

*The Assyrian
Foundation
of America*



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50 Years

A Celebration Gala

NINEVEH

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Editor: Dr. Ninwe Maraha
Editorial Staff: Firas Jatou
Dr. Joel Elias
Dr. Robert Karoukian
Tamara Odisho Benjamin
Donatella Yelda
Tobia Giwargis
Sargon Shabbas, Circulation

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Address letters to:

The Editor
NINEVEH
P.O. Box 2660
Berkeley, California 94702
editor@assyrianfoundation.org

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ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR 6764 - 2014

March 21 marked the beginning of the 6764th Assyrian year. The celebration of the new year is called the *Akitu* festival by Assyrians, and it goes back to antiquity. It was adopted by the various cultures that lived contemporaneously with Assyrians and by those that succeeded them. The Kurds and Iranians adopted the festival and call it *Nowrooz*.

The *Akitu* festival is a 12 day celebration. In the old Assyrian Calendar the Assyrian year (April 1st) began on the Vernal Equinox, which falls on March 21 in the Gregorian Calendar. The first month of the Assyrian year is April (*Neesan*). To align with the Gregorian calendar, contemporary Assyrians mark April first as the beginning of the new year.



Ancient Assyrian new year wish in cuneiform

*I write for your well-being on the occasion of the New Year
May you be happy
May you remain in good health
May the god who looks after you
provide you with good things*

Top 10 Spring Festivals in 2014

Courtesy of www.earthtraveling.com

Kha b`Nisan Assyrian in Western Asia

The Assyrian diaspora celebrates its New Year (also the spring festival) by parades, dances, parties and poetry recitals on April 1. Some Assyrians wear traditional costume and dance in parks for hours. It is celebrated in Iraq (one of the largest Assyrian New Year celebration took place here in 2008), Turkey, Syria. Because of the diaspora, the day is celebrated also in Europe, United States and Canada with food, music and dance.

Naoum E. Palak (Faik) - The Founders

Source: *Modern Assyrian Research Archive (MARA)*
(www.assyrianarchive.org)

By Tomas Beth-Avdalla, Sweden

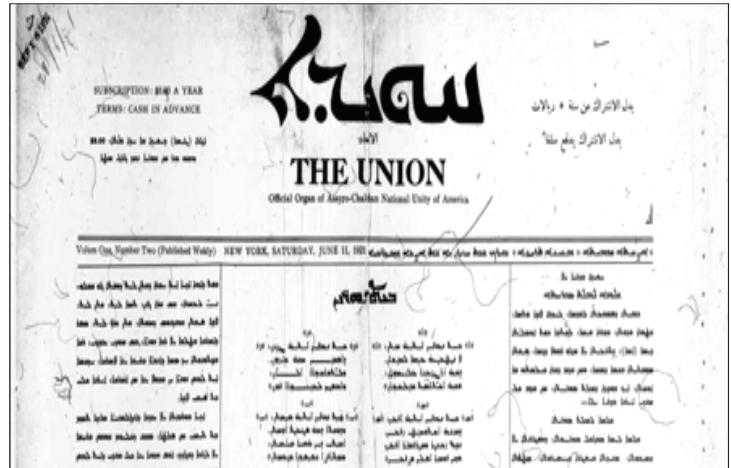
Naoum E. Palak (Faik), the Assyrian nationalist whose remembrance day is celebrated on February 5th by Assyrians world-wide, was active as a journalist and a publisher. The following is a short review of his journalistic work.

Kawkab madenho (*Star of the East*) was the first periodical that he published in the Assyrian city of Omid (present day Diyarbakir, in southeastern Turkey). It was published bi-weekly starting from July 1910 until at least June 1912, the year that he immigrated to New Jersey, the United States. It was published in three languages: Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and (Classical) Assyrian; all three languages were written using Assyrian alphabet. The contents centered around literary, historical and linguistic subjects and articles on church history as well as news.

He was also a prolific writer in the periodical *Intibah – The Assyrians Monthly Paper*, which was published by Gabriel H. Boyajy in College Point, New York. This is **the oldest known Assyrian periodical published in the United States**, which was published from November 1909 until March 1915 when it ceased publication. Boyajy, who also had his origin in the city of Omid, came later to write articles for Naoum Palak's next periodical, *Bethnahrin*.

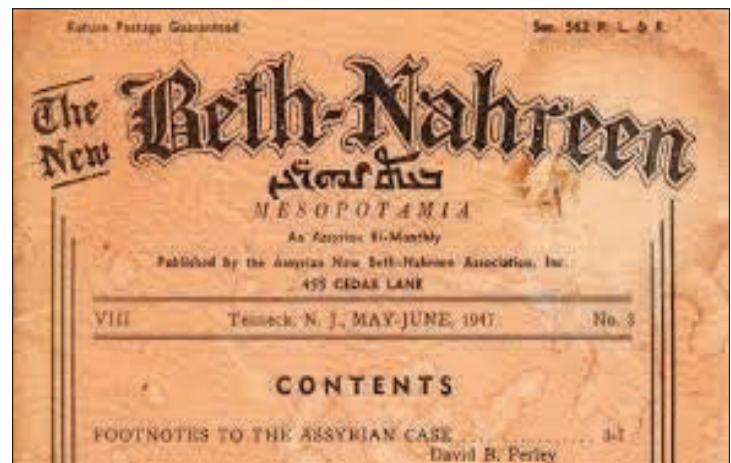
Naoum Palak started *Bethnahrin* (Mesopotamia) – *The Assyrian Paper*, on 1st of January, 1916, in New Jersey. The last issue we know of was published in February 1933, three years after his death. It was published in three different editions, based on the language in which it was published: Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Assyrian. These different editions were issued in parallel; the Assyrian edition however, first came out in 1929. In the first two editions, Turkish and Arabic, there were articles in (Classical) Assyrian as well. Each edition had its own volume subdivision and numbering. It is interesting to note that for articles in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic, Western Assyrian script (called *Sers̄o*) was used and for articles in Assyrian, Eastern Assyrian script was used.

Bethnahrin continued to be published for at least three years after Palak's death. It was first edited by Salim Darakjy from Jersey City in New Jersey and was published by Bshar Boyajy from Suffern, New Jersey, until at least the August-September issue of 1932, when a board (Board of Directors) took over consisting of John Ashjy, Lutfy Boyajy and Salim Darakjy; and was published by the priest Peter Barsoum from Central Falls, Rhode Island, and Bshar Boyajy was its treasurer.



During the time that Palak published *Bethnahrin*, he was appointed as editor of the periodical *Huyodo* or *Khuyada* – *Union*. *Huyodo* or *Khuyada* was the official organ of the Assyro-Chaldean National Unity of America. It was published in New York once a week. Samuel A. Jacobs was assistant editor and I. B. Moorhatch, John Ashjy, S. Baly and Joseph Durna were also on the editorial staff of the paper. It was published in Eastern Assyrian, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, English and (Classical) Assyrian. The first issue was published on 28 May, 1921, and the last known issues was published on 25 March, 1922.

In the beginning of 1934 a new Assyrian periodical appeared; it was a continuation of *Bethnahrin*, and was called: *The New Beth-Nahreen*. The difference here was that it was published in English only. It was published by the New Beth-Nahreen Association Inc. in Teaneck, New Jersey. The last known issue was published in the middle of the year 1948.



rations. They made profound impact on me and my sisters and brother. They also made great impact on an entire generation of young Assyrians who lived in Assyrian diaspora in Sweden. We learned about *Seyfo* and could truly understand the agony our parents and grandparents endured. The horrific persecutions, the terrifying everyday life they lived and what had happened to the Assyrian nation.

In Greek, the word *Sofia* means knowledge/wisdom. Although, there are things about her family and Assyrians my daughter *Sofie* will never know, because that knowledge was lost with the victims of *Seyfo*; yet, she can, like Assyrians throughout the globe speak up and give voice to our demands that *Seyfo must end now*.

My brother's life ended unexpectedly early. Too soon for him, for us who loved him and for the Assyrian nation which is in great need of scholars who can put light on our history. Our need for scholars still is great. My daughter is named *Sofie* because there is love, there is wisdom and there is my brother.

May all Assyrian martyrs rest in peace. You are not forgotten. Dear brother, I miss you deeply. You will never be forgotten.

By Broula Barnohro Oussi, SWEDEN

I would like to share the traces of the Assyrian genocide in my family. Out of my grandparents, none had a normal upbringing. All grew up as orphans after their parents were murdered, often slaughtered right before their children's eyes.

My maternal grandmother's sister was "adopted" after her mother's murder. She was raised a Muslim, eventually married an imam and gave him many children. My maternal grandmother, *Zahra*, married my grandfather, an orthodox priest. When the sisters were reunited as adults, they found each other on the opposite sides of an abyss.

The story of my maternal grandfather, *Issa*, who later took the name "Matta" (Matthew) when he became a priest, is one I am unable to let go of. As a ten year old child, he rescued his younger sister and fled from village to village in search of salvation and security. It is told that the sword was put over his head – in preparation for a beheading – countless times, but someone with a heart always intervened because he was still a child.

My paternal grandmother, *Fayrouza*, was raised by a Kurdish family after her parents were murdered. She was

"still in the cradle" when they took her in, so she had no memories of her biological family. Growing up, the other children were mean, telling her she was a child of non-believers, *Kafir*. When she was old enough to be married, she was taken to *Midyat* in order to purchase clothing and gold for the soon-to-be bride. One of her biological brothers saw her and recognized her instantly – she looked exactly like their mother. It was very difficult for a young woman to deal with the fact that the family that raised her actually had played a part in the killing of her biological parents. My paternal grandfather, *Gawrieh*, maybe ten or eleven years old, carried his wounded best friend on his back into the woods when the village was attacked, leaving a dead family behind.

