

# FULBRIGHT FOCUS

The AMIDEAST Alumni Newsletter of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program

## Secretary Clinton Participated in the 6th Forum for the Future



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton traveled to Marrakesh, Morocco on November 2-3, 2009 for the 6<sup>th</sup> Forum for the Future. For the second time since the Forum's inception, Morocco was chosen as the host country, bringing together representatives from the Middle East and North Africa region.

The Forum for the Future was developed as an initiative to promote reforms in the Middle East and North Africa region and to encourage open dialogue. Countries offer potential reform ideas to the government and business representatives that attend.

## Fulbright partners with mtvU

The United States Department of State started a new Fulbright grant program in 2007 with mtvU, a television network directed towards college students and a part of MTV Networks.

These Fulbright-mtvU Fellowships provide the opportunity for four U.S. Fulbright students to conduct research abroad for one academic year on projects of their own design, around an aspect of international musical culture. The projects take place in a country that participates in the Fulbright Program and also with which the student has some experience, including knowledge of the language.

Fulbright-mtvU projects often use music as a device to address a local problem, such as political strife, poverty, or disease. Overall, these projects present students with a chance to help bridge cultural gaps and form international connections through the use of music and musical techniques.

Previous Fulbright-mtvU Fellowship recipients located in countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Currently, 2009-2010 Fulbright grantee Rod Solaimani is studying and participating in the Afro-Arab-Gnawa-Western musical exchange. A skilled percussionist, Rod is researching the impact of U.S. Moroccan musical partnerships in three cities by using his findings in local high school music curricula to promote cross-cultural collaboration with a student concert. Please visit his blog at <http://fulbright.mtvu.com/author/rodsolaimani/>.



Inside:

- Articles .....pp.2-6
- Alumni News .....pp.7-11
- Current Student News .....p. 12
- Announcements .....p. 13



## Fulbright Alumni Connect

**By: Michele S. Peregrin**

*Alumni Coordinator for the Office of Academic Programs within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Department of State*

Fulbright alumni all over the world reach out to one another, form networks, and pursue important ideas together, whether through conferences, workshops, research projects or community service. While the initiative of individual alumni is essential in pursuing these endeavors, U.S. embassies are increasingly employing Alumni Coordinators to strengthen and advance such networks and activities. These Coordinators strive to promote greater contact with and cooperation among alumni of all U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. Their roles are part of a larger effort by the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Program to expand the reach of alumni engagement and harness its potential.

An important first step in capitalizing on this potential is gathering as a Fulbright alumni community. Nancy Stephan, Alumni Coordinator for the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, along with Barbara Batlouni of AMIDEAST Lebanon, attended an Iftar organized by three Lebanese Fulbright alumni in September to show the continuous support that the Embassy and AMIDEAST have for Fulbright alumni. It was a great opportunity for the alumni to meet and discuss their post-Fulbright achievements and the possibilities for future cooperation and collaboration on community development projects. By the end of the evening, Fulbright alumni expressed their interest in creating a Lebanese Fulbright alumni association and will work with Nancy to achieve this goal.

Wejdan Jaber, the Alumni Coordinator for the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, has been reaching out to Fulbright alumni and involving them in a variety of activities. In September, the Palestinian Fulbright Alumni Association (PFAA) organized a Ramadan Iftar for 40 Fulbright alumni in Gaza. Wejdan provided an update about the mission and goals of the newly established Palestinian U.S. Exchange Alumni Association, which encompasses alumni of various USG-funded programs, including Fulbright. Wejdan has also reached out to students at

an event organized by the President of the Palestine Polytechnic University, himself a Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program alumnus. At that event, which included 40 alumni of various U.S. Government-funded exchange programs, including the Fulbright Program, the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship, and the International Visitor Leadership Program, the audience learned about U.S. Government funded exchange programs; Wejdan stressed the importance of community service as a way for the students to give back to their communities. She also encouraged the alumni to participate in the Palestinian U.S. Exchange Alumni Association's activities and to join State Alumni (<https://alumni.state.gov>), an exclusive online community for alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. It was a great opportunity to network with others, across programs, and to learn more about the various opportunities and resources.

