



# KFEIRIAN REUNION FOUNDATION

*Founded 1932*

**Winter 2010 Newsletter**

## 78 th Annual Kfeirian Reunion

### — Labor Day Celebration

#### **The Kfeirian Reunion 2010**

A block of rooms have been reserved for September 4, 2010 - September 9, 2010.

The special room rate will be available until August 14th or until the group block is sold-out, whichever comes first.

Booking a reservation from the Pullman Plaza Hotel in Huntington, WV, one of our favorite locations. Who can forget the all night debkie and derbakie playing. We have some great surprises lined up for this year's reunion and will have some great items for sale, as well, so bring your dancing shoes and spare change. See you at the Pullman Plaza Huntington in September!



Even if you missed the 78h Annual Kfeirian Reunion this past Fall, it is clear from the photos below how wonderful this milestone occasion turned out to be. People came from far and wide (even from Kfeir itself!) to honor our Reunion founders and celebrate our rich heritage with friends and family. It was an occasion for us all to be proud and one that provided inspiration to keep the Reunion going for generations to come. As such, it is with great pleasure that the Board of Directors invites you to the 78th Annual Kfeirian Reunion in Huntington, WV, over Labor Day Weekend 2010. Huntington is one of our traditional "homes" and we have many hafli and derbakie memories of Reunions past. We all hope to see you there!

*The Pullman Plaza is located in the heart of downtown Huntington. You are within walking distance of shopping, restaurants, and entertainment when staying at Pullman Plaza Hotel.*

*Additional attractions include the Heritage Farm Museum and Village, Central City Antique Shops, Harris Riverfront Park/Ritter Park, various Golf Courses, Huntington Mall, Pullman Square, Huntington Museum of Art, Blenko Glass, Huntington Civic Arena, and the Tri-State Greyhound Park.*

**Please call for reservations and ask for the Kfeirian Reunion rate at 1.866.613.3611**



**Huntington in 2010!**

Memories from the 78th  
Reunion...KFEIRIAN  
REUNION

Winter 2010 Newsletter

Board of Trustees

President

Michael Abraham

Vice President

Joey Peck

Treasurer

George Hanna

Secretary

Thomas Bevins

Trustees

Clay Christian

Lila Mickel Fischer

Mike Harris

Deitra Jamra

Philip Michael

Sherry Mickel Parrish

Jameel Sadd

Karen Wigglesworth

## President's Message

My fellow Kfeirians, with the end of the 77<sup>th</sup> Kfeirian Reunion in Toledo, OH this past Labor Day Weekend, another chapter in our never-ending story was written. Another year where new friendships were made and old ones rekindled. Another year where we came together as one to celebrate not only each other, but a heritage and legacy second to none and the envy of so many who wish they too had a direct link to their ancestry. A great deal of thanks goes to the Toledo leadership of Fouad and Joann Nassar, Larry Jamra and members of your board of directors for all their hard work in making sure it was a weekend worth remembering. It is this passion, commitment and continued dedication by so many to the Kfeirian Reunion Foundation that have been and continue to be the foundation of all our achievements, past, present and future.

What a Reunion Weekend it was! There was Evaughn Michael recalling the memories as a little girl making the bus trip from Toledo to Huntington, West Virginia (WV) for the very first formal reunion in 1932. "Singing and eating all the way," she says. What a blessing to have such a living testimony. My nine year old son Michael meeting up again with Jim Donley's daughter Shannon and Clay Christian's son Robert and renewing their friendships and later on finding the three of them finishing up an evening drinking root beer at the hotel bar watching a football game. (Root beer compliments of Clay) The opportunity to get together at the Past Presidents/Past Host City Chairman/Chairwomen Reception in honoring all those who have worked so hard in our past to keep this dream, this vision of our ancestors alive.

