

Winter 2005

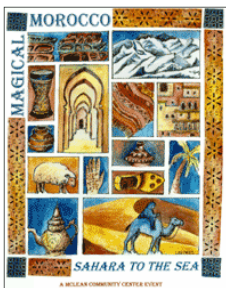
Friends of Morocco

اصدقاء المغرب

www.friendsofmorocco.org

Festival "Magical Morocco: Sahara to the Sea" in Washington, DC Suburb Draws Thousands of Visitors

By Elizabeth Kelleher and Tim Resch, FOM President



A small patch of land outside Washington at the McLean (Virginia) Community Center was turned for a day into a Moroccan *souk*, or marketplace, as vendors hawked brightly colored Moroccan clothing, rugs, pottery, brass, jewelry, tile and ceramics and a host of musicians performed.

The October 2 day-long cultural festival was a collaboration of the Washington Moroccan Club, Friends of Morocco, the Community Center and the Moroccan community in the Washington, DC area. The festival had 20 exhibitors, 6 food vendors, two stages with continuous presentations and roaming performers.

At the entrance was the traditional offering of milk and dates which symbolize the legendary hospitality of the Moroccans. In a posthumous homage, the lobby and hallway of the Community Center were decorated with sculptures and painting by Nadia Haddou. Haddou was a prize winner of the National School of Beaux Arts of

Casablanca and had recently immigrated to the United States of America before her death during this year, following a long disease. Inside the Center was a children's crafts area where they could make a Fez hat, weave a small carpet, make a necklace and color Moroccan scenes and the Community Stage for demonstrations and films. Most of the action, however, was on the Community Center grounds.

Kader Rhanime, who planned the entertainment for the event, said, "A *souk* is not a marketplace literally, but a trading grounds – a cluttered place, full of yelling and shouting." He said, in Morocco, it might be a place where even stories or poems are traded.

The scene near Washington was lively. More than 3,000 visitors came throughout the day to hear lively singing and thumping music, enjoy savory kabobs and couscous, buy vendors' goods and even see a camel up close.

"In Morocco, there is music at the *souk*, but not this loud!" laughed Amina Elaissami, FOM member and a former employee of the Moroccan Embassy in Washington who was there to sell imported wares – tagines, vessels to cook a dish of the same name over an open fire; pottery; colored-glass lanterns; and intricately decorated wooden chests. Other vendors sold bright tunics and jackets, gold coin belts favored by belly dancers, rugs and painted furniture.

At the Community Stage, Fatma Mbarek, the mother of FOM members Martha Dye and Driss Benmhend, demonstrated rug making, and FOM member Russ Pickering, an expert in Moroccan textiles, described the long tradition and diversity of weaving in Morocco. The FOM film by Dan Cahill, *Bridges between Cultures* and the FOM film *Letter from Morocco* by Bev Seckinger, were each shown three times during the festival. *Bridges between Cultures* quotes Morocco's King Mohammed VI as saying his country is "a buffer zone, a melting pot." He said, "To the people of the West, Morocco is the Orient. To the people of the Orient, Morocco is the West."

Food vendors included the Casablanca restaurant (Rafi Labriny, Chef/Owner and a FOM member); Taste of Morocco (Abdel Moumen, Chef/Owner and a FOM member); Creme de la Creme; the Florence Cafe and a Friends of Morocco booth selling Casablanca beer and Moroccan wines sold by the glass and bottle. The FOM booth was staffed by George McFadden,

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Ash Khabarna?

أش أخبارنا ؟

Editor's note: I sincerely apologize for any errors in the last installment of Ash Khabarna. Most of these entries are typed and not cut and pasted, so it was just simple human error. I also rely on the information sent to us by the National Peace Corps Association. Please check with them and make sure your contact information is accurate. Clear handwriting also helps. If you don't want your personal information to appear in Ash Khabarna, please indicate this request on your membership renewal.

Tristán del Canto—Bouarfa 98-00 writes, "I worked for Delta Airlines and traveled extensively for six months, began working for CARE as a donor relations specialist, then got a job as the Program Assistant for the HIV/AIDS unit, and finally was promoted to Program Officer of the HIV/AIDS unit. I am currently still at CARE in Atlanta." Contact Tristán at <maracatuaxe@yahoo.com>.

S. Louise Hoare—Rabat 90-91 is retired and lives in Santa Monica, CA.

Valerie Piotrowski Broadwell—Khenifra 81-83 is an air quality specialist with the U.S. EPA. Valerie lives in Chapel Hill, NC and can be contacted at <vbroadwell@yahoo.com>.

John Leister—Rabat 76-78 is the carpentry foreman at W.M. Moyer Co. John lives in Quakertown, PA and can be contacted at <johnleister@comcast.net>.

Stephen Feinberg—Sebt-Gzoula/Oujda 68-70 is Director, National Outreach at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Stephen can be contacted at <sfeinberg@ushmm.org>.

Kristy Larson—Essaouira 82 to present is a tour director in Morocco for Mountain Travel & Sobek Equitours. Contact Kristy at

<kristylarson@yahoo.com>.

Helen and Alan Marston—Outat El Haj 89-90 write, "We're engaged in forming an RPCV group in the midcoast area of Maine. Anyone interested in being on our list is welcome. Since Alan is retired, we've not been to any AVMA meetings where we used to see some of the "gang", including Stu, the Barkers, Mary and the Lloyds. We're going to Spain and Portugal in October with a side day trip to Tangier. I went to Middlebury College for Portuguese this past summer to get ready. Alan studied Spanish all winter. I'll be going to Cape Verde in January. Maybe the Portuguese will help with the creole! Also, I'll look for the P.C. officer there." Helen and Alan can be contacted at <hlmain@midcoast.com>.

Mary Cava Riley—Meknes 94-96 writes, "I've renovated an historic home; worked learning architectural art glass (i.e. stained glass). I moved to Savannah, GA and started my own glass studio. I recently married Billy Compton." Contact Mary at <comptonriley@bellsouth.net>.

Darryn "Dutch" Martin and Btisam "Ibi" Martin—US Embassy Rabat 02-04 is a Foreign Service Officer. Contact Darryn at <dmartin1906@yahoo.com>.

Evelyn Nolan—Casablanca 88-90 writes, "I worked as an analyst at the FAA for 3 years, then went to graduate school for my MBA. I was in Phoenix working for Intel Corp for a couple of years before moving to the Washington, DC area to work as a marketing analyst and system engineer for a government contractor". Contact Evelyn at <evelyn9748@mindspring.com>.

Rajae Nami—Meknes 76 to present writes, "Since leaving Peace Corps/Gabon, I have attended graduate school and obtained my Master's in Arab Studies at Georgetown University in 2002. Since then, I have been working as a consultant, and have recently founded AMENA Consulting Group with 3 other colleagues to help increase

understanding and cooperation between the U.S. and the Arab World." Contact Rajae at <rajaenami@yahoo.com>.

Elizabeth McClintock—Khemisset/Rabat 88-92 writes, "I offer training and consulting to governments and organizations in negotiation, communication, leadership and conflict resolution skill. For the past two years I've been the lead facilitator for the Burundi Leadership Training program - working at several levels (i.e. political leaders, military, UN observers & local leaders) to assist in creating an environment conducive to the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords. MALD from the Fletcher School at Tufts University." Contact Elizabeth at <lizmcclintock@aol.com>.

Peter Laugharn—Sefrou 82-84 writes, "I received a Masters in Arab studies Georgetown 1987. Worked for Save the Children 1989-99 (1991-99 in Mali) as Field Office Director, Regional Director and Education Advisor for Africa; PhD University of London, Institute of Education 2001. Thesis on Community schools in Mali. Since 1999 with Bernard Van Leer Foundation (Netherlands) which works to promote the well-being and development of young children growing up in disadvantage. BVLF is active in 40 countries, including Morocco. Married to Marie Kagaju (from Rwanda) three kids Marc (1996) and Lily and Kate (2001)." Contact Peter at <laughan@hotmail.com>.

Paul Odegard—Errachidia 82-84 has done the following since returning from Morocco: "US Navy 85-90 Surface Warfare Officer USS Roark (FF-1053); Teacher: English, math, social studies 7th and 8th grade Egling

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In Memoriam

Melissa Mosvick, PCV Ouarzazate



Peace Corps Volunteer Melissa L. Mosvick, died on Saturday, November 6, 2004, in Morocco, as a result of injuries sustained in a public bus accident. The 24-year-old volunteer was killed when a truck crashed into a public bus on which she was riding and flipped it into a ravine, her family said. The accident killed one other person and injured several others, including another Peace Corps volunteer.

"The death of Melissa Mosvick is a terrible loss for the Peace Corps family," Director Gaddi Vasquez said. "Melissa went above and beyond to share her knowledge and skills with women's groups, artisans and people in her community. Her hard work and leadership were admired by the people of Ouarzazate and will continue to thrive in the lives that she touched."

Melissa, 24, of Apple Valley, Minnesota, graduated with a degree in International Business and Marketing from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. She began her Peace Corps service on September 11, 2003. In training, she quickly learned Arabic and continued to develop her French language skills.

After training, Melissa was assigned as a Small Business Development Volunteer in the southern Moroccan town of Ouarzazate, a Moroccan city of about 40,000 known as the gateway to the Sahara. There, she taught English and computer skills to the artisans at the Artisanal Training Center. This year, Melissa expanded her small business work and began assisting an association for the handicapped in Ouarzazate. She taught glass painting to artisans, who then were able to sell their items for profit. Melissa's work was recognized and very much appreciated in the Ouarzazate community, as her supervisor and counterpart heralded positive feedback about Melissa's work to Peace Corps Program Manager Bouchra Al Achkar.

Committed to assisting others, Melissa recently helped 20 Small Business Trainees transition in Morocco, as she

facilitated several cross-cultural training sessions about her experiences. Melissa's leadership this summer in the village of Tazarine to train another women's association group in the use of computers helped pave the way for the development of a work site for future Peace Corps Volunteers to make a difference.

The Governor of Ouarzazate contacted the Peace Corps staff to offer his deepest condolences.

Her grandfather, Roger Mosvick, said she considered taking a job with a large bank but instead chose "to commit her life to public service."

Mosvick's death stunned her family and friends, who said she had planned to get a master's degree after her two-year Peace Corps assignment, then go into foreign Service. Mosvick's mother, Barbara, said family members were proud of her service. They exchanged news often, through phone calls and e-mails, she said. Sometimes the daughter they called "Honey Bee" requested comforts from home, including bed sheets, peanut butter, shampoo and dental floss. But, her mother said, "It was very humbling and very spiritual for her to see what little you really need."

"She wanted to do good work for the less fortunate, and she was willing to do that in service to her country," said her father, Mark Mosvick, of Apple Valley.

"We knew she was religious, but we never knew how much so, and how she could really touch people's lives," he said. "She was my hero."

"The Peace Corps family is deeply saddened by Melissa's death. She embodied the best traditions of Peace Corps Volunteers, and her life and work will be deeply missed by all who knew and worked with her," said Director Vasquez. "Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends. In memory of Melissa Mosvick, the Peace Corps flag will be flown at half-staff on the day of her memorial service."

Melissa is survived by her parents, Mark and Barbara Mosvick, a sister, Kristin, grandmother Nona Mosvick, and her aunt Deborah Wiessner. Peace Corps Morocco held a memorial service in her honor for Volunteers and staff. Mailing address is Mark and Barbara Mosvick 13526 Gossamer Way, Apple Valley, MN 55124

(Continued from page 2)

Middle School Colverse, CA 90-97; Recall Manager at Target 1997-2000; Now English teacher Yuba City HS 2000-present." Contact Paul at <paultodegard179@yahoo.com>.

Ellen Braswell—Temera/Safi 87-89 writes, "I am working as rehabilitation counselor with the Virginia Dept of Rehabilitative Services in Charlottesville, VA. I work with high school students with disabilities in

planning the transition to college and employment. My husband Dave Lindsay and I enjoy hiking, traveling and camping. We're traveling to Morocco in November - my first trip back since I left in 1989." Contact Ellen at <livewell@intelos.net>.

Jason Ben-Meir—Rabat/Marrakech 93-95/98-99 is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of New Mexico and is president of the High Atlas Foundation. Contact Jason at <jben-

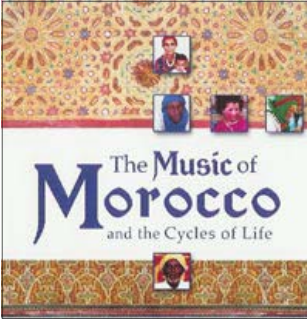
meir@comcast.net>.

Sam Werberg and Denise Mulligan—Fes 97-00 are in the Foreign Service and can be contacted at <sam@werberg.net>.

Tom Coyne and Phyllis Erikson—Nador/Tahala/Rabot 81-83 live in Naperville, IL and can be contacted at <coyne.tom@dol.gov>.

