



Summer 2005

Friends of Morocco

اصدقاء المغرب
friendsofmorocco.org

The Status of Moroccan Women

Washington DC, July 20

Global Rights Morocco Country Director Stephanie Willman Bordat spoke at a lunchtime forum about recent reforms to Morocco's Personal Status Code (also known as the Family Code or the Moudawana).

History of the Personal Status Code and Global Rights' Morocco Program

Ms. Willman Bordat began by noting that Morocco's Personal Status Code (which was, and remains, Morocco's only law based on religious precepts) was originally promulgated by royal decree in 1957. In 1993, minor reforms were made to the law, again by royal decree.

But by 2000, the year Global Rights launched its Morocco program, only 4 percent of the country's citizens knew that the law had been reformed, she noted. A significant reason for this was the fact that 42 percent of women in cities were illiterate, as were 82 percent of women in rural areas. At the same time, women's rights NGOs were concerned that judges were not implementing the changed law.

Global Rights soon developed a human and legal rights training program for illiterate women aimed at developing their capacity to defend their rights and to mobilize

collectively. To this end, Global Rights produced a 420-page Arabic language facilitator's manual explaining the provisions of the 1993 reforms, and trained local NGOs to use this manual with groups of women in their communities.

In 2001, Morocco's King established a Royal Consultative Commission, which he tasked with recommending further reforms to the Personal Status Code. In 2003, the King presented his proposals for revising the law to Morocco's Parliament. For the first time, this law was debated and amended by legislators, not simply altered by royal decree.

The revised version of Morocco's Personal Status Code came into force in February 2004.

Content of the New Personal Status Code

Ms. Willman Bordat noted that the revised Personal Status Code made significant changes to the laws of marriage, divorce and distribution of marital property.

Significantly, she explained, the revised law raises the legal age of marriage for girls to 18, the same as it was for boys. (The legal age of marriage for girls had been 15.) In addition, the revised law more strictly controls the practice of polygamy, requiring a man who wants more than one wife to prove to a judge that he can support two families and that he has an objective and exceptional reason for doing so; the judge can only grant the request if both the first and second wife approve. In addition, the revised law no longer makes the husband the head of the household or requires the wife to be obedient to her husband. And it allows women to sign their own marriage contracts. (Under the old law, a marital tutor had to sign the contract for the woman.)

The revised law also allows for two new types of divorce: divorce by mutual consent and divorce because of irreconcilable differences. It does, however, also maintain the other types of divorce provided by the previous law. These include divorce by repudiation and when a woman pays her husband the amount of her dowry in return for his agreeing to grant her a divorce. The latter type of divorce has remained the most common, Ms. Willman Bordat explained.

The revised law's treatment of marital property remains problematic, Ms. Willman Bordat continued. The law's sole article on this subject provides that the spouses maintain separate marital property, though it makes clear that they can sign a second marriage contract stipulating that they will establish shared property. Still, if no contract is signed, a

(Continued on page 19)

Table of Contents

Ash Khabarna?.....	2
Human Development Initiative.....	3
Sidi ROM.....	4
Moroccan-American Communities.....	5
New Western Sahara Envoy.....	9
Morocco at the Movies #10.....	10
Corps Beliefs.....	11
Friends of Morocco Souk.....	12
Peace Corps Experiences.....	15
News from Morocco.....	16
Moroccan Family Code in English.....	18

Ash Khabarna?

أش اخبارنا؟

Editor's note: I sincerely apologize for any errors in the last installment of *Ash Khabarna*. Most of these entries are typed and not cut and pasted, so it was just simple human error. I also rely on the information sent to us by the National Peace Corps Association. Please check with them and make sure your contact information is accurate. Clear handwriting also helps. If you don't want your personal information to appear in *Ash Khabarna*, please indicate this request on your membership renewal.

John "Jacques" van der Water— 64-66 is a graphic artist in Sacramento, CA and is also the editor of *Harka-Home*, a newsletter for Morocco RPCVs from 62-67. Contact John at <jaxgrafixx@netscape.net>.

Nancy Watson Talbott—Casablanca 75-77 is a substance abuse counselor with the Indiana Department of Correction.

John Clapp—Oujda 80-83 is a teacher at Archbishop Ryan High School in Seattle. Your editor and John met up in Seattle in May after last seeing each other 23 years ago. Asidi Clapp has not changed a bit, except for the gray hair.

