



Syria Resilient Series Offers Alternative to News Headlines

This fall, LAU's New York Academic Center launched a series called *Syria Resilient*, consisting of five events aimed at fostering an understanding of Syria, not as a land of war and tragedy, but as a place of origin for over 150,000 Americans whose ancestors began settling in the United States in the 1880s.

The series was conceived by LAU NY Academic Executive Director Lina Beydoun, and includes music and art performances, a panel discussion, and film screenings.

It takes place in conjunction with the *Little Syria, NY: An Immigrant Community's Life and Legacy* exhibition at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, a comprehensive and unprecedented presentation of the early Syrian

community in New York, and across the U.S.

"*Syria Resilient* aims to humanize the experiences of everyday Syrians, by offering a platform for Syrian voices to express their own experiences of—and responses to—the war," says Beydoun.

The first event, an evening of poetry, prose and music, co-sponsored by the New Pen League on September 27, brought together Syrian-Canadian writer Ghada Alatrash with New York Arabic Orchestra co-founders Bassam Saba and April Centrone. Alatrash read excerpts from her new book, "Stripped to the Bone: Portraits of Syrian Women," while Saba and Centrone accompanied the readings with soulful Arabic music.

"Poetry is important because the

news that we get from the media de-sensitizes our feelings, it de-humanizes the characters, transforming them into numbers and statistics, whereas poetry awakens that which is human in us. It takes us to the place where we can connect," says Alatrash.

On October 6, LAU teamed up with Bard Globalization and International Affairs program for a political discussion on Syria, entitled "Syria's Predicament and the U.S. Role." The panel included Syria watchers Joshua Landis and Steven Cook, and was moderated by journalist Patricia Sabga.

"It's important for academic institutions like LAU and Bard to present an analytical view of Syria and the overall situation in the Middle East," said James

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LAU academic center



Back Where It All Started

The Arab American National Museum (AANM) and LAU celebrated recipients of the 10th annual Arab American Book Awards in a ceremony at the New York Academic Center on October 25.

This year's seven recipients included writers of Lebanese, Palestinian and Egyptian descent, whose works were reviewed by genre-specific committees.

"It's an honor to be recognized for one's work, but it is also a recognition of the body of work that makes up Arab American literature today," said Moustafa Bayoumi, author of "This American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror," which received The Evelyn Shakir Non-Fiction Award.

The Arab American National Museum, located in Dearborn, Michigan, hosts the awards every year to honor books by and about Arab Americans. This year, it partnered with LAU to bring the award ceremony to New York City for the first time.

New York is the home of Arab American literature, "so this is a chance to honor that, to be close to that, and to bring out a new community of audience members," said Kirsten Terry-Murphy, AANM librarian. "It's immeasurable what LAU has offered us: the space, the staff, the support," she said. "Through their help, this was all possible."

The ceremony coincided with AANM's *Little Syria* exhibit at Ellis Island, which documents the history of New York's first Arab American community.

A Lifetime Achievement Award was given to late novelist and journalist Afifa Karam, who was born in 1883 in the Lebanese village of Amchit and came to the United States when she was a teenager. Karam started contributing to the Arabic-language newspaper *Al-Huda* at the age of 16 and later established *The New World—A Ladies' Monthly Arabic Magazine*, in which she advocated for the rights and progress of women.

"AANM and LAU share common goals of celebrating Arab American culture and heritage," says Lina Beydoun, academic executive director at LAU NY. "I look forward to future partnerships that highlight the wonderful body of work Arab Americans are producing."

LAU matters

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Editorial: Paige Kollock
Design: Maryam Zoma

Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, President
Marla Rice-Evans, Vice President for University Advancement
Robert Hollback, Assistant Vice President for Development
Paige Kollock, Director of Communications and Media

LAU Matters
LAU New York Headquarters and Academic Center
211 East 46th Street
New York, NY 10017-2935
(212) 203-4333
laumatters.org

Please send all comments to: laumatters@lau.edu.lb

Cover Photo: (From left to right) Bassam Saba, April Centrone and Ghada Alatrash during an evening of poetry and music on September 27.



Halal Love Inspires Laughter and Curiosity

The New York Academic Center rippled with laughter on October 28, during the screening of *Halal Love*, a feature film about devout Beirut Muslims trying to manage their love lives and desires without breaking any of their religion's rules, produced and directed by LAU part-time instructor Assad Fouladkar.

