

Winter 2004

# Friends of Morocco اصدقاء المغرب

www.friendsofmorocco.org

## Ijtimaa 2004 Coincides with NPCA National Conference in Chicago

By Tim Resch, FOM President (Ouezzane/Rabat 70-74)

Plan now to attend the 2004 Friends of Morocco *Ijtimaa* in Chicago August 5 to 8, 2004 coinciding with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) National Conference. The Chicago Area Peace Corps Association (CAPCA) in conjunction with the NPCA, will host the four-day conference. The conference theme is "Peace Corps 2004: Celebrating a Legacy of Service". In keeping with the theme, CAPCA will be inviting leaders in peace and advocacy to speak and will be presenting awards of recognition to strong legacies within the Peace Corps family. Workshops presented during the conference will cover a variety of topics, including: international affairs, stateside advocacy of international projects, global education and international business practices.

Conference participants will have the opportunity to work as volunteers in the Chicago area or promote peace and Peace Corps awareness through a 5K Fun Walk/Run. Attendees are also encouraged to attend the International Marketplace, an event encouraging artisans in Chicago and around the nation to exhibit their wares, and the Career Fair, bringing together organizations and universities interested

in internationally-minded persons with backgrounds in grassroots development. For conference information and online registration, visit [www.rpcv2004.org](http://www.rpcv2004.org). Register before March 31 to take advantage of discounted registration fees. The conference will take place in the historic Palmer house Hilton Hotel in the heart of downtown Chicago. Other events will take place nearby at the parks along the lakefront. There is a discounted conference rate for the hotel and a very inexpensive youth hostel just 5 blocks away. Conference Chair is our very own Trina Janes (Sidi Addi/Azrou 91-93) <trinajanes@hotmail.com>. *Ijtimaa* 2004 Coordinator is Thom Anderson (Rich 91-95) <tkanderson@theramp.net>. Both are interested in volunteers. Contact them if you want to help make either event a success.

The main FOM *Ijtimaa* event will be at the Andalous Restaurant located in Chicago's Wrigleyville neighborhood. The food is excellent and all the employees are Moroccan. Thom and volunteers met with the owner, al Hadj, and worked out the following menu:

**Harira:** Traditional Moroccan soup

**Zaalouk:** Grilled eggplant cooked with green bell peppers, tomatoes, onions, and Moroccan spices

**Taktouka:** Tomatoes and peppers sautéed with Moroccan herbs and virgin olive oil

**Djej B'zitoun:** Chicken marinated in delicious lemon confi, with onions and saffron sauce, served with green olives

**Vegetable Couscous:** Bed of steamed semolina topped with a variety of fresh herbs and cooked garden vegetables

**Lamb Tagine:** Lamb sautéed with onions, artichoke, and green peas

**Moroccan Pastry served with mint tea**

**The Cost:** Taxes and tips included--\$28.00. The restaurant has a nice outdoor patio with a sound system that emits nice Moroccan music. In the event of rain, the indoor portion of the restaurant can accommodate us. For those who wish to imbibe during the feast, it is BYOB with a no-cork fee. They have corkscrews and wineglasses. This is actually a pretty good deal for Chicago. They are negotiating entertainment options and developing the rest of the *Ijtimaa* program

We also hope to have a booth at the International Marketplace and will do a country update as part of the NPCA Conference.

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# Ash Khabarna?

# أش اخبارنا ؟

**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.

**Connie and David Brakebill—Kenitra 73-75** live in Friendswood, TX where David is an attorney and Connie is self-employed.

**Judy McLeavey and Paul McPeck** currently live in Marstons Mills, MA. Judy is a teacher and Paul is a carpenter-builder. Contact Judy and Paul at <judymopaul@hotmail.com>.

**John Benton—Ouarzazate 80-82** writes that **Scott Taylor—Beni Mellal 80-82** was recently in Morocco and found that the fish program is extinct in Ouarzazate, but thriving in Azrou and Beni.

**Tanya and Samir Labriny** (you may remember that Tanya and Samir Labriny opened Casablanca Moroccan Restaurant in Alexandria, VA back in 1987, which is now owned and operated by brother, Raffi Labriny). Tanya and Samir's son Adam Labriny reviews *Saharan Boy* by **Richard Bellamy (Errachidia/Goulmima 75-78)** in this issue of the newsletter (see page 12). Tanya made a career change several years ago and is working as a realtor with Prudential Carruthers Realtors in Fairfax, Virginia. She says "Samir and I have lost touch with a lot of the community since selling the restaurant and we'd love to hear from you." If you're thinking about buying or selling a house in Virginia or just want to say hello, call Tanya at (703) 626-

7685. [www.Tanya.Labriny.pcragent.com](http://www.Tanya.Labriny.pcragent.com) email: <tanyapysh@aol.com>. Reach Samir at: <Labriny@yahoo.com>

**Martha Vogel Stepnowski** writes, "I've been married for 10 years and we have three children: Mark, Mary Rose and John Paul. Last year we helped sponsor two apartments of Monagnard refugees from Vietnam - I haven't lost the ability to spend hours with people I can't talk to!" Contact Martha at <mstepnowski@hotmail.com>.

**Valerie Broadwell—Khenifra 81-83** is an air quality specialist with the EPA. She writes, "Worked for Peace Corps Headquarters in DC for 3 1/2 years. Then I got married to Mark Broadwell (RPCV- Micronesia) and got a MS at American University. In 1990 we moved to Chapell Hill, NC and got jobs with the US EPA air office. Have been working there ever since. Have 2 kids ages 8 & 3. Just got back from France. Writing a history/travel book about Paris." Contact Valerie at <broadwell.valerie@epamail.epa.gov>.

**Pauline Salsler—Takerkoust CT Amizmiz 97-99** writes, "I was the oldest PCV in the 1997 group. Upon return, I had a manufactured home put on the lot I bought before I went to Morocco. Since, I have established a buffalo grass lawn, landscaping including a skyrocket juniper property line windbreak, planting apricot, plum, sweet cherry trees and grapes with garden and many flowers. I can, dehydrate and freeze fruit and veggies. I volunteer with youth, friends, thrift shop, take porcelain painting lessons and keep up with 5 kids, 6 grand kids and 5 great grand kids."

**Jeffrey Hamlin—Safi 68-70** received an MFA in theater at Columbia. From 1972-84 he was a production stage manager, managing such notable shows as *A Chorus Line* and *Dreamgirls*. Since 1984 he has been the production manager at Lincoln Center Theater with over 100 productions. Contact Jeffrey at <n2kof@pipeline.com>.

**Sarah Jernigan—Kelaâ M'gouna 95-97** writes, "I traveled in Europe and Middle East, taught in Istanbul and am finishing medical school in May. I will start a neurosurgery residency in July 2004. Contact Sarah at <scjern01@gwise.louisville.edu>.

**James Lastowski 76-77** is a senior application architect at Jenzibar in Cambridge, MA. Contact James at <iveone@cox.net>.

**Stephen Reed 92-94** works for the *New York Times* and lives in New York City. Contact Stephen at <SReed99342@aol.com>.

**James Achen—Rabat 75-77** lives in Elmhurst, IL. Contact Jim at <JamesAchen@aol.com>.

**Robert Slattery—Tineghir/Agadir 84-87** lives in Sudbury, MA and is a sales rep for monster.com selling recruitment advertising. Contact Robert at <rslatter@monster.com>.

## Morocco Boosts Women's Rights

By Tim Resch, FOM president

Moroccan women are to win greater rights concerning marriage and divorce under reforms unveiled by King Mohammed. The minimum age for women to marry is to be raised from 15 to 18 to equal that of men, and women will get property rights in the marriage. Women will now be able to divorce their husbands, rather than just the other way round, and unlike current laws, divorce will need a judge's approval. Muslim men will still be able to marry up to four wives, but, for the first time, polygamy will also need a judge's authorization, in addition to the prior consent of the man's existing wives and wife-to-be. "Make husband and wife jointly responsible for the family in keeping with the words of my ancestor the Prophet (Mohammed), 'Only an honorable man will honor them (women) and only an ignoble man will humble them,'" the king told parliament at the opening of its autumn session.

The new texts, which parliament is expected to approve, also guarantee, for the first time, the principle of sharing between husband and wife of property acquired during marriage. After succeeding his father, King Hassan II, in 1999, the 40-year-old king said he was willing to reform the *Moudawana*, or family law. Symbolically, he allowed pictures of his fiancée to be published for the first time in Moroccan history. He also initiated a quota system in last year's general elections guaranteeing 30 seats for women in the 325-member lower house of parliament.

Here are excerpts of his address broadcast live by Moroccan state television. "As for the family and promoting women's conditions, I highlighted their intrinsic problems on the eve of assuming the great responsibility of the Emir of the Faithful, asking... How can society advance while the rights of women - who form half of it - are squandered and they are subjected to injustice, violence and marginalization despite

the deference and fairness accorded to them by our true religion?... We intend... to adopt the following reforms:

1: The adoption of a new formulation to replace the notions which harm women's dignity and humanity to make the husband and wife jointly responsible for the family...

2: Give true authority to women to exercise it in accordance with their choice and interest on the basis of one of the interpretations of the Koranic verse which prevents forcing women into marriage without their consent...

3: Ensure equality between women and men with regard to setting the age of marriage at 18 years [for both]... together with entrusting the judge with the possibility of lowering the age in justifiable cases...

4: Regarding polygamy, we have taken into account Islam's tolerant aims in preserving justice... Polygamy will only be permissible in accordance with the following legal provisions:

- The judge will not allow polygamy unless he is convinced of the husband's ability to treat his second wife and her children on equal footing with the first wife in all spheres of life and if he is convinced of the objective justification to allow polygamy.
- Women have the right to impose a condition in the marriage contract preventing the husband from taking a second wife...
- If there were no conditions, the first wife should be summoned to secure her consent. The second wife should be informed that the husband was married to another woman and her consent should be obtained, and the first wife should be given the right to demand a divorce...