Abbas and JoJo Zawawi live in Glendale, CA.

Kathleen Kohlman Sparkes—Ksar es Souq 64-66 is retired and lives in Kaslo, British Columbia. Contact Kathleen at <vksparkle@netidea.com>.

Ellen Brown—Taza/Rabat 70-73 is an economist with the US Environmental Protection Agency. Contact Ellen at <brown.ellen@epa.gov>.

Orin (Buz) Hargraves—El Hajeb 80-83 is a lexicographer in Maryland. Contact Buz at <orinhargraves@aol.com>.

William Wernick—Safi 79-81 is an oncology registered nurse in East Alstead, NH. He is married and is building a home in the woods of New Hampshire. Contact William at <zathros@sover.net>.

Lisa Howard was a teacher at the Casablanca International School from 1996 to 1999. She is now teaching at the Istanbul International Community School. Contact Lisa at <lisa_howard_27@yahoo.com>.

Richard Holbrooke—Peace Corps/Morocco Director 70-73, is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS. He assumed this role in June 2001, to lead the GBC in mobilizing the business sector. The Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GBC) is the pre-eminent organization leading the business fight against HIV/AIDS. The rapidly-expanding alliance of over 200 international companies is dedicated to combating the AIDS epidemic through the business sector's unique skills and expertise. In addition to his leadership at the GBC, Richard Holbrooke is the founding Chairman of the American Academy in Berlin, a new center for U.S.- German cultural exchange, the Vice Chairman of Perseus LLC, a leading private equity firm, and Vice Chairman of the Asia Society. He also serves as a Board Member of American International Group (AIG), The Coca-Cola Company, the Museum of Natural History, the National Endowment for Democracy, Human Genome Sciences and Refugees International.

Debra Snell will be a Fulbright Scholar teaching ESL at Cadi Ayyad University in Beni Mellal for the 2005-05 academic year. Contact Debra at <debrasnell@gmail.com>.

Zabel Hooks, Morocco 2000 writes, "Come June 18, 2005, I will be traveling to France for a watercolor seminar for 2 weeks, and then on through the south into Spain for a peek of the Guggenheim

Museum by Frank Gehry in Balbao, then to Toulouse and Avignon and then (the best part) up to Paris to spend the last week in Marilee McClintock's apartment. AIN'T THAT SOMETHING! Hope to come back with a binload of works. Not bad for the almost 79 year-old, huh? This is what a stint in the PC will do for people." Read Zabel's article on page 17.

George Roberson is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He writes, "My dissertation is tentatively titled: "Visualizing Tangier - a humanistic geography at the crossroads of lands, seas and peoples". I am particularly interested in the city's long history of outside influence, its powerful fascination to visitors and a very unique colonial experience - and, the impending changes to the city due to the planned tunnel that will soon connect Tangier with Spain. I'd like to send along a special thank-you to Thor, Merriam and Mohammad and everyone connected to the Tangier American Legation Museum for their assistance over the years. I am planning another research trip to Tangier for the Fall of 2005 and I'd be delighted to hear from anyone with an interest in or a connection to this wonderful city. I would be particularly pleased to hear from any past visitors to the city who have photographs, diaries and/or stories about Tangier they'd like to share and from any academics who share my interest in the city. I can be reached by email at roberson@geo.umass.edu and you can obtain more information about my research at my webpage at www.geo.umass.edu/grads/roberson/."

Peter Frederick Ohman—Midelt/Marrakech 82-84 writes, "Since March, I've been on a one year sabbatical. As one privy in my everyday work to the dirty little secrets of the advanced social

(Continued on page 13)

Public Participation: Critical for Success of Morocco's "National Initiative for Human Development"

By Jason Ben-Meir

Last month in a well-received speech to his nation, King Mohammed VI of Morocco launched the National Initiative for Human Development. He described the Initiative as a "large-scale mobilization...in the effort to achieve sustainable development" and "self-reliance." Its objectives include extending basic social services and infrastructures, creating jobs and regular income, and upgrading services for the most vulnerable people. The King stated the Initiative is a "venture spanning a whole generation" and initially will target 360 rural communes and 250 urban districts that are in most need (roughly three million people). It will also be funded by the state budget (over \$1 billion has been earmarked through 2010) without new taxes or levies.