The comedy is about three individual but intertwined stories: Awatef, a middle aged mom of two girls, who is recruiting a second wife to help her satisfy her overly loving husband, Mokhtar, a young and excessively jealous man who needs to find his ex-wife another man to be able to marry her again - for the fourth time, and Loubna, who is freshly divorced and can finally marry her true love, but only on a short-term contract since he has a family.

"The movie provided a palpable life glimpse into private aspects of Lebanese marriage and divorce," said Zeina Mehio, who attended the screening. "I saw myself in this movie and I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. I did both."

A boisterous Q&A with Fouladkar followed the screening, with

several audience members raising questions - and concerns - about relationship practices and traditions in Lebanon.

"In the Arab world, when you visit someone, you go to the living room, or a special place for strangers. You definitely don't go into the bedroom. With this film, I'm taking people inside a sacred place ... allowing them to see very intimate problems," said the filmmaker.

Fouladkar was born in Lebanon and studied filmmaking at Boston University. His first feature film, *When Maryam Spoke Out* (2001), was Lebanon's official entry to the Academy Awards. In the last few years, Assad lived in Egypt directing what has become the most successful sitcom in the Arab world, *RAGEL W SIT SITTAT* ('A Man and Six Ladies'). His attention is now focused on *Halal Love*, which was screened this year at the Sundance Film Festival and before the Golden Globes Committee.

The October 28 screening was co-sponsored with The Consulate General of Lebanon in New York and The Arabian Sights Film Festival.

LAU academic center



South Africa's Leaders come to LAU NY

From October 23-27, LAU NY Academic Center hosted 19 businessmen and women from South Africa as part of a Duke Corporate Education professional development program.

It was the first time LAU had partnered with 'Duke CE,' which is ranked the #1 provider of Corporate Education in the U.S., and #3 globally, by the *Financial Times*.

"They wanted to bring their program to the heart of the financial capital of the world," said Wassim Shahin, assistant provost for Special External Projects at LAU, who instituted the partnership.

Participants were carefully selected by their superiors and by BANKSETA, the organization that underwrote the program.

The group spent a week in Durham, North Carolina, home to Duke University, before coming to New York, where they had program sessions on Mergers & Acquisitions, Strategic Thinking for Investment Bankers, Thinking as Entrepreneurial Leaders, and Inside The Minds of Regulators.

Program participant Ntombi Ngema said the ethos behind the Duke CE program is to give participants a globalized view, as well as the tools to occupy a more senior leadership role.

"There's a leadership crisis in the African continent at the moment," she explained. "We have a bunch of mature elderly leaders that are phenomenal, we have a very vibrant youth, and in between, there's a vacuum. This program helps fast-track those that are almost ready, so that as these senior guys retire, we are ready to take the reins."



WiMob 2016

Also in October, the Academic Center hosted the 12th IEEE International Conference on Wireless and Mobile Computing, Networking and Communications (WiMob 2016).

Ninety-three researchers – including professors and graduate students – from a cross section of disciplines participated in the conference, which is a forum for the exchange of knowledge between researchers, developers and practitioners of wireless and mobile technology. They came from the U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Italy, Japan, China, Korea, and other countries.

"Organizing this conference illustrates the continuous contributions of LAU to research and emphasizes the key role the university plays in advancing technology on a global scale," said Azzam Mourad, associate professor of Computer Science, and general co-chair of the conference.

"You may have 4G, but you switch to a Wi-Fi connection when you don't want to pay for data. We are working on ways for those systems to complement one another," said keynote speaker Muriel Médard, professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT.

There was also representation from the industry side. Dr. Samita Chakrabati, principal engineer/architect at Ericsson in San Jose, California, spoke to the group about IOT (the Internet of things), which is the internetworking of physical devices with electronics and network connectivity that enable the objects to collect and exchange data.

IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), a professional organization headquartered in the U.S., is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity.



Welcoming Sarah Shedeed

LAU NY welcomed Student Services Assistant Sarah Shedeed in June. Shedeed, who is currently pursuing her M.A. in International Educational Development at Columbia University, is a graduate of the prestigious School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University. Most recently, she worked as a teacher and Model United Nations (MUN) advisor at Rising Star Academy in New Jersey. She is fluent in Arabic; classical as well as Levantine and Egyptian dialects.

