



Best wishes for a happy Saint Valentine's Day!



February 2012

Women's League Bulletin

www.aub.edu.lb/women_league

WL Mission Statement

The WL is an organization of women from different nationalities. Its purpose is to promote a broad acquaintance, to socialize, learn and support one another, and establish social network. Its wish is to secure a yearly scholarship fund for a disabled student.

The Fifth Arab Women's Forum

As the International Women's Day is approaching, a forum for the Arab woman was organized at the Four Seasons Hotel on Wednesday and Thursday 1 and 2 February 2012 with the main theme "Women and the Arab Spring." There were around 400 participants from 21 countries and I was invited to attend it.

The forum was to analyze and discuss leading political and social issues of the hour and see if this would lead to more effective political participation for women. There were several panel discussions among the participants with focus on the role of women in the Arab spring. The following issues were discussed.

What are the benefits the Arab Woman has realized in the Arab spring?

What is the role the Arab woman should play?

Will the Arab woman be able to keep her position or would she lose it to the new players?

All the speakers agreed that it's our right to be partners in making the new world and to help in bringing around the needed changes. In addition, they want for their daughters a better future where they can live in a stable and secure world with justice and freedom prevailing, but we still have a long way to go.

One of the speakers, Mr. Wael Abou Faour, Minister of Social Affairs, wished that the Arab spring would not turn to be an Arab autumn for women. He mentioned that what we need is a complete change of mind. The woman is a partner in the revolutions so she should be as well a partner in the benefits. Mr. Abou Faour said that he wishes the Arab woman to be victorious at the end.

The conclusion of the forum was that women paid the price as a result of the revolutions because they lost many of their rights and privileges especially due to the quota system and this due to the conservative approach of the new rulers.

Salwa Damiani

President

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Women's League Executive Board's Visit to Lebanon's First Lady

At 11:00 o'clock on Wednesday 11 January 2012, the following members of the executive board of the Women's League Salwa Damiani, Leila Alamaddine, Suad Khoury, Arminee Choukassizian, Zeina Arab, Rihab Ouri, Salwa Maasri, and Lilo Maasri visited Lebanon's First Lady Mrs. Wafa Suleiman in Baabda Palace.

Each board member spoke briefly about what her post on the executive board of the Women's League involved. Mrs. Suleiman was cordial and showed interest in the activities of the Women's League. The visit lasted for 30 minutes.

No pictures of the visit were taken because the ladies were told that the taking of pictures in the palace is prohibited.

A.C.

Mohamed Elsarji, Speaker for January General Meeting

Mohamed Elsarji, a film director and President of the Lebanese Union of Professional Divers, was the guest speaker at the Women's League general meeting at West Hall on AUB campus on the 9th of January 2012. Elsarji made a brief introduction about the marine world which he called "the unknown and the neglected half of the country which contains numerous natural and cultural resources ranging from fresh water springs to thermal vents to sunken cities like Sidon, Yarmouta, and Tyre." He then showed a film called "Jabal Saida". This 15 minutes long documentary deals with the issue of the mountain of garbage which is located on the southern coast of the city and causes major pollution to the Mediterranean Sea. The film is narrated by a 10-year old local girl who takes the audience through the painful voyage of simple household garbage from local homes to the mountain and from the mountain into the sea. The film also shows the mountain on fire for a great length of time thus polluting the city and its inhabitants with poisonous and deadly fumes. A long discussion followed the showing of the film, and most of the questions were related to proper environmental solutions to the mountain and its contents. Mohamed Elsarji gave a detailed description of the project being carried out right now and also explained NGO Bahr Loubnan's campaign put an end to this mountain by recycling its contents and converting it into a national park called "Rafik Hariri National Park", but the current project is being carried out by Saida Municipality which seeks to make a breakwater wall outside the mountain after recycling the contents of the mountain". So all the dirt and "sand" will be dumped into the sea in order to reclaim new land for the city of Saida.

**Rihab Ouri
Program Chairperson**



Mr. Elsarji delivering his address to the Women's League

Women's League Trip for January

The January trip organized by the Women's League took place on Wednesday 18 January 2012 and was decided to be along the coast line because of the cold and rainy weather which was pretty severe this winter. After a stop for breakfast at Paul's Restaurant in Gemayzeh, we proceeded to visit first the Crypt, which is the archeological museum under the Greek Orthodox St. George's Cathedral in Place de l'Etoile in downtown Beirut.

Due to the Lebanese war between 1975 and 1990, and the partial destruction of the Cathedral, and before its reconstruction in the mid nineties, excavations were carried out under the Cathedral to find remnants of different previous periods, starting with the Hellenic, the Roman, the Byzantine, the Medieval, Mamluk and Ottoman Periods, like churches, old palaces, burial places and objects dating to these periods. We also visited the Cathedral itself and the small church near the Cathedral i.e Al-Nourieh, which was completely destroyed and rebuilt again.

The next stop was the visit to Al-Amin Mosque, a new mosque erected at the beginning of the century by the late Prime Minister Sheikh Rafic Hariri but to be inaugurated after his death by his son Prime Minister Sheikh Saad.

Then we headed north on the coastline passing Chekka to arrive at Saydet el-Nourieh Convent in the town of Hamat. First we visited the new Convent which dates back to the Seventeenth Century and then we went down 200 steps to visit the original small cave which dates back to the 4th century. The story goes that one winter night on a very stormy sea two sailors found themselves in peril. They began praying, and the Virgin Mary appeared to them as a light and guided them gently to the shore of Theoprosopon near Chekka. The grateful sailors carved a cave in the cliff and dedicated it to the Virgin, and called the shrine, Our Lady of Light. The shrine is a popular Christian pilgrimage site in Lebanon, and tourists and pilgrims alike enjoy the beautiful view of the bay from atop historic Cape Theoprosopon.

After visiting the cave and the convent we all enjoyed the extremely beautiful scenery. We headed back to Tabarja to enjoy a very delicious fish lunch at Le Gallet Restaurant to arrive Beirut at 6.00.

Lamia Kawar



Two pictures from the trip of Wednesday 18 January 2012

News from members

2012 marks the hundredth anniversary of the publication *The Book of Khalid* by Ameen Rihani, the first novel in English by a Lebanese writer. To mark the event a collection of essays entitled *100 Years of Selected Writings on Ameen Rihani's The Book of Khalid* was published in the United States and included over thirty essays contributed by researchers. "Rihani and Carlyle: The Quest for a Better Self" by Arminée Choukassizian was also included.

Lebanese Council of Women Organize Lunch at the Bain Militaire

At 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday 1 February 2012 the Lebanese Council of Women held a lunch at the Bain Militaire which was attended by several members of the Women's League. During the event Her Excellency former Minister Laila Solh Hamadeh was decorated with the Légion d'Honneur medal granted to her by President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Saturday 18 February 2012: American Women's Club Lunch at the Maharaja Restaurant, (located in Sporting Beach)

Price per ticket: \$60, including authentic Indian cuisine, open beer and wine.

There will be gifts and DJ Rafi will be entertaining.

A date to look forward to in March: Mother's Day Lunch

Two jokes to share

A man was telling his friends, "when my wife is infuriated, she starts shouting at me, my children and even at our dogs and nobody dares answer her."

One of his friends asked, "and when you are angry what do you do? The man replied, "I also shout at the windows and doors of the house and none dares to answer back."

Husband throwing darts at his wife's photo.

Not a single one hitting the target . . . from another room wife called the husband, "Honey, what are you doing?"

Husband: "Missing you.!"