The King stressed that public participation needs to be incorporated in all areas of the Initiative's implementation to achieve its ambitious goals, including "a new social architecture" for the country. His assertion stems from the basic lesson of development experiences from around the world—which is that local communities need to implement projects that they determine to effectively promote sustainable development (private-public partnerships, informed decision-making, flexible economy, and self-reliance). The King encouraged strategies that catalyze and facilitate community participation in development planning, as well as transfer the needed skills to help communities across entire regions of Morocco manage new projects.

The monarch instructed Prime Minister Driss Jettou and the government "to translate this new Initiative...into concrete, practical, and integrated programs and projects, and to submit to me within the next three months a comprehensive action plan." The following five strategies that promote public participation in local development should be considered for the Initiative's action plan. The strategies will help "translate" the Initiative into reality for the benefit of the Moroccan people and serve as a model of effective ways to address the difficult challenges and threats that face nations in the Middle East and Africa.

Strategy 1: Train in Facilitation: The Initiative should begin a two-week training period for thousands of schoolteachers and other community members, as well as outside technicians and appropriate government and nonprofit liaisons, in facilitation methods. It is highly appropriate to include this strategy as part of the Initiative, since His Majesty stressed in his announcement that "to ensure optimal implementation of the reforms underway, achieve the Initiative's impact area. Facilitation techniques encourage broad community participation in local development. The interactive development experience creates mutually beneficial relationships and trust among the participants. Typically, communities can determine their specific development priorities in six two-hour meetings. In the beginning, international experts (from both the public and

private sectors) could share and adapt with Moroccan communities and counterparts their methods for facilitating participation.

Strategy 2: Establish Community Development Planning and Training Centers: Centers can play a key role in providing assistance to people most vulnerable to poverty and, therefore, addresses a primary objective of the Initiative. Planning and training centers, situated in communities and managed by community members, would be able to assist local people in determining their priority goals and then in designing and implementing projects to achieve them. They also provide training in facilitation, modern agriculture, health, and other skills desired by the local population. In sum, they are able to provide one-stop shopping for community development needs and do so in ways that transfer needed skills to the local population.

Centers are educational forums that catalyze positive democratic change. In his speech, the King called on "political actors as they brace themselves ...for the 2007 elections, to concentrate on preparing concrete projects. The aim is to give shape to the Initiative...and rehabilitate political activity." Political actors that base their projects on their constituencies' self-described priorities will help achieve these large aims and increase their own prospect for success, due to heightened public support. Community members and leaders who have acquired the skills and training to achieve collaborative development and experienced its benefits make excellent candidates for local and national leadership. They understand that an effective social movement can begin with a series of community meetings where local people are given the opportunity to express their concerns and interests. They realize too that inclusive collaboration in the design and management of local development opens the door for their nation to achieve its development potential. A local political leadership will emerge that understands and is dedicated to addressing the real issues of concern to citizens.

Strategy 3: Assist the Creation of Local Associations: Experiences around the world show that local associations are created (and civil society grows) when communities work together to accomplish their collectively defined development agenda. This impacts society's "architecture" because new tiers of cooperation form as neighboring communities begin to implement projects beneficial to the entire region. Morocco already has a straightforward procedure for filing and registering associations and because of reforms has experienced a substantial increase in recent years in the number of local NGOs. An assessment ought to be made of additional reforms to further enable the Initiative to promote an innovative civil society.

Strategy 4: Focus on Potable Water, Irrigation, and Tree Planting: Rural communities across the country regularly identify these three projects as top priorities, all of which

(Continued on page 14)

Sidi ROM and Other Tales from a Thousand and One Websites

By George McFadden Ksar es-Souk, Rabat (76 – '79)

The juxtaposition of traditional cultures and twenty-first century communications technologies, and the social impact of this seemingly incongruous mix, are nothing new for Doug Davis and his wife Susan (65 – '67). During the past fifteen years, they have combined their fields of expertise with their knowledge of information and communication technologies in ways that benefit both Americans and Moroccans.

Doug, currently the Benjamin Collins Professor of Social Sciences at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, describes himself as “an anthropological psychologist”. Indeed, his background is as unique as his self-description. With a doctorate in personality psychology, he has worked as a research fellow at Harvard and the University of Michigan, as a training staff member for the Peace Corps in Morocco and India, and on development projects for USAID and a number of contractors. He was an early adopter of information technology for educational and scholarly applications. The skills he acquired soon brought him into the realm of technology adoption in developing societies with a special focus on Morocco.

