



May 2010

Women's League Bulletin

Website: www.aub.edu.lb/women_league

“It is not important how old you are; it is how you feel, how you think, and what you do that is important.”

Catherine Pulsifer

Letter from the president: Leila Ghantous

It was a great pleasure for all Women's League members to celebrate last year the 90th anniversary of the League.

In point of fact, we are approaching the centennial of the League. Now, we are starting the last decade of a century long effort to serve the community in Lebanon. Yet, we still have much to do in the coming years, and I am confident that with the team dedication of the members we can achieve a great deal and meet the challenges lying ahead. We must make the coming year full of activities and events that display the important role of the League in social life and make us really proud to reach the centennial. We must encourage new members to join and bring new ideas for realizing our objectives. By this only we can look back to great efforts of our predecessors and ensure the continuity of the League.

Let me say that we are most grateful to the American University of Beirut for harboring the League making it a significant pillar and in enhancing the role of women in social and cultural activities. Many thanks to Mrs. Kathy Dorman for encouraging the League by her presence at our activities and for receiving the League at its end-year program at Marquand House.

Last but not least, on behalf of the members of the Women's League, I would like to congratulate all the Executive Board for their efforts and cooperation in making the League a success story.

God bless you all.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

End of year party

The Spanish Embassy is sponsoring The Women's League end-year program on Monday, 7 June 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at Marquand House, the residence of the President of the American University of Beirut, A.U.B. campus. Hope to see you all there.

May Trip

There will be a trip to Tyre on May Wednesday The 19th.

Message addressed to the WL members by WCI Aida Makdisi Armaly which has been sent lately from Washington DC

President Leila Gbantous of the Beirut Women's League is very sorry that she is unable to attend the conference and has asked me to be their representative. I shall talk briefly about the Women's League and their activities and for those who are interested to know more about the League, there is some information here printed out, from their bulletin and of course, you can go to their website.

The Women's League was founded in 1919, by a group of 8 women from the American University of Beirut. Since then, every year on the first Monday of November, the League celebrates their Founder's Day. The League's initial concern was to provide a network for women in Beirut to get together and discuss common concerns. Early on, they became actively involved in providing social services, a pioneering work for a maternity center, and a mother's club to educate families about hygiene and childcare. As it progressed the League focused on socializing activities and international relations while retaining their initial orientation, for example, helping financially needy handicapped students at the American University of Beirut.

The objective of the League was and still is to promote acquaintance among women of all nationalities and to maintain a forum with leaders in matters of public importance, civil interest, educational concerns and cultural interest.

The League meets every month, from October to June, with a variety of interesting activities. This began with a program on health issues in Lebanon. I was lucky to have been there and invited to attend the meeting, and at the end they asked me to speak about the W.C.I. In November the executive committee had a courtesy tea with Mrs. Suleiman, wife of the President of Lebanon, at her residence. In December / January they have a series of holiday celebrations, which includes selected speakers. In March they always hold a large celebration for Mothers day. In April there were two programs, a talk on the 200th year anniversary of Frederic Chopin, and they held a cultural day trip to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, with its beautiful landscapes as well as the complex of roman ruins known as "Baalbek". In May H.E. Mrs. Eva Maria Ziegler, the Ambassador of Austria in Lebanon, will address the members with " a Fresh view of Austria" accompanied with Austrian music. In June they end their year with a musical dance program sponsored by the Embassy of Spain.

As Leila Gbantous has written,

"The League has grown up into an active organization with rather limited number of members and financial resources, but with diversified outlook towards its main objective. ... 'Only through the power of association, social objectives could be achieved.'"

The League has really survived by this motto.]

April Birthday

Members born in May

Dina El – Solh 03/5
Lily Seyouri 05/5
Afaf Rashed 30/5

Members born in June

Hasna Barakat 05/6
Shadia Refae 30/6
Rajiha Saghir 10/6
Thana'a El – Turk 24/6



Emily Nasrallah and her noble motives towards AUB

Emily Nasrallah, maiden name "Abi Rashed" was born July 6, 1931 in Kfeir village, South Lebanon. She graduated from AUB in 1958 with a B. A. degree in Education. Novelist, journalist, freelance writer, teacher, lecturer, women's rights activist, are some of the activities she has successfully engaged in. Her first novel, *Birds of September*, was published in 1962, and won her, three Arabic literary prizes. She participated in the 1988 International Olympics Authors Festival in Calgary (Canada), and was a panelist and guest reader at the 1989 PEN International Congress in Toronto and Montreal. She has participated as panelist and lecturer in conferences in Germany, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Egypt and USA.