And the Alumni Coordinators serve as a key resource for alumni and for potential exchange program participants. They promote greater contact with and cooperation among alumni, including Fulbrighters. They want to include Fulbright alumni in their events, assist in the formation and sustainability of alumni associations, facilitate professional and community service opportunities, help alumni pursue opportunities for funding, and connect Fulbrighters with fellow alumni, NGOs, and the private sector. However, it is up to each individual to reach out to the Alumni Coordinator and let them know that you, as alumni, are interested in being involved in these ventures. As such, we encourage you to contact your closest U.S. embassy or consulate to get in touch with your respective Alumni Coordinator. Feel free to let them know your interests, and keep them abreast of your accomplishments and achievements. Your exchange experience did not end the day you returned home, but continues on as alumni of the Fulbright program.

*“Portions of the material in this article were provided by State Alumni (<https://alumni.state.gov>). For further information about the Fulbright Community on the State Alumni website, please read the announcement on p. 13.”*



# Better Governance by Utilizing Technology

**By: Amer Dalain**

*A Fulbright Alumnus, 2004-2007*  
Arkansas State University

In 2008, I joined a United Nations Development Program-funded project with the Government of Syria to develop the first national e-Government Strategy. A team was formed of renowned experts and professors to develop the strategy that would put Syria on track in the area of better governance and the use of technology to provide improved services to citizens.

Building e-Government (in its broader sense) in any country is a big challenge, and especially in Syria where different government bodies are working at different speeds, using different technologies and focusing on different priorities without any coordination. To achieve tangible e-Government results, computer systems at these government bodies should be able to interoperate (to communicate with each other). This interoperability is proven to be impossible in such environments without high level of coordination between interested parties.

My role as National Expert focused on building a set of standards and guidelines to help government systems become more interoperable (able to communicate) without putting restrictions on any government entities. After months of hard work, a solid set of standards and guidelines was ready to be presented at the 3rd National Conference of e-Government in Syria which was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 in Damascus, Syria.

These standards are incorporated into a document called the "Syrian e-Government Interoperability Framework (SyGIF)". After going through several rounds of discussions and reviews, this document will be passed into law thus forcing all government bodies to obey its standards which, in turn, will allow the assortment of government systems to have enough things in common to be able to share information and services. This sharing will have a great positive effect on improving the performance of the government and on enhancing the citizen experience.

After presenting SyGIF, a general sense of satisfaction was evident as atten-

dees realized the importance of standardization to achieve the goals of the Syrian e-Government initiative.

In the upcoming few years the impact of our work will be tangible as more government bodies will find it easier to offer services on the internet, and more citizens opt to use these e-services. This will reduce travel time, wasted money, and pollution while increasing the efficiency of the whole country and improving the lives of my fellow citizens.

I am happy that I am able to give back to my home country by helping in the long process of realizing the dream of e-Government in Syria. Fulbright helped me reach where I am now by offering me a unique opportunity to reap advanced knowledge during my study in the US. Way to Go Fulbright!



(Pictured Above: Amer Dalain at the 3rd National Conference of e-Government in Syria, which was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 in Damascus, Syria)





## Supporting Higher Education Sector in Yemen

**By: Ibrahim Al-Mahdi**  
*A Fulbright Alumnus, 2003-2004*  
University of Miami

Since early 2008, I have been working at the Yemeni Center of Information Technology for Higher Education (YCIT-HE). YCIT-HE is a new initiative in Yemen aiming to support Yemeni higher education institutions with necessary IT infrastructure and IT services. The infrastructure projects include building local networks for the universities and linking these networks under the “National Education and Research Network”, equipping universities with data centers and public access computer labs. The IT services projects include deployment of vital information systems such as management information systems, student record information systems, e-library systems, and learning management systems. YCIT-HE also provides other services such as IT consulting and training programs.