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The Music of Morocco and the Cycles of Life



The Music of Morocco and the Cycles of Life is a 50-minute documentary film that explores the unique and powerful connection between traditional music and Moroccan rites of passage. From the birth of a baby until the last living breath, melody and rhythm surround and shape the lives of all Moroccans was shown at the

National Geographic Society in Washington, DC on November 16. It is available for purchase in DVD for \$30 from <http://www.musicandthecyclesoflife.com>

The film was directed and produced by DePaul University music faculty member, Victoria Vorreiter, made possible in part by grants from the Illinois Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Illinois General Assembly, the Ford Fund, Royal Air Morocco, the National Moroccan Tourist Office and Chicago Community Trust anonymous donor.

Victoria's passion for Moroccan music began in 1998 during her first visit to Marrakech, where she did graduate work at Cadi Ayyad University. It was at this time she witnessed the primal and ever-present role that music plays in the lives of the Moroccan people, who continue to maintain a vital oral tradition that is hundreds, if not thousands of years old.

She vowed to return to Morocco to document its rich musical heritage. Victoria spent nearly 5 months traveling the Mediterranean Sea to Sahara Desert, from the High Atlas Mountains to the fertile valleys, from the great imperial cities to colorful souks to small Berber villages in order to capture Morocco's indigenous music on film. "The Music of Morocco and the Cycles of Life" is intended to help preserve the vibrancy and diversity of Morocco's magnificent age-old treasure, all the while demonstrating mankind's commonalities.

"When [concerned with] our differences, we should recognize our commonalities," suggests Victoria Vorreiter of the DePaul School of Music. "The same melodies of a Moroccan grandmother sings to her grandchild [is reminiscent of] the lullabies our grandmothers sang to us." In the documentary, Vorreiter notes the North African country has a range in culture, and thus, music—from "ornate Arab to simple Berber melodies." Since the "country [is] at a cultural and historical crossroads [of] the Arab world...Sub-Saharan Africa, all major Mediterranean civilizations and Islamic culture, its musical heritage is exceptionally diverse," said Vorreiter.

"When you look at the arts, music is unique because of its extraordinary transformative power. Melody and rhythm are immediately able to penetrate to the core of our being. Music ritual marks every rite of passage in our lives, from a baby in the womb until our last living breath. This is

especially so in Morocco, a country where the oral tradition is centuries old and still very strong," explains Vorreiter, who has traveled to this North African country on five separate occasions between 1998 and March 2001, for research, interviews, and capturing footage on her Sony DV cameras.

Vorreiter has long been drawn to Morocco, one of the most westernized Islamic countries, for its rich musical heritage. "Morocco's strategic location in the northwest corner of Africa places the country at a historical and cultural crossroads. So throughout the centuries the indigenous Berber tribes became influenced by the Arab world, Islamic culture, Sub-Saharan Africa, and all major Mediterranean civilizations. This means the music of Morocco is amazingly diverse. There is a fantastic mix of tradition" Berber chanting, Koranic recitation, Andalusian ensembles from Spain, trance music of Sufi brotherhoods, and music of the famed blue men of the desert, the Tuareg, "describes Vorreiter.

"Because I was doing this entirely alone, and as a woman, I was able to move very discretely and had access to privileged situations. People would welcome me into their homes. For example, I was able to tape grandmothers singing ancient lullabies to their children. I filmed an all-night double wedding in a small Berber village. And I recorded the Moussem in Fes, a festival where tens of thousands of people come to celebrate with music the life after death of a saint in a symbolic funeral procession. Music accompanies all the important moments in life."

Said Michael Weinstein of New City in November 2002, "In light of the current mix of fear and fascination toward the Muslim world, which has led to rash over-generalization, it is refreshing to look at Victoria Vorreiter's straightforward color photographs and informative text recording the pre-modern cultural traditions that survive Morocco today. A skilled and sensitive documentarian, Vorreiter ... shows us healing practices, religious rituals, tea ceremonies and, most of all, the panoply of various musicians and dancers whose performances are essential and specific to each cultural event. Vorreiter teaches us that the Muslim world is endlessly variegated; Morocco alone is intricately multicultural, tingeing Islam with local, regional and tribal customs. In a particularly elegant image, we see a beautiful desert tribeswoman performing the Guedra, a dance that uses syncopated finger gestures to mime the precision of camels and their herders across the Sahara desert."



Terrific Response to Hakim's Car Fund Appeal

By Tim Resch, FOM President

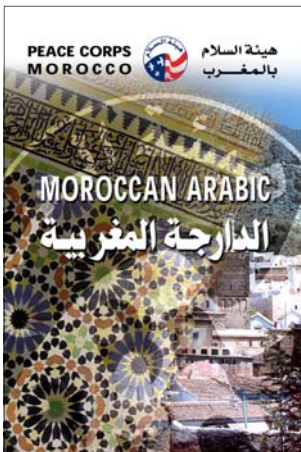
In the last FOM Newsletter, we opened a solicitation for a Car Fund for Hakim Illi, Peace Corps Morocco receptionist for more than twenty years and inspiration for volunteers and Moroccans alike. His disability is not an obstacle, but finances are. Hakim's current vehicle has been specially adapted to allow him to drive, but it is quickly reaching the age of no return. A new car is simply beyond Hakim's means. At press time, we have received \$1,946 from 17 individuals who have been touched by Hakim's kindness. If you would like to donate to the Hakim Car Fund, please send a check payable to Friends of Morocco to: Hakim's Car Fund, c/o Friends of Morocco, P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579. Be sure to indicate "Hakim's Car Fund" on the check. All further donations to Hakim's Car Fund will be acknowledged in a future issue of the Friends of Morocco newsletter. FOM is a 501c3 non-profit and, if you itemize, the contribution would be tax deductible. Per IRS regulations, gifts exceeding \$250 will be acknowledged. Contributors to date are:

Magna Baligh

Yousoufia 85-88

Ellen Braswell	Temera and Safi 87-89
David Burgess	Rabat Director 83-85
Suzu Herring-Campos	Meknes 96-98
Urbae Jiwa	Fkih Ben Salah 94-96
Sada Louise Hoare	Rabat 90-91
Elizabeth A McClintock	Khemisset/Rabat 88-92
George J McFadden	Ksar es-Souk/Rabat 76-80
Joseph Verner Reed	Ambassador Rabat 81-85
Sarah J Presley	95-97
Anne H Reese	Marrakech 83-86
Tim Resch	Ouezzane, Rabat 70-74
James O Schoonover	Beni-Mellal 91-93
Rob Slattery	Tnghir/Agadir 84-87
Sam Werberg and Denise	Mulligan Fes 96-00
Melissa Wyers	Rabat 89-91
Chris Date	Safi, Tetouan, Rabat (Catholic
Relief Services) 84-88	
David M Beavers & Ann Schlesinger	88-90
Marianne John 94-96	Kenitra <input type="checkbox"/>
Thomas J O'Brien 86-89	Missour & Rabat <input type="checkbox"/>

PC Morocco Revamps Its Moroccan Arabic Textbook



Peace Corps/Morocco, led by Training Manager Abderrahmane Boujenab, has substantially revised lessons from the Peace Corps' 1994 Moroccan Arabic book by Abdelghani Lamnanouar, rewrote some lessons completely and added new material to arrive at this new edition. Language instructors Aicha Ait Cherif, Malika Boukbout, Mohamed Mahmoudi and Abdellah Ouhmouch contributed. Layout and design was by former Morocco RPCV Stephen Menicucci.

Trainees use the manual with their LCFs during the PST and with their tutors at their sites. Its competency-based approach made it a reliable tool in learning the basics and survival Moroccan Arabic dialect in some weeks.

There is little Moroccan dialectal Arabic available on the web for travelers and students of the language. Two language sites of possible interest to Friends of Morocco are [Babel: Arabic](http://i-cias.com/babel/arabic/index.htm) at <http://i-cias.com/babel/arabic/index.htm> which is a comprehensive site for practice with reading, writing, listening, pronunciation for learners of Arabic. It also has links to cultural material and sites and [French in Morocco](http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu/collection/lm_morocco/mo_index.html) at http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu/collection/lm_morocco/mo_index.html, which provides cultural discussion, videos, transcripts in French and an English translation for about 20

situations.

FOM is searching for a volunteer(s) to adapt all or part of this 194 page manual for the FOM web site. On a related note, *Bab Dar* is the Peace Corps Morocco-produced phrase book for Moroccan dialectal Arabic. FOM has permission to transcribe it to the web. The volunteer needs a scanner and skills with word processing/OCR or web software to copy the pages and to work the images/text into a downloadable document or a set of web pages. FOM hopes to access the electronic copies of these two publications. Contact tresch@att.net if you have the skills, equipment and interest.



The Moroccan Community and Disneyland

Fouad Abbadi, Morocco Times <http://www.moroccotimes.com>

Florida- Nov 27—While looking at her watch at the end of a laborious day, Saida, waved, with a young smile to the last visitors of the Moroccan pavilion in Epcot Center, one of Walt Disney World four theme parks in Orlando, Florida. She then hastily packed up her own belongings as she prepared to take the Disney minibus to Kissimmee in the daily one-hour journey to where she shares a ten-square-meter apartment with five of her Moroccan colleagues. As the minibus moved on, she looked back excitedly at the beautiful minaret, modeled on the famous Koutoubia. A gesture she has made everyday since she arrived here three months ago.

Some might argue about how decent and rewarding the work conditions are in this pavilion, but for this dynamic 23 year-old girl, coming from the heights of the Atlas, the new experience offered all what she dreamt of while she was still student in the Qadi Ayad University's English Department. Apart from her homesickness, she was satisfied at all times as she found a new atmosphere here and has made plenty of new friends, all newcomers to this American "Eldorado".

Stretched over a hundred square kilometers, the Moroccan pavilion is one of the eleven international stops around the World Showcase Lagoon at Epcot. It represents the whole Arab and Mediterranean region and presents, in addition to the Moroccan genius in craftsmanship and the attractive musical show, a taste of the country's delicious cuisine. Visitors can enjoy shopping in the Gallery of Arts and History- an exhibit on the art and history of Morocco, and Treasures of Morocco- where you can discover the hidden gems of this magnificent place through daily guided tours. If not, they can go and have all the information they want at the ONMT's Bureau of Information.

The atmosphere is established even before you set foot in the restaurant. Based at the center of the pavilion, this piece of art is not owned by Disney Land as we might think, but rather by two Moroccan investors: Rachid El Yazidi and Rachid Choufani. And as the other parts of the pavilion are Disney owned, work conditions change accordingly. Whether familiar or not with the scents and flavors of our cuisine, you will be attracted by them while wandering in the winding alleyways of an ancient typical village. You will then come to the palatial building, adorned in magnificent tile mosaics, within a little walking distance from the minaret. Once there, the Mediterranean feast is laid before you and the skilful belly dancer Fatima-Zohra, known as Dalal, will show up from behind the scene to attract the attention of all the curious visitors. Before or after the dinner, the accompanied children can enjoy drawings and paintings with the 22-year-old entertaining Salwa, while their parents are waiting for their turn for a henna decoration by Saadia, 30, who will talk with pride about her Fassi origin.

A few years earlier you could also enjoy musical folkloric dances performed by youngsters especially recruited for this kind of entertainment, but with the latest worldwide tourism crisis, all those artists and performers were sent out to work as

sellers or security guards or whatever 6-dollars-a-week job they could find in this "magic" world. Only a 6-member orchestra was kept under the leadership of Mustapha the singer, 38, who has been working here for more than 20 years now. Playing with four Americans and Dalal, the Moroccan dancer, he will play from Ihab Tawfiq's Allah Alik Ya Sidi to Sting's Desert Rose or Khaled's Wahran.

As the Disney van left Saida, as usual, at the entrance of the building in downtown Kissimmee, she started waving again to her other colleagues for whom the commute was still a little bit longer, and got excited, for a while, at the idea that the day after she was off. But what excited her really was the fact that she was going to assist for the first time here to our traditional women's feast called Shaabana. She was invited two days earlier by her Friend Rajaa, 32, and was told to be dressed in the Moroccan traditional style and bring whatever Moroccan food or sweets for the occasion. At least she has now the chance to wear the brownish kaftan she brought with her on this occasion where dozen of other women will sing, chat, and dance for a couple of hours.

What the Moroccan pavilion offered to those Moroccan dreaming youngsters is a debatable issue, but what is sure is that since its creation in 1984, the Moroccan community here in Orlando kept growing bigger and bigger. In almost twenty years of presence, it drained several hundreds of young Moroccans, aged between 20 and 40, who later constituted a large basis of the Moroccan community in the state of Florida. Those Moroccan Disney workers are generally employed for a fixed-term contract, but they naturally all turn once the contract expires to work in other Disney parks or attractions, if not outside it but still in Orlando or Florida.

Of course not all of Orlando's Moroccan dwellers went through Saida's itinerary. And you can find among the members of our community here doctors, architects, merchants, as well as businessmen and free-lance computer designers. However you will still find people in such social gatherings calling our friend "Saida Marrakech", meaning the one who works in the restaurant holding this name in our pavilion in Disneyland.