In 1995 and 1996, he lived in Morocco as a Fulbright scholar working on projects designed to introduce the Internet on a mass scale in Moroccan society, especially in educational settings. Traveling throughout Morocco, he held seminars and gave lectures on basic Internet concepts and the benefits the new medium could bring to the Kingdom. These activities resulted in later efforts such as the Sidi ROM Project that was an attempt to assess the psychological and social impact on Moroccan adolescents of growing up in the age of the Internet. (The genesis of the name for this project is explained in an article Doug wrote about a conference he attended in Rabat in 1994. It can be seen and heard at: http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/ec2_7.html)

A paper he subsequently wrote with Susan is unprecedented in its insights into this process. Entitled “The Mosque and the Satellite: Media and Adolescence in a Moroccan Town,” it demonstrates the knowledge the Davises brought to an increasingly high-profile subject. (The paper is available on-line at <http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/mosque.html>)

Since that time, Doug has remained involved with the growth of the Internet in Morocco and its social impact, often traveling there for research and consulting activities. When Susan taught at Al-Akawayn University in Ifrane two years ago, he again had the opportunity to witness first-hand the technological growth he had advocated so passionately years before as a Fulbright scholar. Today he is one of the world's foremost experts on the social and psychological dynamics of communications technology development in the Islamic world.

More recently, he has worked to bring the benefits of his

unique skill set to a wider audience. For the past four years he has worked with the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education, better known by its acronym NITLE (<http://www.nitle.org/>) as part of NITLE's Al-Musharaka" initiative. NITLE was established in September 2001 through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and was founded as a collaborative effort for national liberal arts colleges seeking to make effective use of technology. The number of participating schools has now grown to eighty-one in number and may soon grow to almost one hundred in the near future.

Specifically, Doug worked with NITLE to establish Al-Musharaka, a NITLE initiative conceived as a center for cooperation and collaboration among member schools and others to develop on-line curricula in response to an increasing demand for Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies. He attended NITLE's first workshop on Inter-Institutional Collaboration on Arab and Islamic Cultures in July, 2002, and, since that time, he has served as faculty director for the Al-Musharaka Initiative, along with program director Michael Toler (Morocco 1990-94). The project was

the perfect vehicle for Doug to share and expand the work he had done on the psychology of technology development. Al-Musharaka now hosts a comprehensive repository of materials and resources for these disciplines. (For

example, audio files of Doug discussing the social impact of the Internet in Morocco with colleague Michael Toler can be accessed on the NITLE website at http://arabworld.nitle.org/audiovisual.php?module_id=13.)

The project also convenes seminars to augment its primarily on-line aspect. The most recent was held in Middlebury, Vermont on June 16 - 22, 2005. This year's seminar dealt with four themes: media and the Middle East; Islam and the West; diversity of gender, ethnicity and minorities; and teaching with technology. The seminars are attended primarily by faculty of member colleges. (A detailed agenda of this year's meeting can be viewed at <http://nitle.org/initiatives/almusharaka/seminar.htm>.)

Doug is acutely aware of the need for greater learning and understanding in his chosen fields of study in the post-9/11 world. While the Internet has brought many benefits to the world community, it has had its obvious unintended consequences. He acknowledges that the global village has its bullies and modern technology can just as well benefit their nefarious aims. He is now exploring the role of technology in “identity trajectories” – the role modern communications technologies play in negotiating identity in the modern world. This subject is now of vital importance globally as extremists of every stripe use information technologies to achieve international outreach and establish communities of interest.

One of his aims now is to establish a program to put American and Moroccan college students in direct contact using teleconferencing. He believes that such person-to-



Moroccan-American Communities Organizing

Across the US, communities of Moroccan-Americans are organizing for social, community, education and advocacy purposes. Check out your local group. Advise FOM if there are other communities.

Chicago, IL

Moroccan American Professionals Association (MAPA) of Chicago at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mapachicago/> has 50 members who have gathered for BBQ, boat trips, film alerts and receptions. An article from *Le Matin* on the group is at <http://www.lematin.ma/economic/article.asp?id=8601>

The Chicago-based web site [MoroccoUSA.com's](http://www.moroccousa.com) (<http://www.moroccousa.com>) objective is to widen and enrich this open space and provide a high quality service to our Moroccan community as well as Morocco's friends by offering a platform from which we can all voice our opinions, share news and exchange ideas.