### Divorce reform

6: Make divorce... a prerogative that can be exercised by both the husband and the wife... under judicial supervision. The

husband's right to resort to repudiation shall be limited by norms and conditions designed to avoid misuse... Mechanisms of reconciliation and mediation shall be strengthened through the family and the judge. Divorce is the husband's prerogative, but the wife may avail herself of this prerogative... Whatever the case, it shall be ascertained that the divorced woman gets all the rights to which she is entitled before the divorce is authorized. A new procedure for divorce has been established, requiring the court's prior authorization. Divorce cannot be registered until all money owed to the wife and the children has been paid in full by the husband...

7: Expand the woman's right to file for divorce if the husband fails to observe any terms of the marriage contract or if he harms his wife through, for example, lack of financial support, desertion, violence, or any other ill-treatment... Another provision has been introduced allowing divorce by mutual consent, under the supervision of a judge.

### Gains for all Moroccans

8: Protect children's rights by adding to this law the relevant provisions of international agreements ratified by Morocco. The children's interests as regards custody will be guaranteed...

9: Give the granddaughter and the grandson on the mother's side the right to inherit from their grandfather, as part of the compulsory legacy, just like the son's children..

10: Regarding the management of property acquired by the spouses during their marriage... the couple may agree, in a document other than the marriage contract, on how to manage and invest the assets acquired jointly during their marriage. In case of disagreement, they shall resort to the judge who shall base his assessment on the general conditions of evidence to determine the contribution of each

(Continued on page 22)

## Moroccan Women Participate in Leadership Training in Washington, DC

Four Moroccan women (and one Syrian) participating in a two-week leadership training program for Arab women organized by the Arab Women's Council Research and Education Fund (AWCREF) and funded by United States Department of State Office of Citizens Exchange (OCE) met Friends of Morocco members in the DC area and got an opportunity to meet and discuss Moroccan family law changes at a reception held October 14, 2003 in the home of FOM President, Tim Resch.

The Arab Women's Council Research and Education Fund Inc. (AWCREF) is a non-profit tax-exempt organization founded in 1983 to promote international understanding between Arabs and Americans through sponsorship and delivery of a variety of cultural and educational programs throughout the United States and through cultural exchange programs with several countries in the Middle East. AWCREF's cadre of professional trainers have developed expertise in delivering interactive/participatory training to Arab women in four major areas: 1) leadership training; 2) non-governmental organization (NGO) development; 3) strategic planning; and 4) mediation and conflict resolution. The first

phase of their training program involved bringing a small group of leaders to Washington D.C. for two weeks of training. The second phase involves on the ground training for a larger group of leaders in each Arab country.

The training program in Washington D.C. (Phase I) included visits to women's NGOs and other organizations that run programs of interest to the participants. It included a day of "shadowing" where each participant spent a full day in an organization or a center of her choice so she can see how they run their daily activities. Participants had an opportunity to interact with many members of the Washington D.C. community, and to consider how to apply what they have learned to NGO development and women's empowerment in their own country. During Phase II, women from a wide variety of organizations in their home community, will learn how to network with each other, and form effective coalitions.

The participants from Morocco were:

**Rkia Ait Dahman**, Oujda

Ms. Dahman is a board member of the Association Chouala for Education and Culture (ACEC), Section Mrit (near Oujda.) The organization focuses on the

economic and social development of rural women, and organizes literacy programs.

**Houria Didi**, Oujda

Ms. Didi is a lawyer. She is Vice President of Ichraq, an organization that works with rural and urban women on a wide range of economic and social development projects, including training in the development of small enterprises; campaigns to oppose violence against women; health education and family planning.

**Mariam Moussa**, Tetouan

Ms. Moussa is a founding member and former president of the Association of Women's Research for Development and Cooperation (AWRDC). The organization works to promote women's rights by conducting vocational and literacy training programs, and by providing support for victims of domestic violence.

**Zhara Zaoui**, Oujda

Ms. Zaoui is a lawyer. She has participated in various national and international forums on human rights. She is co-founder and President of Oujda Ain-Alghazal 2000. This NGO operates a center for battered women, and a legal literacy program.

## The Color of Henna at the Santa Fe Museum of International Folk Art



The *Color of Henna* exhibit will be at the Santa Fe Museum of International Folk Art from December 14, 2003 to March 14, 2004. This will be the only venue in the U.S. for this exhibit.

The exhibit showcases the textiles that were produced and used in the southern-most mountains of Morocco. These white and off-white wool blankets, scarves and wraps are finely woven and then painted with unique and mysterious designs using dyes from the henna plant. Once essential for weddings and religious celebration, these rare and beautiful cloths are no longer made or used.

Drawn from a collection assembled and documented by Annette Korolnik-Andersch and Marcel Korolnik, the international exhibition illuminate the influences that distinguish this unique textile tradition.

*shown at left - headscarf circa 1930*

## American-Moroccan Institute

Founded in the wake of events of 11th and headquartered in New York City, the American-Moroccan Institute (AMI) was created with the hope of developing, fostering, and promoting the sharing of educational and cultural information between the Kingdom of Morocco and the United States.

A non-for-profit organization/think tank, AMI positions itself at the crossroads of the dialogue between civilizations at a crucial moment in history when North Africa and the Middle East are in great need of vectors of facilitated communication with an ever changing American society.

The Kingdom of Morocco has a long history of cooperation and exchange with the United States, going back to the early years of the American nation. It is on this historic mutual respect and recognition that AMI builds

and wishes to revive in the modern context.

AMI's primary objective is to build strong bridges of mutual appreciation and understanding between the people of Morocco and America. The Institute aims at achieving these objectives through the dissemination of accurate, scientific, cultural and academic information regarding Morocco and the Moroccan community in North America. A key element of this task will be the presentation of Moroccan culture in its multifaceted forms to North American audiences, institutions, and research centers.

The further development of academic exchange between American and Moroccan universities and institutions will be another pillar of AMI's work. Composed of distinguished professionals, academics, and students, both Moroccan and American,

AMI seeks to address the concerns of the two nations on regional, national, and international levels. Fundraising campaigns are planned to provide for grants, fellowships, and research stipends. A regularly published magazine will keep the public and members aware of the evolution and forward movement of AMI and its projects.

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<Debmstark@aol.com >

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## U.S. to Increase Development and Military Assistance to Morocco

The Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, during a visit to Rabat on October 28, 2003, announced the US intention to more than quadruple non-military assistance to Morocco. Starting in the 2005 fiscal year, the Administration will propose to Congress to provide approximately \$40 million in assistance, a number "we will look favorably to augmenting in the years ahead". These monies will help strengthen Morocco's efforts to open up greater economic, educational, and political opportunities for all its citizens. Some of these monies will also assist Morocco to enhance its fight against terrorism.

Secondly, he announced the intention to double U.S. foreign military financing to Morocco to reach \$20 million in 2005. He said, "We look forward to enhancing our cooperation in the years ahead with Morocco's fine military forces and to increasing Morocco's abilities to update its equipment and police its shores. The United States greatly values its relationship with Morocco and we will

work with you closely in the coming months to define ways to maximize our mutual benefit and further strengthen this relationship."

As a part of this commitment, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the launching of a five-year \$30 million (300 million Dhs) program to assist Morocco, particularly in the economic realm. The program "will help implement the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) currently under negotiation with the USA, improve the general investment climate and develop small and medium enterprises" which will "translate into more jobs for Moroccans," said USAID's Asst Administrator for Asia and the Near East, Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin.

USAID also plans to help address illiteracy and basic education needs in Morocco, through "a program to support job skills training and create public and private partnerships that will link skills training to job placement." The monies will help strengthen Morocco's efforts to "open up greater economic, educational

and political opportunities for all Moroccans," she said. Chamberlin said talks with Prime Minister Driss Jettou and several Moroccan officials were "fruitful" and allowed to "explore where the US government might best target additional resources in the coming years." Job creation, housing credits, rural development and educational improvements are the major concerns of Moroccans, she pointed out, underlining that these concerns will be taken into account to meet the aspirations of the Moroccan people



## Congressional Caucus on U.S./Moroccan Relations

The US Congress announced Tuesday, July 22, 2003 the creation of a Congressional Caucus on U.S./Moroccan Relations that aims to promote understanding surrounding Moroccan issues among members of Congress and build long-term bilateral relations.

Rep. Phil English (R-PA), one of four co-chairmen of the caucus that was founded at the initiative of congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), and also includes Christopher John (D-LA) and John Tanner (D-TN) said the parliamentary group is a step forward toward the conclusion of a free trade agreement and will reinforce Moroccan-US historic relations that date back to 1777.

"Today, I am pleased to announce, along with my colleagues, the new Congressional Morocco Caucus, which will cultivate our longstanding strategic relationship," said English, the co-chairman of the caucus and member of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade. "This is a real opportunity for our two countries to build on our historical relationship and find more common ground."

The U.S. and Morocco have been working closely since 1995 to promote closer economic ties and security relations. Both countries share a common experience being targeted by terrorists and religious extremists. President Bush met with Moroccan King Mohammed VI in April 2003 to discuss trade relations and regional security. Morocco has been an ally in

the War on Terror and continues to be a strong supporter of American efforts to bring peace and security to the Middle East.

Since 2002, the U.S. and Morocco have been in talks toward ultimately reaching a free trade agreement. These negotiations deepen America's dialogue in the Middle East and build upon the free trade agreements already reached with Israel and Jordan.

"Morocco is a natural market for many American manufacturers. A free trade agreement has the potential to bring both countries closer together for mutual benefit," English said. "The trade negotiators are working through critical issues that are central to any trading relationship between such different economies. The caucus will seek to promote a better understanding of these talks and the mutual benefits that might accrue from a free trade agreement."

"Morocco has the potential to be a strategic beachhead for our economy in North Africa and the Middle East," English said.

In addition to investment and business opportunities which the free trade agreement, that is currently being negotiated, will open to both countries, the agreement may transform Morocco into a hub for regional trade given its geo-strategic location, English noted. Moroccan Delegate Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Chief Negotiator for the free trade agreement with the USA, Taib Fassi Fihri, told the caucus members that their adherence to the fresh group evidences that they

share Morocco's approach, vision and determination to cement bilateral partnership, adding that the US decision to conclude a free trade agreement with the North African country, confirms its support to the important economic, political and social reforms currently being conducted in Morocco under the aegis of king Mohammed VI. In this vein, he said the new caucus' support for the anticipated agreement "is crucial, because negotiations are delicate in certain areas." For his part, U.S. trade representative, Robert Zoellick, reiterated support to the agreement, stressing that it will open the world's largest market for Moroccan products.