<http://www.moroccotimes.com/paper/article.asp?idr=49&id=993>



Membership Renewal/Application

PLEASE NOTE: Prior to filling out this application, consider making a few copies to pass on to others. While many of our members are former Peace Corps Morocco volunteers, membership is open to anyone interested in the people, culture and development of Morocco.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Current occupation: _____

Employer/school: _____

Experience in Morocco: (RPCVs and PC staffers list Peace Corps jobs. Academics: list field and research topics. Moroccans: list profession or field of study)

Years in Morocco: _____ to _____ Site/hometown: _____

I give permission to FOM to print the above information in the FOM newsletter: _____ Yes _____ No

Areas of interest: Check potential FOM activities in which you would be interested:

_____ newsletter	_____ local FOM chapter	_____ speakers' bureau
_____ trips to Morocco	_____ recruiting PCVs	_____ putting RPCVs/Moroccans in touch
_____ hospitality	_____ reunion/gatherings	_____ career/readjustment services
_____ fund raising	_____ development education	_____ FOM officer position
Other _____		

We need your support for the *Friends of Morocco Newsletter* and other FOM activities. Membership categories appear below. Joint membership includes membership in FOM and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). NPCA members also receive the award-winning magazine *World View*, and the newsletter 3/1/61. NPCA and FOM dues and contributions can be tax-deductible.

JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF MOROCCO AND NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

Individual	_____ \$50.00
Multiple (two people, one address)	_____ \$65.00

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF MOROCCO ONLY

Individual	_____ \$15.00
Multiple (two people, one address)	_____ \$20.00

Overseas NPCA members - please add \$20 for postage _____ \$20.00

Additional contribution to Friends of Morocco (tax-deductible) \$ _____ (shukron!)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED (make check payable to *Friends of Morocco*) \$ _____

Winter 2005

P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579

Friends of Morocco — اصدقاء المغرب

We like to keep an update on our members. Please answer the following questions:

1. Briefly, what have you done since leaving Peace Corps? What are you doing now?
2. What projects or programs would you like to FOM involved in (either in the US or Morocco)? Can you help?
3. Which news features would or do you like in the FOM newsletter?

The information collected on this form will be used by FOM and will be made available only to those organizations whose purposes are consistent with the aims of FOM. It will not be sold or traded for commercial purposes. The information may be used in the FOM Directory unless you request otherwise.

P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579



► **Café Rafael**

937 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
(203) 254-7519

Chef/owner Jean Roger Rafael is from Marseilles, which is evident in the Provencale dishes normally found on the café's menu. Drissia, his wife and the Dada, or mistress, of this culinary enterprise, is a native of Fez

► **Mamounia Restaurant**

1530 Bellevue Avenue
Seattle, WA 98122
(206)-329-5388
<http://www.mamouniarestaurant.com>

► **Crème de la Crème**

4828 MacArthur Blvd., NW
Washington, DC
(202)333-7773

Chef/owner Kader Rhanime It's a gourmet shop and cafe with good stuff from Fauchon, the Parisian food emporium, and house-made dishes and pastries to eat in or take away. Rhanime, who's from Casablanca, spends long days whipping up chicken tagines with lemon and olives, paella, and a daily couscous from family recipes. His grandmother was the inspiration for many of the dishes, and she and his mom help with the cooking. Because things are made in small batches, when they're gone, they're gone. At breakfast there are croissants, pain au chocolat, and brioche made from Fauchon recipes, as well as egg dishes like an omelet Provençale. The lunch menu includes soups, salads, and sandwiches along with main-course entrées (\$7.50 to \$15.50). Teatime brings house- and Fauchon-made petits fours, cookies, tarts, cakes, and Moroccan, Andalucian, and Middle Eastern sweets along with teas, espresso-bar coffees, fruit smoothies, and milkshakes.

► **Florence Café**

2190 Pimmit Dr Ste B, Falls Church, VA 22043
(703) 893-6677

Chef/owner, Younes Mrani Talbi. The menu is compact only in size, but lacks nothing in the way of variety and adventure. Daily specials can range from Moroccan-style lamb couscous to Italian pasta with a house sauce. The bread that is offered with every meal is baked fresh on the premises and served with a spicy hummus (also homemade). The lunch menu has five sandwiches, the highlights being the Moroccan spicy lamb sausage (served in the same irresistible bread) and the roast beef sandwich (with roasted peppers, onions, blue cheese and a sun-dried tomato paste). For dinner, Florence Café will always stay true to the Italian part of the Mediterranean and offer pastas (like the savory tortellini with goat cheese and a garlic and sun-dried tomato sauce), but the excitement is in the lamb and couscous dishes. Without a doubt, the highlight of the meal will be when you are through—and feel like you can't fit anything else in you—and you try the fresh mint tea, a staple of Moroccan meals. Talbi explains that the tea, made with sugar and crushed fresh mint leaves, is served as a digestive after every meal in Morocco. "You feel so much better after you have drank some," he adds.

Morocco at the Movies #8 - "And Now, Ladies and Gentlemen" (2003)

By Dan Cahill (Kenitra 68-70)



Poor Claude Lelouch. Once the king of elegant romantic cinema in the 60's, scoring a huge international success with the Oscar-winning "Un Homme et

Une Femme", he's now nearing the end of an inconsistent career in humbling style. His most recent film, "Les Parisiens", was so consistently savaged by French critics (Le Monde called it "indigestible") that he paid for a weekend of free screenings throughout France to attract the public. That effort resulted in only limited success, and the same can be said for his previous film, "And Now, Ladies and Gentlemen", a 2003 release now available on DVD.

Jeremy Irons plays a jewel thief improbably named Valentin Valentin (he explains that he was born on St. Valentine's Day, which makes one wonder why his parents would also change their surname for such an event). The ruses he sets up for his robberies are as transparent as his penetrable disguises, and one further wonders how he has become so rich, especially in light of his recurrent blackouts, when he doesn't know who or where he is.

Similarly afflicted is Jane Lester, a cabaret chanteuse ably portrayed by French recording star Patricia Kaas in her first acting role: the Paris police pull her over for endlessly circling a rond point while in a daze. After being jilted from her performing trio (also a love triangle), she takes a job offer in Fez, where she seeks help for her malady. This leads her into the medina for folk remedies and then to a doctor who recommends a CAT scan.

Meanwhile, Mr. Valentin's remedy is to buy a large racing sailboat and set off solo around the world. After another blackout at sea, he finds himself in Essaouira, where he is helped by a doctor who is the twin brother of the doctor in Fez. Willing suspension of disbelief is an absolute audience requirement by this point. Suffice it to say that the destinies of Jane and Valentin are entwined.

The story can't be taken too seriously, but there are numerous rewards here. Pierre-William Glenn's rich and detailed cinematography stunningly captures the handsome Moroccan locations. The Fez settings are mostly at the Palais Jamaï Hotel, where every room seems to have a stupefying view of the entire city. We visit the mountaintop tomb of Lalla Chafia, a saint of supposed healing powers, in a sequence that is evocatively tinted in shades of ocher and sienna. The scenic harbor-side fish market in Essaouira looks as vibrant and beautiful as ever. There is also some clever use of black-and-white vs. color to signal each character's oncoming blackouts.

Beyond the scenery, Morocco is portrayed as a hospitable place. Locals frequently come to the assistance of visitors, notably in one scene at the end of Valentin's souk bus ride to Fez. Irons has probably blacked out and mistakenly heads in the wrong direction when he gets off. The driver kindly points him toward Fez and hands him a bag that he'd left on board. What a refreshing pleasure it is to see this interaction, after the barrage of negative images of Muslims/Arabs that dominate our screens today.

The able supporting cast includes the noted Moroccan actor Amidou (also mentioned in my previous column on "Hideous Kinky"), making his ninth film with Lelouch. He plays a police inspector in Fez whose interrogation methods are, well, let's say they're more humane than those of the US Army Intelligence operatives in Iraq. Also on hand is the always-welcome Claudia Cardinale,

playing a contessa and bar flirt whose jewelry vanishes from her hotel room overnight. There is a ditzy element in her performance, but it appears that's exactly what Lelouch wanted. There's also a cameo from Paul Freeman, recognizable as the villain Belloq from "Raiders of the Lost Ark".

As a literally interpreted story about real people, the film fails. But by removing the blinders of realistic narrative expectation, and opening one's mind to the powers of fate, spirituality, and romance, one can appreciate Lelouch's attempt to reach beyond conventional storytelling. "And Now, Ladies and Gentlemen" is sumptuous to look at, intriguing, challenging, and never boring. For those who would seek to extend the experience, many of Ms. Kaas's songs from the soundtrack have been released on a beautifully packaged CD called "Piano Bar."



Peace Corps and Pottery in the Souss Area

By RPCV & PST Trainer Marilee McClintock,
27/11/2004 Morocco Times <http://www.moroccotimes.com>

Throughout Morocco, veins of clay provide the raw material from which rural potters produce the "Tajines" and water jugs essential to daily life. One such vein has for generations supported families of potters near Ait Baha in Commune Ait M'Zal, Chtouka Ait Baha 90 kilometers southeast of Agadir. These potters had been identified by the Ministry of Artisanat as in need of assistance when I moved to Ait Baha in the fall of 2000 as a small business volunteer in the United States Peace Corps. The active population of potters in the vicinity of the clay vein had diminished from 80 to 26 in recent years and those remaining were not earning enough to provide for their families. Each potter works in his own space using a foot-operated potter's wheel and fires the products in his own kiln which burns argan wood and tikiwite cactus as fuel. Argan has higher and better uses, namely the highly sought after argan oil, and gathering the cactus contributes to the extensive problem of desertification in this arid area.

Moreover, the temperatures achieved in the kilns from this fuel were not adequate. It was identified that at least 30% of the production was of too poor a quality to be marketable. As a result the potters were in a situation of serious economic distress, actually losing money on sales of some items.

I learned that a demonstration project had occurred at the pottery school (Centre de Qualification Professionnelle des Arts Traditionnels de Céramique de Safi) at Safi, one of the principal pottery centers of Morocco. My counterpart, Abdelhamid Boumazourh, regional representative of the Ministère d'Artisanat at Chtouka Ait Baha, and I spent a week in Safi during November 2000. During this visit we were able to have the local Ait M'Zal clay analyzed to determine if the raw material itself was the source of the quality problems. We also learned the technology of pottery production and studied the economics of the propane-fired demonstration kiln which had been constructed at Safi. The outcome was to acknowledge that the clay quality merited continued investment in the local industry and that use of a propane-fired kiln of traditional design could restore profitability to the potters.

By January 2001, twelve of the 26 potters had agreed to form an association (Association Anti-Atlas de la Poterie) for the purpose of seeking funding for construction of a traditional propane-fired kiln on a centrally-located site to be donated by the association president, Mohamed Ait Ouba whose family had resided in the village for hundreds of years. During the remainder of 2001 we sought funding for construction of a kiln, initially through PNUD's program of micro-financing funds for the global environment, without success. Other intervenors were approached, also without success, partly because some similar projects in other regions of Morocco had failed frequently, due to lack of project management capability of the potters' associations.

It also became apparent that the potters themselves were not convinced that a viable future existed for them.

Recognizing this we realized the potters needed new motivation and suggested a study session for them at the Safi school. Of the twelve association members only three were willing to visit Safi. I sought and quickly obtained (from the Green Mountain Vermont Returned Peace Corps Volunteers) 3000 dirhams to fund 50 % of the trip costs which the potters matched. The potters traveled from their village by grand taxi and overnight bus on a Monday night in the spring of 2002. Tuesday morning we met with the Delegué of the Ministère d'Artisanat, the pottery school director and senior staff. Everyone was extremely supportive of the project and gave generously of their time and talents. A schedule was prepared for the remainder of the week.

The potters began with a tour of the local pottery associations and cooperatives and visited individual potters working on the 'hill'. One potter couldn't resist and had to sit and shape some clay within the first couple of hours. During the lunch break they were already discussing the notion of bringing a team of male and female maalem to their village for three months of intensive training in creation of a more decorative (and thus higher value) product line. They talked about creating designs using the indigenous traditional Berber symbols and colors such as appear in carpets of their region.

They also observed the methods of loading the kilns. They saw some potters who maximized the quantity of product in each firing but with serious negative results to the finish quality as some areas of the pottery were devoid of glaze. We later visited the large production factories away from the town center and observed some more mechanization and additional design and glaze variations. That evening one of the potters called his wife and told her to 'start designing'.

On Wednesday morning training began in earnest under the direction of the pottery school maalem. The potters followed the entire traditional process of clay preparation beginning with the breaking up of the clay. Then each made several pieces (using non-electric potters' wheels just like their own) including vases, plates and items with handles. They worked side by side with the school's students and an excellent rapport developed.

The highlight of this day was a visit to one of the most senior maalems on the 'hill' who entranced all of us as he shaped and reshaped clay. I finally understood the importance of the plasticity property of the clay which allows the potter to achieve the widest variety of possible shapes. The potters watched him take a vase which had cured overnight and then attach new clay to create a more complicated piece. The men were absolutely enthralled and kept saying over and over thank you to everyone who made the experience possible. Note that the pottery school

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Our Man in Morocco

By Jack Sundell, PCV Azilal

It's October now in sunny Morocco. The summer's come and gone and the winter's coming on, as the song goes. I'm currently sitting in a cafe in a small town called Tiddas, surrounded mostly by older men drinking coffee and tea, smoking cigarettes, discussing politics or unemployment or yesterday's fish market. Laughter, frequent gesticulations, loud voices and fist-banging animate the conversations, lending an otherwise calm Friday morning an air of bustle and activity. Tiddas is one of five towns being used as community-based training centers for this year's youth development group. Four other volunteers and I are each spending a ten-day period with one of the groups to offer advice and assistance on working at a Moroccan youth center. The new trainees arrived in Morocco on September 14, the day which also marked our one year anniversary in country. It definitely goes down as one of the fastest passing years in the history of my life. The summer especially was a white streak, and it involved a lot more traveling than I had anticipated. But traveling is fun, and it's a great way to meet new and interesting people and to experience some of the beautiful and different worlds that Morocco has to offer. Three of the summer's highlights were a two-week vacation with my brother Joe, working at an English language summer camp, and helping at the new youth development training.