My role at YCIT-HE as the director of information systems services includes conducting technical studies, planning and management of the development and deployment of the various information systems mentioned above. This position gives both challenging



and exciting experiences; challenging because of the limited financial and human resources available for the projects, and exciting because of the great impact of the services we provide to such a large scope of beneficiaries (around 200,000 university students and staff members at 8 public universities).

I've been working in the area of higher education since I came back from the United States in early 2005 with my master's degree in Computer Information Systems. I remember that working in the higher education sector was on the top of my career objectives, which I presented during the Fulbright nomination interview. After my return from the

U.S., I worked for about two years as an IT manager at the University of Science and Technology, one of the largest private universities in Yemen, which gave me experience in dealing with IT needs for the higher education environment from both technical and



management levels. After that, I had the opportunity to be among the pioneers in starting the work of YCIT-HE where I found the opportunity to apply what I've learned and also to learn more while I serve tens of thousands instead of a few hundred as was the case in my previous jobs.

Technical knowledge, organizational and analytical skills, personal and communication skills, project and change management principles are all required in the job I do, which makes personal development a vital part of my professional life. In this regard, I participated in a three week seminar at Jilin University in China, where I had the chance to extend and share my knowledge about e-learning. Also, I was part of several workshops conducted by Dutch experts in the area of systems development and administration. The latest and most modern training program I participated in was the ITIL-V3 - a well known international framework for IT services, which is highly connected to the work we do at YCIT-HE as an IT services organization. In the last few months, I have been trying to extend my knowledge to the area of “IT law” where demand is rising in Yemen because of the increase in the use of electronic documentation and information systems.

If you would like to write an article for the next alumni newsletter, please email Stephanie Whitlatch at [swhitlatch@amideast.org](mailto:swhitlatch@amideast.org).



# Food Safety: Today's Challenge

**By: Julien Khalil**

*A Current Student, 2009-2011*  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

One of the most challenging issues facing food industries is to provide safe and high quality food to consumers. Recently, food safety became a contemporary topic: mass media, universities, health organizations. "Sterilization, pasteurization, expiration date, refrigeration, keep frozen, store in a cool place" and many more are food safety terms that all of us have heard and keep hearing every day.

Being a graduate student in Food Science and Technology, food safety is a large part of all my courses and presentations. Many speakers who gave presentations at my school talked a lot about the importance of food safety and the new technologies that ensure the delivery of safe food to consumers. One of the most interesting presentations concerning this topic was given by the food quality team of ConAgra, a food company based in Omaha, Nebraska. This presentation emphasized the huge efforts taken to ensure the production of safe food products. I even had the opportunity to visit some food companies in Colorado where I experienced the diverse and multiple techniques applied to produce a food product that respects the food safety regulations. A "farm to fork" approach has to be applied to ensure safe food production. In fact, clean and disease free raw materials, good manufacturing procedures and a suitable package are the basis for food safety. Nowadays, all U.S. food

companies are under the pressure of governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and many more. Mass media is playing a huge role in informing the public and at the same time in judging the food industries. One of the most recent examples is the food safety incident that occurred in China in 2008 due to the addition of melamine to milk and infant formula. As a consequence, millions of contaminated products were withdrawn in most countries. Therefore, food safety is a concern for both companies and the consumers. Consumers play a role in food safety. In fact, handling and proper storage of a food product are essential in order to ensure its safety. That is why consumers are required to respect the safety instructions found on the labeling of each product. Despite all the measures taken to prevent food borne illness, according to the World Health Organization, food borne diseases are leading to the death of 2.2 million people annually in underdeveloped countries. That is why new measures and more strict regulations need to be developed. Here comes the role of food scientists to find new ways of reducing food borne diseases.

In conclusion, food safety is a continuously evolving field where new research is taking place and new technologies developed. Being a future food scientist, I hope to get involved in all the progress taking place in the world to find new and more reliable methods of delivering safe products to consumers.