When I was a child, my living grandparents told me these stories. How the bellies of pregnant women were ripped open, how breasts were cut off, how women were raped, heads cut off, children abducted, churches burned down, villages left abandoned... I couldn't question or doubt the historical truth in these stories because they were narrated by eye-witnesses. Needless to say, I had countless nightmares inspired by *Seyfo*.

My own two children, growing up in Sweden, the place my own parents chose when leaving the Lebanese Civil War, are still unaware of the Christian genocide during World War I. They are unaware of the bleeding wound on our people's collective consciousness. We need closure in order to heal. We need recognition so we can teach our children this painful part of our history, enabling us to pass on these stories without hatred, with forgiveness in our hearts and an ability to look forward.

Every genocide that remains unrecognized is a vacuum where a new one can take place. It is a living unfinished time carried within us.





Hunayn Bar Ishaq

respected in the Caliphate courts because of his broad knowledge in medicine. Sargon is also credited for saving the life of the patriarch of the Church of the East, Timothaus-I “Timothy I” (780–823), who was accused of blasphemy toward Islam during a theological debate in the court of Caliph Al-Ma'mun. Timothaus-I was condemned to death by the Caliph, but was spared by the intervention of Sargon the Assyrian, who was the court’s head physician and an adherent of the Church of the East.

Hunayn Bar Ishaq (809-873), or **Hanania Bar Ishaq** (known in Arabic as Hunayn Ibn Ishaq), and his son **Ishaq Bar Hunayn** were masters of the translation craft. Thanks to the renowned Assyrian physicians in Baghdad and marvelous scholars like Hunayn, the medical knowledge of the Greco-Roman world of late antiquity was translated into Arabic and was thus used throughout the Islamic world of the middle ages. The work of Hunayn Bar Ishaq in medicine was immensely influential over many centuries not only in the Islamic world, but also in Europe. The works of Hunayn survived both in Arabic as well as in Assyrian. Once the Arabic version was translated into Latin and reached Western Europe, the textbook of Hunayn was treated as a standard introduction to medicine until the sixteenth

century. He is credited with translating some 100 manuscripts into Syriac and 39 into Arabic, including the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Ptolemy. He was aided in this ambitious enterprise by his son Ishaq and his nephew Hubaysh.

Yahya Bar Adai, or **Yuhannan Bar Adai**, was born in Tikrit in 893. He studied philosophy and medicine under Abu Bishr Matta Bar Yonan, who had also taught Alfarabi. He translated numerous works of Greek philosophy into Arabic, mostly from existing versions in Syriac. The works include: Plato's Laws, Aristotle's Sophistical Refutations (from a Syriac translation by Theophilus of Edessa) and Topics (from a translation by Hunayn Bar Ishaq), and Theophrastus' Metaphysics. Yuhannan Bar Adai also composed a number of philosophical and theological treatises. He died in 974.

Bar Hebraeus, or **Bar Ebroyo** (known in Arabic as Gregorios Abu ‘l Faraj), was born in 1226 in Melitene, Beth-Nahrain (Malatya, Turkey). He was the son of a physician, Harun Bar Touma Malataya, who encouraged him to study medicine as well as other academic disciplines. Due to his immense knowledge of various fields of science, medicine, theology, and history, Bar Ebroyo is known as “The Library of the 13th Century”. He wrote about history, theology, Syriac grammar, philosophy, astronomy, and physics, and also composed poems and medicinal treatises. He died on July 30, 1286, in Maraḡha (northwestern Iran) and was buried at the Mar Mattai Monastery near Mosul.

There were many more Assyrian physicians and scholars who specialized in medicine; however, we hope that the few names we have mentioned are sufficient enough to give the readers of Nineveh magazine a brief glance at an impressive array of the rich culture, history, and great works of so many Assyrian scholars.



Gregorios Bar Ebroyo

ued for weeks. As the last ray of sun had lifted upon the horizon, the agitated builders sat bewildered and confused at what was causing the collapse of the base. After several hours of discussions, they all concurred that the bridge must be cursed by God and as a last resort an offering must be made to God. Therefore, they decided to sacrifice the first thing that walked into the building site by placing it at the base of the bridge. They all pledged to keep this as a secret. Most of the builders broke their promise and told their wives and children not to come near the bridge. The master builder kept his vow.

As the morning sun unfolded, the builders resumed their task of building the center of the bridge. To the horror of the master builder he saw his daughter-in-law, Dalaleh, approaching the bridge with her dog. The noise of her singing set the air alight. She was bringing food to the builders. Sometimes the dog would overtake her and other times would fall behind her.

As it happens, luck interfered with pitiless cruelty and as she approached the bridge her dog fell behind her. Her distraught father-in-law fainted and collapsed. Dalaleh sprinkled some water on his face, and as he opened his eyes he clutched her tightly, he took a deep breath as if preparing to pronounce a deep sentence. He told her about the vow made by the builders and that she will be

encased in the foundations of the central pillar. To the amazement of the father-in-law, Dalaleh agreed to fulfil their vow and immolate herself for the benefit of her beloved people. The ferocity of her desire shocked him, but there was nothing he could do to stem it.

Dalaleh was placed at the foundations of the central pillar. Her father in law allowed for a small gap in his building so that she could breathe and they could pass food and water to her. The distraught builders resumed their work. A renewed energy swept through them spurred by the encouraging words from Dalaleh.

When the last gleam of light faded the gloomy builders returned to their homes. A kind of stillness descended on the village, heavy, cloying, like the stillness before the storm; thereafter there was no sound except for the screams of a child longing for his vanished mother. A melancholy mist hung over the bridge, in the silent night tears leaked from Dalaleh's eyes and dripped down her cheeks, but no matter how hard she cried nor how deeply she sobbed the desolation did not dissipate. She thought of her son and was wracked by sorrow and longing for the days she held him in her arms.

(Continue on page 13)



Februniye (Akyol) Benno First Assyrian and female Mayor of Mardin, Turkey elected



Februniye Akyol, who prefers to go by her Assyrian name, Febronia Benno, a 25-year-old Assyrian and a political novice, was elected co-mayor of Mardin, thus becoming the first Christian woman to lead one of Turkey's 30 metropolitan municipalities.

Akyol, the daughter of a silversmith, is a member of the Syriac community, an ancient branch of the Christian faith whose followers still speak a version of Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ. The region of Tur Abdin near Mardin, a plateau dotted with monasteries that go back to the fourth century, is the Syriacs' historical heartland.

Turkey has had Christian mayors of smaller towns before, and in 2011 the Syriac politician Erol Dora, also running on a BDP ticket, became the first Christian member of parliament in Ankara since the 1960s. But Akyol is the first Christian to govern one of Turkey's 30 metropolitan municipalities.

The Syriac community, which numbered around 200,000 people in Tur Abdin a century ago, was decimated by the massacres of Anatolian Christians during World War I, when Syriacs shared the fate of the Armenians. In the decades that followed, many survivors and their descendants fled poverty, persecution and the war

between the Turkish state and Kurdish rebels in the region to settle in Europe. Today, a total of 150,000 Syriacs live in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. Some 15,000 are in Istanbul, but less than 5,000 remain in Tur Abdin.

Although Turkey began issuing appeals for Syriacs to return to their homeland in the early 2000s and strengthened social and religious rights under the country's EU membership application, Akyol said her community did not yet enjoy full democratic privileges. "Syriacs here are still not free, they can't live in peace," Akyol said.

The newly elected mayor's own name is a case in point. Born and christened Fabronia Benno, she had to run for office under her official Turkish name, Februniye Akyol, because of long-standing restrictions on the cultures and languages of ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey.

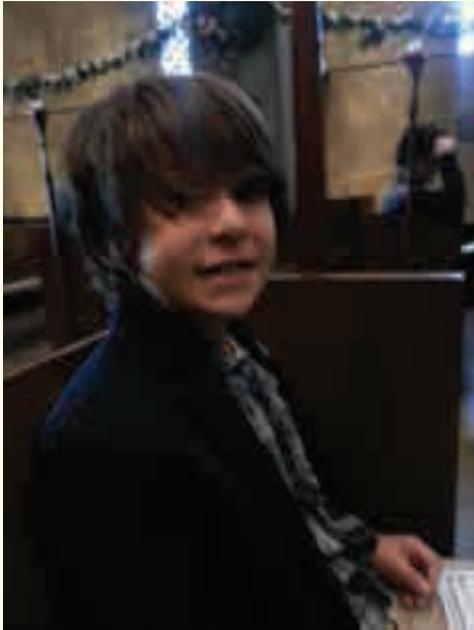


Since the Syriacs are not officially recognized as a religious minority by the Turkish state, they are not allowed their own schools to teach their ancient language to their children.

POEM

Assyrian Magic

By Liam David Parrot, 8 years old



Assyrian magic swirling in my blood.

All the Assyrian smiles delight me in my
sleep.

The Assyrian foods brightening my spirits
as I speak.

All the great Assyrian foods like “chada” or
“red rice and steak” it’s almost

so delicious that after I take a bite I can
barely speak.

I don’t know why but right when I see my
Assyrian grandmothers face, it
just sparks a light of happiness in my eyes.

I’m glad to be Assyrian!