During the last half of June, my brother Joe came to Morocco for vacation. He had just finished a year abroad at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, and had a couple of weeks to kill before starting a summer language program in Spain. I met him at the airport in Casablanca late on a Tuesday night, and the next day we went to visit the Hassan II mosque, one of the largest and most exquisitely decorated mosques in the world, and also one of a very few in Morocco that non-Muslims are allowed to enter. Our travels took us to Sefrou, near Fes, where we visited the Arabic teacher that I'd had during training, and then down to the hot and dusty Errachidia province, home of the Sahara Desert (or at least part of it). After arming ourselves with headscarves for protection from the sting of wind-whipped sand particles, we took a two-hour camel ride into the desert to spend the night at a traditional tourist tent compound. The desert air was clear and fresh, and the stars that night were among the most radiant I've ever seen. Joe and I brought our guitars out with us, and we stayed up with several of the Berber guides late into the night playing songs around a campfire. At bedtime we climbed up a tall dune in order to have a first-rate view of the sun coming up in the morning, but we were rejected by Mother Nature as we found conditions about as hospitable as those on the ice planet Hoth at the beginning of the Empire Strikes Back. The sandy wind blew so fiercely at the top that our bedding would have been carried off had it not been held down by something, so we stumbled back down to the camp to sleep, slightly less unaware of the immense power of the desert. A

few days later we stopped in Tinjdad, home of Nathan and Summer Clark, a married couple in the youth development sector. They had organized the Tinjdad Music Festival, an hour and a half long American folk music concert in a vacant lot out back of their house for about 150 Moroccan kids. Joe, Nathan, Summer, and I played guitars and sang, Summer also played the flute, and Lissa Anderson joined in on the recorder. A few other volunteers sat with the kids and took pictures, and the whole thing was a lot of fun and a big hit with the home crowd. Last I heard they were almost sold out for next year's show. The final leg of our trip took us to the beach town of Essaouira for the Gnawa Blues Festival. Gnawa is a kind of rhythmic trance music that was brought up to Morocco from sub-Saharan Africa by the long-ago slave trade, and an ancestor of American blues music. The four-day festival offers a unique musical menu in a beautiful seaside setting, and definitely merits a stop if you're in the area the last week of June. The vacation was the first I've taken in Morocco, and it was interesting to become a tourist after living and working here for nine months. Being able to talk in Arabic to the people we met opened a lot of doors which we otherwise might not have had access to or even known were there. Also, when I consider the difficulty we had from time to time, despite knowing the language, with asking directions, finding hotels, or figuring out public transportation, it amazes me that anyone can manage fresh off the plane. But obviously they do, as tourism is one of Morocco's biggest industries.

After Joe took off for Spain, I was back in Azilal for a little under a month before heading for Agadir to work at an English language summer camp put on by the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports. The camp itself took place in a small town north of Agadir called Taghazoute. Seventeen other youth development volunteers and I met for three days in Agadir to talk about what we would be doing at the camp, and then we shipped out to the camp facility to await the arrival of the campers. The Peace Corps folks filled a variety of different roles at the camp: three worked as camp coordinators, several worked as English teachers, a few of us worked as Cafeteria Language Technicians, and all of us took part in organizing various clubs, like dance, theater, journalism, and music, to help move English out of the classroom and into the real world. There were also activity periods during which we introduced ultimate frisbee and set up a game room with chess, scrabble, and monopoly. I served as a music club coordinator, and this turned out to be one of the highlights of camp for me. One of our activities was to rewrite the words to the Woody Guthrie song 'This Land is Your Land' to create an anthem relevant to the geography of Morocco. The result was 'This Land's Morocco,' and our adapted chorus went like this:

This land's Morocco, this land is our land
From Casablanca to the Atlas Mountains
From the Argan forests, to Harazem waters
Morocco was made for you and me

At the end of camp, there was a large-scale performance,

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Indigenize Iraq's Reconstruction

By Jason Ben-Meir (Rabat/Marrakech 93-95)

The brutal violence in Iraq requires not only accelerating the training of indigenous security forces, but giving the Iraqi people the responsibility for their own communities' reconstruction. That the United States has spent only \$1 billion of the \$18 billion available for reconstruction is due to: 1) a heavy reliance on foreign companies that cannot effectively operate because of security conditions, and 2) the lack of an overall strategy that enables the Iraqi people to design and



implement reconstruction projects in their own communities *throughout* the country, which for now means focusing on regions outside the hostile "hot" zones. If the United States strongly supported the indigenous reconstruction of Iraq, whereby local communities implement

projects that respond to their self-described needs, critical socio-economic benefits for tens of thousands of households may become apparent in a remarkably short time—just a few months.

Indigenous reconstruction has shown remarkable outcomes in communities around the world because local people have a strong incentive to maintain the projects they create (such as in education, health, business, agriculture, and environment). How does this work? In most cases, communities form local associations (core civil-society institutions) to manage approved projects and implement new ones. New tiers of cooperation then form as neighboring communities join together to create projects beneficial to their entire area. Indigenous reconstruction is a form of "bottom-up" development that is based on pluralist democratic procedures. Around the world, indigenous reconstruction has shown extremely positive socio-economic and political consequences.

For the process to work, independent facilitators are needed to catalyze dialogue within a community on its reconstruction



priorities. The Iraqi interim government, with the support of the international community, especially the United States, should thus immediately begin training thousands of Iraqi school teachers, government and NGO personnel, and community members in facilitation methods. The techniques they learn help to achieve broad community participation in reconstruction efforts, possibly because of their similarities to

conflict-management procedures. Based on dialogue and the use of a third-party, they help to ensure a process that is for once responsive to community needs, inclusive, and productive. The interactive development experience creates mutually beneficial relationships and trust among the participants, just as conflict-management procedures do.

A "Basic Training" course in facilitation can be completed in a two-week period. Newly trained facilitators can then return to their communities, organize meetings, and help set in motion an indigenous reconstruction process. Once communities determine their particular



reconstruction priorities, which typically takes about six community meetings, each lasting two hours, outside funding to implement the locally designed

projects is needed. After this is obtained, the next step is the creation of local employment for building schools, women's cooperatives, health clinics, irrigation canals, and so forth.

The interim Iraqi government should also create "community reconstruction planning and training centers." These locally managed centers assist communities in determining their priority goals and then in designing and implementing projects to achieve them. Centers also provide training in facilitation, modern agriculture, health, and other skills desired by the local population. In addition, centers can assist in reconciling conflicts that inevitably arise during local development processes. In sum, they provide one-stop shopping for community development needs and do so in ways that transfer needed skills to the local population.

Two fundamental elements of a pluralist democracy are the dispersion of power toward the interior (localities) and the inclusion of all social groups in decision making. Community reconstruction centers are pluralist democratic institutions because they strengthen the capacities of local people to manage their own development. Additionally, the partnerships that are created in the process among public, private, and NGO groups encourage greater accountability and transparency, which in turn help to prevent corruption. In these ways, centers provide the educational forum that catalyzes positive political change.

Community empowerment occurs through a gradual, non-violent and, as examples around the globe show,

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Fatima Mernissi Co-Winner of 2004 Erasmus Prize



After the Nobel Prize, the Erasmus Prize is the most important cultural award in the European Union: it is awarded annually to a person or institution that has made an exceptionally important contribution to European culture, society, or social science. The Dutch royal family and the board of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation selected "Religion and Modernity" as the theme of this year's prize.

The Praemium Erasmianum Foundation in Amsterdam selected the sociologist Fatima Mernissi from Morocco, the religious critic Sadik Jalal Al-Azm from Syria, and the Islamic reformist thinker Abdulkarim Soroush from Iran for their contributions in helping reconcile processes of modernization and cultures that are shaped by religion.

Thanks to numerous translations, their works are available in Europe. Of the three laureates, Fatima Mernissi (born in 1940 in Fez) is probably the best known. In the 1970s and 1980s, her books "The Political Harem" and "Beyond the Veil" went a long way towards destroying the western cliché of the veiled, oppressed Muslim woman.

Fatima Mernissi has made a special effort to study the living conditions of Muslim women and expose their vision of the world. Through her published interviews and studies of Moroccan women in various social positions - studies which have appeared in many languages and countries - she became the spokeswoman of what she considers the subjected and discriminated half of the population. By writing in an accessible, evocative style, Fatima Mernissi has reached a very broad audience and has become a role model for younger

generations. She argues that women should fulfil their full role in the public sphere. Thanks to her thorough familiarity with Western cultures, she is also able to make comparisons with Western views on womanhood and question the pretended Western feeling of superiority. Mernissi emphasizes that in the West, too, women are manipulated and exploited, because the female body is often used as a commercialized sex object.

Mernissi was a model for many women in the Islamic world: she called on Muslim women to stop letting themselves be controlled by men and to at last start interpreting Islam themselves.

In the early 1990s, Mernissi put feminism aside and began focusing on two main activities: writing novels and strengthening Moroccan civil society. Mernissi considered writing to be the motor of public spirit. She ran numerous free "writers' workshops" for committed men and women.

The focus of these workshops was on a variety of issues relating to men and women in Morocco: rural development, cultural pluralism, human rights, the relations between the sexes, and the sexual abuse of children. Fatima Mernissi remained an important mentor for the Moroccan women's movement. At all times, she has stressed her identity as both a Moroccan and a Muslim.

She has served as a member in many national, pan-Arabic and international forums on women and development in the Islamic world. She is currently Lecturer of Sociology at the Mohammed V University of Rabat, and Research Scholar at the University Institute of Scientific Research.

In May 2003 she received the Príncipe de Asturias Award for Letters. By Karima Rhanem, Morocco Times

NPCA Directory of Returned Volunteers and Former Staff

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) with its partner Harris Publishing, Inc will publish in the fall of 2005 the Third Edition of the NPCA Directory of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Former Staff. The second edition dates from 2001 and the first edition was published in 1998. Look for an email and letter from Harris Publishing in early January 2005 to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of your listing (and, if you wish, order a copy of the Directory). The directory will be alphabetical and cross-reference all listings by country of service, occupation, and current residence. The quality of the tool will be a function of the quality of the response.

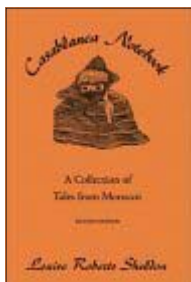
On the Peace Corps web site at <http://www.peacecorps.gov> under returned volunteers you can find an alumni group, request copies of your records, submit a story, update your address, or sign up for our RPCV Update newsletter. NPCA maintains for the Friends of Morocco an email Directory as does Peace Corps Online: The

Independent News Forum serving Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, both of which can be accessed from FOM home page. Keep in touch.



Book Review: *Casablanca Notebook*

By Ellen Hunt (Nador 81-83)



Casablanca Notebook, its second edition, was published in 2002 and it was written by Louise Roberts Sheldon, a journalist who lived in Morocco a total of eight years. For the first two years she lived in Morocco, she was restricted to writing on apolitical topics because she was married to a diplomat. When he left government service and worked for the private sector there, she began writing on the Western Saharan war. Ms. Sheldon reported on the UN and international affairs prior to her residence in Morocco, where she free-lanced. From 1975-77, her husband was with the U.S. State Department and in Casablanca 1977-81. He then worked with Westinghouse in Morocco and they returned to Morocco with the same company from 1995 to 1996.

Despite the political and social environments' restrictions on women, she successfully managed to explore regions and Moroccans in various economic, and later, political milieus. She reported on the Western Sahara conflict as the only female journalist on government sponsored press trips to the war front and her experiences form the last story in this book. The first sixteen stories are about Moroccans she met, spent time with, and learned from about how to live in Morocco.

In these 17 short stories, vignettes of people she met and with whom she spent time, a picture emerges of the Moroccan culture, expressed in Mustapha, the story of the charmer/driver/wannabe millionaire, with his fantasies of a

"trophy" wife(ves) to boot.

This book may appeal to older returned PCVs as Morocco is changing every day from its young life as an independent nation when she lived there, to a country evolving in a global village-defined world.

You will recognize parts of people you knew and/or know in these stories and that alone, for a returned PCV, is priceless. Moroccans' personal goals and desires in a culture very different from our own are portrayed in an empathetic light. The author presents some of the trying events of an expatriate's life in an amusing way, as the outsider learns early and in some cases, late, as to how to function in Morocco, and these lessons comprise some of her stories along with the Moroccans who helped her learn.

At least half of her stories reveal the Moroccan woman's experience in that era, with a focus on more educated women, but also a with a poignant story on women she met in the Casablanca "ghettos".

