



The Tree of Life

VOLUME VII, ISSUE 3 WINTER 2004

THE ASSYRIAN AID SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Assyrian Aid Society of America

Mission Statement

The Assyrian Aid Society is a charitable 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to:

- *Helping Assyrians in need*
- *Promoting Assyrian culture and heritage*
- *Building a structure capable of responding to unexpected crises that require immediate mobilization to help our people*
- *Focusing American and international attention on the needs and humanitarian concerns of our Assyrian people, particularly in our ancestral homeland of Bet Nahrain*

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AAS-A Prepares to Fund Village Resettlement Projects in North Iraq

The Assyrian Aid Society of America is making a priority of supporting village resettlement programs in North Iraq.

At its monthly meeting at the national headquarters in February, the AAS-A Executive Committee agreed to earmark funds to initiate the process of making village resettlement an ongoing project.

“This is the heart of what we do,” said AAS-A Vice President Ashur Yoseph. “Helping needy Assyrians and protecting the Homeland. Growing these villages for our people is essential.”

Informal resettlement proposals for several villages have been received for review. In addition, the Assyrian Aid Society - Iraq will be asked to review the issue and make recommendations before implementing.

The village resettlement issue was put on the Executive Committee’s February agenda by Director Alan Mansour and the Detroit Chapter.

Nineveh Music DVD Sales Support AAS-A

San Jose music artist Fred Elieh has created a musical and visual tribute to the capital of ancient Assyria, and 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the DVDs goes directly to AAS-A and its humanitarian projects in the Homeland.

Hundreds of these DVDs have been distributed already, including overseas to Australia.

See Page 4 for the story behind the music and for ordering details.

AAS-A President Meets with AAS-NZ Executive Committee in New Zealand

On Tuesday 17 February AAS-A President Narsai David met with the Executive Committee of the Assyrian Aid Society -New Zealand in Wellington, New Zealand.

In addition to discussing the current situation in Iraq, each side shared information concerning organizational administration and experiences with fundraising.

Mr. David was particularly interested in learning about the Assyrian community in New Zealand.

“It is almost like discovering a new

branch of your own family,” according to Narsai David.

Also in attendance at the meeting was Hormiz Benjamin, representing ZOWAA in New Zealand.

Last year Nicholas Al-Jeloo, representing AAS-Australia, met with Narsai David and the AAS-A Executive Committee in Berkeley, California.

Editor’s Note: Narsai David met with AAS-NZ officers while in New Zealand on business. No AAS-A funds were used to pay for travel or any other expenses.

Message from the President

Giving, Giving and Giving Some More

by Narsai M. David

We all know how difficult it is to earn money and how easy it is to spend it.

As a small, charitable non-profit organization, the Assyrian Aid Society of America lives this lesson daily, easily spending more of its time raising money

for our humanitarian projects than actually *spending* the money it has

raised. And still there is never enough money to do all the work that needs to be done!

While one is never comfortable reaching out one's hand and begging for money, that is exactly what we must do day in and day out. We are making a concerted effort to develop new sources for increasing our revenue, including government and private grants, but our solid and most reliable base remains personal donations from the Assyrian community throughout the



for the AAS-A Lifeline Pledge Project, as well as a pre-printed envelope for the Lifeline Pledge or other donations you might care to send. In December you receive a Christmas Appeal from us, and in the spring you receive an Easter Appeal. If you live in California, you probably receive an invitation to our annual fundraising dinner in November. In an emergency situation (last year's

United States.

Inside each quarterly issue of *The Tree of Life* you will find a donation form

return it to the donor. It can be so confusing!

No one likes constant solicitations for money, no matter how worthy the charity. We try to keep them to a minimum, even going so far as to studying a realignment of our newsletter publication schedule so that our mailings don't overload your mailbox or you. We appreciate your understanding.

The *spending* part of the job is hard work, too. The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee must research and investigate and debate how to best allocate the money entrusted to us for

*...in fiscal year 2003, 91 cents of every dollar donated to AAS-A went **directly** to helping Assyrians in the Homeland...*

war, for example) you will receive a special appeal at any time.

That's at least two direct mail solicitations each year, plus four newsletters. This is how we raise money.