A similar effort occurred in July 1999 when 110 US congressmen set up the caucus, "Friends of Morocco in the United States Congress" but this has languished with some members no longer serving.

Other current caucus members are: Kevin Brady (R-TX), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Dave Camp (R-MI), Philip Crane (R-IL), Joe Crowley (D-NY), Jennifer Dunn (R-WA), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ), Wally Herger (R-CA), David Hobson (R-CA), Amo Houghton (R-NY), Darrell Issa (R-CA), Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), Thad McCotter (R-MI), James Moran (D-VA), Collin Peterson (D-MN), Jim Ramstad (R-MN), Billy Tauzin (R-LA) and Fred Upton (R-MI). Noted as supportive but do not join caucuses are Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Rob Portman (R-OH).

## Angry Moroccan Teacher Throws Pupils Out of the Window

*Editor's question: How many times did you want to do this? Just wonderin' ...*

RABAT, Morocco (Reuters) -- Two Moroccan schoolboys were injured Monday when their teacher threw them out of a first floor classroom window for being too noisy, an Education Ministry official said.

One of the pupils, aged nine, ended up in hospital with a fractured

shoulder and serious injuries to his face and head while the other, age 10, suffered only slight injuries, the official from the ministry's delegation in Casablanca said.

He said the teacher had warned the pair she would throw them out if they were not quiet.

"They did not listen. They should have listened," he told Reuters by telephone. "She (the teacher) suffers

depression."

The official had no comment on whether the teacher would be disciplined.



## 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:

<input type="checkbox"/> newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> local FOM chapter	<input type="checkbox"/> speakers' bureau
<input type="checkbox"/> trips to Morocco	<input type="checkbox"/> recruiting PCVs	<input type="checkbox"/> putting RPCVs/Moroccans in touch
<input type="checkbox"/> hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> reunion/gatherings	<input type="checkbox"/> career/readjustment services
<input type="checkbox"/> fund raising	<input type="checkbox"/> development education	<input type="checkbox"/> 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*) \$ \_\_\_\_\_





## THE FOM SOUK

► **www.wafin.com** was initially set up in January 2001 as an all-purpose resource for the Moroccan community in North America, but the site has now evolved into a magazine of culture and ideas for people who prefer to discuss and debate Moroccan affairs in English. We strongly encourage everyone to contribute by joining our ever expanding database of over 8000 persons, which is absolutely free and private. Members interested in contributing articles, opinions, or commentaries should do so in English. Wafin offers E-Consulate, Resources, Voices, Dialogues, Chat, Souk, Business Directory, Ask an Expert, and Moroccans of the Month. **What Does Wafin mean?** "Wafin!" has several meanings in Moroccan. It can mean "what's up?" or "where have you been?" or "what's new?" depending on the situation. Sometimes it is used to simply say "hi."

► **www.moroccousa.com** Based out of Chicago and just starting in February 2003, the web site [www.moroccousa.com](http://www.moroccousa.com) already has 1,400 registered users. MoroccoUSA.com's main objective is not to compete with other Moroccan web sites, but rather to provide our Moroccan community with a quality web site that will enhance the communications between our fellow Moroccans in the USA and abroad, which will serve as a resource center for the Moroccan community and as a guide for the visitors. The site includes that glorious mixture of English, French and transliterated Moroccan dialectical Arabic such as "Daba Yemken Lik Tedkhoul L Site Avec Ton UserName & Password" when you successfully register. Site functions include:

- **One Free Page Web Site w/o Advertisements:** Create your own web site free from all advertisements. Whether you choose to post your own profile or photos of your old classmates, we'll be happy to design & host your site for you. This is our way of saying thank you for becoming a member. Note: First come first serve. You can choose your name or your business name to be part of MoroccoUSA.com as long as it's available, the sooner you grab your name the better it is. For instance: MoroccoUSA.com/**karim** or MoroccoUSA.com/**ahmed** or MoroccoUSA.com/**amina** etc.
- **Classifieds Section:** Serves a utilitarian function for finding merchandise, services, employment, and other people.
- **Forums:** Builds a trusted space for communications, where all of us can make meaningful and valuable contributions and exchange views and opinions in a constructive manner.
- **Zawaj Anyone?:** This section is dedicated ONLY to those of you who are serious about marriage (no dating or games please). Good luck in finding your dream wife/husband.
- **Calendar of Events:** Where members can post their own events (birthdays, parties etc) or other important events such as Ramadane, Eid etc.
- **Daily Moroccan News:** Top Moroccan stories are pulled from the best newspapers worldwide.
- **World News:** Top world stories are pulled from the best newspapers worldwide.
- **Restaurant Guide:** If you have a taste for Moroccan food, this is where you can find the best Moroccan restaurants. Members can also rate their favorite restaurant online. For dessert, the restaurants owners can create their own menus online! What's more? Check please :))
- **Health - Fastfood facts:** Find out what nutrients are in your fast food meal.
- **Health - Moroccan Recipes:** Use our extensive recipes database to find your delicious Moroccan food. Feel free to share with us your favorite recipe, we'll be happy to add it to our database.
- **Knowledge Base Section:** This section will be dedicated to all professional Moroccans out there who would like to volunteer in helping our community members answering some of the questions they may have.
- **Moroccan Voices:** This section will be dedicated primarily to issues relating to Morocco and Moroccans. We encourage you to share your own stories with us.

## New Moroccan Film *Mille Mois (Thousand Months)* Debuts in Washington, DC

*A Thousand Months (Mille Mois)* is the title of a new film that premiered in Washington, DC October 11 and 12 as part of the Arabian Sights Film Festival. The film is by director Faouzi Bensaïdi and was produced in 2003 and is 124 minutes in color. Set in 1981 in the Atlas Mountains, *A Thousand Months* tells the tale of seven-year-old boy Mehdi (Fouad Labied), who lives in a small village with his young mother, Amina (Nezha Rahil), and dignified grandfather (Mohammed Majd). His father has been thrown into prison for inciting a strike, but young Mehdi has been led to believe that he is working in France. Mehdi has been assigned the task of guarding his teacher's chair, the only thing of value in the poor village schoolroom. He carries the wooden

chair around on his head when school is not in session. Its symbolic value grows as a series of events that involve the whole village are set in motion and lead to an unexpectedly dramatic finale.

*Mille Mois* is Bensaïdi's debut feature, and it is a film crafted with love and a restrained empathy for his characters. While the story focuses on Mehdi, the camera merely observes him and his family rather than immerses us in their lives. Bensaïdi does not manipulate the audience, but provides a thoughtful and entertaining series of episodes that show us that, in life, it is difficult to always know the right thing to do. Indeed, even in a culture so dominated by unquestioned religious thinking, choices are not always as easy to make as they seem. Further, while Bensaïdi refuses to judge his characters' lifestyles and choices, we are

given an objective, yet absorbing picture of the village lifestyle; a picture of a village adapting their faith to fit their needs and questions.

Presented at the Cannes Film Festival this year, *A Thousand Months* won the Le Premier Regard award. It was a feature film at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual New York Film Festival October 4 and 5. This debut film is distinguished by natural performances, stunning scenery and a gradual building of tension that leads to an unexpected finale. There is no U.S. distributor yet.



## Thomas Riley Nominated to be Next US Ambassador to Morocco

On October 14, President Bush nominated Thomas Thomas Riley of California to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Morocco. He was confirmed by the Senate on December 9.

Currently, Mr. Riley serves as president of Active Photo in Mountain View, California. He previously served in the same position for Web State, Inc., Unity Systems and the General Resources Corporation. Earlier in his career, Mr. Riley served as a program manager for Robinton Products. He has his bachelor's degree from Stanford University and his master's degree from Harvard. Riley and Bush are old friends from Harvard Business School in the 1970s. Riley grew up in Atherton, CA and has lived in Palo Alto for 23 years.

"This is very exciting, but I'm working for the government and that's about as different from Silicon Valley as you can imagine," said Riley. "Rabat and Silicon Valley may share hot and sunny weather, but the two places are obviously worlds apart. I can't

just go down to the Starbucks and get coffee. I have armed guards that go with me and a bullet-proof car," Riley said. He said he is looking forward to the challenges of the new job and believes "there is an opportunity for me to make a difference," he said. Riley plans to move to Rabat with his wife Nancy and Bailey, their border collie.

During his hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the US ambassador-designate to Morocco has vowed to endeavor for the "continued strengthening of solid relations" between the US and Morocco, "a strategic ally and an old friend".

Thomas Riley recalled that the Kingdom of Morocco was the first country in the world to recognize the newly-born American nation in 1777 as well as the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty concluded between the two countries 1787.

The American diplomat also welcomed the political, economic and social reforms undertaken "with courage" by Morocco under the leadership of H.M. King Mohammed VI, mentioning in the regard "the successful local elections"

held on September 12 in the Kingdom as well as the reform of the family code that gives more rights to women, and which he described as "a major and revolutionary law for the rights of women and children".

He also pledged to endeavor for the implementation of the free trade agreement being discussed by the US and Morocco.

Riley was nominated by the President to replace Margaret Tutwiler, who served as ambassador to Morocco for two years. She was confirmed December 9 as the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. She is the choice to replace Charlotte Beers who was hired after the September 11th terrorist attacks to improve the United States' image, particularly in the Muslim world.

## Peace Corps Program Resumes in Morocco

By Bruce Cohen, PC Morocco Director

I am pleased to announce the resumption of the Peace Corps Morocco program. By the time you read this newsletter, *enshallah*, we will have sworn-in over sixty volunteers, including returning trainees and volunteers from the April 3rd departure.

As former volunteers from Morocco, I know that you will share my

pride at how well the staff here has handled this stressful transition period.

True to the Moroccan culture of compassion, politeness and support, both the new and returning volunteers have come to quickly appreciate the beauty of not only the country but the people of Morocco.