Shedeed has extensive experience with Model United Nations programs, particularly *Global Classrooms International*, the Model UN paradigm practiced by LAU. She served as a student delegate beginning in 7th grade, was a volunteer staff member throughout college, and later worked as an advisor for three years.

"I would like to see *Global Classrooms International* continue to thrive, and my goal is to contribute to that as much as possible, to impact as many students as we can, instilling them with a

sense of global awareness and civic responsibly," she said. "These skills are important for young people because they help them gain perspective."

Shedeed says that in today's highly globalized world, it is critical for people to listen to and respect one another, and the earlier students learn that talent, the better off they will be.

As LAU embarks on its second year running the Global Classrooms International Model UN conferences in NYC this coming spring, she will be a tremendous asset, providing logistical support to her colleagues in Beirut, and helping Senior Student Services and Federal Aid Coordinator Linda Nicholas in New York.

"I'm working on finding speakers for the two conferences, and recruiting more schools and students from both within the U.S. and internationally to participate."

In addition, she is assisting with other student services, including transcript processing, enrollment for LAU NY's Arabic language courses, and international student exchanges.

LAU NY ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Public Events

December 1: *Syria Resilient Series*: Film Screening: "50 Feet from Syria"

December 7: *Syria Resilient Series*: Film Screening: "Little Gandhi"

Courses

January 23 – April 29, 2017: Arabic Language Courses

For more information, please contact:

Lina Beydoun, Academic Executive Director
(917) 720-8611, lina.beydoun@lau.edu

LAU alumni events

Annual U.S. Alumni Chapter Tour

This fall, Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations Abdallah El Khal and Director of Alumni and Special Projects Ed Shiner embarked on a tour of LAU's alumni chapters in the U.S., re-connecting with existing chapters, and even starting a new one. Their trip included stops in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, and Detroit.

Houston



More than 40 alumni and friends gathered at the home of alumna Tania Shaheen and her husband Wissam Tayssoun. The group included 15 School of Pharmacy students who are currently doing clinical rotations at Methodist Hospital. Dr. Ray Hachem, who helps guide the young pharmacists, and Mike Liebl, clinical pharmacy manager at Methodist, were both present.

Detroit



A small group welcomed Abdallah and Ed at Bravo Italian Restaurant in Livonia, Michigan, including three newly-discovered members who are eager to serve on the committee. Chapter President Hiba Yazbeck, Vice President Hala Choukair, and Secretary Ghina Yazbeck were present.

Atlanta



(From top to bottom) 1. LAU saw the birth of a new chapter in Atlanta, with a gathering at the home of Ziad and Jocelyn Nassar. The group has already established a Facebook page, and held several meetings. 2. While in Atlanta, Ed and Abdallah visited 101-year-old alumna Lily Badre, whose late husband, Dr. Albert Badre, was the former president of BUC (1973-1983). Lily was donned with a 50th anniversary alumni pin.

Chicago



Chicago-area alums gathered at Pappadeaux restaurant in Elmhurst, Illinois for dinner. Some traveled for up to two hours to attend the event, and the youngest guest was five months old.



Also this fall, the Toronto chapter held their annual picnic, bringing together more than 70 alums, their families and friends, at Lakefront Promenade Park in Mississauga, Ontario.

CONNECT TO YOUR FELLOW LAU ALUMNI

If your alumni chapter has an upcoming event, please notify:

Ed Shiner
Director of Alumni and Special Projects,
(646) 255-1099, ed.shiner@lau.edu



Cosmos Reception

On September 12, Board of Trustees Member Peter Tannous hosted a reception in Washington D.C. in honor of President Jabbra at the historic Cosmos Club. The gathering was attended by LAU partners from USAID and the State Department, members of Congress, and LAU alumni and friends. Former presidential candidate Ralph Nader also made an appearance.



(Clockwise from top left) 1. Dr. Jabbra with Lebanese Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Carla Jazzar. 2. LAU Trustee Peter Tannous; Dr. Jabbra; Ralph Nader; fmr Congressman and LAU Trustee Nick Rahall. 3. Gary Barrett (ASHA/USAID); Jay Ghazal; U.S. Ambassador designate to Kuwait Larry Silverman; Dr. Jabbra; Peter Tannous; Thomas Staal (DCHA/USAID). 4. Dr. Jabbra, Rep Darrell Issa (R-CA); Tanya Rahall.



