

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# PEEK AT Karaoke & Bingo Night at Zaatar Restaurant









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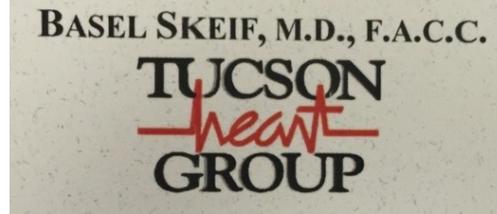
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Kahlil Gibran

*"You should  
be proud of  
being an  
American,  
but you  
should also  
be proud  
that your  
fathers and  
mothers  
came from  
a land upon  
which God  
laid His  
gracious  
hand and  
raised His  
messengers."*

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