First time attendees, Jihad and Alida Kahil from Egypt and Jihad telling of his father being a teacher at one time to George Hanna in Kfeir. Sherry Mickel Parrish leading a charge towards the end of the Grand Banquet and raising over \$4,000 for the Kfeirian Reunion Foundation Scholarship Fund in less in 10 minutes! It was a weekend of fantastic fellowship, good music, good dancing and sore legs. You can't beat it!! Take the time and forward your own memories and/or pictures to [Reunion09@att.net](mailto:Reunion09@att.net) for publication in future newsletters or post them on the Kfeirian Face Book page.

There's even our own blog through our website at [www.Kfier.com](http://www.Kfier.com). I encourage all Kfeirians to take advantage of the many technological innovations we've been able to tap into and keep that relationship growing strong with all your family and friends.

For me personally, it was a year's worth of fond memories. The many phone calls and letters I received are something I will always value. From Kfeirians wanting particular details of the upcoming reunion and sharing their own special Reunion moments, to some letting me know how disappointed they were in not being able to attend, but promising to make every effort to make it next year or simply wanting to thank your board for all their hard work. A phone call and special note I received from Mrs. Louise Tweel thanking us for remembering her husband Ernest and his commitment to the Kfeirian Reunion with the Past President/Past Host City Chairman/Chairwomen reception. These are just a few of the many remembrances I will always have as your president for 2009 and I'm looking forward to providing you with continued leadership after being honored with that charge again for 2010.

Labor Day Weekend 2010 we gather in Huntington, WV. A new chapter waiting to be written full of new memories and stories to tell. Now is the time to start talking with families and friends and start planning, so you too will be part of this, your family's 78<sup>th</sup> Kfeirian Reunion. 78 years and going strong! What a true American success story we are.

As 2009 comes to a close, God's many blessings to all the Kfeirian families around the world, for you are our most important treasure.

God's peace,

Your president, Michael Abraham

## 2009-2010 Scholarship Recipients

Since founding the Kfeirian Reunion Scholarship in 1964, over 135 Kfeirians have been awarded scholarships for higher education. Congratulations to the following Kfeirian who were awarded the 2009-2010 Kfeirian Reunion scholarship.

### Scholarship recipients for 2009-2010 are

**Mirna Abou Rizk** University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario Daughter of Wadih and Najwa Abou Rizk of Ottawa, Ontario

**Gianna Michael** Alfred University, Alfred, NY Daughter of Diann Michael of Fort Lauderdale, FL Gianna is spending a month residency at the American University of Beirut while she prepares her Final B. F. A. Senior Art Exhibition.

**We encourage Kfeirians to apply for next year's scholarship. To download the application and apply, please visit our Web site at [www.kfeir.com/scholarship.html](http://www.kfeir.com/scholarship.html).**

## Kfeirian Reunion Reporters Wanted!

Looking for 'in-the-know' Kfeirians to gather news and information for the newsletter! Help us collect information on fellow Kfeirians such as milestone events, births, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, etc. Send the information to us and we'll print it in the next newsletter. Contact Diann Michael (954) 583-0566 or email to [dianndee@yahoo.com](mailto:dianndee@yahoo.com) if you are interested. Also, feel free to email any news of your family & pictures .

### Gianna Michael writes from Beirut, January 25, 2010:

My experience here in the Middle East has been truly phenomenal, meeting a huge family I never had before has been really refreshing and an invaluable experience. When my uncle Hanna took me and my mom to the Kfeir the day after Christmas, I was proud to see the family arches I've seen for years in photos, to be in the space and on the land of my grandfather and his family. It was wonderful to hear how the village has changed over time and the current active state of development and transformation that is a never-ending process. Right now I am staying at the American University of Beirut to use the time and connections available here to collect images and sounds for my final BFA exhibition to be held in May. I am conducting research in the form of interviews/conversations on camera with people of all ages, backgrounds, and fields of interest to gain the material to weave together a portrait of perceptions. I am meeting a lot of people and working hard to network myself in the art scene as well as with various human rights organizations. Feel free to email me with any curiosities! [gcmichael@gmail.com](mailto:gcmichael@gmail.com)