I can assure you that your fond memories of your Peace Corps experience in Morocco are not “a thing of the past”. I feel very fortunate to be here

and participate in the meaningful work of Peace Corps, and am equally committed to Peace Corps emphasis on cross-cultural understanding. Now, more than ever, the Arab world deserves our support and understanding.

## Our (New) Man in Morocco

*Editor's note: Kimeo Carr, our previous "Man in Morocco", has completed his service and is back home. Our new "Man in Morocco" is Jack Sundell. Jack wrote the following after staging in Philadelphia in September 2003.*

Staging is coming to an end, and we leave for Morocco tomorrow night. We catch a bus from Philadelphia to New York City at noon tomorrow and fly out of JFK at 7:00 p.m. It's been a fast, intense roller coaster ride that has brought me to this point. It really seems like a week ago that I received an invitation to go to Morocco, though it's actually been a little over two months.

Joining the Peace Corps is a big decision and a big commitment for anyone. I felt like I'd been extremely busy the last eight weeks tying up loose ends, settling accounts, and saying good bye to friends and family, but now that I've met others in the group, I realize that I'm leaving relatively little behind. There are those who have sold cars, houses, businesses—basically restructured their entire lives—in order to go to a foreign country and give two years of their time to serving other people. It's hard not to have respect for those who have made such enormous sacrifices to be here.

For me, one of the hardest parts of leaving was saying good bye to my

parents. I had lived at home for a good stretch of the summer and it was the longest stretch of time I'd spent with my parents in seven years. I felt a closer connection than I ever had before because I suppose I've done some growing up since high school, and I felt like I was getting to know them for the first time as people rather than parents.

Staging has been fun, exciting, and surreal. It's amazing how quickly bonds and friendships form in intense situations. I've been with other volunteers barely 24 hours, and I already feel like I know many of them. An inordinate number of faces remind me of people I've known from other places, or combinations of people. This is probably just my weary, storm-tossed brain grasping for some sense of familiarity in a new and completely alien environment. But, I'm smiling as I write this, because I'm having a great time.

Our group is composed of an incredible, diverse slice of the United States. I don't think I've ever been so impressed with a group of folks nor surrounded by so many with whom I can't wait to become friends. Our Peace Corps squad comprises people of all ages, backgrounds and temperaments; there are comedians, introverts, poets, pickers, prophets and pilgrims, and I feel so blessed to be a part of it.

We went around the room today and talked about how everyone feels about flying out tomorrow, and the two most common responses were anxious and

excited. And that pretty much sums it up because we're leaving to go to a place where we have no friends or family, and where we know nothing of the language and culture. Of course, it's exhilarating to be embarking on the adventure of a lifetime, but it is also nerve-racking to have so little of your former life to stand on. In a way, it will be like a return to childhood, except that we'll be responsible for our actions.

But, it seems like a child's perspective might be the best one to take into this experience. Children see the world through fresh and eager eyes, they don't demand that life conforms to their ideals, and they are willing to accept what they see without necessarily understanding. This is important because I don't think any of us really knows what's going to be waiting for us when we get off that plane Sunday morning. As Bob Marley said, “Time alone, time will tell”.



## New Books about Morocco



**Saharan Boy** by  
Richard Bellamy  
(Errachidia/Goulmima  
75-78)

published November  
2002

reviewed by Adam  
Labriny

*Saharan Boy* is a challenging novel geared toward 13-16 year olds. *Saharan Boy* is about a boy named Hamid Mbarka and his mom, Fatima, his dad, Hassan, his brother Ali and his sister, Ayeesha.

The novel takes place in Morocco in the 1980's. At the beginning of the story, the family lives in the city of Rasheedia. Hamid thought his life was pretty good, but when his father gets called to war, everything changes. Hassan is sent to the Sahara to fight the Polisario. He is kidnapped and the military leaders believe he is dead. The family is left with no source of income. When Fatima can't pay rent, the greedy landlord comes and takes their little house away. They are forced to move in with some relatives in Fez. When they get to Fez, they discover that their new home is in a shantytown. They also learn that finding work is very hard. Hamid, his brother and sister, his mom, his aunt and his uncle did any job they could just to earn the slightest amount of money. Then his sister got fatally sick. His pretty good life had turned into a difficult struggle for existence.

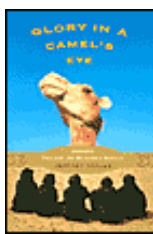
Then Hamid got an idea. He decided to go back to the military base in Rasheedia to check on the status of his father and see if he had returned. While his mom was out working, Hamid left his younger brother in charge of his sister and set out on his journey to Rasheedia. He hitchhikes to a town in the middle of nowhere, and soon realizes the man who picked him up is about to betray him. While Hamid is snoozing the car stops. The driver is telling a policeman that he found a wanted member of a gang. Hamid manages to escape and runs off in a

direction he hopes is toward the Atlas Mountains.

Many things happen on Hamid's journey to Rasheedia. I don't want to give away the whole story, but if you want to know how the rest of the story goes, I suggest you read the book. However, you should know that it is harsh reading. There is nothing happy about this story, and if you require happy endings this is not for you.

I loved the book because it talks a lot about the Moroccan culture. But I was disappointed in the ending because I felt like I was left hanging. Hamid's problems never got solved and his life was still horrible. That sort-of aggravated me. Maybe the author was trying to make the reader feel like Hamid, never knowing what was coming next in his life. However... I'm waiting for the sequel.

Rating on a scale of 1 to 10: 8



**Glory in a Camel's Eye:  
Trekking Through the  
Moroccan Sahara** by Jeffrey  
Tayler (Marrakesh 88-90)

published June 2003

reviewed by Vic Cox  
(originally published on  
[www.peacecorpswriters.org](http://www.peacecorpswriters.org))

WE ALL HAVE DREAMS, but few of us pursue them with the passionate persistence of Jeffrey Tayler, travel book author and Moscow-based correspondent for the *Atlantic Monthly*. He needs that quality because going on long, arduous and often dangerous journeys apparently is central to Tayler's dreams.

In his first travel saga book, *Siberian Dawn*, Tayler hitchhiked and rode the rails more than 8,000 miles from Magadan, Siberia, to Warsaw. For his next book, *Facing the Congo*, he and a guide paddled a dugout canoe 1,000 miles down the Congo River, fending off corrupt government functionaries and traversing malaria-infested regions.

For the recently published *Camel's Eye* he and his indigenous guides trekked and rode camels several hundred miles through southern Morocco's Draa River Valley and over Saharan sands to the Atlantic Ocean. When his Moroccan agent advised him that the journey was risky but it could be done, Tayler wrote, "Suddenly, all my time in Morocco and trips to the Draa seemed like a prelude to the chance to realize a dream I had nurtured for fifteen years."

Unfortunately, this dream seldom comes into focus for the reader. His unconventional route takes us through a welter of towns, villages, and wide-spots-in-the-dunes, few of them distinctive in this account. (A map of the route traveled would have helped.) His tone is mostly dispassionate, recording events and occasionally sharing a moment of enthusiasm for his guides or the people he meets in the crumbling casbahs or dust-encrusted tents along the journey.

Even the desert, with its variety of terrain and winds, recedes into background, never fully becoming a character in the story. It's as if the increasing hardships on Tayler, his two Ruhhal guides, and three camels narrow the narrator's focus to conflicts among the men and the struggles to survive to the next oasis or well. And after four years of drought, some of those Saharan wells are dry.

The drought is blamed for driving the independent, clannish Ruhhal people from their traditional herding life into the country's drab towns and flyblown villages. Some cling to the old ways and still tend their goats and camels on the diminishing vegetation, but Tayler reports little luck in finding the bold and valorous desert people he imagined.

Inspired to master Arabic in college by reading Philip K. Hitti's *History of the Arabs* (1943) and Wilfred Thesiger's *Arabian Sands* (1954), Tayler claims to have become "enamored of the Arab world." Yet his first venture in 1987 into the region

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## Create a New Era of Muslim-Western Relations

By Jason Ben-Meir 93-95

Western countries significantly increasing their support for community development in the Muslim world will bring new opportunities to millions of people and improve international



relations and security. For these benefits to be achieved, however, full participation of community members in the design and management of development projects is necessary to ensure that real local needs and interests are being met.

There are many examples around the world of community-designed projects that successfully create employment, diversify incomes, provide food and healthcare, further education, preserve natural resources, and forge public-private partnerships. As the development process unfolds, the decision-making ability of community members is enhanced because of the inclusive dialogue and information sharing that takes place during the design and management of projects. Experiences also show that civil society institutions are created and new tiers of cooperation are formed when neighboring communities implementing projects that benefit their entire region.

In Iraq where nation-building is critically needed, broad participation in community development will mobilize local people. If implemented across the country, economic and political transformation will take place. Billions of dollars spent in reconstruction contracts with foreign companies and coalition forces involved in the physical building of Iraq are disempowering to local communities and often foment resentment. The U.S. and others should support community projects that

respond to the self-defined needs of the Iraqi people. In this way, a truly empowered, democratic, and prosperous country will be built.

By creating projects that diversify incomes, broad participation in local development prevents the displacement of farmers caused by international free-trade. Such projects often include the utilization of modern agricultural methods, fruit and forestry tree planting, potable water, environmental enhancement, school construction, women's cooperatives, tourism, artisanal crafts, and others. Free-trade with the U.S. and E.U. makes it critical that Jordan and Morocco create new projects in rural communities because they currently cannot



compete with Western agricultural production. Morocco, for example, a predominantly rural country currently negotiating free-trade with the U.S., needs several billion dollars to realize new development opportunities for its rural communities. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced during his December trip to Morocco a fourfold increase in economic aid (to roughly \$170 million over three years). This is certainly a step in the right direction. More, however, must be done by the international community to support projects local people determine so that urban migration and further discontent are prevented.

