



Triangle Lebanese Association News

January - February 2011

Reporting on the Thriving Lebanese Culture in the Triangle

Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that we send off the TLA Newsletter, the first for this year. We are encouraged and excited about the upcoming activities and look forward to have the TLA build vibrant relationships and community spirit.

For those of you who did not attend our first major event of the year, the Valentine's Hafle, you missed a great event. As usual, we had a vivacious crowd, with typical Lebanese-American vitality and energy, not to mention great food and music. An article on this Hafle including pictures can be found in the following pages.

The primary activity of the year will be the Lebanese Festival, held on the Fair Grounds in Raleigh on April 9 and 10. This is the 13th Festival and we aim to make it as memorable as the previous ones. Besides the Dabke groups, we plan to have special activities for children, demonstrations of Lebanese cooking, and a number of specialty vendors offering Middle Eastern supplies and handcrafts. Of course there will be a wide selection of food to sample, so you can enjoy lunch or dinner and be proud you have invited friends. This will be a particularly appropriate event to invite friends and neighbors to taste Lebanese food and culture.

Later in the year, the TLA will participate in the International Festival, held the first week in October. The Dabke group makes a splash and invariably have a rousing reception as they stand out with their energy, choreography, and expressive interpretation of Lebanese folklore. The food booth is sought after by many for the variety of dishes to sample and the unmistakable Lebanese hospitality.

We will gather to celebrate Lebanese Independence Day on Sunday, November 20. The occasion, and the community meal we will share is a reminder of the deeper ties that bind us together.

All of these activities beckon to us to be involved. There is much satisfaction and sense of fulfillment to be had as you join hands with other. For truly, when we give we receive much in return. I call on you to invest time in one activity. You will be richly rewarded with deepening friendships and the reward of presenting a positive glimpse of Lebanon to the wider community.

With warm regards,

Bisharah Libbus
President

The Mirror of Time

It is only through happenstance that Hanna Makhoul (John Mack) ended up in Mooresville, North Carolina. In 1903 he left Roum (which lies 10 miles east of Sayda) to follow in the footsteps (literally as well as figuratively) of his relatives. Like the tens of thousands who left other villages and towns in what was to become Lebanon, Hanna Makhoul came here to seek a better living. He did not think he would stay long but rather expected to work for a while to gather money and return home to live the good life. Focused as he was on these straightforward goals he did not imagine that the days spent peddling lace and buttons, shopping for food and clothes,



and strolling in the streets of their adopted communities would be transformative. He almost certainly did not imagine he would spend the rest of his life in North Carolina, raise a family, open a landmark store and leave a lasting legacy through his philanthropy and volunteerism.

After getting off the boat in New York and going through Ellis Island, where his name was anglicized to John Mack, he took the train with the aim of reaching Marion, South Carolina. Not knowing a word of English he instead got off in Marion, North Carolina where a kind train conductor took pity on a young man looking lost and perhaps not a little scared when no one was there to meet him. Through hand gestures and a written note, the train station master figured out the problem and took Hanna home with him where he spent the night. The next day he put him on a train to Charlotte where another Lebanese family, the Josephs, lived. From that uncertain start Hanna Makhoul set to work making a living. Like most of the early Lebanese immigrants he chose a career in peddling. Carrying four suitcases at a time (one on each shoulder and one in each hand) he would strike out from Charlotte and walked for miles going as far north as Mooresville, east to Concord and south to Rock Hill. Peddling was the easiest job for someone who possessed very few words of English. The numbers were his fingers, the items were buttons, lace, yards of cloth, needles, thread and any other item that housewives living on isolated farms would need or want. He slept at times in the fields, but more often he exchanged a room for the night for some items the farmer's wife or children wanted. What he lacked in language he more than made up with his animated and amiable personality.

Within few years (in 1909 to be exact) he was able—with the help of his sons Charles and Sa'ad and his daughter Nora—to set open a store in Charlotte. Within a year the store—without insurance—burnt down and left the family with a \$2500 debt to their suppliers and creditors. Working harder than ever—every one of them—they repaid their debt in full by 1912. Walking house to house to repay this debt took its toll and led Sa'ad to decide on a more efficient manner of delivering goods; so they invested in a horse and buggy to haul more and larger items to housewives. The next step was to open a store in Mooresville, which they did in 1912 renting a space on Main Street for \$30/month. Even as their material fortunes were rising disaster struck back in Lebanon. That same year Hanna's wife fell of the top of the house and died.