Houston, TX

MoroccansInHouston.Org is a non-profit website founded to come to the aid of Moroccans in Greater Houston, and provide friends of the Kingdom of Morocco from all over the world with valuable information about Moroccan history, culture and traditions. It is home to the [Atlas Lions](#), Moroccan Soccer Team of Houston.

Los Angeles, CA

Very active, but without a web site and operating by email, **Moroccan LA** is lead by Ahmed Dmini (877)412-2131 AhmedinLA@earthlink.net. In the last six months they have organized receptions, picnics, concerts, art shows, political actions and social service activities.

The Mission of "The Moroccan American Association of Southern California" is to unite and build bridges between the US and Morocco. <http://www.maghreballiance.com>

New York, NY

Wafin.com was initially set up as an all-purpose resource for the Moroccan community in North America, but the site has now evolved into a magazine of culture and ideas for people who prefer to discuss and debate Moroccan affairs in English. Based in the New York city area, watch the web site

and sign up for the listserve for local events. They have an electronic Newsletter and over 15,000 members.

The [American Moroccan Institute \(AMI\)](http://www.amius.org) at <http://www.amius.org> is a think tank dedicated to developing and promoting academic and cultural relations between the United States and the Kingdom of Morocco. AMI was born at a crucial moment in the history of East-West relations whose continuous challenges it seeks to address in the particular context of the United States and Morocco, both of which have a long history of diplomatic exchange going back to the early years of the American Republic. It is this spirit of exchange that AMI seeks to revive as well as extend to a wide range of fields, from humanities, social sciences, and the arts to technology, economic development, and communication. They publish a semi-annual journal. Recent activity was [Dialogue of Traditions: Moroccan Sufism and the West](#) held April 15 at Columbia University

Washington, DC

Active since 1990, the [Washington Moroccan Club](http://washingtonmoroccanclub.org) (<http://washingtonmoroccanclub.org>) led by Hassan Samrhouni, who is also on the FOM Board of Directors, is an intercultural, sport and social organization. It is also the home for the soccer team, the Washington Athletic Club.

A network of Moroccan-American businesses has been created at the initiative of a group of young Moroccan contractors established in the Washington, DC area and managed by Mohamed Hajjami, director of a media company, [AVActions](#). Web site for the Moroccan American Business Network is at www.mabiznet.com

National

[The High Atlas Foundation](#) formed by former Morocco RPCVs is a separate 501c3 non-profit whose aim is to establish community-based projects in Morocco that local people design in partnership with government and non-government agencies. Its founders utilize their professional relationships, friendships and knowledge gained during their years of Peace Corps service for the continued benefit of the Moroccan people.

(Continued on page 13)

The High Atlas Foundation invites you to a reception in honor of

André Azoulay

and

Aziz Mekouar

Counselor to His Majesty the King of Morocco

Moroccan Ambassador to the United States

Thursday, September 15, 2005

6:30pm to 8:00pm

at Le Souk

47 Avenue B (between 3rd & 4th Streets)

East Village, New York City

Individual Tickets are \$100 - Sponsorships are \$1,000 (includes four tickets)

Contributions over \$30 per ticket are tax-deductible.

Proceeds will support potable water, irrigation, and tree planting projects in rural Morocco.

Please RSVP to haf@highatlasfoundation.org or call Jason Ben-Meir (646) 285-7444.

Send checks payable to "High Atlas Foundation" to PO Box 21081, Park West Station, New York, NY 10025.

The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to establish community development projects in Morocco that local people design in partnership with government and non-government agencies.