This photo was taken at Rowell Ranch Rodeo during the Fulbright Foreign Student Gateway Orientation at California State University– East Bay, in the San Francisco Bay area. The two other girls are also Fulbright students. The students in this picture are, from right to left, Maria Jreissati from Lebanon, Julien Khalil (me) from Lebanon, Ruth Pollak from Austria.)





## Alumni Development Grant News

The U.S. Department of State and AMIDEAST are excited to announce that 11 Alumni received the Fulbright Alumni Development Grant in August 2009! Fulbright Program alumni whose grants were administered by AMIDEAST have the opportunity twice a year to apply for a grant up to \$2500 to complete research, attend a conference, or participate in a training program. Please read about several of the newest the recipients below, followed by information on how to apply a grant yourself!

Asem Al Khateeb (Jordan) will be presenting at the American Society of Human Genetics Annual Meeting in Honolulu, HI.

Fadi El Hajjar (Lebanon) is participating in a training geared towards negotiating techniques for senior executives and dealing with difficult people in Cambridge, MA.

Hind Ghorayeb (Lebanon) is taking part in a training entitled "Inspiring Frontiers for the Next Generation in Art Therapy" in Dallas, TX.

Jamel Baccar (Tunisia) is traveling to New York, NY to attend the 2009 Letter of Credit Law Summit and the Guarantees and Standby Forums.

Lama Youssef (Syria) is completing research in a comparative clinical study of the effects of statins on atherosclerosis development, lipid profile and inflammatory biomarkers in Syrian patients with ischemic heart disease in Boston, MA.

Naglaa Saad Hassan (Egypt) is presenting a paper at the International Conference on Arts and Humanities in Honolulu, HI.

Pauline Y. Aad (Lebanon) is conducting research in Stillwater, OK on a new technique for the detection of Bovine Leukosis Virus.

### What is the Alumni Development Grant?

The Alumni Development Grant is sponsored by the Department of State and AMIDEAST to enhance the professional development of Fulbright alumni from the Middle East and North Africa region. With the Alumni Development Grant, alumni have the opportunity to conduct collaborative research projects or attend a professional conference.

The grant provides for up to \$2,500 and is eligible for activities in the United States or the Middle East region. Other limitations may apply; please see website for complete details.

Other examples of previous Alumni Development Grant activities include:

- Embarking on a study tour of micro-credit projects in Egypt
- Visits to an American research institute or company to identify possible collaborative research on electrical industry restructuring

**For details on how to apply for the Alumni Development Grant, please visit the following link:**

**[http://www.amideast.org/fulbright/alumni\\_information/development\\_grants.shtm](http://www.amideast.org/fulbright/alumni_information/development_grants.shtm)**



# Alumni News

## Gaza

### Samar El Khoudary (2004-2007) University of Pittsburgh

Samar El Khoudary is currently working on a very interesting and important project in the U.S.: The Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN). SWAN is a multi-site longitudinal, epidemiologic study designed to examine the health of middle-aged women. The study examines the physical, biological, psychological and social changes during this transitional period.

The goal of SWAN's research is to help scientists, health care providers and women learn how mid-life experiences affect health and quality of life during aging. She mainly works in the coordinating center of this study located at the University of Pittsburgh. She is investigating the impact of endogenous hormones on subclinical cardiovascular measures among women during their menopausal transition period.