Overall, it's a book of short stories that focuses on the kindness of the Moroccan people, no matter what background, and it keeps the stories in the vein with which I recall Moroccan daily life, that is, with a sense of humor and ease in a kinship based society that both restricts people to its social customs but allows room for idiosyncrasies too.

The book is available from the online bookstores for about \$15

The Tangier American Legation Museum

By Thor Kuniholm TALM Director

The Tangier American Legation Museum (TALM), a thriving cultural center, museum, conference center and library in the heart of the old medina in Tangier, is housed in the only historic landmark of the United States located abroad. Saved from destruction by a small but dedicated group now known as the Tangier American Legation Museum Society, (TALMS) the museum now operates with a locally-hired staff under the leadership of the Museum Director, Thor Kuniholm. <http://www.maroc.net/legation/>.

The Tangier American Legation Museum Society (TALMS) welcomes financial support and contributions from those wishing to help the Museum maintain its facilities for scholarly research and discussion; promote the exchange of ideas and information with Morocco; and preserve this site for the pleasure of visitors to the region. All contributions are tax deductible from income reported to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Contributions should be sent to: Stephan Eastman, Treasurer, P.O. Box 43 Merrimac, MA 01860 tel: 978-346-9078 fax: 978-346-7498 email: seeastman@wellmanage.com.

The November director's six-month report included the following summary:

"The Museum is active seven days a week: researchers and museum visitors; literacy and sewing classes; small loan disbursements during the week, and on the weekend students using our general library and frequently special group tours. We accomplish our mission with a paid management staff of one American Director and one Moroccan librarian. We are engaged in three main activities:

- we are a museum and historic landmark,
- a research and conference center, and
- a headquarters for social outreach programs

Our relations with our two major benefactors- the American Embassy and the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS)- remain cordial and productive.

Our Moroccan friends hold the Old American Legation in high regard and affection in spite of the nearly universal disapproval of U.S. Middle East policy. A few observations on each of our major spheres of activity:

- *Museum and Historic Landmark.* My first priority continues to be the maintenance of the Legation and

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during which each of the clubs had a chance to present what they'd been working on for the last two weeks. I've got to say that standing up on stage doing 'This Land's Morocco' with the 17 kids in our music club singing, harmonizing, and banging on homemade percussion instruments has been one of the most joyful moments of my time here. Besides the fun, the whole camp experience was a good one, partly because getting to know the kids that came to this camp showed me a completely different side of Morocco than the one I'm used to. Largely from urban, affluent backgrounds, the campers, who ranged in age from 12 to 17, were well-educated, privileged, and cosmopolitan. Most of them went to private schools, several had travelled outside of Morocco, and some even spoke French at home with their parents. This is a stark contrast to the youth I have come to know in the rural, mountainous region of Azilal. The camp was also a good working break, giving us a chance to spend some time in a new area of the country and get together with old friends, while also doing something constructive during the month of August when all of the youth centers are closed.

The summer's final highlight is still in session. I'm currently lending a hand at this year's youth development training, which is based in the town of Khemisat. I got to the training site about four days ago, and it felt a little like I was traveling back in time. As I walked into the building I saw the temporary Peace Corps office housing computers and cardboard boxes full of laundry detergent and other supplies. There was a small table covered with books about teaching English and working with kids, just like there had been at our training. There were the Moroccan Arabic teachers gathered in a corner of the room talking to each other, many of them the same exact teachers we had had. The training center was full of the fresh, eager, and slightly worried faces of new arrivals with which I'd been surrounded a year ago; the difference this time around was that mine was not one of them. One of my first projects at the training was to give a two-hour presentation on cultural differences between Morocco and the United States, during which I recounted personal experiences and answered questions about common

obstacles to cultural integration. Inadvertently vulgar language blunders proved to be the most popular stories. A few days later we left Khemisat to go to the community-based training sites where trainees are honing their Arabic language skills and getting their first practice teaching in a Moroccan youth center.

That brings us to the present day and hour, Friday morning mid-October, still warm but with a hint of autumn in the air. I feel myself straddling a space in time between the year before me and the year behind. Since my arrival last year I have been exposed to many different sides of Morocco: its people, language, culture, geography, religion, and history; its transportation system and education system, monetary system and social system; and its traditions, values, problems, and potential. While I will continue to learn about all of these things until the day I leave, the most difficult work has been done. The coming year will be a time to take advantage of opportunities that were unavailable to me last year due to a lack of language skills or to various cultural shortcomings. The schedule is full of exciting prospects for fun and interesting projects. Some of these, besides English classes, include a chess club, an environmental club, a world map painting project, acquiring English language books for the youth center library, and continued study of classical Arabic.

As fast as the first year passed, I'm sure the second will only be faster, and before I know it my time in the Peace Corps will be a thing of the past. I cannot say now how I will feel about it then, but I am aware that I am in the midst of one of the most rewarding and satisfying experiences of my life to this point.

By the way, if any readers have any questions about Morocco or what I'm doing here, or any comments about the articles, I can be contacted at Jack Sundell / B.P. 99 / Azilal 22000 / MOROCCO, or by email at jacobsundell77@yahoo.com.

Jack Sundell is a Peace Corps volunteer currently serving in Azilal. Jack writes periodically about his life in Morocco as a PCV.

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improvement of its decor. This is a unique historical landmark in a unique location. It is important that whatever else we undertake here, those activities should always be compatible with the aesthetic setting of the Legation. Our dedicated staff (including our Associate Director) and the American Embassy have been central to our success in this regard. Moreover, the Museum is a significant source of income. In a recent six month period, our Museum-generated income was derived from: (1) cruise ship visits: 44%; (2) Museum store sales: 21%; (3) other group visits: 19%; (4) poster sales: 11%; and donation box receipts: 5%. (While donations at the door are low, visitors often patronize our Museum store or purchase a poster)

- *Research and Conference Center.* As the Morocco affiliate of the American Institute for Maghrib Studies

(AIMS), we have been able to broaden the scope of our activity and to benefit from substantial AIMS financial support.

And finally, we continue to benefit from the advice and counsel of current and former TALMS board members including Mark Tessler (outgoing AIMS president), Bill Zartman (a founder and longtime AIMS president); Donna Lee Bowen (outgoing AIMS Treasurer), John Entellis (editor of the prestigious *Journal of North African Studies*) and distinguished scholar and AIMS member, John Damis.

In support of these objectives, TALM obtained funding for several Foundation projects and activities. We renovated the nearby Progresso Square largely through a grant from the Ambassador's Cultural Preservation Fund. For our literacy program, we obtained a donation from the American energy firm, CMS Morocco, and this year a grant from the

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The Re-Readjustment

By Jim Heaton

~Dedicated to the RPCVs of Morocco~

What an overwhelming experience to be back in Morocco. At first I began to wonder if I had made a wise decision to come back for such an extended period. Had the climate really changed? Would people look at me any differently now or associate me with the aggressiveness of my country. I have not made a habit of succumbing to the fears invoked by our leaders and propagated by our media. But none-the-less, I couldn't help but wonder if I had entered an 'unfamiliar' world. Would my language come back? I had gone over the scenarios I was about to experience and was sure enough of my language skills to get around. But it would be a challenge because I had brought so much crap! I knew better for sure. I often said that if I returned it would only be with a couple items of clothing and few other essentials. But when it came time it seems as though I packed the house. To my defense, I must add that I am planning on purging almost everything I brought and am happy to have less stuff in storage. But I was worried about packing everything around while I found a place to live.

I made up my mind not to get worked up over money and succumb somewhat to being charged relatively outrageous prices. That proved to be a savior when it came to dealing with things. Whereas I would have argued and maybe fought to pay a fair price (even if the difference was a matter of cents) I did not engage in such righteousness until I was settled. I even paid a guy to help carry a bag to the hotel whereas I would have certainly seen fit to break my back rather than fork over the 'floos' in the past. That state of mind, along with the welcomed recognition of so many familiar things, really made the adjustment a breeze. So this has turned into a long intro for what I want to share with those who are familiar with Morocco. Without adding context

-as I am sure it is not necessary if you have spent ANY amount of time in Morocco- I jotted down a list of things I experienced in those first couple weeks -those 'welcomed recognitions'. I call it my "Morocco Firsts" even though they are all things I know well from my years in Peace Corps. But the first time I saw, had or experienced these it was like, "Oh, Ya! ...that" if you know what I mean. Anyway, here they are:

- I have only seen only two mustaches, everyone wears helmets on their scooters and seatbelts in the cabs, people stand in straight lines, people use 'paper not plastic' and there are price tags on everything*
- There are policewomen (and some policemen) at almost every intersection
- Marlboro cigarettes are everywhere. (If they were before, I don't remember that)
- Another brand of water by Dannon
- Cell phones are everywhere. I mean EVERYONE has them.
- Sugarcane juice is a rage
- New 5 dirham coins with new King
- New 2 dirham coin that looks a lot like the 1 dirham coin only slightly bigger (The 1 dirham coin is still around, of course.)
- Djemma El-Fna is closed to most traffic
- Many more people are sporting westernized clothes
- More supermarkets, more cheese, more new scooters, more new cars
- Tall bar is gone
- Internet cafes are EVERYWHERE and cheap
- New street phones are everywhere and they are only operated by phone cards (Teliboutiques and post office phones are pretty much obsolete)

*Of course that first line is B.S.—it is as usual

(Continued from page 3)

Joyce Holfeld—USAID Rabat 89-94 lives in Washington, DC.

Cheryl Deane—Midelt 81-84 is Director of Admissions at Friends Academy in Massachusetts. Contact Cheryl at <tweela58@hotmail.com>.

Mitchell Cohn is in the U.S. Foreign Service and will be posted to the U.S. Embassy in Rabat in August 2006. Contact Mitchell at <cohnma@state.gov>.

Evelyn Anderson was in Morocco in 1962. She writes, "I am a health educator for the Minnesota Department of Health. I have been in public information and awareness for non-profits in banking, disability advocacy and education. Still keep up with 4-5 "kids" who were in Morocco in 1962—we're all in our sixties now!" Contact Evelyn at <evelyn.anderson@health.state.mn.us>.



News from the High Atlas Foundation

By Jason Ben-Meir (Rabat/Marrakech 93-95)

Dear Friends,

Did you know that there is a very easy way for you to directly impact the life of a rural Moroccan family? Consider this: after four to six years, 100 fruit trees can provide income for a year for a family of five. Amazingly, the average price for a fruit tree is only \$1.

This January, in time for the beginning of the planting season, the High Atlas Foundation is sponsoring a project to distribute fruit trees (apple, pear, plum, almond, cherry, olive, walnut, and others) to deserving women and their families. Morocco's Ministry of Waters and forests will match our fruit tree donation with a donation of forestry trees, which are used to protect the local habitat.

Diversification of rural household incomes is critical in preventing the dislocation of families in this free trade era, and fruit trees diversify family incomes. Most importantly, rural families have told us that they want trees—the critical element for project success.

The High Atlas Foundation is a non-profit organization whose aim is to establish community-based projects in Morocco that local people design. It was founded by Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Morocco in order to utilize their professional relationships, friendships and knowledge

gained during their years of Peace Corps service for the continued benefit of the Moroccan people.

Together with our Moroccan partners, we have applied for funding for various tree-planting projects in Morocco. In the coming months, we will assist our partners with a proposal to the Millennium Challenge Account and the Middle East Project Initiative that combines potable water, irrigation improvements, and tree planting—the top priorities of so many rural communities. Whether we receive funding or not, your involvement will help to expand project benefits.

So when you consider purchasing a Christmas tree for \$30, or \$40, or even a plant for the corner of your living room, please think about how many lives you can change by sending a donation of that amount (or more) to the High Atlas Foundation. \$20 right now will benefit an entire family for years to come, plus, it will be matched to provide forestry trees to help save the local environment. Furthermore, we promise that 100% of your tax-deductible donation will go towards the purchase and transport of trees.

Please, don't say no. We have a real opportunity to make a profound and enduring positive impact on the lives of a great many Moroccan families. Friends, the time is now. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in solidarity for Morocco,
The High Atlas Foundation

(Continued from page 16)

Embassy's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

It has been a privilege for me to work with my Moroccan colleagues in this Foundation who represent a wide variety of professions—architectural studies, finance, university professors, community affairs, museum curators, medical doctors, park specialists, conservationists, writers, etc. In a city that has been too long characterized as the playground for eccentric drifters from abroad, I hope that the future of this city (and perhaps of Morocco itself) lies in the hands of this educated, hardworking, professional, middle class.

Should we, can we do more? Given our current staffing and museum setting I feel that we are carrying a full load. I would reverse the old adage "you can't make a silk purse out of pig's ear." It seems to me that we want to avoid "making a pig's ear out of a silk purse." The Museum is a silk purse. It has been 183 years in the making: it has served our country, our diplomats, our Peace Corps well, and emerged from these successive relationships with its inherent beauty intact.