(Continue from page 10)

Dalaleh’s sister wept bitterly as she saw her child calling for his mum. There was something about his cries that made her husband cover his ears and flee, as if the moans of some poor, damned soul had leaked out of hell. It was a sound of torment and it drilled into the most primal part of his brain. A sudden surge of anger welled up inside him and he picked his axe and headed for the bridge. He took a deep breath flooding his body with oxygen and started hammering at the base like a tormented madman.

Every time he hit the base of the bridge, Dalaleh could feel pain inside her. She pleaded to him to stop and to go back and raise their child. She told him that she is carrying the bridge on her shoulders. Her husband could not hear her cries and, his eyes were mist with tears and continued hitting the bridge until he collapsed.

Dalaleh saw his pale and haggard face devoid of life. A chilling howl of lament emerged from her throat; her wails of pain had reached the vaults of heaven. Her heart banged her ribs as if it wanted out; she felt heavens spreading inside her. She breathed long and deep, slowly her eyes closed. She suffered the torments of martyrdom and in her agonies transcended all agonies.

With the construction of modern concrete and iron bridges in the area, the Dalaleh Bridge has become much less important. But locals still use the bridge to get from one Zakho neighborhood to another and the bridge, with its five arches and large stones, still has an undeniable charm.

The Dalaleh Bridge is mostly a tourist attraction now and according to Zakho’s tourism department, between 100,000 and 150,000 persons visit the site each year. However, the bridge is in urgent need of maintenance. Several civil society organizations in Iraq demanded that the bridge be better maintained and in accordance to UNESCO’s scientific standards and to have this bridge listed as one of the world’s important archaeological sites. One only wonders: will this historical relic go the same way as so many of Iraq’s lost antiquities have?

Assyrian Aid Society-University Chapter, Davis Established

By Ivet Lolham and Bianca Davoodian



The birth of a new chapter for the Assyrian Aid Society of America, AAS-A, took place in the heart of California at the University of California at Davis. The chapter was initiated by Samuel Isaiah, AAS-A Sacramento President and Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering student at UC Davis at the time, in collaboration with Dr. Sevini Shahbaz, UC Davis Medical Student at the time and founder of the Assyrian Group at Davis. The Assyrian Aid Society-University Chapter, Davis (AAS-UC, Davis) began in 2012 and was recognized by the mother organization as officially established in September 2013. The novel title addition, namely *University Chapter*, signifies that the chapter is lead solely by students, undergraduates and graduates alike, at the respective university.

With a plethora of studious and innovative Assyrians localized near Sacramento as they are in attendance to the University of California at Davis, initiating a University Chapter was a wise move. Samuel Isaiah notes, “The ultimate reason for establishing this chapter [AAS-UC Davis] is to raise awareness and to promote our culture in order to demonstrate our existence, passion and pride to and within one of the largest public universities in the nation [UC Davis].”



The Assyrian Aid Society of America is a non-governmental organization devoted to helping Assyrians in the ancestral homeland, Bet Nahrin. Established in 1991 in response to suffering Assyrians in Iraq at the time of the First Gulf War, AAS-A continues to expand its influence across the United States by initiating local chapters, or subsections, through utilizing Assyrian leaders who are passionate and dedicated toward this common cause.

“Our goal is to educate the community about Assyrians and our target audience is college students since they are our future and have the ability to pass their knowledge on to society” says Dr. Sevini Shabaz, Vice-President of AAS-UC, Davis. She hopes that this innovative Universi-

ty Chapter concept continues to “spread to all major Universities in the nation.” She advises other students to catalyze this cause, “It only takes one person to make a change. We started with only four committed members and already have more than a dozen as we continue to grow!”

In an effort to fundraise and rally support for the Assyrians in Iraq who are receiving an Assyrian education in Bet Nahrin, AAS-UC, Davis has held various social activities that are open for all to attend, Assyrian and non-Assyrian alike. Hiking trips, backgammon tournaments, monthly house meetings and barbeques, local sporting events and other activities allow this organization to thrive by promoting participation amongst members while simultaneously raising awareness within the community.

Appointed officers of the establishment include Andrew Davoodian – President, Dr. Sevini Shahbaz – Vice President, Tamila Betyaghoub - Coordinator, Lawrence Joseph - Secretary, and Adorina Betgorgiz - Treasurer.

President of the Assyrian Aid Society of America, Ashur J. Yoseph remarked, “Even though the Sacramento and Davis Chapters of the Assyrian Aid Society of America are the newest

chapters, they have been able to accomplish much more than I had, personally, anticipated. The chapter is made up of very young, energetic and professional - or soon to be professional - volunteers. The level of energy and commitment is absolutely intoxicating. I truly enjoy spending time with them as they, and other leaders like them throughout the organization, are the future of the Assyrian Aid Society of America. We [the Assyrian people] have a very bright future ahead!”

More information can be found at www.assyrianaid.com as well as on Facebook through *Assyrian Aid Society University Chapter, Davis*

Stanislaus County Taking Initiative to Care for Assyrian Mental Health Needs

Introducing The Assyrian Wellness Collaborative

By Elizabeth Purto



The Assyrian community has long been underserved and under-recognized. In late 2013 a group of Assyrians and Non-Assyrians in Stanislaus County banded together in an effort to make a change. The Assyrian Wellness Collaborative, AWC, was developed to empower the Assyrian community, provide resources, develop community leadership skills, build youth leadership, engage the elderly in treatment, and perhaps most importantly perhaps to de-stigmatize mental health.

A plethora of possibilities prevail as to why many Assyrians are underserved. They may not vocalize their needs due to the stigmatization of mental health in the community, or perhaps due to the lack of resources available in the language. Whatever the reasons may be there is a need that thus far has not been fulfilled; a need for mental health services including counseling and peer support from trusted local professionals as well as a need for youth and community leadership. There is a need for elder Assyrian support and engagement, health and wellness education and lastly but certainly not least for immigration support and services.

As a direct result of the evident need and with the push of local community leaders, fellow Assyrian Carmen Morad teamed with Stanislaus County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services – Prevention and Early Intervention, BHRS-PEI, representative Theresa Zamora to bring into existence the Assyrian Wellness Collaborative. Carmen states, "I had been a Stanislaus County Equal Rights Commissioner for years and a very active advocate in the community, at large. My intention has always been to serve the Assyrian community, which had been underserved in Stanislaus County. When I saw the opportunity to establish a dialogue and resources for the Assyrian community to thrive, I seized it." A Non-Assyrian, Theresa Zamora of Stanislaus County's BHRS-PEI says, "My goal is to reach out to diverse communities. There is a need within the vastly growing

Assyrian Community here in Stanislaus County. Our department is here to support and strengthen the Assyrians here so that they can act on their own behalf toward promotion of the wellbeing of their people." She adds, "Through immersing myself, I have come to love the Assyrian culture." More can be learned about this organization through their website www.stancounty.com/bhrs.



The Executive Committee Board is expected to continue filling positions through 2014 as to ensure that all aspects of leadership and outreach are covered in order to create a stable, lasting, and unabridged organization. "We are working hard to set a firm foundation consisting of solid, learned, and motivated team players so that this organization may thrive and eventually expand. The big picture is to redefine mental health to the local Assyrian community and to eventually dis-

seminate our programs and resources to Assyrians globally," says Bianca Davoodian, Secretary; Education and Youth Outreach Director. "Thanks to this era of expanding social media, we can begin reaching out all over the world even now. Our team is doing an amazing job with our Facebook outreach and I would encourage everyone to connect with us there. Our objective is to reach beyond our comfort zone and start conversations – a controversial one is better than none. We can only go up from here!"

The Assyrian Wellness Collaborative will continuously be open to partnering and collaborating with various organizations, as well as be seeking to increase constituents. If you are interested in learning more about the Assyrian Wellness Collaborative initiative or would like to contribute in any way, email AssyrianWellness@gmail.com and/or connect through Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/AssyrianWellness.

Gishru Experience

By Edessa E. Kiryakos



“The only thing I desire from the Lord is that He will not take away my soul until I have seen you, homeland.” - Nau
“The only thing I desire from the Lord is that He will not take away my soul until I have seen you, homeland.” - Naum Faiq

On May 10, a few panelists including myself, Dr. Robert Karoukian, Mr. Firas Jatou, and Mr. Nardin Sarkis decided to report and share our experiences in Assyria (Northern Iraq) at the Assyrian American Association of San Jose hall. The topics discussed were: investment opportunities, education, the Gishru experience, and ancient sites. Dr. Karoukian, Nardin, and I had the pleasure of visiting via the Assyrian birthright trip, Gishru (www.gishru.com).