Inclusive participation in development creates projects that encourage self-reliance, which would greatly benefit the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. Since the occupation in 1967, Israel adjusted the economy of the territories to suit its own economy. This created a dependency (as seen in trade and labor) that gives Israel political power

over the Palestinians. Israel now can generate tremendous good will by directly funding community projects in the territories that local Palestinians are encouraged to design and manage. According to officials in the state department, the Palestinian Authority (PA) currently controls monopolies in the territories of essential commodities, including petroleum, gravel, flour, and sugar. The World Bank, Israel, the U.S., NGOs, and the international community should strongly encourage the PA to more actively support local development initiatives and not be a competitor.

Finally, broad participation in community development expands the zone of tolerance, making the beneficiaries of this process less inclined towards fundamentalism. This is due to people achieving their own interests, suffering less alienation, and being less prone to be used as a destructive tool by others. Additionally, as the majority of people in communities, regions, and nations in the Muslim world come to reap the benefits of this development approach, they themselves will more boldly work against extremism.

If governments significantly increase their support for community-based economic development, prosperity will be generated, international relations and security will be significantly enhanced, and a potential unbearable clash between the Muslim world and the West will be avoided.

The following five initiatives achieve community development across a country. Their implementation in Arab and Muslim nations should be vigorously supported by the international community, which will bring profound mutual benefits.

1. Establish Agencies of Coordination: One of the major challenges to achieving inclusive

(Continued on page 23)

## Reconnections: Another RPCV Returns

By Polly Rightmire Scoville (Fès 63-65)

It's certainly nothing new for a former Peace Corps Volunteer to return to country of service and meet with former students. But when the interval between leaving and returning is almost 40 years, the trip receives added poignancy.

I had taught ESL at Lycée Moulay Idriss, an all-boys school in Fès in 1963-65 as a members of the second group of Peace Corps volunteers in Morocco. I had returned to visit one student, Adbeltif, and his family 13 years ago, but had lost touch since then. In November 2001, an email magically appeared from another students, Saïd, with whom I'd had no contact whatever since teaching him in 1964. He found my address through Peace Corps Washington. When I heard about the Friends of Morocco 40th Anniversary of Peace Corps in Morocco Celebration Tour to take place in October 2002, I signed up and notified him. Through some detective work, he found Abdeltif and we were put back in touch.

So, after the wonderful 10-day bus tour of coastal and southern cities (a plug here for Hassan Samrhouni, the able tour organizer), I met Saïd and Abdeltif and spent the next 11 days being hosted by them and their families. What a transformation! My students had become bank directors, professors, lawyers, director of a translation school, etc. Adbeltif's little brothers and sisters, who had been running around in plastic sandals, had their own families and similar jobs. They live in large, beautiful houses and served me sumptuous meals and elegant desserts. Nowhere did we use of fingers to eat as we had in the '60s. Instead of sleeping on a lumpy mattress in a room off an open courtyard as I was wont in Peace Corps days, I was treated to stays in five-star hotels overlooking the medina of Fès.

All this comfort and convenience had their charms, but I missed "my" Morocco, the one of the mid-1960s. I

refound it when we stopped at Lalla Mimouna en route to Tangiers from Fès. It had been a small, dusty village where I had spent one summer teaching the women to sew uniforms for their children who went to preschool. Now, it was a much larger, dusty village. My roommate and I had a best friend, Tayeb, who owned a small *epicier* which sold a bit of everything, all on credit, and where we would go each afternoon for mint tea and solace from all the misadventures of the day.

I didn't know if Tayeb was still alive. By asking around, we were excited to find out he was there and a boy led us to his house. We were met by the sound of ferocious barking. Finally, a girl came along and opened the gate. We went inside the courtyard and there, in a small alcove outside the house, Tayeb lay reclining on a mattress, surrounded by bowls with bits of grapes and scraps of food. He looked thinner than usual, and his blue eyes were now clouded. Tayeb was blind. He asked if I had come to see him, and I said I had. He said, "Je voudrais te voir." I took his hand and he said, "C'est elle." He told of his bad heart, and sat with his head between his knees.

His wife, my friend Rita, came with her sisters and various children. Much embracing, exclaiming and reciting the lullaby she had taught me years before, "Ni ni a mou mou" - I had remembered it! I was led to Rita's brother Mohammed's house, many-roomed, for more conversation and photos.

I left rejoicing having seen old friends, but mourning for Tayeb. Abdeltif asked, "Do you know if there's Moroccan organization like the Peace Corps?" He was wondering if he could join ...

Just before returning home, I had the honor to address the new Peace Corps volunteer group which had assembled at the Hotel Merienides, atop a Fès hilltop overlooking the medina, for their swearing-in ceremony.

Impressively, they were already skilled in speaking several Berber dialects as well as Darija and French, and well-aculturated from living with local Moroccan families. I was able to

point out in the distance the Lycée in the medina where I had taught and tell how my life had been changed by my experiences, and especially the friendships which had been forged and just renewed. I envied the volunteers' coming adventures.

Saïd had managed to locate some other members of my English class and arrange a reunion during my stay. In Rabat the week before, I stood outside a restaurant with six of them (now graying, balder, some with paunches, but still recognizable and very dear) in a semi-circle, and we all sang "My Darling Clementine"! They remembered it! And now they are reconnected with each other.

Connections and reconnections. That's what it's all about. What a trip. Go back if you get a chance.



## News from Morocco

### **US doubles Morocco military aid**

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has said the US is to double military aid to Morocco, on a visit to the kingdom.

US economic aid will be boosted four-fold over the coming years - a reward for Morocco's support in the US-led war against terror.

Mr. Powell was speaking in Marrakesh, during a brief tour of North Africa.

He later stressed the importance of press freedom, broad political participation and respect for human rights on a visit to Algeria.

The visits to Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are aimed at increasing co-operation in the war against terrorism and promoting democratic reform.

Mr. Powell said he held "candid" discussions with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika on the past years of political violence in Algeria, which has claimed thousands of lives.

He said he called for full and open political participation "for all who wish to participate", including free, fair and transparent elections, and Mr. Bouteflika gave him corresponding "assurances".

Islamic militants took up arms against the Algerian Government in 1992 after the authorities scrapped elections that an Islamist party was poised to win. Fresh presidential elections are expected next April.

Earlier, Mr. Powell congratulated Moroccan King Mohammed VI on what he called bold political reforms.

He thanked the Muslim leader for his support of US policy in Iraq and efforts to solve the conflict in the Middle East.

Mr. Powell said Morocco and the US shared the same vision of Israeli and Palestinian states coexisting peacefully.

He announced that the roadmap - the US-brokered plan to bring peace to The Middle East - was definitely not dead.

He said what was needed now was a commitment by Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Ala to fight terrorism.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3287563.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3287563.stm)

### **Over 1,200 Moroccans affected by AIDS, official figures**

Statistics of the Moroccan health ministry say 1,237 Moroccans are affected by AIDS, and between 13,000 and 16,000 persons are HIV positive.

Out of the group of AIDS affected people, 63% are males and 37% females. Sexual transmission accounts for 73% of cases.

The statistics were released on the occasion of the world anti-AIDS Days (Dec.1) that featured a series of awareness events by the Pan-African anti-Aids Organization (OPALS) and the Anti-Aids association (ALCS).

For OPALS chairwoman, Nadia Bezaoui, although the situation is not yet very worrying in Morocco compared to other African countries, it is important that all the concerned actors get mobilized. OPALS has presented a program revolving around three major axes: medical and psycho-social treatment, prevention and community action. The organization has prepared a CD-ROM, a movie and a set of awareness actions, including visits to schools by physicians who will give courses on sexually-transmitted diseases, inform teens on medical services they can obtain at the association and encourage them to undergo anonymous testing at itinerant centers.

Meanwhile the ALCS said it will focus its awareness events and prevention campaigns on major tourism cities.

The events, which include concerts, distribution of posters and pamphlets, a broad mailing operation with the water bill and a caricature exhibition, will target especially the cities of Marrakech, Agadir, Tangier and Essaouira.

Chairwoman of the association, Hakima Himmich, said 1,000 families and 100,000 administrations will receive the ALCS message.

The association will also conduct

a series of prevention and awareness actions in the poorest districts of Marrakech through an itinerant info-bus which carries a physician and volunteers who answer teens' questions. The bus can also conduct anonymous and free HIV tests for people wishing to have the test.

On its part, the health ministry said it will increase starting next year the anonymous and confidential testing centers as well those that provide treatment to AIDS-affected people.

The ministry said it is collaborating with NGOs and international donors to conduct a nationwide strategic plan covering the 2002-2004 period. The plan focuses on three complementary actions: prevention targeting vulnerable populations, detecting HIV infection and treatment of affected persons.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031202/2003120216.html>

### **Morocco earmarks \$1.4 million for handicapped integration**

The Moroccan secretariat of state in charge of family, solidarity and social action has earmarked for 2003 over 14 million dirhams (\$1.4 million) to support 160 associations working in the field of handicapped persons integration.

The department says in its annual activities report partnership with the civil society is the key to improve handicapped persons' condition, recalling that in 2003, some 200 associations have benefited from its support and advice.

Concerning education, the department says it has mainly created 104 special classes and organized training sessions for educators, inspectors and headmasters.

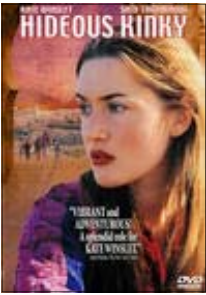
The enactment this year of the law on accessibilities for handicapped persons is a major asset that will reinforce Morocco's endeavors in favor of the handicapped, the document goes.

According to the document, the secretariat of state in charge of family, solidarity and social action has also set up special libraries, handed devices worth some 2.27 million DH and

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Morocco at the Movies #5 - "Hideous Kinky" (1998)

By Dan Cahill (Kenitra 68-70)



Don't let the title mislead you: there's nothing kinky in this adaptation of Esther (g r e a t - granddaugher of Sigmund) Freud's 1992 autobiographical novel, and the only hideous part is the child-rearing approach of her mother Julia, played well by Kate Winslet. Bea and Lucy are Julia's two daughters, ages 5 and 7, whom she takes to Morocco, in flight from her faltering relationship with their philandering father (presumably in real life the noted painter, Julian Freud).