And we are not the only organization using direct mail solicitations. AAS-A is not even the only *Assyrian* organization making direct mail appeals for your contributions. Occasionally we receive donation checks intended for other organizations and we must either try to get the check to the correct group or

health, education, and other humanitarian projects in the Homeland. We are extremely proud of the fact that, in fiscal year 2003, 91 cents of every dollar donated to AAS-A went **directly** to helping Assyrians in the Homeland. This means that our reliance on volunteers and our efforts to keep administrative overhead costs to a minimum have been successful. This is an extraordinary achievement!

Your donations and your continuing support are a blessing.

Child to Travel from Baghdad to U.S. for Surgery

A four year old Assyrian boy from Baghdad will soon be on his way to Los Angeles for surgery and a new life, thanks to the Shriners Hospital and the Assyrian Aid Society of America.

The child has extensive orthopedic problems which cannot be treated in Iraq. He will require multiple surgeries and extensive post-operative treatments and rehabilitation. Accompanied by his father, he is expected to be in Los Angeles on April 1.

All expenses will be covered by the Los Angeles Shriners Hospital.

The child's case was brought to the attention of the Los Angeles Shriners Hospital by AAS-A Los Angeles Chap-

ter President Pierre Toulakany and Albert Davidoo, an AAS-A supporter and Certified Public Accountant in Encino who sits on the Shriners Hospital Board of Governors.

In Phoenix, Arizona last October G. Frank LaBonte, Administrator of the Los Angeles Shriners Hospital, made a presentation to the AAS-A Board of Directors at their annual meeting. The purpose of the presentation was to educate the Board about medical programs and services available to children throughout the world at no cost via the Shriners Hospitals in the United States.

There are 20 Shriners Hospitals in the United States. For more information, visit them on the Internet at www.shrinershq.org.

Third Annual *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean* Set for November

Save the date---again!

The third annual *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean* gala charity dinner is scheduled for Friday 12 November 2004 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in San Francisco.

The first two *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean* charity dinners raised over a quarter of a million dollars for humanitarian projects in the Homeland, including aid to refugees in North Iraq during and after the Second Gulf War.

Dinner Committee Chair Mona Malik expects to "shake things up a little bit this year, to introduce a couple of exciting new elements," but guests this year can again expect a gala evening of gourmet food prepared by celebrity chefs,

wonderful Assyrian music, and of course an exciting live auction of travel getaways, fine dining, and who knows what else!

It's not too early to volunteer, according to Ms. Malik.

"Last month we had our first meeting of the dinner committee, and one of our top priorities right now is lining up volunteers. November isn't so far away, we need all the help we can get."

If you live in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and would like to volunteer for *Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean*, send an email to ntotm@assyrianaid.org or call 510-527-9997 Monday through Friday, 1 PM to 5 PM.

Executive Committee Roundup

EC Considers Apple Warehouse, University Project

Editor's Note: The Executive Committee is a chartered committee of the AAS-A Board of Directors. The EC meets monthly at the national headquarters in Berkeley, California.

At the December meeting Dr. Ashur Moradkhan made an encouraging presentation concerning the progress and current status of the Atra Project. Noting that a large number of apple trees had

been planted over the past two years and are already beginning to bear fruit, Dr. Moradkhan proposed the construction of a refrigerated warehouse for storing the fruit. In its discussions, the EC identified an existing building in North Iraq which could possibly be modified as an appropriate facility. It was decided to request an analysis by AAS-I engineers before proceeding further.

In January and February

the committee discussed a proposed joint project with Dohuk University and a leading university in Southern California. The original proposal from U.S. school representatives dates from Spring 2003 but has been on their back burner due to lack of funding from anticipated sources in the Los Angeles area, perhaps because of social instability in Iraq. The EC agreed to re-open the discussions in hope that the individu-

als in Southern California will renew their search for needed seed money.

In other business, the committee: agreed to secure a realtor to handle the sale of a Southern California property, the proceeds of which will be donated to AAS-A for education projects...approved the Central Valley chapter to conduct a fundraising raffle...authorized \$5000 donation to assist needy Assyrians in Georgia.

AAS-A News Briefs

Arizona Chapter Wins Recognition for Charity Work

In January St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix recognized the Arizona Chapter of the Assyrian Aid Society of America for donating 639 pounds of food during its holiday food drive.

LA Chapter Aids Family of Slain Assyrian in Iraq

The Los Angeles AAS-A chapter raised \$5000 for the family of Lewya Sargon Nanu, an ADM representative killed in Basra last November.

AAS-A On the Air

AAS-A TV, a presentation of our Santa Clara Valley chapter, can now be seen on Comcast Cable Channel 15 in the San Jose area every Friday evening from 8 PM to 8:30 PM.