The panel began with Nardin discussing his experience of going to Turkey and Iraq via Gishru. We started in Southeast Turkey in Mardin and Midyat, and drove into Northern Iraq visiting Zakho, Nohadra, Alqosh, Barwar, Nahla, Arbil, Simile, and the Nineveh Plains. Participants from Canada, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland joined us as well. Highlights of his portion included all that we had experienced in both countries, as well as his personal testament to the wonderful experience. He had men-

tioned that as an Assyrian born in the United States, it was important for him to visit our “Atra d’awahatan” and tie his identity to our physical land, people, artifacts,



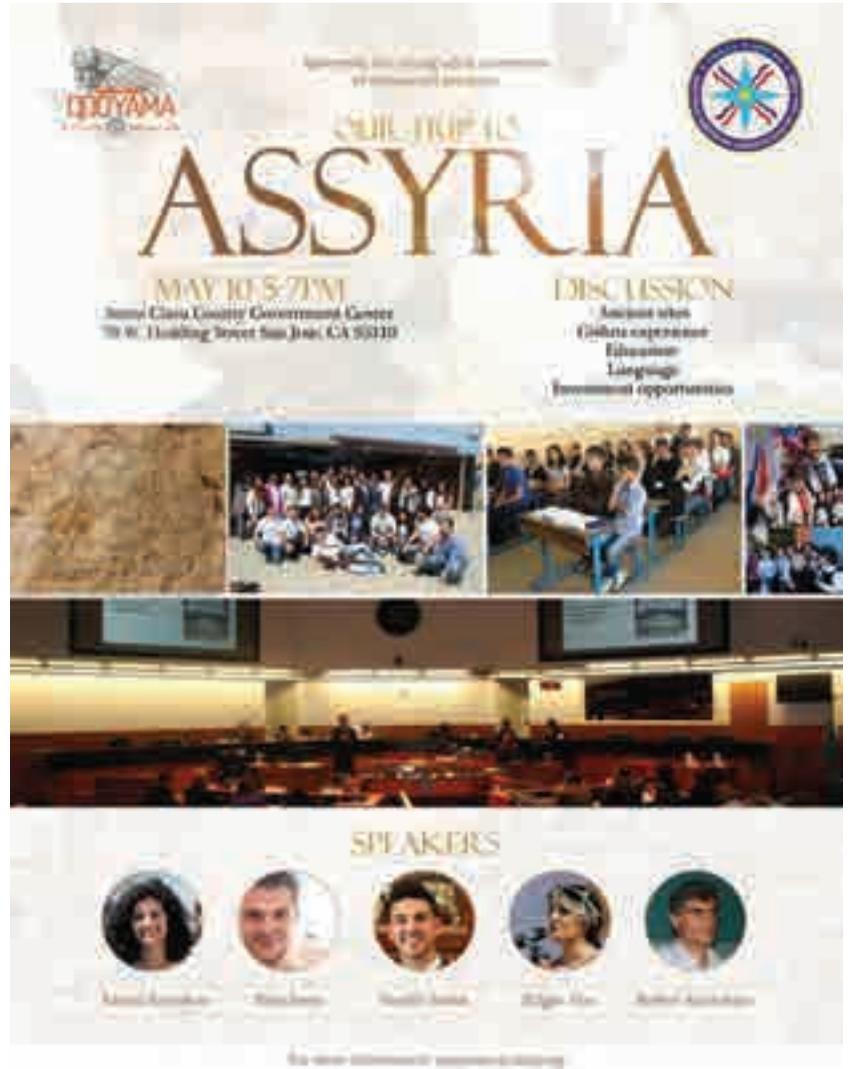
and to be an eye-witness of what is happening in our land.

I then concentrated on the topic that is near and dear to me: education. Highlights of my portion were discussing the incredible experience of going to one of roughly 60 Assyrian schools, Akkad, and seeing all of the subjects and curriculum in the school being taught in Assyrian, as well as Arabic and Kurdish. The students were well behaved and when having the opportunity to talk to them and ask their names they all had Assyrian names like “Ashuraya, Shrara, and Nahrain.” We also had the opportunity to visit the dormitory for the college students in Nohadra. They serve primarily for college students who are from the Assyrian villages but are studying in Nohadra. While the government provides financial support, Assyrian Aid Society takes a lot of the financial responsibility in transporting the students, providing additional salaries to the teachers, printing the textbooks and more.



Firas spoke on investment opportunities that are available in Northern Iraq. The types of investment are buying land both residential and/or for business. Doing business as a foreigner is not difficult in northern Iraq and has medium risk - not too high and not too low. He also mentioned that partnering with Assyrians there would help with understanding the investment logistics of that region. For more information about investment, you may contact Firas at firas@aaasj.org.

Lastly, Dr. Karoukian spoke on ancient sites that we saw both in Turkey and Northern Iraq. We had a wonderful opportunity to visit Deyrulzafaran Monastery in Mardin, the house of the late Naum Faiq, Mor Gabriel Monastery, Assyrian villages in Turkey such as Enhil, the Delaleh bridge in Zakho, King Sanherib's Aqueduct, Hakkari Mountains, the Assyrian village of Alqosh, and much more. In addition, Dr. Karoukian spoke about his visit to the ancient Assyrian remnants in Nimrud and Khinnis, which unfortunately are not being kept in the best conditions. Fun fact: be-



forever. Together, we experienced an opportunity so unique and important for us. We carry a responsibility to ensure we continue to work for our people, continue to speak our language, and continue educating people on who the Assyrians are. I am cautiously optimistic that with the Nineveh Plains prov-

cause of his ability to read Akkadian, Dr. Karoukian was able to read some of the ancient artifacts.

Visiting Assyria - especially during Assyrian New Year - was the most incredible experience I have had up to date. The friends that I have met both in Iraq and around the world are friends that will be near and dear to my heart



Bishop Mar Aprim, The Early Years

By Solomon S Solomon

Handsome and soft-spoken, Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis looks younger than his true age. Born in Habbania in January 1943, Mar Aprim, then known as Edward Khamis, graduated from the Teacher's Institute in Ramadi after first finishing High School, and was duly appointed a teacher in the public schools where he taught for nine years. At the same time, conscious of his destiny, the future Bishop studied the Assyrian language, the Bible and theology under Archdeacon Akhiqar Haji, the priest of the Church of Mar Giwargis in Habbania. Also participating in his education were Rabi Sheem Michael and Rabi Zero Amro.

During the second visit of Patriarch Mar Ishai Shimon to Iraq in 1971, Mar Ishai approached Mar Aprim with an offer of Bishop but Edward declined after deep thinking. Following Mar Ishai's resignation in July 1973, Bishop Mar Youalaha hinted to Mar Aprim of the need of Church of the East, to consecrate new bishops. A month later, Bishops Mar Dinkha and Mar Narsai, repeated the offer to Mar Aprim and this time he agreed. The next month he was consecrated in the Cathedral of Mar Zia in Baghdad.

However, the new bishop did not stop studying language and theology. During the Beirut Church Council of September 1973, he helped Metropolitan Mar Yousip and Bishop Mar Youalaha supervise the affairs of the church, and during the second Beirut conference of November 1975, it was decided to temporarily send Bishop Mar Aprim to America to run the affairs of the Church of the East in the United States and Canada. He arrived there on May 29, 1975.

On October 17, 1976, Mar Aprim took part in the London meeting that elected Mar Khnania Dinkha as Patriarch. At the same time, Mar Narsai was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan and Mar Aprim was confirmed in his new position as Bishop for North America. While in Chicago, the new bishop continued his studies earning a Master in Theology in 1994.

What followed was a great expansion of the Church of the East in the new world with new congregations being established, clergy being ordained, and infrastructure being maintained. Bishop Mar Aprim was in the thick of it and he proved worthy of the challenge.

These days Mar Aprim is presiding over the Diocese of the South-West. It is a fairly new diocese and the news from there is that Bishop Mar Aprim is doing well. May our Lord be with him always.



*Photo taken in Beirut, Lebanon in 1973
Standing from Left: Mar Aprim, Mar Narsai, Mar Dinkha, Mar Youalaha
Sitting from Left: Mar Youkhanna, Metropolitan Mar Yousip, Mar Timotheus*

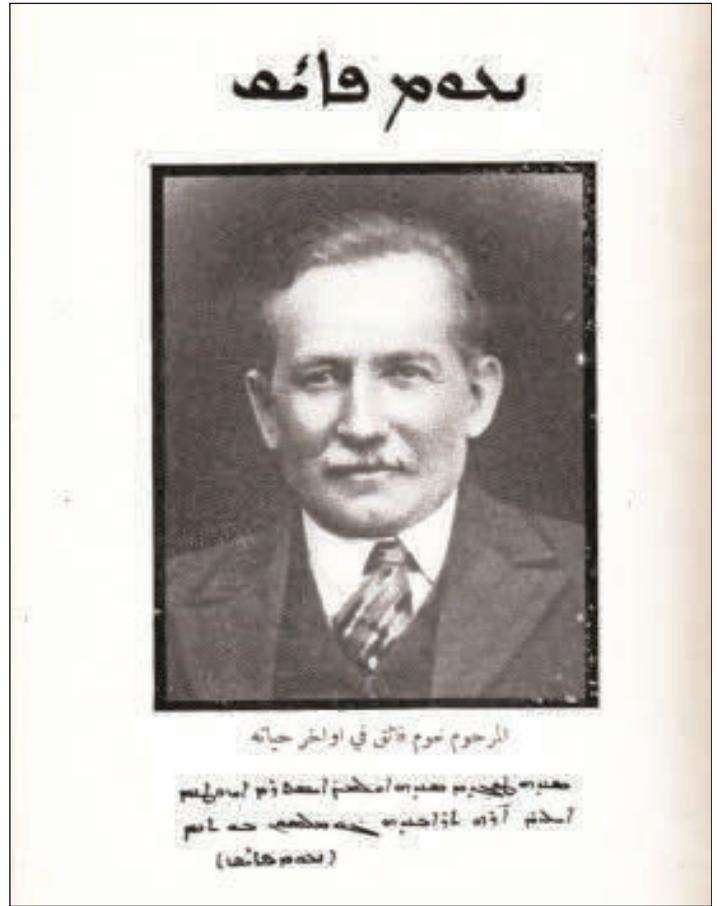
(with Persian characters).