Samar has published the following:

- "Severity of interstitial cystitis symptoms and quality of life in female patients." El Khoudary SR, Talbott EO, Bromberger JT, Chang CC, Songer TJ, Davis EL. *J Womens Health* (Larchmt). 2009 Sep;18 (9):1361-8.
- "Coronary angiography predicts improved outcome following cardiac arrest: propensity-adjusted analysis". Reynolds JC, Callaway CW, El Khoudary SR, Moore CG, Alvarez RJ, Rittenberger JC. *J Intensive Care Med*. 2009 May-Jun;24(3):179-86. Epub 2009 Mar 25. Review.
- "Impact of chronic musculoskeletal pathology on older adults: a study of differences between knee OA and low back pain." Morone NE, Karp JF, Lynch CS, Bost JE, El Khoudary SR, Weiner DK. *Pain Med*. 2009 May-Jun;10(4):693-701. Epub 2009 Feb 25.
- "Body mass and surgical complications in the postbariatric reconstructive patient: analysis of 511 cases." Coon D, Gusenoff JA, Kannan N, El Khoudary SR, Naghshineh N, Rubin JP. *Ann Surg*. 2009 Mar; 249(3):397-401.

## Jordan

### Shada Ramahi (1998-2000) Rush University

Shada Ramahi earned a PhD in Medical Physics from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago in 2003. Since then she returned home and worked as a clinical medical physicist at the prestigious King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman, Jordan. She is now the Head of the Medical Physics Section. She was elected as a regional counterpart for a Mid-West Asia project and also a counterpart for an Arab and Asian countries project. Both projects aim to improve the profession of Medical Physics through clinical training, certification and accreditation.

Her recent publications are as follows:

- I. Jaradat, Shada Wadi-Ramahi, A. Al-Mousa, I. Haddadin, L. Mula-Hussain, M. Meheyar, S. Khorma, K. Rawashdeh, I. Sultan, G. Abdeen, I. Qaddoumi, and I. Nawaseh, "Plaque Brachytherapy for Ocular Tumors at King Hussein Cancer Center", Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Jordanian Ophthalmological Conference and the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Arabic Ophthalmic Association, 23 May 2009.
- S.Wadi-Ramahi and J. Khader, "4DCT imaging technique for conformal forward planning in lung tumors", Proceedings of the International Conference on Advances in Radiation Oncology, Vienna, Austria, April 2009.
- S. Wadi-Ramahi, S. Heet, F. Waqqad, I. Rashdan, N. Al-Nasser, "In-House low cost shield for pregnant radiotherapy patients," Proceedings of the International Conference on Advances in Radiation Oncology, Vienna, Austria, April 2009.
- I. Jaradat, S. Wadi-Ramahi, L. Mula Hussain, "Establishing plaque therapy for ocular melanoma in Jordan", Proceedings of the International Conference on Advances in Radiation Oncology, Austria, April 2009.





## Alumni News

### Yaser Natour (1998-2000) University of Florida

Yaser Natour is an associate professor in the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences and Disorders, University of Jordan. Currently, Yaser is working on helping Jordanian speech-language pathologists formulate the Jordanian Speech and Hearing Association. He also volunteered to be an editor-in-chief for the magazine "The Examiner for Hearing and Speech". The magazine is a bilingual scientific journal with the mission of raising public awareness regarding current hearing and speech rehabilitation issues in the Arab World. The Examiner targets readers in Jordan, Arab countries and the world with the latest advancements in hearing and speech rehabilitation. The journal includes overviews of current studies and research conducted by researchers and professionals. It provides information about hearing aid and speech instruments. It also highlights the services provided by hearing and speech centers and special needs establishments.

His recent publications are as follows:

- Saleem, A., & Natour, Y. (Submitted). Standardization of the Arabic version of the Voice Handicap Index: An Investigation of validity and reliability.
- Natour, Y.S., & Saleem, A. The performance of the Time Frequency Analysis Software (TF32) in the acoustic analysis of the synthesized pathological voice. *The Journal of Voice*.
- Natour, Y.S., & Wingate, J. Fundamental frequency characteristics of Jordanian Arabic speakers. *The Journal of Voice*.
- Hamdan, J., & Natour, Y. (2008). *Translation: The Voice and Voice Therapy* by Boone, D.R., McFarlane, S. S., & Von Berg, S. L, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Allyn and Bacon (2005). Deanship of Academic Research, University of Jordan, Amman: Jordan.