HAF was created by Peace Corps Volunteers in order to use their professional experience and knowledge gained during their years of Peace Corps service for the continued benefit of the Moroccan people.

www.highatlasfoundation.org

Honorary Chairs

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Membership Renewal/Application

PLEASE NOTE: Prior to filling out this application, consider making a few copies to pass on to others. While many of our members are former Peace Corps Morocco volunteers, membership is open to anyone interested in the people, culture and development of Morocco.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Current occupation: _____

Employer/school: _____

Experience in Morocco: (RPCVs and PC staffers list Peace Corps jobs. Academics: list field and research topics. Moroccans: list profession or field of study)

Years in Morocco: _____ to _____ Site/hometown: _____

I give permission to FOM to print the above information in the FOM newsletter: _____ Yes _____ No

Areas of interest: Check potential FOM activities in which you would be interested:

- | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> local FOM chapter | <input type="checkbox"/> speakers' bureau |
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| Other _____ | | |

We need your support for the *Friends of Morocco Newsletter* and other FOM activities. Membership categories appear below. Joint membership includes membership in FOM and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). NPCA members also receive the award-winning magazine *World View*, and the newsletter 3/1/61. NPCA and FOM dues and contributions can be tax-deductible.

JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF MOROCCO AND NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

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Friends of Morocco — اصدقاء المغرب

We like to keep an update on our members. Please answer the following questions:

1. Briefly, what have you done since leaving Peace Corps? What are you doing now?

2. What projects or programs would you like to FOM involved in (either in the US or Morocco)? Can you help?

3. Which news features would or do you like in the FOM newsletter?

The information collected on this form will be used by FOM and will be made available only to those organizations whose purposes are consistent with the aims of FOM. It will not be sold or traded for commercial purposes. The information may be used in the FOM Directory unless you request otherwise.

P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579

New UN Envoy Named to End Western Sahara Impasse

By Irwin Arieff

UNITED NATIONS, July 26 (Reuters) - Secretary-General Kofi Annan asked a veteran Dutch diplomat on Tuesday to renew U.N. efforts to break a decades-long impasse over whether Western Sahara should remain a part of Morocco or gain independence.

Peter van Walsum, who retired from the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands in 2001 after 19 years of diplomatic service, was named as Annan's special envoy for the northwest African desert territory of about 260,000 people.

Walsum fills the post more than a year after it fell vacant with the resignation of James Baker, the former U.S. secretary of State, who left after seven years of unsuccessful efforts to reach agreement on the territory's future status.

With no one in the post over the past year, "the lack of political prospects has led to the worsening of tensions between the sides," the Spanish Foreign Ministry said in a statement welcoming the appointment.

The Western Sahara, which is rich in phosphates and fisheries and also may have offshore oil deposits, was seized by Morocco in 1975, immediately after it gained

independence from Spain.

A U.N. peacekeeping mission has tried for 14 years – so far without success – to hold a referendum on independence there and the Security Council regularly adopts resolutions pressing Morocco and the Polisario Front independence movement to resolve their differences.

Polisario Front officials have threatened recently to resume their armed struggle against Morocco if there is no breakthrough soon in U.N.-led peace talks.

In a letter to the 15-nation council, Annan said he had asked van Walsum as his first task to start to explore with the two sides, neighboring states and other interested parties "how best to overcome the present political impasse."

Baker had proposed giving the territory semi-autonomy for four to five years, after which a referendum would let residents pick independence, semi-autonomy or integration with Morocco.

The Polisario endorsed the plan but Morocco said it would never give up sovereignty over the territory

Morocco Project of the Anahid Sofian Dance Company

The Anahid Sofian Dance Company has begun work on a major, Moroccan-themed project slated for performance late fall 2005. Inspired by Ms. Sofian's research trip to Morocco, this ambitious and innovative production will utilize a cast of approximately 35 dancers, musicians and artists from other disciplines. The Project's website address is <http://moroccoproject.com> and the Company's website is <http://www.anahidsofianstudio.com>.

Over the years, Ms. Sofian's artistic vision has continued to mature into a full-evening's production. The Morocco Project (working title) focuses on the time she spent in Marrakesh and visits to the legendary Place Djmaa El Fna and will further develop her efforts to recreate and evoke the atmosphere of that splendid and mystical city. Incorporating folklore, fantasy and interpretation, this new work will weave together and explore the region's diverse traditions through a contemporary perspective, honoring the region's rich cultural heritage. Ms. Sofian plans to integrate Moroccan dancers and musicians with modern dancers and her company of dancers and musicians. She will utilize both live and recorded music, and costumes will combine authentic dress with original designs. A condensed, special presentation is also planned to present to schools, and a videotape is projected for educational TV.