These five books are works by Naoum Palak. There are also several books about and in tribute to him; including:

Naum Faiq – Zikra wa takhlid which is a tribute to Naoum Palak, is the comprehensive book written about him. Murat Chiqqe compiled it and it was printed in Damascus in 1936. It is a collection of texts written by Palak’s contemporaries from different parts of the world and in different languages; Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, (Classical) Assyrian, English and German. The book also contains examples of Palak’s own writings.

David B. Perley, a well-known lawyer and author, contributed with an article that was published in the above-mentioned book under the title: A Brief Study in the Palak Nationalism (pages 280-286). Here is a quotation from that article which describes Naoum Palak very well both as a person and an author:

“He owes his celebrity as much to his writings as to his actions. They are striking examples of the rarest sort of expository skill. Gifted with an extraordinary lucid mind, he was the sworn enemy of every form of obscurity. Had he chosen to devote his energies to pure scholarship as his generous endowments would have suggested, the highest academic distinctions would doubtless have come to him. He is not a debtor to any human institution of learning. He possessed no formal education, neither bachelor, master, nor doctor of any art, science or philosophy he was. He was born with a free and controlling genius. He is especially distinguished by originality. He

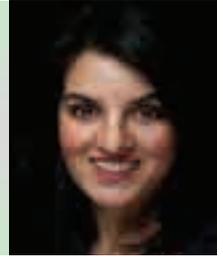


was eloquent, more particularly, in his poems. He transformed the inmost truth of his nation into music and verse. His songs, as we place them on our lips, strike an answering chord in almost every heart among us. What tears has he not shed over the calamities of his race! What mournings has he not entertained for his dear persecuted brothers and sisters! What ashes has he not put over his head because Ashur Yoosuf, “the master-light of all our seeing”, was strangled!”



Preserving the Future

By Tamara O Benjamin



As we celebrate our 50 years in existence, we remember the volunteers whose dedication and perseverance created the Assyrian Foundation of America into the respectable, admired and cherished organization it is today. We reflect on how far we have come and envision where we will be 50 years from now.

As a wife, mother of two small children and now the Education Chair, where we are going is always on my mind. How will we be celebrating 50 years from today? What will come of our future and our organization? What is the glue that will keep our nation, culture, or identity going for 50 more years?

As a mother, I consciously speak Assyrian with my children. I have since they were born. And although neither of my children are in school, their language of choice is English. Though their father speaks English, he does make a commendable effort to learn and try to encourage Assyrian in our home, but outside of our home we live in America. A world where English is the language of choice. How can I or anyone else compete with that? I think about my small role in the big picture and want to make sure my efforts make a difference but often times I feel defeated.

Since I do speak Assyrian, both kids understand everything I say. I've tried different tactics to encourage an Assyrian response but again English dominates. We work on the Assyrian Alphabet, numbers and words and sometimes it feels like it pays off. Especially when my eldest asks, "mom how do we say fog in Assyrian", it melts my heart. But it is also a sign that the gears in his brain are turning and he does understand there is a difference between languages. Does he prefer not to be different? Does he understand that since English is the language of choice in our neighborhood, on TV, radio and everywhere else, he would rather speak English? I recently downloaded the Assyrian alphabet application on my i-phone and encourage him to use it. He

tries it for a few minutes, but he's more entertained and interested in the English counterpart. Why, I am not sure?

Since I am living in such a formidable time for our future. I would love to tap into the interaction of my kids and channel their energy into books, games, CDs or DVDs that are young, fun, contemporary and relative, embracing our Assyrian and American culture. I am encouraging our readers, to collaborate and fulfill a niche market that needs to be exploited. We need to merge our scholars young and old, integrate our technology gurus and creative minds to look forward and build the road for the next 50 years.

Many of our volunteers, are our parents, many who will work for our people until they can no longer and when the time comes they will need to pass the torch and how devastating will it be when there won't be anyone waiting to accept it. I don't share these thoughts as a doomsday scenario. I share these thoughts as a young mother of a young family living in an American city wanting to find a solution to a problem that so many other families are facing.

We remember our genocide every year and pay tribute to the women, men and children that died to preserve our nation and we need to always remember our past, but we need to work towards the future, so that none of their senseless deaths were in vain.



DONATIONS

Your donations are not only crucial but vital for generating continual support to helping the many Assyrians in need suffering worldwide, support and promote education for Assyrians and preserve the Assyrian history. The Assyrian Foundation of America is dedicated to helping Assyrians and every cent you send goes directly for the cause that you designate. AFA sincerely thanks you for your generous response to the Annual Christmas Appeal which to date has raised over \$21,000. Please continue with your help our people living in Diaspora need you more today than ever before. For more information visit our website at www.assyrianfoundation.org or email us at info@assyrianfoundation.org.

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Double or even triple your support with Corporate Matching Gifts. Check with your company's Human Resources office to see if they offer a matching gift program. The AFA extends its deepest appreciation to the following organizations that have made contributions through their matching gifts program.

- *Bank of the West, \$500.00 (Employee Giving Program via Sue Odah)
- *Fidelity Charitable, \$500.00 (Employee Giving Program Via Beneta Baitoo)

NEEDY

Your extraordinary generosity is the primary source of Assyrian Foundation's financial assistance to needy Assyrian families throughout the world. AFA is honored to recognize your generosity and is extremely grateful for all your donations that enable AFA to continue with its dedication to help Assyrians.

Anonymous, \$150.00	William & Shamiran Karon, \$50.00	Najibeh Reyhanabad, \$100.00
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EDUCATION

Your gift is crucial in providing support for Assyrian Foundation to achieve its goal to provide significant scholarships to bright young Assyrian students who are working toward advanced degrees in Assyriology and related Assyrian studies. AFA gratefully acknowledges your generosity and foresight to the importance of building a strong Assyrian academic foundation that will keep the flame of Assyrian history and identity burning bright for

Lucy Abraham, \$20.00	Nadia George, \$50.00	Edward P. Miner, \$2,500.00
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Vardin Chamaki, \$300.00	Peter D. Kiryakos, \$300.00	Shalim Tatar, \$200.00 (In memory of Lily Nissan)
	Nora Lucy, \$1,700.00	Lawrence Youhannani, \$75.00

NINEVEH MAGAZINE

Nineveh Magazine is the global voice of not only the Assyrian Foundation of America but Assyrians worldwide. The magazine is distributed to thousands of readers around the world, including major universities. Nineveh Magazine extends its deepest appreciation to all the individual contributors who helped fund publication of Nineveh. Please consider sponsoring the publication of the next issue Nineveh Magazine.

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		Wisconsin Historical Society, \$30.00

GENERAL DONATIONS

AFA expresses its sincere appreciation to the donors who have made generous donations and would like to remind you that every cent you send to AFA goes directly for the cause that you designate.

Lucy Abraham, \$10.00	Elias & Debbie Hanna, \$100.00	Sarkiz & Arjovik Ray, \$100.00
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Emanuel & Mary Goriel, \$50.00		Gorgias Press LLC, \$100.00
		Royal, \$20.00

Please note the above are donations received from January 1st to May 31, 2014, any donations received after May 31st will be listed in the next issue of Nineveh. Also, we have made every effort to ensure that our lists of supports are up-to-date. It is possible that a name may have been misspelled or omitted. If so, please accept our sincere apology and kindly notify us at assyrianfoundation.org, so that we may make the appropriate change to our records. Thank you.

4th Annual Members' Appreciation Event

By Donatella Yelda



Nicholas Al-Jeloo (PhD in Syrian Studies, Sydney, 2011) is an Australian-born Iraqi Assyrian, and is currently an independent researcher and scholar at the beginning of his academic career. He also holds an MA in Eastern Christianity from Leiden University, and a BA in Classical Hebrew from the University of Sydney. He speaks six dialects of Syriac and modern Assyrian dialects, ethnic-religious and linguistic minorities, as well as the social and cultural history of ethnic Assyrians at the medieval and modern periods. In addition to his experience as a socio-cultural historian, he has conducted fieldwork across the Middle East. He has taught Syriac at the University of Sydney and his books include *A Modern Assyrian (Aramaic/Syriac) Dictionary and Grammar* (2007) and the exhibit catalogue *Immigrants and Exiles* (2010). He has also written a number of scholarly articles and is presently writing a book on Assyrians in Iran during the post-modern and early modern periods.

On April 27, 2014, the AFA held its Fourth Member's Appreciation Event with a special presentation by Dr. Nicholas Al-Jeloo on "Assyrians Tomorrow: Continuity and Preservation"

The afternoon kicked off with a social hour, hors d'oeuvre, traditional Assyrian tea and silent auction. The MC, Ms. Bianca Davoodian welcomed all and presented the event's performers and speaker.

The AFA's President, Mrs. Sue Odah, also welcomed and thanked all the AFA members and supporters for their continuous commitment to AFA's

mission. Additionally she recognized the Board Members for their tireless efforts, dedication and team work. One board member in particular, Sargon Shabbas was recognized above all and presented with a well deserved appreciation award for his many years of unwavering commitment, selfless dedication and service to the AFA and the Assyrian Community at large.

Mrs. Lorraine Davis, with her exquisite voice, accompanied by her daughter Ms. Ramina Sarmicanic on the piano opened the program with the Nineveh song by the late Rabi William Daniel. Additionally, this year to the guests' great delight, the AFA proudly presented Ms. Edessa Essa, who with her enchanting voice sang Kharabet Nineveh, and Atry Khilya Bet Nahrain.