Local Companies Reward Volunteers, Benefit AAS-A

Recognizing the volunteerism of their employees and rewarding their charities of choice, two Bay Area companies are making a difference with their contributions to AAS-A.

Hewlett-Packard employee Raman Mirzapour recently netted AAS-A \$2000 from his company via its matching donation program.

And for the second straight year, Joseph Baba's volunteer work with the Santa Clara Valley chapter has earned AAS-A a \$250 grant from New United Motor Manufacturing, INC (NUMMI) of Fremont, California.

Now this is what we call WORK!

Sales Benefit AAS-A Humanitarian Projects

The Story Behind the Popular *Nineveh* DVD

by Fred Elieh

See the form on the next page for ordering the *Nineveh* DVD via mail. Go to www.assyrianaid.org for Internet ordering options. Australian customers can order directly from AAS-Australia.

The *Nineveh* Project was created with a single goal in mind: helping our Assyrian people in Bet Nahrain. It began merely as a tune that I whispered to myself for about two years. It was one of those tunes that I could not get out of my head, and slowly I began shaping that tune into a song.

From the moment I began writing the song I knew it was going to contribute to an important cause. For that reason I was careful not to rush the project. I discussed my intentions with one of my friends, Nina Chanko, a young Assyrian vocalist with a mesmerizing voice who sings in the church choir. Nina agreed to sing the female part of this song and was equally excited to be part of a project aimed at helping our people.

After a year of work on lyrics and

music, we finally recorded *Nineveh*. Six months later I produced the music video, the final stage of this project and my gift to all. The music video was produced with the highest quality of work in mind and I am honored that the leg-



endary Assyrian musician and violinist, Nebu Issabey, has taken a part in it. This song is a tribute and remembrance to *Nineveh*, the capitol of ancient

Assyria, and metaphorically also *Nineveh*, the mother of our “Umta Atoureta.” It resonates passages of one day arriving again to see *Nineveh*, our ancestral homeland.

Though the artistic part of this project is behind me, I am still a long way from accomplishing the mission and the ultimate goal of this project, which is raising funds through the sale of the DVD in order to provide help to our people in need. Hence, my collaboration with the Assyrian Aid Society of America.

For a mere \$20 donation, people can enjoy a digital quality music video of this song, which also includes commentaries by Nina and myself. The entire proceeds are donated to the Assyrian Aid Society of America to support and further assist our Assyrian people.

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Loans Benefit AAS-A

The next time you finance a new home or refinance your current home, you could also be helping your brothers and sisters in the Homeland.

Ada Frenkel, Home Mortgage Consultant at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, recently met with members of the AAS-A Executive Committee to discuss her company's Sharing Advantage program which enables you to support your favorite charitable organization while financing your home.

When you close your home loan with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, according to Ms. Frenkel and documents pro-

vided by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, the Wells Fargo Housing Foundation will make a \$300 contribution to any faith-based or non-profit organization of your choice, provided that the organization has 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code.

The Assyrian Aid Society of America is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Over \$2000 in donations has already been made to AAS-A via this program.

The donations paid by the Wells Fargo Housing Foundation are made without any additional expenses charged to you on your mortgage transaction, according to Ms. Frenkel. The donation is not made in your name and you cannot claim a \$300 tax deduction on your return.

For more information on the Sharing Advantage program and to fully compare and evaluate the terms and conditions, call your local Wells Fargo Home Mortgage office or, in the San Jose area, Ada Frenkel at 408-776-2996.

NINEVEH DVD ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please send me _____ copies of the Nineveh DVD.
Enclosed is \$20.00 per copy plus \$2.00 shipping and handling..

Mail this form to:
Assyrian Aid Society of America
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, CA 94707

Arabic-Assyrian Dictionary Again Available

Copies of BAHRA, the 10,000 word Arabic-Assyrian dictionary published by AAS-I, is once again available from the AAS-A national headquarters.

Originally distributed free of charge to students, teachers, social organizations, and media groups in North Iraq, this comprehensive 256-page dictionary is an essential reference for any Assyrian who received his or her formal education in Arabic.

The dictionary, available only from AAS-A, now sells in the United States for \$20.00 per copy, plus \$4.00 for shipping and handling.

To order call 510-527-9997, go to www.assyrianaid.org/merchandise.html, or mail the completed form below.