So, Hanna sent his son Charles to Roum to bring his three sisters—Lucille, Sofia and Bahiya—back to Mooresville. With the family reunited, the business expanded to the point that the Macks (as they were known) built the first and largest department store in Mooresville, and their store became the commercial anchor of the town as well as its landmark for over 80 years. More to the point, the Macks became one of the illustrious families of the town. Bahiya’s new store with imported fashions from New York, Sa’ad’s deep involvement with the Boy Scouts of America which earned him the highest award from that organization, or the myriad philanthropic donations and activities in which the Mack family was involved all gave this family of immigrants a public persona that

lives on to this day. Today, if you go to Mooresville you will find that their town hall is names after “John Mack” with photos of the early days of the family and their stores.

We can see elements of ourselves and our journeys in this tale of Hanna Makhoul. The hard work, the values we hold dear and family as our anchor are all reminiscent of our lives. But so are the challenges of language, cultural misunderstandings and alienation, financial setbacks and tensions within and outside our families. These are as real and as critical in shaping our own life stories, individually and as a community. So, as we go about recovering and recording the stories of families like the Makhouls, Hatems, Baddours, Ishak, Moussa, Ramadan, Khayrallah and many others we are not only preserving an invaluable history. Nor is this simply to let our non-Lebanese friends and neighbors know of all that we have accomplished for ourselves and for North Carolina. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, we learn about ourselves by looking at this historical mirror. We get a chance to reflect together on what our experience means to our immediate family, to our communities and to Lebanon. And in this reflection we give substance to our community that will not fade with the passage of time, or wane with the change of fortunes. It will be there for us, for our children and their children.

I encourage all of you to visit the website <http://ids.chass.ncsu.edu/lac> where you can register and contribute material to the oral history project for Lebanese in NC.

Akram Khater
Professor of History
North Carolina State University
Director, Khayrallah Program for Lebanese-American Studies
Director, Middle East Studies Program

Valentine's Day Hafle

by Karmina Ishak

Valentine's Day is a day when we celebrate the love in our lives. It is a day in which we are urged to pause from our busy routines and focus on the important things that make all our hard work worth it. Our families, spouses, children and friends are the most important parts of our lives and Valentine's Day is the perfect day to express just how important they are to us.

The TLA Valentine's party this year was one to remember. All aspects of the party, including the food, entertainment, and atmosphere, were fantastic. There was no shortage of great music and dancing after everyone enjoyed a delicious Lebanese meal, and the ambiance of friends coming together to share laughter and joy was incredible. While the basics of any good party were covered, as always, the true beauty of this party was the coming together of all the Lebanese in the community who share a love for their country and culture.



The best memories I have from my childhood are from TLA events and parties. I was always thrilled to have a night to dress up and dance until morning with my best friends and family. As I've grown, the excitement hasn't faded, instead it has matured. Now, when I attend a TLA party, like our recent Valentine's Day party, I am thrilled to see all those who join together under one common love, the love of being Lebanese. I've learned that the TLA and its members work so hard to put together such beautiful events so that we can all enjoy a piece of our Lebanese culture and experience unforgettable nights together.

This party was no different; I was thrilled to dress up and anxious to see my friends on the dance floor. However, at this Valentine's Day party I got more than I even expected. I got a night in which I could spend a few hours celebrating the love that Valentine's Day encourages with the most important family I have, my Lebanese family.

We all have something that we should never forget to love, Lebanon. Valentine's Day gives us the nudge to celebrate our loves, and the TLA gave us the best party to do it together.



Mark your calendars for
the Lebanese Festival in April

LEBANESE FESTIVAL 2011

**13th Annual Sponsored by the
Triangle Lebanese Association**

Saturday, April 9 : 11:00am – 8:00 pm
Sunday April 10 : 11:00 am – 6:00 pm



لبنان

Kerr Scott Building
NC State Fairgrounds
Raleigh

Admissions \$2.00 at the door.

www.tlanc.org • info@tlanc.org

FEATURING:
Dabke Performances
by Adult & Youth
Dance groups with
audience
participation

Belly Dancing show
with audience
participation

Oud Performance and
live music

Area Sponsors and
Vendors with Middle
Eastern Goods

Famous Lebanese
pastries & Desserts

Delicious Lebanese
Food

The mission of the TLA is to promote the Lebanese culture & heritage, and to provide an exchange of information between the Lebanese, American, and other cultures through social, cultural and humanitarian endeavors