Finally, Dr. Al-Jeloo's presentation focused on Assyrian history, especially from ancient to medieval times, illustrating how Assyrians have played a seminal role in the pro-

cess of inventing, disseminating, translating and applying knowledge. It was this role that earned ancient Mesopotamia the nickname of Cradle of Civilization. And how various invasions and domination by other, more numerous and more aggressive cultural groups, have now rendered the Assyrians a stateless, transnational ethnic group, and a beleaguered minority in their own native lands. The presentation also, dealt with the way in which such previous intellectual prowess has continued amongst them today. It also tackled the question as to whether or not the Assyrians have persisted in the same spirit of education and cultural preservation, particularly in safe-guarding the Aramaic language and ensuring its future continuation. Today, Assyrians around the globe are advancing their efforts to unite with one another, bring about awareness of their history and culture, and continue their traditions and language. The activities of Assyrian organizations in the United States such as the Assyrian Foundation of America, Assyrian Aid Society, Assyrian American National Federation, Assyrian Council of Illinois and Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation, as well as those in other countries, was discussed and suggestions were raised as to how these efforts can be continued into the future, and expanded further internationally, in order for the goals of continuity and preservation to be maintained. (the entire presentation by Dr. Al-Jeloo is available to view on our website:

www.assyrianfoundation.org - courtesy of Paul K Benjamin and PKB Visions)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

A very special and heartfelt Thank You! to Mrs. Lorraine Davis, Ramina Sarmicanic, Bianca Davoodian, Edessa Essa, Paul Benjamin, Sh. Ashur DeKelaita, and our Key note Speaker Dr. Nicholas Al-Jeloo for making AFA's 4th Annual Appreciation Event a very memorable one. You make AFA and Assyrians around the world proud

Additionally, a sincere thank you to the following individuals for their continuous and steadfast support, through their donation towards our silent auction fund raising efforts:

- Sue Odah - 4 Assyrian Artifacts
- Paul Benjamin and PKB Visions (www.pkbvisions.com)
- Martin Jacob
- Flora Kingsbury
- Assyrian Aid Society
- Narsai David





CONGRATULATIONS !

Dear Mom & Dad,



Today as both of you look back with happiness and pride, upon the fifty cherished years that you've spent side by side, may every memory that you share of

dreams you've seen come true, help make this special Golden day a happy one for you!

Warmest congratulations and sincere best wishes as you celebrate your 50 Years of Marriage!

بۆھۆچە مەس كەسەئۆچە 50 یۆتە دۆخۆدۆھە .
مۆدۆنە بۆخۆگەھە .

Happy 50th Anniversary

June 22, 2014

Arbella, Hanibal, Briteel & Beneel



CONGRATULATIONS !



We joyfully welcome our daughter
Eliana Younan Karamian
Born April 16th, 2014 at 11:26 AM

We thank God for his blessing.
Love
Raman & Karmen Younan Karamian
(Parents)
Youra & Stella Younan Karamian
(Grand-parents)
James & Vala Younan Grand-parents).

Nineveh and the Assyrian Foundation of America join in congratulating the proud families of our Assyrian Newborn.



Nina Marzocca graduated fifth grade at Farallone View Elementary School in Montara.



Valentina Marzocca graduated from pre-school Seaside Kids in Half Moon Bay.

Nineveh and the Assyrian Foundation of America join in congratulating Nina and Valentina.

CONGRATULATIONS !



14TH ANNUAL
BEVERLY HILLS™
FILM FESTIVAL
GOLDEN PALM
SCREENPLAY COMPETITION AWARD WINNERS
ROSIE MALEK-YONAN AND MONICA MALEK-YONAN
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ROSIE MALEK-YONAN'S
THE CRIMSON FIELD
A WIFEHOOD EPIC
EDITED BY MONICA MALEK-YONAN



Beverly Hills Film Festival Announces Screenplay Winners

Rosie & Monica Malek-Yonan's *The Crimson Field* has been named the winner of the 2014 Beverly Hills Film Festival Screenwriting Competition.

2014 Beverly Hills Film Festival Screenplay Awards

- Golden Palm - Best Screenplay - *The Crimson Field* (Rosie & Monica Malek-Yonan)
- 1st Runner up - *Olivia's Oath* (Philip Sedgwick)
- 2nd Runner up - *Patchwork* (Amanda Keener)

Nineveh and the Assyrian Foundation of America join in congratulating the author Mrs. Rosie Malek-Yonan and her sister Mrs. Monica Malek-Yonan .

22nd Annual Assyrian Food Festival

22nd Annual

22nd Annual Assyrian Food Festival

2014 August 23 - 24

2014 August 23 - 24

Assyrian Food Festival

"The Celebration Continues"

Traditional Assyrian Food
Live Music, Dancing & Entertainment
Exotic Teas, Coffees and Pastries
Wine Bar, Exhibits and MORE...
Vendors from Around the World
Fun Filled Kid Zone

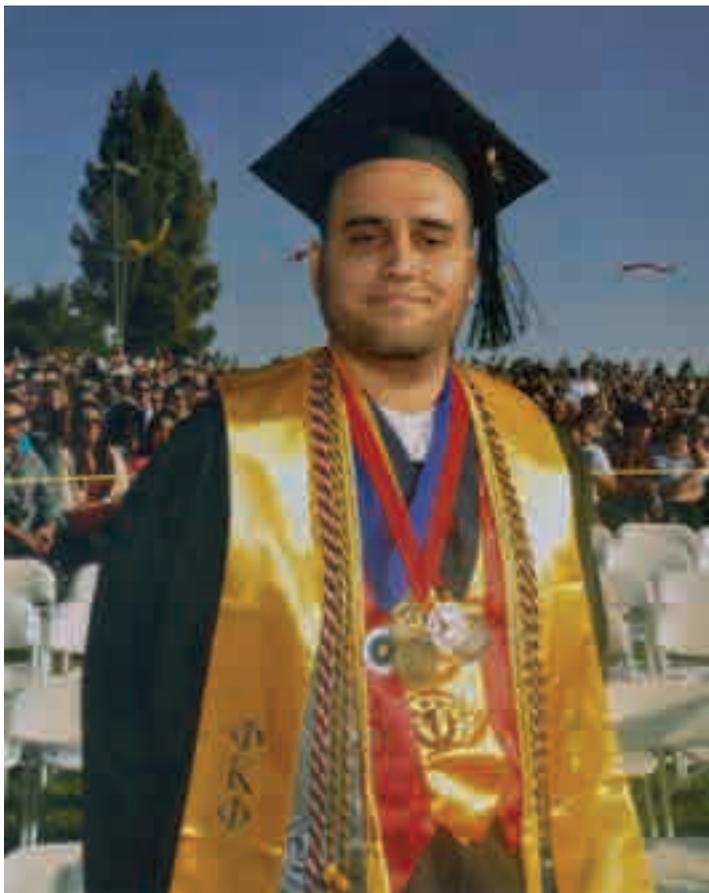
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2014 Ford Mustang

AUGUST 23-24, 2014
SATURDAY, SUNDAY
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CONGRATULATIONS !



Isaac W. Farhadian is the recipient of numerous awards, honors, and scholarships. He recently graduated with a Single-Subject Teaching Credential in Social Science (4.0) from CSU, Stanislaus in 2014. That year, he was awarded the Laura E. Settle Scholarship, which is awarded to one outstanding student who was pursuing a Single-Subject Credential Degree. In addition, he was awarded the Mary Stuart Rogers Scholarship for a second time, which is awarded to a small group of students who have outstanding academic performance, good work ethics, have participated in volunteer services, maintained a minimum GPA of 3.5, written extensively in their field of research, as well as writing a competitive essay.

In 2013, he graduated with a Master of Arts in History with *Distinction*, the highest honor a graduate student can receive. In 2012, he was awarded the University-Wide Outstanding Graduate Award in history, which is awarded to the top-performing student in the graduate history program. That same year, he was awarded the Judge & Alverta Hughes Humanitarian Award, which is awarded annually in recognition of one “student who has delivered outstanding volunteer services to communities, groups or individuals and has positively impacted the lives of others,” for his hundreds of hours of voluntary

services at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and several other non-profit organizations.

In 2011, he was awarded the Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award, which is awarded annually to 80 outstanding graduate students and professionals nationwide who have exhibited academic achievement and scholarship in their discipline. For the 2010–2011 academic year, he was awarded the Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Student Scholarship Award and the Phi Kappa Phi Founding President Scholarship Award, which are competitive, annual scholarships awarded to one outstanding student who has excelled academically.

In 2010, he earned a double degree in History and Political Science and graduated Summa Cum Laude. That same year, out of over 2,300 graduating students, he was awarded the **2010 J. Burton Vasché Award** (Valedictorian Award), which is awarded to one student who displays, “the highest standards of leadership, cooperation, participation, service and scholarship.” That same year, he was awarded the Miriam V. and John L. Keymer Memorial award, which is awarded to one outstanding student annually “who has worked selflessly and effectively as a student advocate on or off campus and has improved the overall quality of life on university grounds.”

That same year, he completed and graduated from the University Honors Program, publishing two honors theses in the annual Honors Journal. He has also published an article in the Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies. He has studied abroad three times in two different countries. He has studied abroad in Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2009 and in 2010. For his first study abroad, he engaged in archaeological work at the prehistoric settlement mound called Tel Hazor, which was sacked by the Assyrians in 732 BC.

His second study abroad took place at Universidad Internacional (UNINTER), in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he studied Spanish and the history of Mexico. His third study abroad brought him back to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he studied the topography, geography, archeology, and political history of Jerusalem from ancient times to the modern era. He has presented at ten academic and honors conferences throughout California (CSU, UC, and Private institutions), earning awards for best research papers.