Morocco premiered in 1979 at the New York Ethnic Dance Festival at Carnegie Hall. Subsequent performance venues include Avery Fisher Hall and Town Hall in New

York. The dance is inspired by the Berber dances of southern Morocco and incorporates elements of trance dances found throughout the Middle East. Accompanied by percussion ensemble in North African style, Morocco conveys the mystical power and vitality of tribal communion. The dance was awarded a NY State CAPS grant for choreography which the review panel described as striking and original.

Black Eyes premiered in 1985 at Riverside Church's Dance Festival in New York and was an audience favorite in the Company repertory. A traditional dance of the women of the countryside, earthy and lively, Black Eyes utilizes excerpts from the Jajouka Festival and Berber songs for musical accompaniment.

El Maghreb-In descriptions of the notorious dancers of the ancient port of Gades (now Spanish Cadiz), during the time of the Roman emperors, there's a striking resemblance to the modern day Shikhat public dancers of Morocco and both traditions are said to have descended from the Carthaginian world. With movements both delicate and indelicate, the Shikhat dance contains strong Berber, African and Andalusian elements. El Maghreb portrays the dance through a contemporary perspective. It premiered in 1997 at the NY Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and was later revised for performances at the Tribeca Arts Center in New York.

Morocco at the Movies #10 - On Location With Ridley Scott

By Dan Cahill (Kenitra 68-70)

British director Ridley Scott has a filmography that emphasizes the large canvas, effects-driven epic. His best-known films are *Alien*, *Blade Runner*, *Thelma and Louise*, and *Gladiator*. In his 15 film career, he has also brought us impressive but less successful gems such as *The Duellists*, *White Squall*, and *Matchstick Men*. He is a true crowd-pleaser who has succeeded in the Grade A film industry without sacrificing his intelligence and humane sensitivity. He is in a position to make any project he wants and to choose where he will shoot. Morocco has been a prominent location for three of his recent films, due in no small part to the government's desire to promote this sector of its economy as an offshoot of the essential tourist industry.

Gladiator (2000)



"I love Morocco. I absolutely love Morocco. It was clear, clean. A great place to go." So Scott raves on his DVD commentary, and the clear, clean results are up there on the screen. The sequence that takes place in "Zucchabar Province" depicts Maximus's (Russell Crowe) first training and arena battles in a small regional stadium. The mud-brick structure was built in a valley adjoining an existing casbah outside Ouarzazate. That casbah dominates the background of the sequence, and the clarity of the desert air enhances the view, lending authenticity to the locale.

Gladiator is best remembered for Crowe's Oscar and the astounding re-creation of the Roman Colosseum, not for its use of Moroccan locations. Scott has, however, cleverly

incorporated one visual idea to the scene where the newly-trained gladiators are marched through the streets to the arena. They are led into a traditional dyers' souk, where skeins of raw wool drip vivid red pigment onto them. This surreal touch is a brilliant foreshadowing of the bloodshed that awaits them.

Black Hawk Down (2001)



I first saw this intense, overpowering war film on the big screen in January 2002. I knew that the film had been made before 9/11, and I also brought with me a vague notion that it had been filmed in Morocco. At that time US troops were battling the Taliban in Afghanistan, and watching Americans in combat was chilling. I was unprepared for the extra chill, however, of watching Americans fighting Muslims in a setting that felt disturbingly familiar. The architecture, topography and geography on screen are distinctly Moroccan. From the first glimpse of Salé standing in for Mogadishu, I couldn't help but see this as a possible future scenario of the United States fighting in a friendly, tolerant Muslim land. How horrifying to imagine that my country could be at war with the people I lived and worked with so peacefully. Three years later, the parallels to the chaos of Iraq are inescapable, and all the more deeply chilling.

The film begins from the point of view that the American military was in Somalia for humanitarian reasons to fight the famine brought on by civil war. The focus shifts to a specific mission to capture two lieutenants of a hostile warlord. Things go wrong when a Black Hawk helicopter crashes in a crowded city. Poor intelligence and confusion lead to an endangered rescue mission which is the principal story of the movie. Scott's humanistic approach views this

tragedy from a politically neutral stance, observing the cost in all lives with great sadness.