Nevertheless, even with current resources, we can do more. For example: 1) CAORC's proposal for cataloguing and putting Moroccan libraries online for use by researchers worldwide has the potential for much greater involvement by TALM as project coordinator. 2) There is untapped potential for greater utilization of our conference facility, an area that Board Members and Fellows might help to promote. 3) Our fine art collection needs

more attention (to eliminate foxing and to reframe on acid free matting) and the publication of a Museum art catalogue is high on my agenda. 4) We would like to expand our offerings to neighborhood youth. 5) We could pay more attention to our general lending library and make available easy-read texts for students at the high school level. (English is being introduced much earlier in the Moroccan school system). 6) There is potential for TALM to serve as a bridge between American students in Spain and Moroccan culture. In October, we hosted a small group of American students studying in Spain who came through Tangier on a four day orientation trip sponsored by an NGO, Morocco Exchange, in partnership with AMIDEast. We were told that there are around 10,000 American college students currently studying in Spain, but they are generally discouraged from signing up for orientation trips to Morocco because of the current political unrest in the region. Should this situation change, TALM would be ideally suited to provide these students an initial introduction to Morocco.

When I was interviewed by the Board for this position more than thirteen years ago, I said that it seemed to me the Museum had not really discovered its purpose. I don't think this is the case any more. The ties that have been developed with AIMS and with the Moroccan community in Tangier as well as our symbiotic relationship with the American Embassy in Rabat, have transformed the Legation from a historical curiosity into an institution. We are moving forward with specific programs and defined goals.

Blog: Morocco

In 1999, when "web" and "log" were combined to form the word "blog", few foresaw the power these online journals would wield. Now blogs number near four million and deal with every imaginable topic. One of the strongest Morocco-related blogs is *Thé à la menthe: Reflections on Far Away Morocco* at <http://www.williamsonday.com/morocco/> run by FOM member Bill Day 88-90 and an early contributor to the FOM web site.

Another large blog/web site is *Moorish Girl* at <http://www.moorishgirl.com/> by Laila Lalami. Ms. Lalami was born in Morocco, went to a Catholic school as a kid, public high school in Rabat, college in Britain, and grad school in California, resulting in B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees, mostly in linguistics. She says, "There weren't very many distractions when I was growing up, so I read voraciously, and quite eclectically—anything from Spiderman to Driss Chraïbi to Mohammed Choukri to Alexandre Dumas. I've been writing for many years, but only took up the craft more seriously when I turned 30 and decided life was too short not to do what I really wanted to do." She started *Moorish Girl* in October 2001. The blog features literary news, commentary, book reviews and author interviews as well as occasional political and cultural links. While the site is ranging, searching "Morocco" on the site turned up many interesting references.

There are a large number of individual, group and professional blog sites and pages that discuss travel in

Morocco. Said the Washington Post on travel blogs, "Most are free-for-all group sites where thousands of users post their little rants from the road. The more organized group sites invite users to file under categories – like restaurants, hotels, tourists traps, and local customs – that you can sort through using a search window. Others merely provide space for travelers to post any kind of rambles on their ambles. And some fall in the middle, letting you sort through long journal-style entries by destination."

IgoUgo at <http://www.igougo.com> is a community where regular tourists become travel writers". There are lots of disorganized tourist slices of Morocco under both "Destinations" and "Journals". www.virtualtourist.com organizes postings Yahoo-like by location and interest area including many snapshots and some photographs. <http://www.bootsnall.com/> is a resource for independent travelers and the site itself is rich for Morocco, but the blogs it hosts are weak on Morocco-related mentions.

Visit the above sites, but FOM and the community could benefit from a volunteer effort to filter and rate the blogosphere and provide a road map for newbies. Contact tresch@att.net if interested.

Morocco Publishes King's Salary

From the BBC



King Mohammed VI
(photo courtesy of
the BBC)

A Moroccan magazine has taken the unprecedented step of publishing details of King Mohammed VI's salary.

The French-language magazine *Tel Quel* says the monarch earns less than a typical company director in the developed world, under \$45,000 a month. The annual expenses of the royal court are said to be around \$250 million.

Correspondents say the publication

of such figures is a unique event in the Arab region, whose unelected leaders are some of the richest in the world.

King Mohammed has been spearheading a drive to modernise his society and introduce a culture of accountability, correspondents say.

He has made the fight against poverty in Morocco one of his priorities, earning him the name "guardian of the poor".

Since coming to power in 1999, he has embarked on a series of political and economic changes.

Thank You!

Merci!

شكرًا

Many thanks to the people listed below who contributed to Friends of Morocco above and beyond their membership fees.

David Burgess
Phyllis Erikson & Thomas A Coyne
Abdessamad "Sam" Nhairy

Hildreth Cooper

Tristan Del Canto
Peter Laugharn
Anonymous

Elizabeth McClintock
John Leister

(Continued from page 1)

Ellen Hunt, Casey Troy, Stacy McCoy and others.

Musical acts included a group of drummers called "Sounds of Morocco," who played while roving through the crowds in traditional outfits – tunics and pants called jabadoor. Much of the group's set was devoted to the joyous, lively musical style of Marrakesh, a city in the south of Morocco where the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert converge. Other performers included the Kasbah Band and the Moroccan singer, Mourad.

A Jewish Moroccan singer named Pinhas was the biggest hit with the crowd. Many in the audience left off eating lunches of kabobs, roasted vegetables, couscous, hummus and homemade bread, in order to sway and clap during his performance. Pinhas is well-known in Morocco for his mix of flamenco sounds with Jewish and Muslim liturgical music and North African secular songs.

Pinhas was joined on stage by Muslim musicians for a finale. That fusion "focuses on what binds us," said Rhanime, noting that Moroccans are Muslim, Jewish and Christian and have lived in peace for centuries.

Organizers, intent on creating a bustling scene, staged a Moroccan wedding at midday. An engaged couple from Bethesda, Maryland, Christie Walser and Thomas Mullins, who subsequently married in late October in Fes, Morocco, were recruited. While not Moroccan, the couple happened to be arranging their "destination wedding" through a travel agency run by festival organizer Hassan Samrhouni, who is also president of the Washington Moroccan Club. He talked them into the "pre-wedding" at the festival. Hassan is also on the FOM Board of Directors and donated the door prize of a trip to two to Morocco (with Royal Air Maroc).

Walser, dressed in a white dress, made her entrance carried on an *amaria*, an elegant, roofed platform supported by long poles held by four men. The men hoisted Walser on the *amaria* into the air, and they were followed by Mullins on foot, who was also dressed in white. The wedding cortege was accompanied by Pinhas and musicians from The Kasbah Band, who sang and played alongside the dancing *amaria* bearers. A top her jostling *amaria*, Walser smiled and waved to the crowd, and expressed relief afterward that she had not eaten anything earlier.

In traditional weddings in Morocco, the bride is carried to her wedding this way, and sometimes the groom is too, from a different part of the city. Afterward, they are lifted together to greet their guests as a married couple. "This shows the joy of her," said Samrhouni. "It is like flying to another place, just before the wedding."

In Morocco, brides have their hands and feet painted with henna, a natural dye that washes off in a few weeks. The festival featured a henna-painting station, which was quite popular with pre-teen girls. Today, in Morocco, Rhanime said, women paint their hands or feet with henna to celebrate any happy occasion.

The festival was also a melting pot of native Washingtonians, Moroccan immigrants and visitors. Rhanime estimates that 20,000 Moroccan immigrants live in the Washington area. A group of Moroccan children gave a

fashion show (organized by Martha Dye and Driss Benmhend), with emcee Martha naming their local Washington area schools, but often also noting that a child's outfit was sent from a grandparent in Morocco.

Each year since 1990, the community center has held a cultural festival featuring a different country. Despite predictions of rainstorms on the day of the event, the Moroccan festival attracted the "largest attendance for our fall cultural festivals besides [that for] the Russian culture," said Sam Roberts, the Center's events director.

"I'm committed to fostering understanding. These are the types of Americans we want. With the world climate what it is today, I want to do whatever I can to bridge misconceptions," said festival organizer Annalisa Assaadi.

Driss Behnmend is a Moroccan who has made McLean his home for seven years. "I'd like people in my community to know the real Morocco, with its ancient, rich culture and hospitable, peace-loving people," said Behnmend. The festival, he said, can "clear up any ideas people may get from the news" about that area of the world. Morocco is a country roughly the size of California with much of the same topography. It has both fertile farmland and desert oasis within its boundaries. "Even though it's a small country, it has a lot of ethnic groups, with their own customs, food and religions. They get along. That's the Morocco I know," said Behnmend.

Nasir Assaadi, a McLean Moroccan, said his countrymen here who are working on the festival want to impart a sense of the richness of the culture to their neighbors. "As a Moroccan, I would hope people get a clear idea about the culture and see the different and new face of the Moroccan community and see the similarities we all have as a community.

Annalisa Assaadi said, "I hope that people will walk away [from the festival] with the sense that Moroccans are gentle, compassionate people whose culture can complement our way of life."

The diversity seen in Morocco mirrors that of McLean, according to Behnmend. "I chose McLean for its ethnic diversity. My neighbors are from all over. My neighbors are French, from Brazil, Arabia, from all over," said Behnmend.

"People here in McLean are well-traveled and well-educated, but we need to do whatever we can to bring understanding," said Annalisa Assaadi. "The top Moroccans in the community, who are passionate about creating the array of sights and smells of Morocco, are working on this. It is being displayed through the food, the pottery, rugs and fashions. Morocco is the smell of mint tea, fellowship and brotherhood. We hope everyone who comes will experience this for themselves."

Rhanime said he hopes the day set a precedent. He said he wants to take "Magical Morocco" on the road to Boston, Orlando and New York, which all have large Moroccan populations.

Major sponsors included Bank of America, Cox Communications, Gaithersburg Mazda Isuzu, Moroccan Salon Imports (FOM member Sam Nhairy), Creme de la Creme, Casablanca Travel and Tours and Royal Air Maroc.

News From Morocco

New South Korean volunteers placed in Morocco

Ten new volunteers from South Korea have arrived in Morocco. They were greeted with an opening ceremony organized by the Korean International Agency for Cooperation. Korea and Morocco agreed to place the volunteers in social institutions, the faculty for economic and legal sciences at Meknes, the Urban Safety Agency at Fes, the Urban Commune at Fes, the Fes Agency for Urban Renewal and the regional pedagogic center at Rabat.

Korea is following the successful policy of Japan investing in the economy and society of developing countries in order to be placed in a stronger trading and diplomatic position for the future. Morocco welcomes the higher quality but cheaper priced Korean products.

Morocco's working children number 600,000

Malak Benjelloun, the Moroccan administrator of the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), announced Thursday there are 600, 000 children working in Morocco. The information was part of a study jointly organized by the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Solidarity and IPEC. The National study on employment ("l'étude nationale sur l'emploi") revealed working boys and girls aged between five and 14 represent 11% of Morocco's children.

Eighty-seven percent of working children come from rural areas, while only 13% are from cities, confirms the study, explaining that rural areas suffer from financial difficulties making it impossible to buy books and other school necessities. Also, rural children have to walk very long distances to reach their schools. Traditions, which make children an appreciated workforce in rural areas, also force them to leave school at an early age to help their parents with their farms.

Quite unexpectedly, the study also revealed that there are more working boys than girls. The reason being more girls who do not go to school tend to stay in their families' homes, while more non-schooled boys work.

According to the Moroccan law, children of both sexes are not allowed to work under the age of 15.

Domestic violence increasing in Morocco, survey

Domestic violence is increasing in Morocco, according to a national survey which revealed that 60 per cent of violence cases concern married women aged 20 to 49 years and 59.8 pc are the consequence of disputes over child custody, divorce and alimony.

The survey conducted between 2000 and 2003 at the initiative of the Democratic League of Women's Rights on the occasion of the celebration, November 25, of the international day of violence against women, describes as "worrisome" domestic violence.

The survey, based on the testimonies of victims that showed up in the 23 centers of "juridical orientation and psychological support for victims" scattered around the

country, show that most cases of domestic violence are recorded in the cities.

It also showed that in most cases husbands, brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law are to blame for the aggressions against married women.

The direct causes of this violent behaviour are alcohol, drugs, nervous breakdowns and perversity.

To tackle this phenomenon, the Moroccan Government has ratified a number of international conventions banning domestic violence against women and improved the status of women thanks to the new Family Code which was enforced last year.

Moroccan English news website launched

Morocco Times, a Moroccan news website in English, was launched this Nov.22 during the opening of the international World Summit on the Information Society in Marrakech.

"The Morocco Times website (www.moroccotimes.com) is designed to be an open space, defending the values of democracy, modernity and freedom," said Othman El Oumeir, President of Maroc Soir, the leading press group in Morocco, which publishes Le Matin in French, Assahra Al Maghribia in Arabic and La Manana in Spanish.

There is currently a huge need for an English news source from Morocco, stressed Oumeir. "There are many Moroccans studying English in the country and a huge amount of Moroccans living in English-speaking countries. But mostly, there is a need for an international knowledge of Morocco," he said, adding that until now, the only international access to Moroccan news was in French.

The website, whose motto is "The local newspaper with a global perspective," will be updated daily to provide balanced news coverage of Morocco and the Maghreb region. It will also cover international news and provide a Moroccan angle to the world's events and issues. "This site will be open to different viewpoints and will address all aspects of Moroccan daily life from politics and the economy to culture and society," Oumeir said.

Based in Casablanca, the Morocco Times has an international staff with backgrounds, in addition to journalism, include communication studies, archaeology, translation, finance, athletics, literature, religion and cultural studies.