The year is 1972, and the setting is chiefly the medina of Marrakech. As you can surmise from my dates of service above, I am qualified to judge the period accuracy of the production, and it's dead on. The sense of Morocco as a new discovery by the Euro-American counterculture is well-depicted by the background elements of drugged-out hippies on a quest for spiritual truth and a good party. The soundtrack tunes, from Richie Havens, America, and the Jefferson Airplane, strike just the right note. Westerners sit in on Gnawa music performances, joining into the trance-dancing. There's even a scene at the end of the good old Marrakech Express leaving the station we knew so well. The vagabond lifestyle of that era was fulfilling and exciting to the young adults that we PCV's were back then, as well as the 25 year-old Julia. But it's a different story for small children.

Much of Morocco is seen through the girls' eyes. Like their mother, they are charmed by the charismatic Bilal, a street-performing acrobat played smoothly by Said Taghmaoui (born in France of Moroccan parents, and now visible in a variety of interesting films, such as "The Good Thief", "Three Kings", and the superb French import "La Haine", which he co-wrote). Bilal is a sincere and loving figure, who, al-

though he comes and goes a lot, always brings fun with him when he appears. By the end of the film, his efforts to help Julia and her kids give him a sacrificial, nearly heroic stature. In spite of his flaws, he is a good representative of the warmth and hospitality that Moroccans have always shown to outsiders.

One can only wish that the outsiders had been as well represented. Winslet's character, Julia, is an unsympathetic mess, who loves her children but doesn't have a clue how to rear them responsibly. Her search to "understand the truth" through Sufism seems superficial and motivated more by what she's running from than what she's seeking. When she finally makes it to Algeria and visits a Sheik (played by Amidou, perhaps Morocco's most well-known actor with appearances in 44 feature films to date), she realizes, to the surprise of no one in the audience, that she's not ready. By this time our patience with her has reached a breaking point: she has left her older daughter, Bea, in a communal living arrangement because Bea wants to go to school and live a more stable life than hitch-hiking to Algeria, as Lucy is forced to do. When Julia returns and tracks her down, there are confrontations between the manager of a Christian orphanage and Julia, and it's hard to imagine anyone siding with this feckless excuse for a mother.

Despite this glaring problem of an unsympathetic protagonist (unless we think of the kids as the film's true heroes), there are a lot of worthwhile reasons to screen "Hideous Kinky". It will transport you back to another time in an extremely scenic place. The establishing shots of Djemaa el Fna are alone enough to stir the soul. Anyone who has haunted the local post office looking for the monthly *mandat* from Rabat will feel Julia's frustration in her endless wait for the money from home-- and as a bonus there is also a hearty, well-deserved laugh at the expense of the Moroccan Postal Service. Bilal takes Julia and the girls for a visit to his native village, where we go behind the surface folklore to eavesdrop on a pungent conversation among the local men, but only after Lucy

has been disguised as a boy in order to join the group. The opening sequence, a nightmare actually, is brilliant at evoking the scary culture shock of dark narrow streets and strange music that would startle any small child.

The movie was directed by Gillies Mackinnon, a Scot with only a few worthy films in his credits... "The Playboys" is certainly worth a look if you've never seen it. But he brings little inventiveness or style to this project, and there are times when we wish for more of Morocco. It's too bad that they were only able to show Djemaa el Fna, the heart of Marrakech, in long shot from above. Dialogue scenes, probably meant to take place there, are instead filmed in a more controlled setting which doesn't have the same feel. This is probably a question of budget (one shudders to think how much *floos* it would take to actually control any part of the square-- I know, Hitchcock did it, but he was Hitchcock and that was nearly 50 years ago).

On the whole, the film is best taken as a cautionary tale of the risks involved in going too far into the hippie lifestyle if you're expected to look after your kids at the same time. But along the way, it's a wonderful opportunity to groove once again on how great that time and place were for so many of us who are still intoxicated by it.

Contact Dan at <daniel.cahill@nyu.edu>



## Raiders of the Lost: A Search for Hidden Treasure

By Glenn Kaufmann

Who among us hasn't fanned the fading flame of childhood adventure? Occasional thoughts of adventurous travel in the realm of lost cities, mysterious people, and hidden treasure are vital to our psyche. Indeed, these momentary journeys may be the one thing that keeps us from plunging our officemates into the paper shredder on Monday mornings.

I'm here to tell you that sometimes, despite ourselves, and in ways we never imagined, these fantasies do come true.

Standing outside Tafraoute, a small town set deep in Morocco's Anti-Atlas Mountains, I pulled the sweat from my brow and shook my head in disbelief. Patrick, an electrician from Dusseldorf whom I'd just met on the night bus from the coast, held a crude pencil drawing. The colored glyphs of cave drawings and mountains were clear and unambiguous, yet something wasn't quite right.

Our map, hastily scrawled by a hotel bellboy, indicated a simple circuit of villages and hidden, but "easily located" natural art. Twenty minutes later, off the paved road, we found ourselves lost in the middle of a village that wasn't on the map.

We lost a few moments fruitlessly questioning adults, before two young girls appeared. Rather than running away when we muttered our broken patchwork of "blue rocks", "colored stones", and "which way", the girls led us through back alley kitchens, parlors, and squat archways. Just as I was convinced they were taking us home for lunch, we ducked through a low, dark, crawlspace and then staggered out into piercing sunlight. The girls pointed off into the desert and disappeared back down the tunnel.

We stood at the head of a rough dirt track leading into flat rocky desert. The map, such as it was, seemed to lead onwards, and we followed it. Dazed by

the heat, we pounded across hot dusty rocks for well over an hour. At regular intervals the trail disappeared. With blind reliance on the bellman's map, we staggered through arid, abandoned farmland.

Just as dogged persistence began to feel like moronic single-mindedness, we came upon three young Moroccan men - often cause for concern in these isolated parts. Unwilling to look stupid in front of our contemporaries, we held back on the dull-witted half-French/Moroccan inquiries. Unable to find a common tongue they left us, stranded.

My childhood fantasy overflows with images of, a small cave entrance nestled high on a bluff, a perilous climb to reach said cave, and expressions of awe and gratitude to a generous God as I squeeze through the tight dusty entrance and wipe decades of sand from the face of sublime ancient artifacts.

What my fantasy didn't contain is exactly what we got.

We rounded a flat bend in the trail to find a desolate farmer's field giving way to a low, unimpressive valley. Yes, the valley did ring with peals of awe and amazement. Said appellations included, "WHY in the name of God?"

"That can't be it."

And the ever popular, "We sweated our ass off for THAT?"

That's not to say that we weren't impressed. Oh, we were. When, deep in the heart of a high Moroccan desert, you stumble upon a collection of giant rocks painted a flat, milky, house paint blue, one can't help but be impressed by the sheer, naked absurdity of it all.

In 1984, Belgian artist Jean Veran found his way from Tafraoute to the squat desolate valley that stood before us. It was here that he and his

assistants applied (rumor has it) as much as 15 tons of blue paint to rocks indistinguishable from a thousand others on the horizon.

Why these? Why here? Why 1984? All of these questions remain unanswered. The artwork itself gives no hint to motive or motif. Scant official records exist of Veran, the blue rocks, or his other works of art. The spectacle of blue rocks in the desert stands alone. The mere fact of its existence is the lone voice in its own defense.

We explored the valley, climbing high on some of the larger painted rocks. Patrick and I hoped against all reason that the next cash of desert art would yield more traditional artifacts.

According to the map, our sole tenuous link to civilization, the next leg of the journey should have been a short hop on the trail to a village not far away. An hour later, no trail in sight, we had no idea where we are.

We stopped frequently to drink from our dwindling water bottles, and to confirm that neither of us was holding anything back. Safe in the knowledge that we were both completely lost, we continued. Now, past noon, we began to consider the heat less, and the onset of darkness and cold a mounting concern.

Reasoning that it must lead to a settlement of some sort, we followed a set of abandoned, crumbling power poles. The way so far had been a series of arid, long-abandoned farm plots, marked by crumbling low stone walls.

The abandoned farmland began to slope consistently into a canyon of sorts.

Believing that the slope must lead to water and the village, we continued our march towards the gazelle, a small chalk sketch rumored to sit on a rock

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not far from the village, that ages ago seemed so close.

Continuing for perhaps another hour we came upon an intact earthen house, housing a father and his son. All smiles and warm greetings, they stepped away from their ragged band of half a dozen stringy goats.

Tired, and long since disabused of our self-esteem, we asked after the location of the chalk drawing and were rewarded with a wide-eyed stare, a chorus of “la gazelle”, and a vague gesture in the direction we’d been traveling.

Forward ho. The trudge continued.

Some long while later, we were back in dusty farm country, a craggy moonscape of abandoned garden plots and overgrazed land. Clearly this had once been a land of abundance, or at the very least the home of dogged optimists.

Later, canyons walls began to reappear, and then, suddenly, we turned a corner into heaven, an oasis of palm trees, grass, and the tiniest of streams.

Following the water, we soon found a village. In the mountains of Morocco this consists of a store and a vague patchwork of garden plots, and small homes. Was it “the village”? Who knew? Who cared? They had cold drinks.

Alas, none of the locals would freely admit to the whereabouts of “la gazelle”. On the edge of town, one old man grudgingly consented to lead us to it, for a small fee. Exhausted, we conceded. With great ceremony, and money in hand, he led us to a small corral holding the scrawniest of goats.

After several unsuccessful attempts to reckon our map with the land in front of us we came upon an old woman who offered up the broadest of smiles. With nary a hint of ceremony, or obligation, she led us through palm fronds and dense grass, off trail and through the stream, to a non-descript rock on a bluff about six feet above the village.

Here, in a place uncharted by bellboy, entrepreneurial farmer, and well beyond our route-finding skills, sat two

small chiseled gazelles.

Perhaps I was just tired, but on the short final leg back into Tafraoute the assaults of pleading rug merchants were muted and far less abrasive than normal. My mind was elsewhere, lost in the desert.

Later, in my room, I gazed past the open window at distant mountains and felt immensely thankful for the people who helped me get this far. This group, I realized, included angry rug merchants, and the chiseling old man. Without their burdens the trip would have been incomplete.