He is a member of five honor societies and he has served as an officer for the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS), the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Pi Sigma Alpha: The National Political Science Honor Society, and Phi Alpha Theta: the National History Honor Society for multiple years. Moreover, for one year, he has studied the modern Assyrian language intensively under the tutelage of MalpanaTobia Giwargis.

NEW BOOKS

Joe David

The Infidels

The Great War began with two shots: one aimed at the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Hapsburg throne, and the other aimed at his wife, Sophie. What many thought would be just another Balkan squabble quickly transformed into a major war felt around the world. As Europe burst into flames and millions of soldiers began battling the forces of nationalism, northwestern Persia became a warzone in which radical religious tribes invaded Christian villages and systematically martyred hundreds of thousands of “infidels” who dared to resist conversion.

On a small slice of ancient and isolated land owned by a wealthy Assyrian family, a young Christian girl awakens to the brutal massacre of her race in a war that she is too young to understand. Surrounded by hostility and greed, deep-seated hatred and unspeakable horrors, she must somehow come to terms with the nightmare that her life has become.

Today the world is in crisis, as two mighty religions collide. Is this the beginning of another genocide? Which one will survive and dominate? View the past to grasp the future. Step back in time and discover what happened during World War I when the Turks decided it was time to cleanse the Ottoman Empire of infidels.

Joe David

Genocide and International Law:

Does the Genocide Convention Protect All Nations from Genocide?

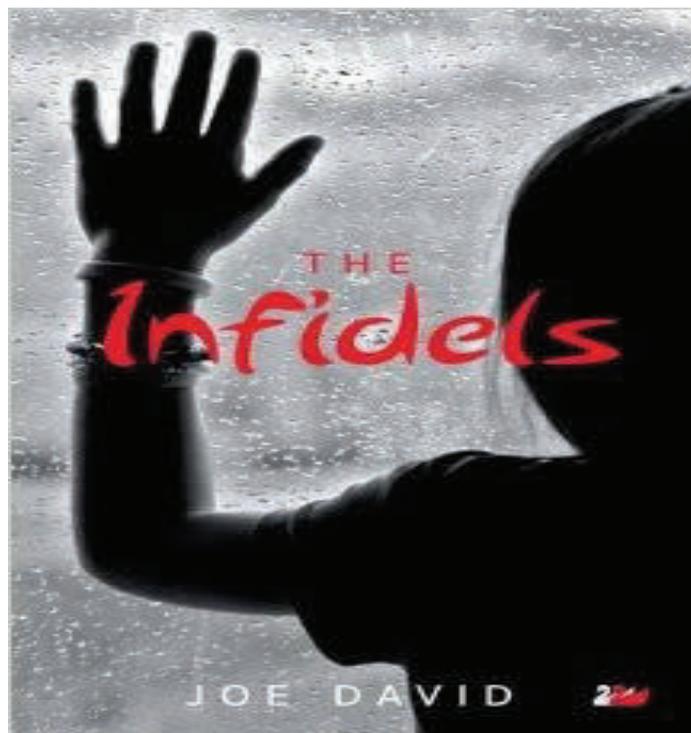
Professor Hannibal Travis Will Present his Views, April 14th, at the National Press Club of Washington

Why have Turkey and the member states of the Arab League often been allowed to escape condemnation for mass murders against their own populations, while other nations are forced to face international consequences for their crimes? Professor Hannibal Travis, professor at Florida International University of Law, will explore this question among others as he applies his insights to the subject of genocide in the twentieth century on Monday, April 14, 2014, 6:30 p.m., at the National Press Club of Washington, 529 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC.

“Over the past several decades,” Professor Travis said, “the Republic of Turkey has interpreted the Genocide Convention as not applying to its own history and conduct, even as it claims to be preventing acts of genocide against its racial, ethnic and religious allies in the Balkans, China, Cyprus, Palestine, Russia, and Syria. The member states of the Arab League have been doing the same by maintaining a disproportionate focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to deflect the attention of the United Nations away from their eradication or forcible assimilation of their own indigenous non-Muslim populations.”

To correct this oversight of justice, Professor Travis believes it is important that we never forget the ethnic and religious cleansing of the period from 1914 through 1945 in the Middle East and Europe, as we attempt to understand and to resist contemporary threats to ethnic and religious tolerance and diversity.

Professor Travis will be a speaker at the book launch of Joe David’s latest book *The Infidels* (Thames River Press, London). *The Infidels* is a moving story about an Assyrian family, trapped in northwestern Persia, during World War I, victims of one of the twentieth century’s first major genocides. David will read a passage from his book, which is a fictionalization of his mother’s harrowing experience, while a child, living in Urmia in northwestern Persia.



An Oxcart to Nineveh

By Lilea Eshoo

July 12, 2013- All who had heard yesterday's tragic news wake up from a troubled sleep tightly clutching the oddly-shaped and painful shards of a vivid nightmare. The pieces fall into place and her face appears before us. The cold, dark reality sets in. It did happen. She is gone. We immediately envy our past selves -- willing to give anything to revert to a state where there was even a possibility that the worst was not true.

Summer 2001- Julie was pregnant with her first child and the girl's name had been decided: Lily. I was 12 at the time and tried convincing Julie and Sargon to name her Lilea instead -- as if that final syllable would seal some bond. I cannot explain it but I wanted so badly for her to be like me.

July 11, 2013 ~10AM - Mom opened my office door and stuck her head in. She saw I was on the phone and walked off quickly, closing the door behind her. I finished my call and ascended the stairs, headed to her office. Mom was nowhere to be seen but my sister Inanna

stood frozen in the hallway, tears running down her face. I immediately knew what happened: Lily Jacob, daughter of Sargon and Julie Jacob, passed away in Costa Rica. She was eleven.

Spring 2005 – I read *Joy Luck Club* in my 10th grade English class. There was one line in the book that stuck. Now, it haunts.

May 10, 2008 – Lily and her sisters danced *Sheikhani* at Papa and Mamani's 50th wedding anniversary celebration. She jumped and ran around with enthusiasm. I remember her boisterous energy, her unabashed confidence, and her enormous smile.

September 1, 2012 – We had a going away party for Inanna before she went off to France. The first thing I did was greet Lily at the door. She walked in with a basket of fresh strawberries. I don't remember this but a picture has told me so. I didn't realize that would be the last time I would see her. Pictures of that day speak, if



not yell, volumes; I have all but gone deaf. Pictures of Lily at the piano, pictures of her and Summer laughing together, pictures of two families of five at the dinner table -- they all ring decibels louder than their initial kind whisper.

July 11, 2013 – ~9AM- Mom received a call from Lily's grandmother Gail. She got off the phone and told us to pray for Lily who was sick with food poisoning. She requested I call Mark and ask that he, too, pray for her and spread the word to expand the prayer circle. Instead, I sent my own positive thoughts her way, I cried, and then I then went back to work as a means of distraction. I was confident she would recover. With medicine being what it is, with her father a doctor. We were all confident.

I regret not calling. It's not that I didn't care, it's that I didn't believe. It's that I deprived her of a complete prayer chain. I let my skepticism and foolishness interfere with my mother's request at a crucial moment. It's not that I impossibly killed her; it's that I deprived her of possible life. Prayer circles are proven. The stoic empiricism that rules generally accepted beliefs even says so.

July 8, 2012, ~1:00PM – Mom, my cousin Lisabelle, my aunt Bernadette, and I took the girls to Petroglyph to paint ceramics. They all selected different unicorn pieces as their canvas. The table became a rainbow of paints and brushes, a blur of muddled water and busy fingers. Lily chose a girl sitting atop a unicorn. She sat for about two hours, even after the others had finished, painting it beautifully with patience and determination.

July 19, 2013 7PM – We gathered a day before the funeral at Benito and Azzaro Pacific Garden Chapel in Santa Cruz. It was an open casket but I couldn't bear to look. I wanted to remember her running at the beach, laughing her giant laugh, smiling her carefree smile, painting her unicorn, and dancing *Sheikhani*. Sargon told us he still doesn't know exactly what happened to her, nothing conclusive on how she died. All credibility in the foreign doctors' autopsy was long diminished. He had worked on her for hours and hours; her vitals were fine then she slipped away. We spoke of her life, her spirit, and her patterns. Sargon told us in detail about how organized she was, how meticulously she kept her journal and kept track of her time, and how well she watched over her sisters. I told Sargon she was too good for this place. I'm not sure what compelled me to say it, or if it helped, but I had begun to realize it was true.

July 20, 2013 10AM – Over 500 congregated for her funeral. A bookmark with her picture was handed out at the door. The time she shared with us was patched together as experiences, phrases and anecdotes were recounted by her priest, grandma, father, and teacher. I drew more connections to myself than I wanted to, and not just the similar name: the calm, kind and intelligent father, the patient, beautiful mother who is more parts

kind than human, a somewhat lonely childhood spent wanting a best friend, occasional sassiness as a thin veil for concern, trips with Girl Scout troops, journal-keeping, gift-knitting, the nights spent awake to finish books too good to put down, a reverence for Laura Ingalls Wilder, intense organizational skills, and caring eldest sister instincts. I draw these connections and wonder why I was fated to live past eleven. What have I done? More importantly, what can I do? I want to be calm and compassionate, to live with passion and desire, and to dream big. I realized that despite the similarities, I am nowhere near. I wanted to badly to be like her, despite the missing syllable.