The website also promises an extensive coverage of the conference that will address the Role and Place of Media in the Information Society in Africa and the Arab States. It will be attended by media professionals, non-governmental organizations concerned with freedom of expression and freedom of the press and academic experts from across the globe. <http://www.moroccotimes.com>

Locust swarms invade south, east of Morocco

Locust swarms have invaded in the latest week the southern city of Laayoune and the eastern province of

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(News from Morocco—continued from page 21)

Jerada causing serious damages in crops and green spaces.

The first swarms swept into Laayoune on Friday despite efforts to fight these insects that can consume vast swathes of crops.

The swarms that invaded the region of Jerada came through eastern borders with Algeria.

A single swarms can cover up to 5.000 to 30.000 hectares, said president of the anti-locusts regional center in Laayoune, Ekka Elbouki. He said 97pc of the targeted area has been treated so far.

Nearly 60.000 hectares have been treated during the 4 latest days in the surroundings of Laayoune, he explained, noting that locusts caused major damages in the green space of the city of Laayoune and its surrounding, as well as in the irrigated area of Fom El-Ouad.

Locusts had previously swept the region of Figuig, near Jerada, last October.

Official sources said the situation is currently under control.

Morocco eyes Arab tourism market

Morocco which already constitutes a destination of choice for Europeans, is seeking to attract more tourists from Arab countries. For this purpose, the Government will support efforts of travel agencies and tour operators in Arab countries that want to encourage their citizens to visit Morocco.

A message addressed by HM King Mohammed VI to participants in the International Congress of Journalists and Writers specialized in tourism that opened, here Wednesday, said that despite the fact that Morocco has exceeded, for the first time ever, the 5 million tourist mark in 2004, "we do not content ourselves merely with visitors from European countries, which constitute the first tourist-emitting market in the world, but we also count on Arab tourism as we believe in the cultural role of tourist exchange and the contribution it makes to strengthening brotherly bonds between our peoples."

In his message read out on his behalf by Adil Douiri, Moroccan Minister of Tourism, handicraft and Social Economy, the monarch said: "In accordance with my instructions, the Moroccan government is seeking to support the efforts of travel agencies and tour operators in Arab countries that want to encourage their citizens to visit Morocco."

HM King Mohammed VI also called on investors, especially from the hotel industry in Arab and other countries, to avail themselves of the valuable and promising opportunities arising from the thriving tourist industry in the North African country.

Over US\$ 2 million allocated to control of beggary in Morocco

A budget of 20 million DH (over US\$ 2 million) was earmarked for a program to control beggary and the use of children in begging, said social development, family and solidarity minister, Abderrahim Harouchi.

The official told the weekly question-time at the chamber of advisors (upper parliamentary chamber) his department has worked out a program that evolves around social and family

integration of children exploited in beggary and economic integration of adults who exploit children, and involves non-governmental organization in raising awareness on the dangers of this plague.

The program will start next week, said the minister, who also announced the launching of 1,816 small projects, for a total cost of 320 million DH (over US\$ 33 million) consisting of infrastructures, social services, income-generating activities and integrating persons in a precarious situation, said Harouchi who did not give any figures on children involved in begging.

Moroccan first Arab women to become head of Olympic Candidate Evaluation Commission

Nawal El Moutawakil, 44 years old, is a Moroccan hero and legend thanks to her performance in the 400 meter hurdles in the Olympic games in Los Angeles in 1984. Now, Nawal has become the President of the Candidate Evaluation Commission and as of next year will judge which candidates are entitled to participate in the 2012 Olympic Games.

She is the first Arab, African or Muslim woman to be selected for this post, as reports Driss Bougrine, from the French language Web afrique-sport.com website. Bougrine explains that Nawal and Saïd Aouita represent the golden age of Moroccan athletics.

US-based Moroccans found charity

A group of Moroccans living in the US states of Virginia, California, New Jersey, Massachussets and Chicago have set up the "Morocco Foundation" charity, to support Morocco's efforts for the protection of destitute children, encourage children schooling, particularly rural girls and bring relief to poorest populations and handicapped persons.

The association secretary general, Nadia Serhane, says the non-political and non-profit seeking association will seek to establish cultural and humanitarian cooperation with Americans and other foreign communities living in the USA.

A campaign to collect books, clothes and school supplies that will be shipped to Morocco was the association's first activity, said Serhane, adding that most donations came from Americans and Albanians. The association also intends to collect medical and orthopaedic equipment, medicine and wheelchairs for hospitals as well as computers and educational tools to be sent to social and youth training centers. The association's activities can be viewed at its website (www.moroccofoundation.org).

Moroccan Jews hold religious festival

Taroudant (South of Morocco), Dec. 16 - The Jewish community of Morocco organized, here Tuesday, in the Ribi David Ben Baroukh Cemetery in Aghzouba Hammou, (province of Taroudant), its religious "Moussem" (festival)

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(Pottery - continued from page 11)

maalem stayed with us past 7 pm, more than an hour after his normal work-day ends. Two of the potters were so enraptured that they dreamed of returning and spending a month with this maalem.

Thursday, day three, was on to the next phase of the training. This included trimming of the pieces "thrown" the day before. I saw one of the potters do an add-on like we had seen the maalem do the night before. We realized that the potters were learning many practical techniques that would be immediately useful even in the short term when they returned to making tajines.

The big step this day was to actually do some decorating. A specialist maalem from the school showed them how to lay out designs on vases and bowls. They then began to get the feel of painting with brushes - very shaky at first, but stronger by the end of the day. It was interesting to see the association president (a non-potter) participate in this phase. He created some very good designs and had a steady hand for the decorating. It was also fascinating to watch him throughout the trip making sure the men were cared for, engaged and learning. And he brainstormed with them every evening about what the future possibilities could be.

At the end of day three the potters and students glazed their painted pieces and loaded them into an electric kiln in the classroom for overnight firing. Note that the staff stayed again until almost 7 pm to complete this process!

In the meantime preparations were occurring to fire the traditional kiln. Initially there was a small malfunction of one of the five propane burners. That was a good reminder that there needs to be a mechanically-trained person to oversee any such kiln. Those burners were fabricated in Spain, but we understand that there are Moroccan-manufactured products available.

I attempted to verify the economics of the cost of the firing (the product in the kiln would be having its second firing which consumes less energy than the first, or biscuit firing, when there is a lot of moisture in the clay). In the end we could not verify the exact cost because the meter on the large propane tank that feeds this and other kilns was broken. However,

there is a new association of six Safi potters who plan to invest in a similar kiln and they are quite confident of their cost information. Their construction cost will be 70,000 dirhams, and each firing will cost an average of 300 dh.

Of note, one of the observations was that even the traditional wood-burning kilns in use in Safi have a different design that prevents the wind from making a back draft down the chimney and dampening the fire. The potters discussed how they might modify their own kilns to accomplish this.

Another important learning was just how serious are the problems created by the lead glazes in use - contributing to health problems for both the potters and users. It will be important to change glazes because the potters know that in the short term they will continue to produce pottery used for cooking and eating. We also discussed the costs of the paint and glazes used for decorative pottery which are quite expensive.

On Friday morning both kilns were opened and the full unloading process was observed. The potters were able to see the results of proper loading techniques and they received the decorative pieces they had painted and glazed the day before. In the afternoon the entire team held a debriefing session with the Delegué.

The comments were all positive and the thanks profuse to the staff of the training center for their dedication. The summary thank you speech included huge thanks to Peace Corps and the Vermont Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who helped finance the trip. There is now the potential to breathe new life into a dying village where artisanal work makes good sense for the long term. The raw material exists and is of good quality, there is a market for the products, and a multi-generation tradition of the trade.

<http://www.moroccotimes.com/paper/article.asp?idr=11&id=991>

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widely accepted process because of the many collective and individual benefits the community experiences. As people fulfill their own interests, they feel less alienation, and their zone of tolerance also expands because the underlying conditions that fuel extremism are being directly addressed. Those affected are then less likely to channel hatred toward outside actors. Additionally, as more and more Iraqis enjoy the benefits of the indigenous reconstruction approach, they will become increasingly emboldened to oppose extremism within their own country.

If communities are fully engaged in the design, implementation, and management of reconstruction projects that influence their daily lives, then aid as a tool of public diplomacy will be effective. For the United States to support this new direction in the reconstruction of Iraq requires that

policy makers think very differently about how lasting development can be achieved and understand the absolutely vital role local communities must play in the process. The reconstruction of Iraq will be sustained by its own communities if they are put in control of its design and management. Indigenous capacities to manage development can reach their potential only when local people are in charge of rebuilding essential and major sectors of their own economic, social, and cultural life.

Jason Ben-Meir is President of the High Atlas Foundation.

Book Review: *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*

By Bill Day (Outat El Haj 88-90)



I have just finished reading *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*. Ibn Batuta's tale of his travels first to Mecca and then to the exotic East, with a brief coda on his voyage to Mali, provides a glimpse into a world far removed from most of our experience.

In the first place, Ibn Batuta's voyages, though often fraught with peril in the form of shipwrecks and attacks by pirates and bandits, are enveloped with an air of privilege. He travels from one sultan's court to another, where he is invariably showered with presents and frequently appointed to a state office. He leverages his experience in one court at the next by impressing each successive sultan by his intimacy with his previous host. His prestige reaches its apex when the Sultan of Dihli (Delhi) appoints him ambassador to China.

For protection on the road, Ibn Batuta typically travels with an armed escort or in a merchant caravan. In addition to being well provisioned, these caravans enable Ibn Batuta to bring his retinue, including a number of slaves male and female, with him on his journeys.

The society that Ibn Batuta describes centers around a series of royal courts, generally presided over by a sultan. In attendance on the sultan are one or more viziers and any number of princes. Ibn Batuta encounters a number of Sufis and other Islamic holy men along his route, and even withdraws from the world and embraces an ascetic life at one point until he is once again seduced by the pleasures of the court. Ibn Batuta was by birth a *shaikh* and by training a *qadi*, or Islamic judge, and various sultans appoint him to judgeships in the course of his travels. Merchants are mentioned, but mostly in passing to explain how the court is provisioned, there is little description of them in terms of

individuals. Finally, one gets the impression that the courts that Ibn Batuta visits are maintained by a veritable army of slaves.

Ibn Batuta's world is also clearly one of male privilege. As mentioned above, he usually travels with several slave girls, whose main purpose is evidently his sexual gratification. He even mentions at one point that one of his slave girls bore him a child. In addition, at any given court at which he stays for any length of time, he takes up to four wives (the maximum number that the Koran allows). When it is time to move on, he simply divorces them, a practice that in some cases was enjoined by a ban on women's traveling. In one instance he returns to India to look for a son that was born to him twenty years earlier, but the boy has died in the interim.

The Travels are punctuated with savage violence. In addition to the brigandage en route, the usual means by which one Sultan succeeds another seems to have been by murdering his predecessor, who is often a member of his own family. In addition, such offenses as picking up a piece of fruit lying on the public highway are in some kingdoms a capital crime, and the hapless offender is impaled and crucified as an example to others. Ibn Batuta appears to take such punishments as a matter of course.

Ultimately, *The Travels* portray a rich mosaic of sophisticated cultures throughout the Islamic world in the 14th century, when it was arguably at its zenith, and for that reason alone are well worth reading.

*Editor's note: **The Travels of Ibn Battutah**, edited by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, is available for sale via on-line bookstores.*

Free Copies of NPCA's *WorldView* Magazine for Teachers



The National Peace Corps Association is offering free copies of recent issues of our quarterly publication, *WorldView*. We will send free sets of forty magazines for the cost of shipping. *WorldView* magazine has news, commentary, and stories about the developing world, and is an excellent resource for high school or even middle school classrooms, as well as a great addition to any school library. Free lesson plans to go

few of the topics addressed in those issues:
Vol 15-4 (Fall 2002)
Building a dam in Uganda
Gypsy prom

Vol 16-1 (Winter 2003)

with articles from *WorldView* are also available online at <http://www.rpcv.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=268>.

Below is a list of available issues of the magazine and a



How Atlas Men Marry - Chatting Up Women All Over the World

by Sharif Erik-Soussi

The Hajj and I generally keep our conversations limited to topics of health and weather because of either his disinterest or my poor Arabic. He may, on rare occasion, ask me if I worked that day, to which any response brings an "Ilyawn." May God help you in your task. So it was of considerable surprise the day he asked me to teach him how to use the Internet. I couldn't imagine that the Hajj, the grandfather of my hosting family, would have much use or much interest in the Internet. He has, on more than one occasion, seen me answering e-mail and asked me why there was no sound coming out of my "special television." I asked if he knew what the Internet was.

"No," he replied. "But my wife is dead, and I know if you know how to use the Internet, you can marry a foreign bride."

Taza, a city of about 200,000 nestled snugly in the only pass through the middle Atlas, has the blessing of a relatively high rate of education, the curse of higher unemployment and a glut of young people. The combination often forces its citizens to get creative to ensure a future. The easiest way is generally to leave, earn your money and then come back to take advantage of the low cost of living in Taza. But it's not that easy in Morocco. People can't just schlep off to the big city for a couple of years to earn their nest egg. Despite the western lifestyle available in Casablanca or Marrakech, getting even menial labor requires connections that most people in Taza just don't have. Education and experience are often meaningless.