The things I remembered were not the painted rocks or “la gazelle”, but the smile on an old woman’s face, the young girls’ complete surprise at finding us on their doorstep, and not knowing what was coming at us next.

The real treasure was the chance to get good and lost for a while.

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## Don't Touch My Country

By M'hamed El Kadi (Peace Corps Morocco staff)

The symbolic logo that a youth association in Casablanca created right after the tragic attacks in that city united all Moroccans regardless of their political tendencies or social backgrounds in a big demonstration in the economic capital of Morocco.

The logo came out on t-shirts, posters and many other items.

“Don't Touch My Country” is a very symbolic motto against terrorism created by the Association Initiative Urbaine, a youth neighborhood association operating with limited funds. It is a group of young Moroccans who strive for better cross-cultural understanding and the empowerment of youth in their neighborhood. This small association gives a sense of hope



and future to Morocco.

We met with the Association leaders and they want to extend their willingness to share this logo with the RPCV community and Friends of Morocco. The logo can be reproduced at no charge provided you get in touch with the Association for permission.

Association Initiative Urbaine  
9, rue Ibnout Al Baïttar  
Derb Saad, Hay Mohammadi  
Casablanca  
Email: initiative@menara.ma

## Neighbors

By Orin "Buz" Hargraves (El Hajeb 80-82)

It was a hot, dusty afternoon in late August. I had just returned to El Hajeb, the village where I had taught English for a year. I'd been away for the summer: a few weeks of being surrounded by Volunteers old and new at that year' omnibus training program in Rabat, the capital. El Hajeb was a big come-down after all that. I was the only American in town, and though I'd been quite happy with that for a year, coming back to it all at once was a shock. I hadn't yet rediscovered any of the parts about it that I liked.

I spent most of the afternoon writing letters, catching up on correspondence that had piled up in my mailbox while I was away. I was also conveniently avoiding the heat, and, to some degree, the village itself. At that moment it didn't feel like the place I wanted to be. I stayed inside the thick, cool, stuccoed walls of my fine house. You see, mine wasn't the mud-hut Peace Corps experience. I lived in the upstairs apartment of a beautiful colonial period villa in the part of the town that had been built by the French. Walnut trees lined the avenue outside, and I could hear boys throwing stones up into them, trying to knock down the ripening fruit.

A cool breeze from the mountains picked up late in the afternoon, intimating that it might bring some clouds our way, along with a shower or

thunderstorm. I took advantage of the cooler air to get a little exercise and walked to the post office. I felt fortified now after the hours of seclusion, ready to withstand the stares of the children, and the cries of "Christian! Christian!" that often accompanied me on my walks in the village.

The post office offered the usual experience: a cluster of people mashed together in front of the sullen clerk, all thrusting their business in his face with the line of less determined off to one side, standing patiently in the belief that they would be waited on sometime. I joined the line, not yet feeling up to the cluster experience. It took ten minutes or so, but this way I could stay inside the thick American shell that I still wasn't willing to come out of.

When I started back, the rain was looking like a sure thing. The breeze had become a wind. Little dust devils were whirling around in the dirt streets, and withered leaves twirled down from the sycamore trees that formed an arcade over the wide, dilapidated street. Dark clouds were bearing down from the mountains to the south. I picked up my pace, thinking that now I'd have to hurry to get in before the rain.

Down the street, coming towards me, was a woman wrapped in a turquoise *jellaba*. I recognized her as my downstairs neighbor. She wasn't veiled and her hood was off: this was only a walk in the neighborhood and she

wouldn't be subject to the prying eyes of students. As we continued towards each other, we were nearly jogging, trying to reach our destinations before the rain. Under these circumstances, the normal greeting rituals - which could run a few minutes of chattering even with someone you saw all the time - would be overlooked. We only exchanged smiles and hello, how-are-yous as we passed.

"Please tell Aisha to put the goats in the shed, it's going to rain," she shouted at me over her shoulder as she continued on her way.

"OK," I said.

In that moment, such a feeling of elation! And why, over something so small and trivial? Because she said it in Arabic, not in French. Because she didn't slow down or dress it up for speaking to a foreigner. Because she said it to me in the same way she would have said it to one of her own children, or one of her other neighbors: without formality, without any awareness that she was talking to someone from the other side of the world, but just saying it the way she normally would say it. Because after all I was only her neighbor, no one strange or special. I was just the guy who lived upstairs.



Photo courtesy of Jason Ben-Meir

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supported many handicapped job-seekers.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031203/2003120325.html>

### **Moroccan-Jewish community council raises funds to assist Palestinian hospitals**

The Council of Jewish Community in Morocco will organize next December 2 a fund-raising gala in Madrid to raise funds for Palestinian hospitals.

The event is also sponsored by the Spanish "Mundo en Armonia" association chaired by princess Irene of Greece, the Spain-based Peres Center for Peace and the Palestinian Health Council.

The gala will feature songs that highlight the common basis of the Jewish and Islamic-Moroccan cultures and merge the music of the two cultures in a recital that is an hymn for peace, tolerance and the acceptance of the other.

The concert, organized by chairman of the Council of the Jewish community in Morocco, Serge Berdugo, will include Sephardic Moroccan songs performed in Arabic, Hebrew and Spanish by Françoise Atlan and Zoubeida Idrissi.

The concert was first performed during Morocco's days in France in 2000 and is now played in many countries part of a world tour that started in May 2000 in Casablanca.

The event will take place at a time when the international community is celebrating Saturday the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031201/2003120119.html>

### **Morocco poised to definitively shelve past human rights violations cases**

Chairman of the Consultative Council of Human Rights (CCDH), Omar Aziman, said Monday Morocco is poised to shelve once and for all cases of past human rights violations, mainly through the creation of the "Equity and Reconciliation Committee."

Speaking at the opening of an encounter on the Committee, incepted last November 6, Azziman said the new body serves the ultimate objective that is

reconciliation, so that the page of past violations be turned definitively.

The body will be in charge of pursuing the out-of-court settlement of Past human rights abuses related to forced disappearances and arbitrary detention and complete a fair and equitable rehabilitation of victims.

The CCDH chairman assured that the resolve to turn the page will help consolidate the rule of the law, stressing how unique the Moroccan experience in the field is.

Azziman also hailed the action of human rights associations underlining that the divergence of views between them and the CCDH is natural, since these associations aim for an "ideal and absolute framework" while the council is handling the question using concrete data.

Human rights minister, Mohammed Aujjar, said the creation of "Equity and Reconciliation committee" evidences a genuine political determination to put an end to injustices, and Morocco's choice as far as democracy and human rights are concerned.

The encounter features two workshops. The first focuses on the context, significance and objectives of the commission, while the second deals with the role of politicians and human rights people in the equity and reconciliation process.

The meeting gathered representatives of the CCDH, human rights organizations, unions and ministries.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031202/2003120218.html>

### **Two major Moroccan banks merge**

The "Banque Commerciale du Maroc" (BCM) and Wafabank, owned by the Kettani family, have decided to merge to form a major financial group, executives of the Kettani group and of the BCM announced here Monday.

The merger is to become effective next January, said the executives who also announced that a takeover bid for 100% of Wafabank capital will be launched next March.

BCM CEO, Khalid Oudghiri, said the merger will not entail any layoff at Wafabank.

The BCM-Wafabank group will be a key actor in Moroccan socio-economic development and will create investments funds in several sectors, support small and medium-sized enterprises, develop close contacts with professional organizations, promote the emergence of national economic groups and increase population bankarization that hardly exceeds today 15%.

The merger was first initiated on November 24 when the BCM bought for 2.08 billion DH the capital of OGM, owned by the Kettani family.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031202/2003120217.html>

### **Over 60% of maids aged below 15, study shows**

Over 60% of maids working in Casablanca are aged less than 15 years, and 84% of them are illiterate, says a study by the Moroccan Observatory of Children's Rights (ONDE).

The figures were released by the Observatory during an encounter held in Casablanca to examine the situation of children in the Casablanca region.

ONDE's study also found that 25% of children live with their families in a single room and another 40% live in a two-room dwelling.

The study also found that 50% of the Moroccan children who were asked about their aspirations said they dream of better understanding within the family and a good education. However, 5% of the children polled said that they are interested in the Association's programs.

Meanwhile, parents said they are mainly concerned by problems of drugs and tobacco addiction for males, and rape and violence for girls.

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/031122/2003112214.html>

### **US launches \$3 million program to fight child labor in Morocco**

The US has launched, in the framework of the currently negotiated free trade agreement, with Morocco, a US\$3 million program to fight child labor.

"Initiative Education," which is subject to a partnership between the

(Continued from page 12)

ended badly in Meknes, Morocco, when he "ate a bad kebab and it nearly killed me."

Despite misgivings, he pragmatically returned to Morocco a year later as a Peace Corps Volunteer posted to Marrakesh. "My money had run out and I had no other prospects for employment," he wrote, and he wanted to resume exploring the Arab world. It was during his two-year tour that Tayler first heard of the stark beauty of the upper Draa River Valley. He also learned about the seductive attractiveness of Moroccan women.

In this book, Tayler seems to be in search of another shimmering seduction: Thesiger described an inner peace born out of desert solitude and the "comradship in a hostile world" from noble-spirited nomads. The Ruhhal Tayler travels with and meets on his trek are of much more common metal, concerned with caring for their camels, eating regularly, and stretching out their employment by adding time to the trek.

They also are curious, in varying degrees, about this Christian (they assume) who speaks fluent Moroccan Arabic and is walking across some of the most challenging territory in the country. A few of these devout Muslims even seek to convert him, which he finds initially amusing, then annoying.

The protagonist in a story like this, which offers none of the standard travel lore or information, always has stage center, but Tayler reveals only snapshots of his emotions, fragments of his values. We get little self-reflection so it is difficult to see how he is "enamored" by the land or its people. At times, he does not seem to like them very much, but that is most evident when he feels ill.

Wherever he travels in this harsh land, for example, he finds hospitality extended to the stranger, be it a cup of mint tea or a full meal. While he notes the customary kindnesses, as he does the ritual greetings and praise of God, he seems more likely to comment on the people's lack of hygiene.