P.O. Box 41471 Raleigh, NC 27629 www.tlanc.org

Treasury Report: 2010 & 2011 Events' financials

Event	Expenses	Net Profit/Loss
Valentine's Hafle 2010	\$3,530.58	\$3,276.42
Lebanese Festival 2010	\$16,102.13	(\$2,116.63)
International Festival 2010	\$2,957.78	\$7,462.72
Independence and Adha Celebrations 2010	\$427.56	N/A
New Year Hafle 2010	\$6,003.33	(\$1,101.23)
Valentine's Hafle 2011	\$4,497.00	(\$1,38.24)

Dues Collected from membership for 2011: \$1,735.00
Property Tax 2010: \$536.10

Balance by end of February 2011

Lebanese Educational Center Account Balance: \$36,036.58
Triangle Lebanese Association Account Balance: \$5,193.00

**Triangle Lebanese Association
13th Annual Lebanese Festival**

Festival Sponsor Form

If you would like to become a Festival Sponsor, please check the appropriate level below. **To ensure proper recognition on Festival materials, your form and donation must be received no later than Tuesday, March 15th, 2011.** We will confirm your sponsorship with a tax receipt and tickets shortly before the Festival date.

√	Sponsor Level	Amount	Benefits
	Cedar	\$1,000.00	Sole sponsor of Center Stage events; multiple recognitions from the stage; exclusive signage; recognition on external advertising (if any) and in program; and 20 Festival tickets.
	Dabkeh	\$500.00	Sponsor credit for Festival decorations; recognition from the stage; inclusion on external advertising (if any), sponsor signage and in program; and 10 Festival tickets.
	Mezze	\$250.00	Sponsor credit for food and drink costs; recognition from the stage; inclusion on sponsor signage and in program; and 6 Festival tickets.
	Oud	\$100.00	Sponsor credit for advertising and printing expenses; inclusion on sponsor signage and in program; 4 Festival tickets
	Olive (Personal/Family)	\$50.00	Sponsor credit for one table and 8 chairs; sponsor signage on the table; inclusion in program; 2 Festival tickets.

___ I will supply material for the Sponsors Table.

___ Please contact me about being a Festival Vendor (separate from being a Festival Sponsor.)

Business Name (as it should appear): _____

Contact Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please mail this completed form with your check or money order made out the *Lebanese Education Center* to:

Lebanese Education Center
P.O. Box 41471
Raleigh, NC 27629

Thank you in advance for your support!



Triangle Lebanese Association Membership Application – 2011

**Please renew your membership using this application form.
If you are not a member, consider joining the TLA by completing this application.
Membership dues help the TLA accomplish its mission.**

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Birth month: _____ Renewal: ___ New membership: ___
 Address: _____

 Phone: Home _____ Work _____
 Email: _____

Family Information	Relationship (Spouse, Child, Parent, etc)	Birth month
Name: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Tell us about yourself and your family:
 Occupation: _____
 Hobbies & interests: _____
 Reasons for joining TLA: _____
 Events and functions you are willing to volunteer for:
 ___ Culture ___ Cooking ___ Arabic teaching ___ Events/Functions ___ Fundraising ___ Dabke Dance
 ___ Other: _____
 Additional Information & Comments: _____

Circle Category and Type:	1-Year Membership	Type of Membership
	Family \$25	Voting <i>(Lebanese by birth, ancestry or marriage)</i>
	Single \$15	
	Student \$10	
Additional Contribution:	_____	Associate <i>(Non-voting, open to all friends of the Lebanese culture)</i>
Total Donation:	_____	

Check payable to: Triangle Lebanese Association. Mail to: P.O. Box 41471, Raleigh, NC 27629

Mission of the Triangle Lebanese Association

The mission of the Triangle Lebanese Association (TLA) is to preserve and promote the Lebanese culture and heritage, and provide an exchange of information between the Lebanese, American, and other cultures through social, cultural, and humanitarian endeavors.

Mission of the Lebanese Education Center

The Lebanese Education Center (LEC) is a non-profit, educational center of the TLA. It seeks to implement the mission of the TLA via educational activities and outreach.

More information on our website www.tlanc.org

This newsletter is published by the Triangle Lebanese Association.
Please mail your comments to the address below, or e-mail us at info@tlanc.org.

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Lebanese Education Center
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Raleigh, NC 27629