**NOTE:** This is the first Arabic Translation ever of a traditional text book used world-wide.

### Lebanon

#### Bassam Zeino (2006-2008) Cornell University

In May 2008, Bassam Zeino completed his thesis and sent it to the Department of Art, Architecture, and Planning at Cornell University in fulfillment of his Master of Architecture degree requirements. He was extremely surprised and overwhelmed by the final assessment grade his project received: "A+", a record high in the history of the Architecture graduate school there! The news of this achievement was picked up by the office he works for, RMJM Dubai, and they followed up the announcement by setting up an interview for him with the magazine Middle East Architect. The interview was published in the July 2009 issue and online. Throughout the interview, he spoke with Jeff Roberts, the Group Editor, about the urban and architectural concepts his thesis deals with, as well as his own broader vision of Beirut and the Middle East. He was nominated for the ITP Middle East Young Architect of the Year Award. On the 7th of October, the awards were announced during a gala dinner, and he had received second place for that category!

Recently, he gave a presentation of his thesis project and a review session to final year architecture students at the American University of Sharjah. He has gathered this series of wonderful and very invigorating evaluations and channeled them towards publishing his book "Portraits on Mirrors". Today he is actively contacting prospective publishers and following up on the entailing procedures. As the fruit of his Fulbright academic experience, he hopes that in the near future his book will enable all of his colleagues and alumni friends to share with him the academic intensity and richness he was so fortunate to have!



# Alumni News

## Morocco

### **Mohamed Wail Aminou (2007-2009) Duke University**

Mohamed Wail Aminou is currently working on a research paper that aims at estimating the losses Morocco incurred due to skilled workers' immigration to Canada. Each year, around 5,000 graduates move to Canada as permanent residents. The loss valuation takes into account, among other things, the education cost and opportunity cost of value creation by highly educated emigrants. The paper will be published by November 2009.

At the end of last year, he published a guide for Moroccan engineers seeking to pursue graduate studies (Masters, PhD). It is the first guide in Morocco addressing this topic. His experience as a Fulbrighter was very important in completing this guide. Twenty-three Moroccan engineers participated in this project. The guide can be downloaded from <http://guideingenieur.canalblog.com/>

In August he passed the second level of the Chartered Financial Analyst exam. He is planning to take the last level exam next June in Tunis. Also, on October 10, 2009, his wife Fadwa Chaker (Duke '09) gave birth to a baby girl. They chose Lyn, which means tenderness in Arabic, as her first name.

### **Ziad Bentahar (Morocco; 2003-2005) The Pennsylvania State University**

Ziad Bentahar finished his PhD in Comparative Literature at Penn State University this past summer, and now teaches Arabic Language and Culture at Brown University. His research is driven by a will to frame North African literary and cultural studies within an African context rather than a solely Middle Eastern one.

His recent publications include an essay on Frantz Fanon in Algeria, and an article on Moroccan music forthcoming in Wasafiri. In this article, entitled "From Gnawa to Ghiwane and Back," he argues that various generations of Moroccan musicians, including the legendary 1970's group Nass El Ghiwane as well as contemporary young urban artists, have used elements of sub-Saharan origin in their music to assert their cultural identity.

### **Fadwa Chaker (2007-2009) Duke University**

Since May 2008, Fadwa Chaker has been writing in her blog about the education system problem in Morocco ([www.fadwa.org](http://www.fadwa.org)). The idea is to share experiences and ideas that proved successful in other countries (namely what she learned in the USA) and adapt those experiences to the Moroccan context. Sometimes, she simply addresses some aspects of the current malfunctioning in the education system and tries to offer some suggestions on how to tackle such problems.

In the same spirit, she has been working on a booklet entitled "Improving the Education System in Morocco : Collection of Experiences Abroad". In the booklet, she briefly explains her understanding of why "the current education system is not working the way we want it to work", and then she suggests an alternative system that could eventually meet the needs "we are expecting from it". The booklet is in the final review stages, and she hopes to have it published by December '09.