Following is her speech that she delivered when she was honored by AUB:

"كلمة أقيمت في احتفال أقامته جمعية متخرجي الجامعة الأميركية لتكريم أدباء من خريجها"

أن تكرم الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت تلك الفتاة التي كان يجب أن تنتهي دراستها في الصف الابتدائي الثالث بحسب تقاليد محيطها وزمانها، لأمر يفوق كل التوقعات... وأن تكرم هذه الجامعة الفتاة التي كتبوا في هويتها، ومنذ اللحظة الأولى لولادتها، كلمة "أمية" لأمر لا نصدقه في الحاضر؛ إنما كان في الماضي، حقيقة ملازمة لوجود المرأة ومحدودية طموحها.

أما أن نتذكر هذه الجامعة العريقة، والتي كان وجودها فعل تحوّل وتغيير، لا في وطننا وحسب، بل وفي الشرق العربي قاطبة... أن نتذكر وتكرم أدباء ومؤلفين من خريجها، لهو درس جديد، فاتنا حفظه في ما حفظنا عنها من دروس وحكم.

أيها الحفل الكريم:

سيدي رئيس الجامعة الدكتور بيتر دورمان،
سعادة السفير خليل مكاوي، رئيس الجمعية العالمية لخريجي الجامعة الأميركية ،
الأستاذة روزان خلف والهيئة التي قامت بتنظيم هذه المناسبة الفريدة.
أرجو أن تتقبلوا شكري، وإقراري بفضلكم، إذ قلّدتوني جميلاً لن أنساه عمري...
وأود أن أعتقد بأن كل حرف كتبته في خلال مسيرتي الأدبية، كان من محاولات التجاوز،
والتأكيد بأنني حفظت بعض ما غرسته ال [AUB] في فكري وكياني.

كذلك تغمرني السعادة والغبطة كلما تذكرت أن أفراداً من عائلتي، أولادي، مستمرون في السير على خطى الجامعة، إن من جهة الإنتماء إلى هيئتها التعليمية والطبية، أو إنتظام أولادهم، حفدائي، في صفوف طلابها.

عاشت الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت، عاش القيمون عليها.

Women's League April Trip

On a beautiful spring morning, the bus took off along the old Damascus road heading to the Bekaa valley where our first stop took us to Chtoura, famous for its 'arouss labneh' which was a special treat (especially for those of us reconciled to eating nonfat labneh at home).

Riyak was next on our agenda where we passed by the military airport before our visit to the deserted old train station, many fond memories were recalled and hopes were renewed for restoring the train line that used to connect Lebanon to Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and beyond.

On our way to Niha, we passed by lush green grass where sheep were grazing, and behind them stood majestic mountains capped by a dusting of snow signaling the end of winter. We visited the Old Roman Temple of Niha where we climbed the ancient steps leading to the top of the temple and admired the solid construction of the gigantic stones. As we stepped back down we enjoyed the sound of the wind rustling through the trees in the background. We were told that concerts and various exhibitions were held at the temple during the summer.

The village of Terbel took us back to yester year with our visit to a typical 200 year old village mud house which was furnished in typical 19th century style; folded mattresses in one corner of the room, straw mats, stone and metal kitchen tools, and some pottery. There were several 'cubby holes' built into the walls for displaying and storing items. We learned that even now, one third of the world's population continues to live in mud houses. Their simple design is being revived due to their efficient insulation properties: they stay warm during the winter, and cool during the summer.

For lunch, we had the usual mezza and mashawi served by volunteers at Arc en Ciel, an NGO that takes care of mentally and physically challenged children. .

Our last stop was in Taa'nayel, a beautiful dairy farm with a small store where some of the ladies couldn't resist shopping. While there, our day was capped by a walk through the woods leading to the scenic Taanayel Lake.

Randa Theodory

A Word from the editor

Farewell is knocking the doors on the bulletin for the year 2009- 2010. This is only to say that we have much to look forward to in the year 2010- 2011. It has been a pleasure to write about the entertaining trips we took together, the special celebrations (Christmas and mother's day), and the informative lectures we attended.

I feel compelled to mention that the general meeting that took place was very constructive and held in a highly civilized manner. I must also note that the board members work very hard and cooperate in order to achieve long and short term goals. I am proud to belong to the Women's League crowd. Until the coming October... Happy thoughts everyone!

Editor of the Bulletin and Liaison
Rihab Ouri