BAHRA DICTIONARY ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please send me _____ copies of the BAHRA Dictionary.
Enclosed is \$20.00 per copy plus \$4.00 shipping and handling..

Mail this form to:
Assyrian Aid Society of America
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, CA 94707

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The next quarterly issue of **The Tree of Life** will be published in June, 2004.

Lifeline and Other Donors from October 2003 through December 2003

San Francisco Bay Area

Youel Baaba
 Leo Bahribek
 George Bet Shlemon
 Stella Charbakshi
 Henry Cristofi
 Narsai David
 Joel Elias
 Lisa Mirza Grotts
 Fred Hermes
 Maha Hermes
 Gregory James
 Robert Karoukian
 Awitar Khoshaba
 Lena Malik
 Michael Malik
 Mikhael Waranso Malik
 Mona Malik
 Sargon Michael
 Edward Miner
 Nathan Nasser
 Paul Odah
 Sargon Shabbas
 Matthew & Jana O'shana
 Sargina Tamimi-Silvani
 Shalim Tattar
 Ashur Yoseph
 George S Yoseph

San Diego

Johnny Jacob
 Riadh Razooki
 Samir Shabilla

Detroit

Samir Bahho
 Mahir Ibrahim
 Sargon Khairon
 Alan Mansour
 Jamil Mansour
 John Rais
 Majid Shammami

Central Valley

Saret Azizians
 Albert Benjamin
 Raheel Benjamin
 William Buxman
 City Cell Wireless
 Bella Daniel
 Thomas Daniel
 Younis David
 Tina Dinha
 Gladis Elisha
 Floreen Essa
 Daniel Georgis
 Peter Ibrahim
 George & Elki Issa
 Sarkes Isaac
 Louas Isho
 Alexander Malick
 Pius G Orah
 Matthew O'shana
 Julia D Paul
 Mikhaeil Pius
 Ramsin Police
 Romeo & Mariana Samo
 Yousif Shamon
 Ashur Shiba
 Krykous Shlemon
 Mary Tamimi
 Benjamin Telya
 John Vazira
 John Youkhanna
 Louise Yohannan
 Daniel Youkhanna
 Ashoor Zia

Phoenix

Mary & Ben Benjamin
 George Nissan
 Edward Rehana
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Las Vegas

Francis Ellyin
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Los Angeles

A.J. Alexander
 Edna Alexander
 Arbella Arsenous
 Joseph Bet-Shmuel
 Nahren & Dariz Badal
 Alfred & Carolina Betdashtoo
 William & Genevieve DeEiel
 Sarkis Elia
 Peadro Farmarzi
 Ladimar Khamu
 George & Regina Nissan
 Victor Orshan
 Flora Oshana
 George Ramsini
 Shirin Ramsini
 Anvieh Shalita
 Pierre & Angie Toulakany
 Sargon Youash
 Diryash Youkhanna
 Simon Younan
 Sarkis Zoumalan

East Coast

Athra Trading Inc.
 Joseph Faulkner
 Eden Naby Frye
 William Hartman
 Maryam Mirhaj
 William Ramsini
 Bailis Shamun
 William Yoel
 Grace Yohannan

Other

George Bet-Shlimon
 Joseph Faulkner
 Adline Hartman
 Fiona Pergerson
 William Ramsini
 Bailis Y Shamon
 Nadia Yakoob

Chicago

Augania Alexander
 Hanny Baba
 Morice Botrice
 Sargon Chabo
 Jacob David, Jr.
 Albert Eprim
 Father Shleemon Heseqial
 Edward Joseph
 Iren Kliszus
 Ninous Malham
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Santa Clara Valley

Fred Aprim
 Banipal Babella
 Dr Andrei & Rabi Evelyn Bitbadal
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 Neil Karaman
 Victor Kelaita
 Novel Mosh
 Novel Moushi
 Paul Odah
 Sperjohn Pirayo
 Sami Sada
 Raymond Samuels
 Arbella Sarkis
 Edward Tuman
 Hubert Varda
 Michael Younan

Lifeline Pledge Form

I want to join the Lifeline Pledge Project and make regular tax-deductible contributions to the Assyrian Aid Society of America. I authorize monthly installments to be automatically charged to my credit card. I may choose to send a monthly check.

Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone # _____

Method of Payment:

____ I will send a check each month. Charge to my: ____ Visa ____ MasterCard

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Send this form to:
Assyrian Aid Society of America
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, CA 94707

Monthly Donation: \$75.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$30.00 _____ Other _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Central Valley Chapter to Conduct Innovative Raffle

Have you ever heard of a charity raffle in which the winner gets to *pick* what kind of car he or she wins?

And how about free *unlimited* car washes for a year along with your new automobile? Hey, why not?

These are some of the innovative spins Central Valley Chapter volunteers and Chapter President Fred Isaac are putting on a new AAS-A fundraising project.

"You take a regular idea and then you give it a little twist," according to Fred Isaac. "It catches your attention, it gets you interested."

The general idea was to raffle a car. The special twist was to give the winner a choice about what kind of car he or she would win.

BMW? Lincoln? Lexus? If you win, it's your choice as you get \$25,000 toward the full payment of any of these or other makes and models being offered.

To make the idea a reality, Fred Isaac approached a number of Central Valley auto dealers and other businesses. He soon had enough pre-commitments to both underwrite the project and guarantee a wide array of choices for the big winner.

Participating auto dealers are Central Valley Automotive (Nissan, Chrysler, Volkswagen), Showcase Auto Plaza (Buick, Isuzu, Lincoln, Mercury), Valley BMW / Valley Lexus, and Modesto Toyota/Mazda/Suzuki.

Other participating businesses include Advanced Care Solutions, Assyrian American Civic Club of Turlock, Assyrian American Association of Modesto, TSM Insurance, City Cel Wireless, Eastern Market, Yonan's Jewelers, Rotary Club of Modesto East, Yosemite Auto Service, Endsley and Associates, Kabobs by Sonia, Cal Time Jewelers, Signature Pools, Flowers by Alis, Neesan Market, Jacobs Fine Dining, Babylon Market, 7Up Modesto, Great Central Mortgage, Mazaffari Engineering, Modern Cuts, Ed Pro Painting, Video King, and Liquor King.

Tickets are \$20 each or six for \$100. The raffle drawing is scheduled to be held on Sunday July 11, 2004. Proceeds will benefit the AAS-A resettlement project for Assyrian villages in Iraq.

For more information, contact Fred Isaac at 209-578-3413.

*Make sure your **Lifeline Pledge** information is current and correct. Please notify us when you change or renew your credit cards. Thanks!*

Assyrian Aid Society of America

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fiscal Year 2004

October 2003 - December 2003

INCOME

Chapter contributions from fundraising, Lifeline, Atra Project, Christmas Appeal, and designated donations

Central Valley	\$1,555
Chicago	\$1,270
Detroit	\$1,170
East Coast	\$2,005
Las Vegas	\$900
Los Angeles	\$3,495
Phoenix	\$8,135
San Diego	\$75
Santa Clara	\$4,165

Subtotal \$22,770

Donations - National Headquarters	
November 2003 Fundraising Dinner	\$118,142
Lifeline	\$1,835
Christmas Appeal	\$2,050
United Way Donations	\$252
Wells Fargo Sharing Advantage Program	\$1,500

Earnings

Merchandise Sales	\$75
Interest	\$240

Subtotal \$124,094

TOTAL INCOME \$146,864

DISBURSEMENTS

Grants	
School Project	\$1,000
Atra Project	\$19,000
Needy Assyrians in Georgia (Russia)	\$5,000

Sub-Total \$25,000

Operating Expenses

Administrator / Bookkeeping	\$6,480
Insurance	\$1,412
Newsletter (Printing & Postage)	\$3,676
Annual Board of Directors Meeting	\$3,774

Subtotal \$15,342

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$40,342

NET INCOME (OR LOSS) \$106,522

BEGINNING BALANCE Oct 1 2003 \$92,864

Add - Total Income	146,864
Deduct - Total Disbursement	40,342
Add - Oracle Stock (as of 12/31/03)	2,761

ENDING BALANCE December 31, 2003 \$202,147

Assyrian Aid Society of America



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Berkeley, CA 94707

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If you are receiving multiple copies or if the name addressed is incorrect, please mark the changes on this page and fax it to us at 510.527.6633, or mail it to the address above. Thank you!

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Los Angeles



On Saturday, January 17, 2004, the Arizona Chapter of the Assyrian Aid Society of America participated in the City of Chandler's annual multi-cultural event. Members of AAS-A and their supporters sold ethnic foods and merchandise to raise funds for humanitarian programs in the Homeland. Flyers containing information about the history of our nation and the latest developments were also distributed.