## Alumni News

### Loubna Hanna (1996-2000) The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Loubna Hanna is currently working on a new book project focusing on Muslim youth. She has completed multi-sited ethnographic research over the last year to address specific questions related to the lives and experiences of youth in the globalized world.

In early June, she presented a paper at Princeton University's Politics of North Africa Workshop organized by the Near Eastern Department. Drawing on a large data set from independent and partisan written press, she has analyzed the construction of female leadership and women's political participation in leading Moroccan press. She has context-analyzed 1,738 press units (editorials, articles and front covers) over a period of four months leading to the June 2009 communal election. She concludes that despite the mounting pressures from human rights organizations for great gender equity in public life and despite women's greater leadership roles since the adoption of the 2004 landmark legal reform, Moroccan press remains confined to Jürgen Habrmas' classic masculine model of the public sphere, in which men figure prominently in the public media debate.

She also has a new article, "New Modes of Communication: Web Representations and Blogs—North Africa," coming in the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*. Here she uses the gender and generation lens to research the tensions between state censorship and youth cyber activism in Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. She demonstrates that, while newer technologies neither disrupt nor redress unequal structures of power, they are beginning to transform traditional forms of (gendered) social interactions, individuals' habits of self-expression, as well as communication *with* and *about* socio-political institutions.

### Syria

### Yousef I. Hassan (2003-2005) University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Yousef I. Hassan recently finished his PhD program in human molecular nutrition at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and started working as a postdoctoral research associate.

Immediately after graduation and without wasting much time he took a long family trip to South Dakota visiting Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Badlands, and Dinosaur Park. "The trip was very relaxing and I would recommend South Dakota to any person who loves nature."

Finally, he was invited to write a book chapter entitled "Genetic Aspects of Physical Performance and Nutritional Assessment" to appear soon in *Nutritional Assessment of Athletes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. edited by Ira Wolinsky and Judy Driskell.



(Above: Yousef I. Hassan and his family at his graduation from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln)



# Alumni News

## **Mohammad M. Naffakh (1999-2002) Duquesne University**

Currently, Mohammad M. Naffakh is managing the institutional development unit in the private consulting business that he established 2 years ago with a couple of partners. He is working on capturing all knowledge regarding the Balanced Score Card (BSC) technique that was developed at Harvard to evaluate companies performance and implementing it in institutions in Syria. He and his team have made a couple of successful attempts with two private sector companies. They have also made some adaptations and implemented the BSC technique in AAMAL, a reputed NGO in Syria that cares about children with disabilities.

Naffakh is a co-author of a local training manual on business process reengineering. He has made presentations for many EuropeAid projects in Syria that he participated in. The audience was mainly from the governmental sector (top and middle officials from various ministries).

In March of 2009, he traveled to Malaysia for his honeymoon.

If you have interesting news that you would like to share with your fellow Fulbright Alums for the next alumni newsletter, please email Stephanie Whitlatch at [swhitlatch@amideast.org](mailto:swhitlatch@amideast.org). We look forward to learning about all of your accomplishments!





## Current Student Updates

**Hayat Messekher** (Algeria) presented a paper entitled "Processes of EFL teacher identity formation: The case of Algerian English teachers" at the First Annual Teacher-Scholar Symposium, English Department, Indiana University of Pennsylvania on September 25, 2009.

**Hamad Mohammed** (Bahrain) participated in the screening committee at Duquesne University for the Fulbright Study Abroad program, interviewing and advising applicants. He presented a paper in the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center at Duquesne University on September 4th entitled "Devious Emancipations: Political Liberalism and Marx's Critique of Classical Liberalism." Hamad presented the abovementioned paper at the Concerned Philosophers for Peace conference at Dayton University, Ohio, on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Mohamed Helal** (Egypt) He has been chosen to be the "Shapiro Scholar" at the Harvard Law School for this academic year. It is a program designed to bring together an Arab student and an Israeli student to get to know each other.

