

Egyptian American Report



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A Season of Celebration . . .

As we close the year and prepare for all the holidays, the members of the EAO board extend their best wishes to all our members and friends for a Eid Mubarak, a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

The EAO will hold the last event in the year, the Annual Dinner and Young Leadership Award, following the General Assembly meeting, on Sunday, November 21 at the Long Beach Hyatt Regency. It is with pride and enthusiasm that the EAO presents the award to Ms Dalia Mogahed.

Ms Mogahed, who has been selected as an advisor by U.S. President Barack Obama on the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, is the Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies.



Dalia Mogahed

An Act of Thanksgiving . . .

Whether sacrificing a lamb for God's mercy or cooking a turkey to celebrate the bounty of the earth, the principle of giving thanks for all that life provides is innate in the culture of the Egyptian-American: *Al hamdu l'Allah*. (Also innate in our culture is expressing the spirit of the celebration with a well-spread table!)



Thanksgiving Magic

ROWENA BASTIN BENNETT

Thanksgiving Day I like to see
Our cook perform her witchery.
She turns a pumpkin into pie
As easily as you or I
Can wave a hand or wink an eye.
She takes leftover bread and muffin
And changes them to turkey stuffin'.
She changes cranberries to sauce
And meats to stews and stews to
broths;
And when she mixes gingerbread
It turns into a man instead
With frosting collar 'round his throat
And raisin buttons down his coat.
Oh, some like magic made by wands,
And some read magic out of books,
And some like fairy spells and
charms
But I like magic made by cooks!

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- INTERESTED IN ACTING? We put out a call in the last two issues for talented actors and others interested in theater. Please contact us at: faiwahshe@yahoo.com or post your interest on FACEBOOK.
- The board has approved inviting sponsorship for our EAO Report and our FACEBOOK. Please contact us for details on getting space on our publications.
- We urge you to check out our FACEBOOK. A discussion thread was started, events are announced, friends of the EAO post their thoughts.

Ushering in 2011 with a vision of successful engagement . . .

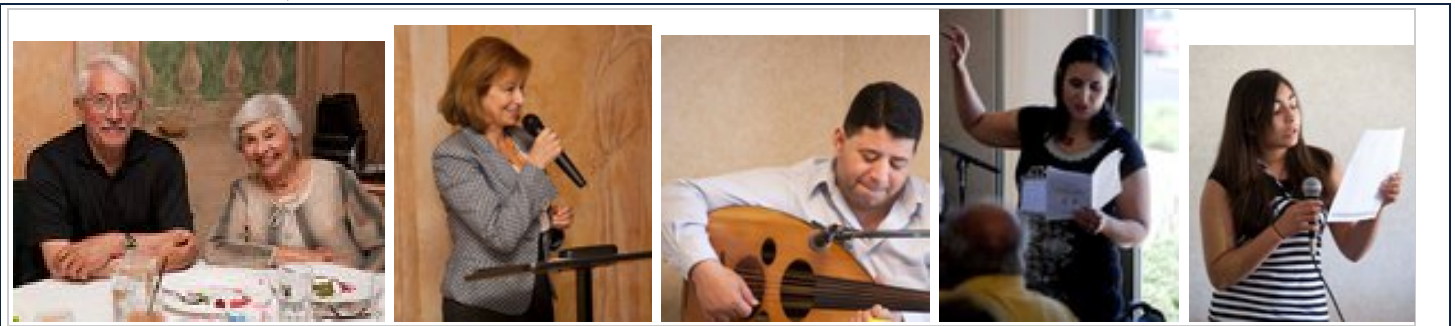
In the last year, the EAO has organized a number of cultural events to engage our community and friends and to provide forums for social interaction and the pleasurable exchange of ideas. In May, our annual Sham-El-Nessim celebration was culturally enhanced by traditional Egyptian music, performed live by the Santa Barbara Middle East Ensemble. A book discussion of Samia Serageldin's historical novel, *The Naqib's Daughter*, occasioned lively discussions about the period of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, his *mission civilisatrice*, the concept of occupation, slavery (Mamelukes), the role of women, minorities in Egypt, and other issues. Samia Serageldin was the EAO's guest speaker at a luncheon in September, and those of us who had read the book delighted in the opportunity of a one-on-one with the author. Serageldin's talk was gracious and very informative.

If the Egyptian-American community has one thing in common above all else, it is nostalgia for the Egypt of our memories. In early August, the EAO held a poetry reading at the Anaheim Hills Golf Club. Poetry was read in Arabic and in English, and poets from Shakespeare and Ahmed Shawqi to local and contemporary Egyptian Americans were celebrated. The audience's passionate response manifested itself not only in applause but in tears and heart-felt laughter as well. The themes of the poems read ranged from homeland to family, from love of country to love of others and, of course, the theme of nostalgia. The effect of thought in melody was enhanced by the outstanding performance of the readers and the oud accompaniment by Hosam Ibrahim.

While I wish I could include all the great poems read at the event in this newsletter, space limits me to these few lines from Shakespeare's sonnet:

*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
.....
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
.....
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,*

All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.



From left to right: Dr. Mahmoud and Dr. Magda Bayar (Serageldin luncheon), Ms. Serageldin (Serageldin luncheon), Hosam Ibrahim (poetry reading), Laila Shereen Sakr (poetry reading), Noha Ayoub (poetry reading)



Do you know why red and green are the traditional colors of Christmas?

While one common explanation is that the early Christians decorated homes and churches with holly trees because their pointed green leaves reminded them of Jesus' crown of thorns and the red berries of the drops of Jesus' blood at crucifixion, historical facts give another explanation. In medieval times, churches presented "Miracle Plays," religious plays used to educate the illiterate public. Traditionally, on December 24, the church presented the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. And in place of an apple tree—as they weren't available in winter—they fastened apples to the branches of a pine tree. Using a pine to represent the Tree of Good and Evil became a common practice among churches and they began incorporating the tree into their Christmas displays each year.

This custom introduced two modern traditions: the Christmas tree and our holiday colors: green for the pine tree and red for the apples. (source: Nicole Skutelnik)