(From right to left) 1. Honoree Joseph Maroun, George Farris and Dr. Jabbra. 2. Brian Holman, Rosalind Elias and Amine Hachem. 3. Ambassador Edward M. Gabriel



New York Gala Supports Women’s Institute

Alumni and friends of LAU gathered at New York City’s iconic Metropolitan Club on September 9 to enjoy a festive evening in support of LAU’s Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World.

During the course of the evening, the 150 guests had the chance to learn more about the organization they were benefitting through a video message from the institute’s indefatigable director Lina Abirafeh, who was in Brazil attending The Association for Women’s Rights in Development conference and could not be present.

The New York Gala started in 2010 as a way to honor Lebanese and other successful individuals for their public service. This year’s honorees included mezzo-soprano opera singer Rosalind Elias, Ambassador Edward M. Gabriel, and entrepreneur and philanthropist Joseph Maroun.

In a soulful speech about her determination to succeed, Elias brought the audience to tears.

“As a little girl doing my chores, I would always listen to the Metropolitan Opera on the radio and fantasize that I was on stage,” she told a captivated audience. “I was the thirteenth child in my family, my mother never spoke English, my father was from the ‘*dayaa*’ (village) and thought any women who went on stage was a bad woman.” Elias went on to give 690

performances at the Met, win three Grammys and two Emmys. Former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco Edward M. Gabriel was the son of Lebanese immigrants. He grew up in a small town in upstate New York, with little connection to Lebanon. As a child, he started a business shining shoes, charging a quarter a shine. That work ethic led him to a successful career in Washington D.C. as a government servant.

“We must work together in service of each other,” emphasized Gabriel. “Almost everybody in this room could be up here. Many of us come from humble backgrounds and now we must give to others ... for it is in giving that we receive.”

In between dinner courses, attendees were treated to musical performances from tenor Amine J. Hachem, accompanied by pianist Brian Holman. A highlight of the evening was when Hachem sang an aria from the opera *Carmen*, as a tribute to Elias. Rita Zihenni took on the role of master of ceremonies and even sang a few notes of songs by the famous Lebanese diva Fairuz at President Jabbra’s request.

In the spirit of supporting the women’s institute, Jabbra reminded the audience of LAU’s founder, American missionary Sarah Huntington Smith, and her commitment to educating young women: “She was animated by a unique spirit, a spirit of giving to others so that others may have education and a rich and bountiful life.”

LAU giving



Doing Good and Doing Well

By Atty. Ron Cruikshank

Most of us would welcome the idea of “doing good (philanthropically) and doing well (financially)” at the same time. In this article, I want to shed some light on one way you can accomplish this.

While the stock market continues to fluctuate day-to-day, long-term investors are aware that, since the “Great Recession” of 2008, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has made significant gains. Consider, for example, that the Dow closed 2008 at 8,776.39 and ended 2015 at 17,425.03.

For those of you who hold stocks as part of your investment strategy, these figures are significant, and they probably mean that you have some holdings that have experienced significant gains in value. That’s great until you decide to sell. At that point, you’re faced with paying capital gains taxes on the increased value of the stocks you’re selling. Here’s a way to ease your tax situation and help your favorite charities (that is: Do good and do well!).

Step One: Let’s say you want to make a \$5,000 gift to Lebanese American University. Instead of writing a check, consider holding onto that money and, instead, giving LAU a gift of

\$5,000 of appreciated stock. In doing so, you can take an immediate tax deduction for the full market value of the stock and also avoid the capital-gains tax you would owe if you were to simply cash in the securities.

Step Two: Now, use the cash that you didn’t donate to charity to buy new shares of the stock you just donated, or use it to buy other stock that you’ve had your eye on.

Most of us would agree that we give to charitable causes such as LAU because we believe in them, want them to succeed, and want to be part of something morally uplifting. Tax considerations come second. But, it’s also foolish not to think about tax implications and not to take advantage of opportunities available to us. There’s nothing wrong with doing good and doing well.

As always, I urge you to speak with your attorney or tax advisor before making any decisions regarding your investments or your charitable giving.

Ron Cruikshank is of counsel with Choate & Seletski. He is a former trustee of LAU and a current member of the Advisory Board of the Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World.

Commemorating a Visionary



On October 12, LAU NY, in partnership with the Consulate General of Lebanon and the New Pen League, hosted a commemoration of Lebanese poet Jawdat Haydar, offering a glimpse of his legacy through film, readings, and an exhibit featuring artifacts from his life.