Given this, the emigration fever runs deeply. Indeed, one of the first things I noticed upon arriving here is that everyone wants to leave. Not that this is any different than other developing countries, but it's more profound here in that the possibility is realistic enough to be tantalizing. Most younger Moroccans speak at least one European language fluently, and often several. You have only to go to Tangier to be able to see the coast of Spain. Every summer when Moroccans living in Europe have their holiday, they are welcomed back like conquering war heroes, the EU plates on their new cars a badge of honor. This is true everywhere in Morocco, but more so in Taza.

Following September 11, few in Taza could meet the more stringent U.S. immigration criteria, for example. Suddenly, just getting your diploma and applying for a visa to France or Belgium wasn't a realistic option any more. Emigration became much more of a forbidden fruit. It didn't take long for Moroccans to figure out that increasingly the most efficient way—often the only way—to get to a country with a currency worth earning is through marriage. But how to meet and marry a foreign woman? Enter: Internet chatting as the responsible career path for young jobless men.

From my understanding, it's been about 10 years since the first Internet café sprung up in Taza, funded by a returned

migrant from France looking for a low-maintenance low-risk investment for his European money. This is generally the story in Morocco. Most of the investment money is either old or foreign. Owners of cyber cafés are generally working-age men from wealthy families or returned migrants. Cyber cafés are popping up in Taza about once every couple of months, but demand still outweighs supply.

During the day, the cafés are generally quiet. The patrons may number no more than a few children playing generations-old video games while café employees pirate new music or movies for sale. But after the sun goes down and the town shakes off its afternoon siesta, the true character and purpose of the cyber café is revealed. What was in daylight a poorly ventilated room of 20 or 30 decade-old computers becomes the night-time hot spot of the town's upwardly mobile younger class of males. There are always lines out the door.

Away from the oppressive heat of the town and 5 to 8 time zones ahead of the United States, these Internet Romeos try to catch women in the dregs of their workday who like to kill time before the end of the workday. Walk into any cyber café, and the scene is pretty much the same: Arabic pop blasting on an endless loop, children hawking single cigarettes and hard-boiled eggs, and a young man in sunglasses making kissy-face to a computer screen for the web cam. It looks like a Harrah's casino with its bank of slot machines offering jackpots to lost souls. English classes are booming in popularity as the chatters, already fluent in French, look to tap into the enormous pool of singles in the United States. Those who already know their English find day work roaming cyber cafés helping chatters phrase a few romantic sentences. Groups of young Moroccan boys forego their movies and coffee shops to hang out with the café's owner and discuss their prospects like fly fishermen in a tackle shop. Among the locals, the word "chat" is conjugated like an Arabic verb.

In small-town Morocco, the girls are frowned on if they leave the house for anything more than chores or visiting their relatives, especially in the evenings or where young men are at play in a cyber café. Women grow up under the greater prohibition against marrying a non-Muslim—it is religiously prohibited, culturally disgraceful and illegal. But women are now entering the cyber cafés, apparently frustrated with such a lifestyle. They tend to have less formal education and are, therefore, slower to adopt the chatting procedures. They enter wearing western clothes and makeup for the web cam. Generally, they do not appear to attach the same importance to acquiring a foreign spouse; they are more motivated by the social and entertainment value of the evening. Some, however, still hold out the vague hope that they can find an immigrant Arab or Muslim somewhere in cyberspace for the sake of their families. Older women, and especially those who are

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no longer virgins, are more interested in a foreign spouse because they are less marriageable within the Muslim community. A woman who never marries does not live an enviable life in the Arab world.

The act of proposing to someone you have never met may sound ridiculous to many, but in Taza it happens. Inspired by the success stories of their friends or family, they are doing so in increasing numbers. Everyone I know knows someone that has married someone through the Internet. I've lived in Taza for a year and I know five men who have acquired internet brides.

In the Arab world, marriage has always been more of a contract than a joining of souls. There are certain things a man is supposed to do, certain things a woman is supposed to do, and if they can both do them successfully the deal is half done. They marry for the idea of what kind of life they will have with their spouse rather than how much they love one another. Love comes later, if at all. I had initially used this as a possible explanation for why people seemed, to my amazement, to be marrying carelessly fast. But a trip to the café with some friends revealed that it was more often the American on the other side of the screen that first raised the romantic intentions. What sounded initially like an orchestrated visa-centred manipulation turned out to be little more than taking advantage of a presented opportunity.

Living in a poor city does funny things to people. The desperation and frustration of it makes them believe in miracles, something from the outside world offering you a quick and permanent fix to a troubled existence. There is a well-known story of a poor Taza girl who was working on the assembly line of a local textile factory. She caught the eye of the factory owner, who had just flown in from Germany to see how the factory was doing. They married and now she occasionally visits her village in a Mercedes.

The folklore is not all encouraging. A young man who became engaged to what he thought was a 19-year-old rich girl quit his job, broke with his family and prepared for his one-way trip to the United States. To his shock and surprise, the woman he met at the airport was a 60-something woman

recently widowed who had been chatting under her granddaughter's profile. She had come to Morocco because her pension wasn't enough to live on in the States. Embarrassed and without options he married the woman because she was the only meal ticket he had left. They now live a hermit-like existence, she unwilling to learn Arabic, he unwilling to face his former friends.

Many of the unions seem questionable at best. Call me insensitive, but I have a hard time believing that all the young men who are now commonly seen walking around Taza holding hands with women easily old enough to be their grandmothers would be doing so if there wasn't a visa in the deal. I would sooner call them desperate measures for desperate times, and often did. But doing so ignores the larger truth that success stories are more common than marriages that end badly. More often than not, these young men make devoted and loving husbands and, increasingly, fathers. They work, they send money home to their parents and siblings, and they live their new life with some degree of success. It remains to be seen if they will ever return to this lovely little town in eastern Morocco, but having that choice certainly beats out living here bitterly.

Over a cup of mint tea, the owner of my local store told me about his best friend, Ali, who left for Florida to marry a woman he met through a chat program. Ali has done well with two businesses, a home furnishings store and selling large Allah-emblazoned pendants to hip hop fans in Los Angeles.

I met Ali when he came back to Taza for a visit.

We talked about his business, his new life in Florida, his youth in Taza. He said he was excited to get back to Florida.

"Worried about your business?" I asked.

"No" He replied. "I miss my wife."

"Taza will always be dear to me, but it's not home anymore. My home now is wherever she is."

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celebrated annually for more than 70 years now.

Many Jews from all over Morocco and foreign countries like the United States, Canada, Israel and Switzerland, come in annual pilgrimage to the Mausoleum of the Jewish venerated Saint, descendant of a grandfather who lived in the 10th century in the area of Mentaga, in the province of Taroudant.

In addition to being part of the main religious events of the Moroccan Jewish community, this festival boosts the commercial activity of the Taroudant region.

Five million tourists visited Morocco in 2004

Casablanca, Dec. 17 - Five million tourists visited Morocco by the end of 2004, said Moroccan Tourism Minister, noting that 4.7 million tourists visited the country in January-October 2004, compared to 4 million in the same period in 2003 and

3.8 million in 2002.

Speaking at a debate-conference, organized by the French Trade and Industry Chamber, the Tourism Minister, Adil Douiri, said thanks to a short-term policy, the national tourism sector managed to overcome the crisis in this sector after many world capitals were hit by terrorist acts.

Tourists flow to Morocco is the result of permanent contacts with new tourism partners in France, Spain, The United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium in addition to Moroccan expatriates, he explained, recalling the government's goal to reach 10 million tourists by 2010.

He said his department aims at increasing the number of beds to 230,000 instead of 75,000 in 2000. Establishing a competitive policy, creating a distribution and marketing network and training about 70,000 people in tourism-related activities are also among top priorities, according to the minister.

Want to Visit Morocco Next Spring?

Want to see how Morocco has changed, or not, since you were in the Peace Corps? Or show your friends or family the place you learned to love as a PCV? Remember the article by Kathy Kohlman Sparkes last issue about her trip to Morocco? There are now two similar opportunities for you in the Spring of 2005.

Join us as we explore exotic Morocco--perfumed markets, fabulous crafts and delicious food are just a few of the experiences you'll enjoy! A truly unique feature of these trips is meeting many local people in their homes and villages. We travel over the Atlas Mountains, ride a camel into the dunes of the Sahara, stay in comfortable hotels in Marrakech, Fes, Rabat and the charming seaside town of Essaouira. And in a tent in the Sahara! Meeting local people, we have the opportunity to discuss education, parenting, health, weaving and other topics with them firsthand. Susan Schaefer Davis is our study leader. A former PCV (Morocco V), she has worked and lived in Morocco over the past 30 years, and highlights include meeting with some of her Moroccan colleagues who will share their professional lives and experiences with us.

In order to make this a more personal experience, the trip is limited to 14 travelers. We have prepared two departures,

based on requests and past trips. The value is exceptional, as there are few out-of-pocket expenses. The March trip is slightly more expensive due to the season. The length of both trips is 13 days; content is different, although with similar excellent activities. Please check Susan Davis' website www.marrakeshexpress.org and click on "Travel" at the bottom of the home page to access the details of each trip.

March 5-17, 2005 \$2411 per person, based on 11-14 travelers, not including international airfare (deposit due Jan. 1!)

May 21-June 2, 2005 \$2285 per person, based on 11-14 travelers, not including international airfare

If you would like more information, or wish to discuss the trips further, please contact Susan Davis at sdavis@uslink.net or Joan Noble, trip organizer and escort, at (800) 566-9228 or junglijoan@yahoo.com.

We could also organize a special trip for your group.

Truth Commission Begins Public Hearings

From the Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) - North Africa's first truth commission opened public hearings in Morocco on Tuesday, giving victims of human rights abuses dating back decades an unprecedented platform and marking an "important step" in a new relationship between the kingdom and its citizens, a rights group said.

The Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission, established by King Mohammed VI as part of human rights reforms, plans to hear up to 250 testimonies over a minimum 10-week period.

The New York-based International Center of Transitional Justice, or ICTJ, which assists countries pursuing accountability for human rights abuses, called the hearings a role model for the region.

"It is almost unheard of in this part of the world for victims to be given an official platform to relate their experiences of abuse," said Hanny Megally, director of the center's Middle East and North Africa division. The group helped set up the Moroccan commission and has worked with truth commissions in Sierra Leone, Peru and elsewhere.

"Hearings are an important step in the construction of a new relationship between a state and its citizens," the statement said, adding that the commission had received more than 22,000 submissions related to past human rights abuses. It selected a sampling of cases related to the body's themes: disappearances, torture and arbitrary detention.

Among the first to speak was Jamal Ameziane, telling of

the disappearance of his father who led anti-government forces during a revolt in 1958-1959. His father fled a death sentence in Morocco and died in exile in 1995, he said.

"My story is that of thousands of Moroccans," he said. "I dream of lifting the veil on the dark years, without fear of repression in the future."

More testimony came from Chari Lel Ouh, 61, who was arrested in 1973 for political activism as a member of an opposition socialist party. He spoke of four years in "abominable" conditions in a secret detention center.

"If I am speaking about this here tonight, years after the fact, it is because I wanted to open up -- to speak," he said.

The commission was set up in January to identify and provide compensation in human rights cases that blackened Morocco's image for decades, from 1956-1999.

It is charged with locating detention sites and remains, assisting survivors and providing compensation.

"Our objective is that Moroccans reconcile with themselves and with their history," the king said in January. He said he wanted to see "the culture of rights and duties of man become the best rampart ... against extremist and terrorist tendencies."

Mohammed VI has overseen social, political and human rights reforms since he took the throne after the death of his father, Hassan II.

Are you still an FOM member?

Membership in Friends of Morocco brings you, in addition to all issues of our newsletter, special mailings announcing the annual meeting, reunions, seminars, and special Moroccan arts and craft showings. Membership also brings you the satisfaction of contributing to the goals and aims of Friends of Morocco. At least once a year we do a system-wide mailing to keep our address database accurate and to give people the opportunity to join us. The mailing label below indicates when your membership expires

If you have not paid your membership dues of \$15.00 (individual) annually to the Friends of Morocco, please consider doing that now. We appreciate any additional contributions and recognize special contributors in the Friends of Morocco newsletter.

Contribute to the FOM newsletter

FOM members are encouraged to submit original contributions for the newsletters. Please send any contributions by email as a Microsoft Word attachment (I can't guarantee a typo-free contribution if I have to re-type it) to Kate Trayte, FOM newsletter editor at <k8tr8@yahoo.com>. Any type of contribution is appreciated: photos, book reviews, recipes, fiction or non-fiction, but please make it Morocco or Peace Corps-related.



اصدقاء المغرب

Friends of Morocco Newsletter is published quarterly by the Friends of Morocco and is circulated to its members and other interested parties. The organization was formed in 1988 to reunite PCVs who have served in Morocco, to inform members about current events and conditions in Morocco, to promote a better understanding of Morocco and Moroccans on the part of Americans, and to fund or otherwise support development activities in Morocco. Membership is \$15 annually. FOM is governed by a nine-member national advisory board. Mailing address: Friends of Morocco, P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579. For further information, contact FOM president Tim Resch at 703-660-9292 or by email <tresch@att.net>.

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