**The 77<sup>th</sup> Reunion in Toledo was a wonderful experience for all who attended. Highlights included (pictures are in color on the website)**





## *The Kfeirian Reunion Heritage Cookbook*

For the 80<sup>th</sup> Reunion, we hope to have a Kfeirian Reunion Heritage Cookbook completed and ready for sale. All proceeds will go to the Kfeirian Reunion Scholarship. Diann Michael has been working on the cookbook and heritage history for sometime and updated a lot of information about Kfeirian recipes, cooking, heritage and traditions during her recent trip to Lebanon and Syria, where eating was the major daily event! Traveling to the Kfeir and spending a month with her cousins from the Kfeir, she has a lot of new ideas and details about the food traditions through which our culture has been transmitted.

One could say food and culture are almost synonymous for our people, as preparing serving and eating food is an all day, every day event. As part of the cookbook effort, a committee has been formed and Chuck and Lila Mickel Fischer, Gloria Hanna, Georgette Mickel, and Mydina Thabet are all serving on the committee. In addition, we have a group of TESTERS, great cooks who will test out variations of recipes, as there are many small details that differ from recipe to recipes, and TESTERS, good eaters with sophisticated palates who will taste our concoctions and render opinions as to the best of the best. Some people who have signed on as Testers are: Jeanette McCoy, Jeanette Bolus, Ghada Michael Deeb, Rhoda Hodge, Layla Thabet, and Joanne Nassar.

**WE NEED MORE TESTERS, and ANYONE can volunteer.** Just contact Diann Michael if you are willing to cook up some of your best food and test some variations from others' recipes. **We also need more TASTERS,** Initial tasters are Joey Peck, Philip Michael, George Kawaja, Julian Saad, and George Hanna, so if you just love to eat Arabic food, just contact Diann Michael ([dianndee@yahoo.com](mailto:dianndee@yahoo.com) or 954 583-0566) and it is a gourmand's dream.

We want family anecdotes about cooking, recipes, foods, and, especially, our grandmothers' and mothers' recipes, but we also want pictures, from the old times, of our beloved cooking ancestors. Food stories, history and funny stories will all go into the cookbook. This is a major project, so we need everyone's cooperation! All the recipes we will include in the Kfeirian Reunion Heritage Cookbook have been well researched, compared to many Lebanese/Syrian cookbooks available on the market, cross referenced with our committee members, and wherever possible have been directly confirmed by current residents of the Kfeir, Beirut, and Damascus who are Kfeirian descendants. The recipe below is an example of that process, and Diann confirmed preparation of Tabouli with 4 Kfeirian cooks while in the Middle East over December and January,

2009-2010. We are trying to give the most authentically “Kfeirian” versions of all our cuisine, knowing, of course, that there are family and regional variations, as well as personal preference. Let’s say that these recipes are as close as possible to our grandmothers’ as we can get, and that they are a good place to start our own culinary adventures. Some ingredients used to be difficult to find in the States, but now most are readily available at health food and specialty stores.

A sample of our cookbook starts with an all time favorite: **TABOULI**

Tabouli is at the center of many Kfeirian meals. It is an essential part of the “mezze” that precedes most all meals. Served with large center leaves of Romaine lettuce, it is a refreshing and healthy, balanced salad of dark green parsley, green onions, tomatoes, and bulghur. In the traditional form, fine bulghur is used, rinsed, and then squeezed to remove the water so that the lemon juice and olive oil dressing, as well as the flavors of the tomato liquids and the spices can be absorbed. Other parts of the Middle East use much more bulghur than the traditional Kfeirian style, and some, especially the North African countries or Magreb, used medium or even coarse bulghur and sometimes couscous. While this gives a good salad, it is not the traditional Tabouli of our grandmothers. Also, some recipes call for garlic, and others for cinnamon, and others for allspice, even cayenne pepper, none of which are the traditional Kfeirian variety. Some people like to add very finely chopped cucumbers, and even iceberg lettuce, to give the Tabouli an extra crunch. Salt and pepper to your taste.