Haydar not only lived until 101, but produced some of his most brilliant and profound work towards the end of his life.

Born in Baalbeck in 1905, the young Haydar’s childhood was filled with strife. His father and siblings were forced into exile in Turkey under the Ottoman Empire. At nine, he was left alone with his mother, who was stricken with typhus and died. He then took the long and harrowing trip to Turkey by himself to reunite with his family.

At age 16, as a student at North Texas University, he wrote his first poem.

While Haydar went on to have a career outside of poetry, first as an educator and then as a director at the Iraq Petroleum Company and the Mid-East Auto and Trading Company, he came back to poetry later in life.

“He was a visionary. He wrote about universal issues like science and the beauty of nature, and focused on themes of non-violence, tolerance, and human rights,” said his daughter Shahina Osseiran, who attended the event, along with several other members of his family.

The evening began with readings of Haydar’s poems by alumna

Hilda Abla, and New Pen League member Rita Zihenni.

His work touched many lives, earning him recognition from the Lebanese Order of the Cedars, the Golden Medal of Lebanese Merit, the Legion of Honor of France, and the Papal Medal from Pope John XXIII for humanitarian work.

“Jawdat Haydar contributed to building bridges of understanding,” said Lina Beydoun, executive director of the New York Academic Center.

It is for these reasons that Haydar is often remembered not just as a poet, but as a humanist.

“Haydar rejected the divisions of religion, language or ethnicity, and embraced a universal spirituality that encompasses humanity,” said Consul General of Lebanon in New York Majdi Ramadan.

The evening concluded with a reading in Arabic from Youssef Abdel Samad, poet and managing editor of the New Pen League, a group that helps maintain the heritage of the early immigrant poets such as Kahlil Gibran, Mikhael Naimy, and Elia Abu Madey.

In 2011, LAU dedicated the Jawdat R. Haydar Memorial Study Room in the Riyad Nassar Library in Beirut, to which Haydar’s family has donated some of his precious books, old manuscripts, and personal belongings.

To read more of his work, visit jawdathaydar.org

Syria Resilient Series

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Ketterer, dean of International Studies at Bard College. “That includes putting the crisis into the context of the arts, poetry, and music, which helps personify a population.”

A musical/visual art performance on November 3 featured Syrian composer and clarinetist Kinan Azmeh, and Syrian-Armenian visual artist Kevork Mourad. The production documents how the duo have felt during different stages of the war. “I know that the clarinet cannot stop a bullet, it cannot feed the hungry, it cannot bring the refugees back home, but what it can do is inspire,” said Azmeh.

The series wraps up in December with two documentary film screenings: *50 Feet from Syria* and *Little Gandhi*.

By offering a counter-narrative to the headlines about Syria in the mainstream media, the *Syria Resilient* series advances the New York Academic Center’s goals of raising public awareness of the Middle East and promoting cross-cultural understanding.



Syria analyst Joshua Landis during the panel.

The *Syria Resilient* Series is made possible by the generous support of The Violet Jabara Charitable Trust, New York Council for the Humanities, Aida Sharabati-Shawwaf, BNP PARIBAS, and Lloyd Barood & Zeina Mehio.

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Reham Haddad



Tell us a little about yourself.

I graduated from LAU in 2003 with a BS in Pharmacy, then went on to earn my Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree in 2004. I moved to the U.S. in 2006, and since then, have been working for CVS Pharmacy in the Boston area. I'm now Pharmacy Manager at the CVS in Alewife, Cambridge, MA.

Why did you choose to study at LAU?

One of my main attractions to LAU was the pharmacy school. Also, I loved the small, green, cozy campus of Beirut, and it being right in the city. Many family members had graduated from LAU when it was BCW, and it had a good reputation.

How did your LAU degree give you an edge professionally?

Being a pharmacy graduate from the only accredited pharmacy school outside the U.S. gave me the opportunity to be

in the States and to work for one of the biggest retail pharmacy chains. When I started training in Boston to get licensed and sit for the board exam, I realized that the knowledge I had gained at LAU was similar, if not superior, to that of my co-workers.

What about personally?

LAU taught me to be independent. It taught me that what you put in to your work is what you get out. The time I spent there was unforgettable, and I am still in touch with most of my professors. My most memorable moment at LAU was receiving the Rhoda Orme award in 2001, and the Torch Award when I graduated in 2004.