As we sat in the packed church, Julie's family filled the row in front of us. They had driven over from the Midwest where Julie grew up. The priest called the children on stage to share memories then sent them to hug whomever they came with. The running of these children restored some measure of our dwindling hope.

Next we trudged to the graveyard. The image of Julie kissing her casket lingers ever-present, like staring directly into the vivid sun and closing your eyes. Her sisters placed flowers on the casket; her youngest sister Ashley returned time and time again, peering down as each dropped with a thud that echoed our heavy heartbeats.

July 12, 2013 - The details of her final hours were revealed. Her last words: "Mommy, I'm scared."

July 8, 2012 - 3:00PM – Operation paint unicorns was still underway. We watched the girls as they finished their respective unicorns. Bernadette and I chatted and she showed me a Eugenio Montejó poem:

*The earth turned to bring us closer,
it spun on itself and within us,
and finally joined us together in this dream
as written in the Symposium.*

*Nights passed by, snowfalls and solstices;
time passed in minutes and millennia.*

*An ox cart that was on its way to Nineveh
arrived in Nebraska.*

*A rooster was singing some distance from the world,
in one of the thousand pre-lives of our fathers.*

*The earth was spinning with its music carrying us on
board;*

*it didn't stop turning a single moment
as if so much love, so much that's miraculous
was only an adagio written long ago
in the Symposium's score.*

July 11, 2013 ~9PM– Inanna and I came home with puffy eyes. Dad had turned the kitchen table upside-down and was fixing it because it was lopsided. All of a sudden the line from *The Joy Luck Club* came back to me. At the time I greeted it with surprised and distress,

an unwanted guest telling an unwanted story. Now it makes sense that our days' tragedy had effectively primed me, conjuring that line to the top of my muddled subconscious. This particular vignette expresses a mother's plight and details her losing faith in God following the death of her young child. She was religious and kept her bible on her mantle but after her child was swept away by the ocean, "her Bible would end up wedged under a too-short table leg, a way for her to correct the imbalances of life." It was already there for me. Now that Dad balanced the leg, my bible still sits there, stifled and crushed close. Life is more imbalanced than the day that table was new and flat, if ever it was.

August 10, 2013 – We went to Sargon's house to visit and go to the beach. The piano notes, the belongings, her babysitting tally, and the pictures served as reminders of something we are unable to overlook. A harsh, persistent alarm when you're already wide awake. Her absence is felt; her parents' eyes ache of it. We played volleyball on the beach, ate pizza, and talked about a piece *Nineveh Magazine* wanted to run on Lily.

July 11, 2013 ~11AM – Despite having attended many funerals together, I saw Dad cry for the first time. Mom had called and told him the news. He came to work sobbing tears and heaving cries of disbelief. He and I sat at the conference room dazed for hours, waiting for the enormity of this disaster to sink in. In many ways, we're still waiting.

June 17, 2012 – I arranged a Father's Day Picnic at Lake Vasona. Lily, Summer and Ashley meticulously filled up an entire basket of water balloons and initiated an epic water balloon fight. Lily fearlessly hurled balloons at all brave enough to challenge her. We ate, we played volleyball and then we played tug of war. Lily and her sisters served as tug of war team captains and dutifully assembled their teams. The largest men were picked last. The first team picked their dad first and the second team picked their mother first. Julie, brimming with loveliness and much-deserved pride, came forth with a large graceful smile, a smile returned by her girls, reassured Mommy was on their side.

July 19, 2013 9PM – Uncle Martin asked that I read *Baban d'Bashmayya*, *The Lord's Prayer*, in Assyrian at Lily's funeral the next day. I consulted eight family members for proper pronunciation, filmed my grandma, and rehearsed frantically even though 95% of people there would be unable to recognize an incorrect line. I wanted to get it right because Lily had placed it above her bed and committed to memorizing it and she would have gotten it right. I worry that the number of Assyrians unaware, as I was before all of this happened, will grow. I hope enough will pull out their bibles from beneath

their tables and onto their mantles.

December 14, 2013 – December 14: a date immortalized in stone too soon. 2001: A year affixed to another, too close. December 14th is the day of her birth, a date that will still come around despite our best intentions. Why does death turn a 'birthday' into 'date of her birth'? Perhaps it is because she is no longer here with us to celebrate. Perhaps it is because of the sharp contrast to the joy of years past. 'Birthday' and 'date of her birth'-- the two should contain the same meaning but their connotations suggest otherwise. Perhaps because so much has been severed across time and space, life and death – the least the words can do is cooperate, however half-heartedly.

July 8, 2012, 3:30PM – The girls were finished painting at Petroglyph. We stood back to admire their work and all agreed that Lily looks like the girl on the unicorn that she had painted.

August 14, 2011– We all went to Sargon's house to play volleyball. The girls had new hammocks that Sargon had just put up. Sargon, Ashley, Summer, and Inanna were on the front deck and the Moms chatted downstairs. Lily showed me her room, carefully organized, her bed, tidily made, and then her hammock, hung up on the back deck. She sat in it and rocked backward and forward as a summer breeze played across the porch and time slowed down.

So much that's miraculous was only an adagio written long ago.

July 11, 2014 – Abruptness displaces, unity restores, pain injures, and traditions stabilize. Consistent with Assyrian tradition, we will all visit her grave bearing frankincense and a bible. Prayers will be read and she will be remembered as thousands upon thousands before her have been remembered and visited one year later in a tradition called *Sheeta*. Traditions delivered from the time of our forefathers have passed across continents and centuries; from the land between the rivers to the land of opportunity. A land where they say all things are possible but nothing is guaranteed. Not language, not tradition, not life. These are the things we have to cling to as we make our journey.

An ox cart that was on its way to Nineveh arrived in Nebraska. Much remains unknown but one thing in my mind is certain: Lily is that girl atop the unicorn -- heavenly, dreamlike, and ultimately too good for this world. I think of her often and she comes and visits in my dreams, beaming widely and laughing fully. The earth turned to bring us closer, it spun on itself and within us, and finally joined us together in this dream

In Memoriam



Our Parents: Baba and Nanajan Yukhanna

Nanajan (Nano) Yukhanna passed away on October 19, 2013 in Chicago at age 87. She was married to Baba(Bob) for 64 years and they lived in Baghdad, Iraq. Baba passed

away in March, 2007. This is where the downhill journey started for her. They are survived by 4 daughters: Edna and husband Dr. Ghazi, Anita and husband Daniel, Rona, and Caroline, 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

They were born in Urmiyah, Iran. Baba went to Iraq with his family as refugees (Raqa) in 1918, he was a new born baby. He grew up and worked in Habaniya. He attended Rabi Yacu's school and was actively involved in school activities like Shakespeare's play of Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and others. He played team soccer and played competitively in Iraq. He also played tennis. He was one very patriotic Assyrian and followed news about Assyrian causes. He believed that the Assyrian nation will rise again as mentioned in the Bible. He told us to believe in it and not lose hope. He was an avid reader; he read English newspapers and magazines like Time, Newsweek, Life and they were passed down to us to improve our English. He read his Assyrian Bible daily, especially during his retirement of 20 years. He was fluent in reading and writing Assyrian.

Nano went to Iraq in 1943, got married, and lived in Habaniyah while Bob was working there. She was educated in Urmiyah, studied in Farsi, Arabic, and English. In addition she spoke Turkish and was fluent in Assyrian. She believed in education as the key to success. She insisted that her 4 daughters attend Nun's school for best education then college. She enjoyed watching CNN for news and politics daily. She worked side by side with Bob to achieve the best for their daughters.

Our parents came to U.S. in 1970. They both worked very hard in Chicago's harsh winters, but they were proud of it. They were independent and self-made people from the beginning.

They were ideal parents with great values of hardworking, honesty, helping the needy, and living by true Christian beliefs. They enjoyed having their family. It was always a feast when having their daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren around. They will be forever missed throughout our lives and will never be forgotten as parents, teachers of history and life experiences, and convenient references of knowledge.

All of us were blessed to have them with us for so long. Edna, Anita, Rona, and Caroline



Shamiran Warda Odisho

1954-2014

My entire family mourns the loss of my niece Shamie who died in the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana on the 10th of April, 2014 after a long illness. Shamiran leaves behind the following family members: mother Khatoon; three

sisters: Klamia, Linda and Liliana; her four brothers: Tiador, Ashoor, Noel and William and their families. At one time, Shamie was married to Kenny Cramer of Wabash, IN.

Shamiran was born in Habbania in November 1954. After graduating from high school in Iraq, she moved to the US to be with her brother Tiador, who had come in 1971. The rest of her family, including her father the deacon Warda Odisho arrived later.

The funeral of Shamiran took place in Lindinwood Cemetery, Fort Wayne; April 14th 2014 with father Jason Plaies of the St John Chrysostom, Antiochian Orthodox Church. She was laid to rest next to her father, her grand parents and aunt.

Shamiran will be greatly missed by all her extended family, relatives and friends. May God almighty give her a place in Heaven.



The Prayer of a Child

By William Sarmas
Translated from Assyrian by: Ramona Giwargis

Kneeling in front of my bed,
this is my request
for You, the Almighty.

Take care of my father,
so he will provide us our daily bread.

Take care of my mother,
so she will keep peace in our home.

Take care of my brother,
so he will one day take the place of my father.

Take care of my sister,
so in time she will keep another home.

Take care of me,
so I can help my mother night and day.

Take care of my relatives,
so they can have our backs and become closer
every day.

Take care of my nation,
because without a nation, it's better to be dead

Hear my request,
merciful God

Kneeling in front of my bed,
I say my prayer to You, the Almighty.

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