The secret for really great Tabouli is the preparation of the parsley. The parsley should be very dark green, curly variety, in preference to the flat leaf Italian variety. The parsley florettes need to be pinched off right at the stem, with no stems in the salad at all. Stems tend to make the salad tough and bitter. Then the parsley needs to be carefully rinsed in cold water and then dried, if there is too much water on the parsley the Tabouli will be wet and lose flavor. Chopping the parsley is a time intensive job, with the finer the chop, the greater the flavor. No large leafy pieces should remain, but mincing in a food processor over does it and tears the parsley to shreds leaving it lifeless and mushy. The old, tried and true elbow grease of finely chopping the parsley leads to the most flavorful and yummy Tabouli. Next, the fresh mint leaves need to be cleaned, no stems, and finely chopped, as do the green onions stalks, which should be crisp, firm, and dark green. Some add the whites of the green onions as well, and occasionally some small amount of sweet onion when green onions are not plentiful. The tomatoes, which are less in quantity than many recipes and restaurants call for in the traditional Kfeirian Tabouli, must be ripe, but firm and very finely chopped. Some of the tomato juice will add flavor to the bulghur and give that extra special flavor. Lastly, both fresh mint and dried mint are to be added. They give a different flavor and texture, so including both is important for the best flavor. Extra virgin olive oil, preferably straight from the Kfeirian olives and the juice of fresh lemons, with salt and pepper finish the Tabouli for a memory you will never forget, just like grandma’s! Experiment and make the Tabouli your very own. Try different quantities of each ingredient until you hit your taste preference. However, the **Kfeirian traditional Tabouli recipe** below is the closest to our mountain home heritage and a good place to start your creative experimentation in the kitchen.

## **Ingredients**

**2 to 3 bunches finely chopped curly leaf parsley**

**1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves (or 1 tbsp. dried)**

**3 tablespoons fine bulgur (can be increased to your taste)**

**2 medium or one large chopped firm tomato**

**1 bunch of scallions chopped (or one small onion)**

**1/4 cup extra Virgin olive oil (can be increased to 1/3 cup)**

**1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (juice of 3 large lemons)**

**salt and pepper to taste**

## **Preparation**

**Prepare the chopped parsley and mint leaves and set aside. Rinse the bulghur with cold water and squeeze dry. In a large bowl, mix Bulgur, chopped tomatoes, chopped onions/scallions with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Add the parsley, mint, olive oil, and mix, adjusting seasoning by adding more oil and lemon if desired. Refrigerate for a half hour to let the bulghur soak up the seasonings and dressing and soften. Serve cold garnished with romaine lettuce.**

## Engagements



Mr. And Mrs. Philip Michael from Charleston, WV and Mr. And Mrs. Nassim Nasr from Delaware proudly celebrate their children's engagement. **Mary Elizabeth Michael to Tony Nassim Nasr**. The wedding will be on June 26th, 2010 at the St. George Cathedral in Charleston, WV.

## Marriages

**Dr. Karam Radwan**, Chief of Clinical Training, Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Chicago, married Dr. Sandra Naaman in Toronto, ON July 27, 2009. His mother, Eva Radwan, and sister, May, and Best Man Tannous Mouti traveled from Damascus for the wedding,. The bride's sister, Sarah Naaman, was Maid of Honor. A lovely wedding and gala reception followed.

## Births



It's a GIRL!! Samantha Isabela Donley was born to Kevin and Monica Donley at 5:57 pm Tuesday Sept 29 2009. She arrived weighing 7 lbs 11 oz, 20.5 inches. Brothers Duncan, Dylan, and Brandon are already protective. Kevin clearly has a new love and the family will have a new ruler !

**Samantha and Happy dad, Kevin Donley.**

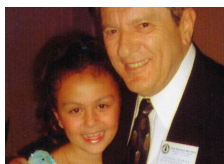


Philip and Lilah Michael from Charleston, WV gave birth to a new son, Alexander Nicholas Michael. He will be baptized on February 27, 2010. Alexander has two older brothers Luke Abraham 3 years old and Philip Joseph 7 years old.

