Letter from the President

In spite of the still cold and rainy weather, yet spring is almost in the air for it coincides with Mother’s Day which are both celebrated on March 21st. This makes March a joyful month.

MOTHER what a sweet word, the first word that a child says. On this occasion I would like to wish you all a Happy Mother’s Day and share with you this lovely passage.

Your Mother

"Is always with you. She is the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street. She’s the smell of certain foods you remember, flowers you pick and the fragrance of life itself. She is the cool hand on your brow when you’re not feeling well. She’s your breath in the air on a cold winter’s day. She is the sound of rain that lulls you to sleep, the colors of a rainbow; she is Christmas morning. Your Mother lives inside your laughter. She’s the place you came from, your first home and she’s the map you follow with every step you take. She’s your first love, your first friend, even your first enemy, but nothing on earth, can separate you. Not time, not space, not even death.”

International Women’s Day is also celebrated on March 8 of every year. In different regions the focus of the celebrations ranges from general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women to a celebration for women’s economic, political and social achievements.

Lamia Kawar
February Lecture

Mr. Najib Saab was our speaker for the month of February. He is an architect, publisher and writer. He is Secretary General of Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) and Editor-in-Chief of "Al-Bi'a watanmiah" (Environment and Development) Magazine on sustainable development. In 2011, Mr. Saab was the recipient of the Sheikh Zayed International Prize for environment. Mr. Saab is the Editor of the series of annual reports published by AFED on (1) Water sustainable Management of a Scarce Resource, (2) Impact of Climate Change on Arab Countries, (3) Green Economy in a Changing Arab World, (4) Sustainable Energy and Food Security.

For the last decade, rapidly growing population, rural-urban migration, and perverse subsidies have contributed to a rising demand for energy. Water, food and other finite resources on the Arab region. Mr. Saab, mentioned that 70% of water (rain) goes as waste (there are no dams, reservoirs). The Arab countries must make rules and regulations and to see that they are implemented, to regulate the consumption of water.

Mr. Saab emphasized that the changing consumption habits is an indispensable tool for balanced resource (water, food, electricity) management and protection of the environment. This would include a combination of government policies and business strategies, encouragement of individual and society actions, and involvement of civil society and academia, together with media and advertising. The role of women is crucial in this process, mainly in her capacity as house manager and mother.

So the individuals need to change their consumption habits and lifestyles towards more sustainable behavior.

Mr. Najib Saab with the executive board
February Trip

Twenty Six ladies of the Women’s League and their friends were courageous enough to go on a trip to Saida (although hearing of a coming of a snowy storm). On Wednesday, February 21, we took a small bus, had our breakfast at Pain d’Or in Khaldeh, and then proceeded to Saida, first to visit “Ahlouna” Charitable Society, whose mission it to contribute to the development of citizens on a social level, especially the disadvantaged. They work to indicate poverty and empower individuals through diverse fields of education and persona; development. Ahlouna Charitable Society receives funds from National and International Donors, and rely largely on its volunteers. We were welcomed by Mrs. Sahar Jbelly (President) and were given and tour around the offices, the kitchen where some workers were preparing foods and sweets for catering. Many of the ladies bought from the sweets and jams etc. The Women’s League, then donated a small sum of $300 as a contribution to this Society.

Then we made a tour in the old souks where we visited the “Debbaneh Palace” Museum, which was built in 1721 by Ali Agha Hammoud, and in 1800 it was acquired by Mr. Joseph Debbaneh and his family to be used as their residence until 1978 (when it was occupied by refugees until 1983). In the year 2000, The Debbaneh Foundation undertook basic restoration works, and then it was opened in 2001 as a Museum. This 18th Century Palace depicts all the elements of an Arab/Ottoman Dar with a main Courtyard.

After that by walking in the old Souks of Saida, we reached Dar of Ali Hammoud (built in 1730), then in mid 19th Century, became a Makkased School in the name of (Aisha Um El Mou’inin) which was also occupied by refugees during the war. In 1997, the Makassed Association and Hariri Foundation signed an Agreement to restore it, and today this Foundation signed an Agreement with the Lebanese American University (LAU) to make this Palace into “Outreach Leadership Academy” (it consists of 14 rooms, Academy and a huge outer space Hall for lectures.

Our next stop was at “Verre Souflé” (Blown Glass) Factory in Sarafand, where many ladies bought from the colored glass.

Our last stop was at “عربيس البحر في خيبران” which is a fish restaurant where we had a generous delicious lunch of mezzeh and fried fish with a dessert of fruits and jam.

We had a splendid day, for in spite of the expected storm, it was a sunny day, for which we thank our Trip Chairperson, Mrs, Zeina Arab, who is an excellent organizer.
With deep sorrow, we announce the passing away of Dr. Khalil Jirji Maasri (Member of the Royal Academy of Veterinary Surgery in Britain). Dr. Maasri is the late husband of Mrs. Lilo Maasri (a previous President of the Women’s League (1992-1995). Our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Lilo and her five sons.

Mrs. Margorie Saad (an Ex-President of the Women’s League (1973-1975 & 1979-1981) has passed away in the United States. Our love goes to her daughter Mrs. Rosanne Khalaf.

The Mother’s Day Lunch will be held on March 11, 2015 at “L’Eau de Vie” Restaurant, at the Roof of Phoenicia Hotel at 1.00 p.m. Tickets are available with all Board Members for $80. Hope to see all the members and their friends at the Lunch.

Our April General Meeting will be held on April 8 instead of April 6, 2015. For April 6, will be Catholic Easter Monday and AUB will be closed then.

Leila Zacca Alameddine
Editor of the Bulletin