**Zaynab El Bernoussi** (Morocco) is now an editor at the Journal of International Affairs, a very prestigious publication at Columbia University and one of the most renowned in the international affairs domain.

**Samy Metwally** (Egypt) was invited as a Fulbright scholar to a meeting with the professors, dean and president of Hartford Seminary. He was one of three invited visiting scholars. In this meeting, he answered many questions relating to his experience in his field of Islamic studies and to jurisprudence of Muslim minorities.

**Mohannad Al-Kajasi** (Jordan) was chosen as a Graduate Fellow at Florida State University's Center for Middle East Studies. Also, he has been invited to become a member of the following two honor societies: Golden Key International Honor Society and Honor Society for International Students and Scholars (Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society).

**Ahmad Safi** (West Bank) presented two papers and one poster at the Association of Environmental Studies and Sciences in Madison, WI: *Water Technology Transfer: Concerns, Limitations and Opportunities*; *Environmental Research and Native Americans: History Culture and Science*; and *Mapping Environmental Aid 1980-2008*. Additionally, he has co-authored a paper published at the Human Geography journal.

**Lamis Sleiman** (Lebanon) Last Spring she received the Phi Beta Delta Honors Award, the Maxwell School Award at Syracuse University for being a Team Leader, and Maxwell's Award for "Shakira Bellydancing". She also received the Magna Cum Laude International Award. This fall she received the Phi Kappa Phi SU award, and the Golden Key International Honor Society Award. She is interning at Search for Common Ground as a Track II Mediation intern, and helps resolve disputes between the U.S. and Iran, and the U.S. and Syria.

### **Congratulations to Winter 2009 Graduates!**

**Abeer Al-Qatati**, Gaza, PhD in Endocrinology (in progress), Colorado State University

**Ahmad Safi**, Gaza, PhD in Environmental Sciences (in progress), University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Amer Doko**, Syria, MS in Information Systems Management, Carnegie Mellon University

**Ghassan Matar**, Gaza, MA in Management Information Systems, Central Michigan University

**Lamis Sleiman**, Lebanon, MA in International Affairs, Syracuse University

**Safia Trebelsi**, Tunisia, MA in International and Global Studies, Brandeis University

**Sandra Richani**, Lebanon, MA in Architectural Drafting, Princeton University



# Announcements



**STATE ALUMNI** is the official website for more than 1,000,000 alumni of exchange programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Interactive, dynamic and password-protected,

**alumni.state.gov** offers alumni from U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs a place to:

- Network with alumni from Fulbright, IVLP, and other programs
- Participate in the Fulbright Community
- Register for a FulbrightMail.org email account
- Find grant and funding opportunities worth more than \$33 billion
- Access more than 20,000 free journals, periodicals, and more
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- Stay involved through a local alumni association

All alumni are invited to register for the site by clicking "Join Now" at <https://alumni.state.gov>

State Alumni operates over a secure connection, to prevent cyber theft. State Alumni asks that you register in order to log onto the website and provide a password so we can keep you and your fellow alumni in better contact. Registrants have the option to hide their personal information.

## **Second Annual ExchangesConnect Video Contest!**

"Change Your Climate, Change Our World" is the theme of ExchangesConnect's 2nd Annual Video Contest. Tell us in a video no longer than 2 minutes what you or somebody you know is doing to make your community a better place, and in the process contributing to a healthier, safer, cleaner, and more peaceful world for all of us and you may win an all-expense-paid international exchange program! Remember, small changes in your local community can make a big difference in our world!

The prize is an approximately two-week long, all-expense-paid exchange program!

The contest opened on November 17, 2009 and will close on January 12, 2010."

Learn more about ExchangesConnect's 2nd Annual Video Contest here: <http://exchanges.state.gov/news/2009/exchangesconnect-videocontest.html>

Watch Secretary of State Hilary Clinton promoting the contest with this video: <http://exchanges.state.gov/videos/secretaryclinton/videocontest.html>





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