**Alexander Michael son of Philip and Lilah.**

**Sarah Sadd**, born in April 10, 2009, is the daughter of Greg and Cheryl Sadd and the grand-daughter of Jameel Sadd.

## Accomplishments



**Alexandra Ayoob**, nine years old, has the gift of song, and while she is just in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, she sang with the WV Symphony Orchestra in "A Night on Broadway". She has performed the National Anthem over 30 times, once at our own Kfeirian Reunion. We will continue to follow this bright star as she continues her extraordinary singing early career.



**Victor George**, the 2005 Trial Lawyer of the Year was recognized by his peers for his successful cases against large corporate defendants such as Wal-Mart, Ford Motor Company, Columbia Medical Hospitals, Sears-Roebuck, and the State of California. He handles personal injury cases and employment discrimination .



**Norm Haddad** has done what many contemplate, he has recorded his memories, history, and reflections for his children and grandchildren and generations to come. His book, entitled "Ne-Mebbering" covers growing up in an ethnic family, in Beckley, the theme was growing up growing up and going to schools in the small towns of Beckley and Huntington. The title, "Ne-Mebbering," is derived from how my grandson used to say "Remembering". Norm's father, George Haddad, was from Jib Janine. Norm's book covers 1940 when they moved from Madison to Beckley, though there is a bit about Madison from 1936 when he was born. His book, is available for sale at Tamarack or his website [nojahaddad939@aol.com](mailto:nojahaddad939@aol.com). It sounds like a great read that all of us would enjoy.

## *Memory Eternal* May They Rest In Peace



**Shumla Steffan Bassitt** of Milan, Michigan died peacefully April 5, 2008 in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the age of 87. Shumla was born on November 11, 1920 in the Kfeir to Hania and Sol Steffan. Her father came to the US in 1921 and was one of the founding fathers of the Kfeirian Reunion. Shumla and her mother came to the US in 19230 and joined him in Williamson, WV. In September 1940, Shula went to her first Kfeirian Reunion in Beckley, WV where she met Eli Bassitt from Milan, Michigan.

They were married on January 5, 1941. They were together for 56 years with Eli passing away in 1997. Eli and Shumla owned and operated Bassitt's Store in Milan for over 40 years. They were among the founders of Greater Milan, Inc. and members of the Marble Memorial United Methodist Church. Shumla was also founder and charter member of the Milan Investment Club, a member of the Milan Women's Club, the American Legion Auxiliary and she served as first lady of Milan when Eli became the mayor. She will be greatly missed by her family, friends, and community. Survivors include her son David (Randy) Bassitt of Stillwater, MN, her daughter, Stephanie Stanton of Frankenmuth, MI, and grandchildren Lisa, Jeffrey, Jennifer, and great grandchildren Isabel, Eli, Joshua, and Abigail. She leaves behind a sister, Vivian Woods, of Bethesda, MD and was preceded in death by her husband Eli and her grandson, David Scott Bassitt.

**Robert A. Bevins**, 84, of Williamson, West Virginia, died September 3, 2009, in Pawley's Island, South Carolina. He was born in Dunleary, Kentucky, on December 28, 1924, to Stella Damron Bevins and Thomas J. Bevins. He was a retired sales representative of the Nabisco Corporation, a member of the Masonic Lodge in Stone, Kentucky, and served in the Marine Corps from 1942 to 1945. Surviving are his wife, Gloria Mickel Bevins of Williamson, West Virginia; two sons, Kevin M. Bevins of Summerville, South Carolina and Thomas P. Bevins of Pawley's Island, South Carolina; a sister, Mary Lou Bevins of Louisville, Kentucky; and nine grandchildren, Rachel Bevins Linczak of Cleveland, Ohio, and Lauren Bevins, Brooks Bevins, Austin Bevins, Emma Bevins, Carly Bevins, Allison Bevins, Connor Bevins and Faith Bevins all of Summerville, South Carolina. A memorial service was conducted October 7, 2009, at **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**.