Taylor is gracious enough to ask forgiveness from one of the Ruddal guides with whom he has been in conflict, but he cannot resist telling us that he tipped both guides with "a wad of bills."

In the end, Taylor's narrative feels shaped more by disappointment than the elation to be expected from completing a grueling journey. If his dream was to discover for himself Thesiger's inner peace and the friendship of noble nomads, time and change may have thwarted him this time. But he will try again.

Vic Cox is a writer/editor at the University of California, Santa Barbara and the author of the young adult nonfiction reference books *Guns, Violence, and Teens* and *The Challenge of Immigration*.



**Bowles: Sheltering Sky, Let It Come Down, The Spiders House and Bowles: Collected Stories and Later Writings.** Publish

August 2002

Daniel Halpern (Editor).

This Library of America volume 134, containing his first three novels, with its companion *Collected Stories and Later Writings* Vol. 135, is the first annotated edition of Bowles' work, offering the full range of his literary achievement: the portrait of an outsider who was one of the essential American writers of the last half century.

*The Sheltering Sky* (1949), which remains Bowles' most celebrated work, describes the unraveling of a young, sophisticated, and adventuresome married couple as they make their way into the Sahara. In a prose style of meticulous calm and stunning visual precision, Bowles tracks Port and Kit Moresby on a journey through the desert that culminates in death and madness.

In *Let It Come Down* (1952), Bowles plots the doomed trajectory of Nelson Dyar, a New York bank teller who comes to Tangier in search of a different life and ends up giving in to his darkest impulses. Rich in descriptions of the corruption and decadence of the International Zone in the last days before Moroccan independence, Bowles' second novel is

an alternately comic and horrific account of a descent into nihilism.

*The Spider's House* (1955), the longest and most complex of Bowles' novels, is set against the end of French rule in Morocco. Its characters—ranging from a Moroccan boy gifted with spiritual healing power to an American writer who regrets the passing of traditional ways—are caught up in the clash between colonial and nationalist factions, and are forced to confront cultural gulfs widened by political violence.

The Library of America volume *Collected Stories and Later Writings* offers his first collection, *The Delicate Prey and Other Stories* (1950), "in which the reader is the detective; the mystery is the motivation for the characters' behavior." In such stories as "A Distant Episode" and "How Many Midnights," Bowles pushes human character beyond socially defined limits and maps a transformed (often horribly transformed) reality. A master of gothic terror and an acute and at times diabolically funny observer of manners and motives both American and Moroccan, Bowles confirmed his mastery of the short story in such volumes as *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962), *The Time of Friendship* (1967), *Things Gone and Things Still Here* (1977), and *Midnight Mass* (1981), all included here along with a selection of his final stories.

This volume also contains *Up Above the World* (1966), a frightening novella set in Latin America in which a trusting American couple are lured into an annihilating trap, and the informed and fascinating travel book *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* (1963).



*(Continued from page 20)*

US Labor Department and the Moroccan government, will be run by the Management Systems International (MSI), which started working on the project in October 2003.

The program aims at fostering awareness of the importance of education and mobilizing involved parties to improve education infrastructure.

***Essaouira hosts evaluation meeting of "urban development and freshwater resources: small historical coastal cities' project"***

How to restore and preserve the historical heart of coastal cities, without driving away their inhabitants, while respecting traditional building criteria as well as modern norms, with the participation of local craftsmen and the support of local and governmental authorities. That is the multiple challenge the "Urban Development and Freshwater Resources: Small Historical Coastal Cities" project is designed to meet.

UNESCO has been developing the project since 1997 in five "case study" cities - Essaouira (Morocco), Mahdia

(Tunisia), Omisalj (Croatia), Saïda (Lebanon,) et Jableh (Syria). From November 30 to December 2, 2003, all those involved in the project - architects, urban planners, geologists, hydrologists, local officials and UNESCO experts - will be evaluating its progress in Essaouira, at the invitation of Morocco.

The project's main objective is to promote and propose alternative solutions of sustainable sociocultural and environmental development to the municipalities and ministries concerned.

On December 1, the mayors of the case study cities will present the projects carried out in their towns since UNESCO's activities in their municipality, such as expert missions and international seminars on Urban development: a balance between Land, Sea and Society". The mayors and experts will attempt to evaluate the real impact of these interventions on political decisions taken by municipalities in the choice of new projects or the reorientation of existing ones.

On December 2, the experts will formulate recommendations on the follow-up of the project. They will base their conclusions partly on the evaluation report of the Algerian geographer Rachid Sidi Boumedine. They will also consider

municipalities' expectations, partnership offers and the contributions of other United Nations agencies such as UN-Habitat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

This UNESCO project associates primarily the experts' networks of the MOST Programme (Management of Social Transformations), the IHP (International Hydrological Programme) and the "Coastal Regions and Small Islands" Unit. It is based on the principles of the Istanbul Declaration (Habitat II, 1996) and the ICOMOS Charter on Historical Cities.



*(Continued from page 3)*

of the spouses... These reforms... should not be perceived as the victory of one side over the other but rather as gains for all Moroccans... The aim is to draw up a modern Family Law which is consistent with the spirit of our tolerant religion.

- The Family Law should not be considered as a law designed exclusively for women but rather as a code for the family: father, mother and children. The proposed legislation is meant to reconcile lifting the iniquity imposed on women, protecting children's rights and safeguarding men's dignity. Would any of you tolerate seeing his family, wife or children being thrown out of their homes into the street or his daughter or sister being ill-treated?"



*King Mohamed VI chairs the Ministers' Council on Family Code Reform*

*(Continued from page 13)*

participation in development is bringing together all the interested parties into a dialogue process. An "agency of coordination" is an administrative framework that organizes and facilitates meetings among communities, government agencies, and NGOs for planning and implementing development. It has the flexibility to operate at local, provincial, national, and international levels in order to negotiate partnerships that promote the objectives of communities. Whether such an agency is governmental, an NGO, a consortium of NGOs, etc. is determined by its host-country.

An agency of coordination can also play a vital role in facilitating Arab-Israeli development cooperation. For example, several years ago when there was less tension in the Middle East, Moroccan-Israeli collaboration could potentially take place. Procedurally, however, this would require the interested Moroccans to contact directly the Israeli liaison office in Rabat (currently closed) and make a request for assistance. Many Moroccans interested in working with Israelis feel uncomfortable establishing initial direct contact. On the other hand, the Israeli MASHAV (the aid wing of their Foreign Ministry) cannot initiate contact, as this would be interfering in Moroccan internal affairs. This condition that makes direct dialogue difficult to attain explains, in part, why in over 20 years of Israeli-Egyptian peace there has been little development cooperation. An agency of coordination (perhaps in this case an international NGO that can contact both Arab and Israeli officials) can provide the needed role of catalyzing dialogue and helping to create productive partnerships that benefit local communities.

2. Establish Community Development Planning and Training Centers: These centers, which are located in communities and locally managed, facilitate an interactive process that helps communities determine their priority needs and design and implement projects that meet those needs. Centers also

provide training in facilitation, modern agriculture, health, fundraising, and other skills desired by local people. They can assist in reconciliation among diverse groups. Centers are, in a sense, federalist institutions, since they strengthen the capacity of communities to manage their own development. Clearly, they can play a vital role in the reconstruction of Iraq.

3. Fruit and Forestry Tree-Planting and Irrigation Improvements: Around the world, tree-planting is regularly identified by communities (urban and rural) to be a top priority. Indeed, trees provide income, jobs, food, and environment enhancement. Modern irrigation maximizes the utility of water supplies, increases yields, lays a foundation for potable water, and, by bringing water to land once barren, creates the opportunity to build schools, clinics, and other service centers. The international community should fund tree planting and irrigation improvements in viable areas and communities across the Muslim world. Importantly, planting a tree is considered an "act of faith" in Islam and instills genuine trust between local people and funders because of the long-term benefits it provides for individual families.

4. Encourage Political Parties that Pursue the Goals of Communities: Political parties that pursue the development goals of communities will succeed because their platform reflects the priorities of local people. Of course, it is not for the international community to determine political processes within a nation. However, in Iraq where the U.S. is helping to create a new political structure, encouraging political parties to be primarily responsive to the goals of local communities will dramatically help the nation achieve its development potential. In the long-term, the power of example is the most effective and genuine way of encouraging responsive politics in the Muslim world.

5. Funding Campaigns for Community Development: Funding is needed for agencies of coordination, planning and training centers, and, to the largest degree, implementing

projects local communities design. Ambassadors serving in Muslim nations should promote community development by organizing donor conferences, for example. There is a broad spectrum of prospective donors because multiple sectors (economic, social, health, education, environment, etc.) are advanced in this development approach. As community resources improve, outside funding becomes less necessary.

USAID's Middle East Regional Cooperation program (MERC), established as a result of the Camp David peace accords, funds projects that primarily involve Arab-Israeli joint technological development. In order to advance regional collaboration during this critical time, MERC should fund projects according to the quality of Arab-Israeli partnership, regardless of whether there is a technological component. In addition, the transfer of technology is a primary criterion to receive Israeli MASHAV's assistance. This often gives the impression to Arab neighbors of serving Israeli interests rather than the people they are trying to help. Projects that communities design to meet their needs most often do not require the imports of technology. When new technology is needed, for example pressure/drip irrigation systems for agricultural communities, it is a matter of diffusion of a technology that already exists within the country.

International support for the above initiatives will encourage more trustful and productive relations and enhance security by bringing real opportunity to millions of people. Such initiatives represent public diplomacy at its best because of the essential mutual benefits they bring.

*Jason Ben-Meir is completing his Ph.D. and teaches sociology at the University of New Mexico. He is a former Peace Corps Morocco Volunteer and is currently president of the High Atlas Foundation, a non-profit that assists community development in Morocco. He is also president of the Diversity Institute, a non-profit that promotes development and reconciliation in the U.S. The views expressed in this article are the author's and not necessarily of the organizations he works for nor Friends of Morocco.*

## 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.

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## 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 five-member national advisory board. Mailing address: Friends of Morocco, P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579. For further information, contact president Tim Resch at 703-660-9292 or by email <tresch@att.net>.

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