**Frank Brinkley**, husband of Tammy Sadd Brinkley, and son-in-law of Jameel Sadd, passed away August 2, 2009.



**Raymond Alvin Hawarny**, age 80, passed away on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 at his home. He was raised in Milan, Michigan and lived in Vero Beach since 1982, coming from Troy, Michigan. Mr. Hawarny received his Undergraduate Degree from Eastern Michigan University and his Masters Degree from the University of Michigan.

He was a dedicated High School Speech, English, and Literature teacher, compelling Director of Dramatics, compassionate church schoolteacher, and charismatic public speaker. Raymond was President of Pi Kappa Delta, National Speech Honorary Society; President of Sigma Tau Gamma Social Fraternity and Alumni Association; President of Troy, Michigan Board of Education; President of the Kfeirian Reunion Foundation; and a loyal member and teacher at Kings Baptist Church in Vero Beach. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Deloris; his sister Jo Ann; his children, Michael (Rene'), Sharon (Nicholas) Husson, and James (Rebecca). He was predeceased by his brothers, Phillip and Robert and his son David (Cathy). He is survived by 11 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren, who knew him as Ghiddee. Memorial contributions may be made to Kings Baptist Church Building Fund at 3235 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vero Beach, FL 32966.



**Virginia Ann North** was killed on October 22, 2009 when a vehicle on M-14 crossed a median that lacked a guardrail and crashed into her car. Virginia was born on June 24, 1951 and grew up in Blissfield, Michigan. She earned a B.S. in interior design at Michigan State University and a doctorate of architecture at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. As a practicing architect, she specialized in lighting, working at Rosetti Associates and Newton Company, and held various teaching and administrative positions at Eastern Michigan

University where she was a Department Head, Professor, and Program Coordinator, and then at Lawrence Technological University, as Professor, Department Head, and Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies in the College of Architecture and Design. She published in the field of architecture and presented papers at professional conferences in the United States, Canada, and England. Heavily involved in community and professional service, she was an accomplished tennis player and for decades directed tennis tournaments, in particular the Ann Arbor Junior Open. A competitive ice skater, she also practiced martial arts. Virginia Ann North was predeceased by her parents Vern DeGross and Lucile Kerbawy and is survived by husband Clare, daughter Ashley, brother and sister-in-law Frank and Susan DeGross, niece Sierra DeGross and nephew and niece Jarrod and Stephanie DeGross; sister- and brother in-law Marcia North and John Hoffstaed and niece and nephew Channa North-Hoffstaed and Russell Shearer; and sister-in-law Georgiann North. A memorial service was held at First Congregational Church in Ann Arbor on Tuesday, October 27 at 11AM.

**Rose Sabb**, of Hillsboro Beach, Fla., passed away Sunday, Sept. 13, 2009, at Hospice by the Sea Care Center in Boca Raton. Rose was born in Terre Haute, Ind., on Dec. 18, 1926. She was preceded in death by her husband, Joseph Sabb Sr. She his survived by her children, JoAnn, Joseph Jr., Jeannie and Janet; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; sister, MaryAnn Tanoos; and brother, George Nasser. Rose and Joe were active members of St. George Church in Terre Haute, as well as active members of St. Philip Church in Davie, Fla. They owned and operated Sabbs Oriental Rugs. She also was a member of the Order of St. Ignatius. She will be remembered by her sense of humor, quick wit and love for gambling in the casinos. She was a beautiful woman with a great lust for life. The family requests expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers be made to St. Philip Orthodox Church, 4870 Griffin Rd. , Davie , FL 33314 or Hospice by the Sea Care Center , 1531 W. Palmetto Park Rd. , Boca Raton , FL 33486 .



25 Hillendale Drive  
Huntington, WV 25705

***Return Service Requested***

PRST First Class  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Huntington WV  
Permit 229