Most of the movie depicts explosive street fighting. One wonders how they pulled this off without actually destroying any of Salé, and the answer involves construction prior to destruction, and intensive pre-production negotiations. The principal location where the Black Hawk crashes was originally an undeveloped dirt field in a blue-collar section of the city. The production crew built a multi-story building onto which choppers landed and parts of which were destroyed during the shoot. But prior to any of this, permission had to be obtained from the Royal Palace on down. Mohammed VI is intent on welcoming film production to his country: it brings in a lot of money, provides employment, and improves Morocco's image in the world. After 25 years of growth in the movie business, Morocco now boasts a strong *cadré* of talented and experienced crews that provide vital support in every field from costuming to lighting to catering.

The film couldn't have been made without actual Black Hawks, which required cooperation from the Defense Department and the Department of State. The requests were finally granted after the intervention of Colin Powell, but delays in the process meant that filming had to start before the helicopters were delivered several weeks later. Tensions rose when the US military insisted on sending in 135 armed troops just to protect the equipment. At the street level, Scott's production staff knocked on every door in the surrounding community, offering hotel housing and other compensation for the local citizenry.

Black Hawk Down provides a close-up view of the combat that our soldiers face every day. It is uncompromising in its harrowing, realistic approach. But beyond the highly professional craftsmanship, Scott has managed to depict Americans defending a doomed humanitarian mission who are under

Corps Beliefs

By Judith Steininger (reprinted with permission from Milwaukee M magazine, March 2005)

Where the Sahara Desert sands blow up against the Atlas Mountains in the kingdom of Morocco, Anne Herisson-Leplae lived among the Berber people in the large village of Midelt. The tattooed, very fat, seven-time, widowed woman she lived with wanted to know if Hanane (Arabic for Anne) had done something wrong that her family had exiled her from America.

Quite the opposite: Herisson-Leplae was a Peace Corps volunteer, and proud to be one. "The Peace Corps was a natural for me," she says. "When I left Macalister College, I wanted to save the world. I still dream about my life there." She's not the only one to have had those ideas or dream about the two years spent far from the United States.

The dreamers committed two years of their lives because of a speech John Kennedy gave at 2 a.m. at the University of Michigan in 1960. He challenged young people to do something for their country by helping the developing world. The proud, select club known as Returned Peace Corps Volunteers numbers 170,000; they've served in 137 countries. This year 7,733 volunteers will be stationed in 71 countries.

Volunteer demographics show a slightly higher percentage of women serve than men, 84 percent are single. The average age is 28; the oldest being 81. They serve their host countries in education, health, environment, business, agriculture and youth out-reach. Well-known Wisconsin RPCVs include Gov. and Mrs. Jim Doyle (Tunisia 1967-'69), U.S. Rep. Tom Petri (Somalia 1966-'67) and former University of Wisconsin-Madison President Donna Shalala (Iran 1962-'64).

Herisson-Leplae lives in a different kind of village now — Shorewood. Since 1998 she has helped English speakers learn French as the director of Alliance Française. In Midelt, she helped Arabic speakers learn English. Even though she was fluent in French when she arrived in Midelt, she quickly needed to learn Arabic. Her first impression of Morocco was leaving the airport in Rabat and finding herself on a bus that could scarcely move due to the thousands of pedestrians streaming down the highway to the coliseum for a soccer game, the country's national pastime.

While two years in an exotic location sounds romantic from the living room of a heated/air-conditioned home in Wisconsin, Herisson-Leplae, like all volunteers, confronted harsh realities and experienced culture shock. Only half of her initial group of

200 lasted the two years.

"Midelt. like most Moroccan towns, is built of mud bricks or cinder blocks. Some might not think it attractive, but I thought it was paradise " she says. "I lived on the second floor of my host family's house. There was no electricity, and we had no running water because the region was suffering a severe drought when I was there from 1984 to 1986. My family was so good to me. One of the best things about Morocco is the food. Couscous is special for Friday, their Sabbath. Women like to brag about making the whitest couscous from scratch. Our family of seven might have a chicken wing and thigh to share. We ate lots of pumpkin, tomato, onion and rancid butter. The butter takes a little getting used to, but then I really enjoyed it. Since there are no utensils, you roll the couscous into balls with your hands and dip in the other foods."

Most Moroccans wear a combination of Western and local clothing. "Women wear frilly satin-like or polyester western dresses with the traditional djallaba or tunic over them. Men also wear the djallaba over Western pants. Everyone wears whatever arrives in the latest shipment of plastic shoes from China."

The Berbers are the indigenous people, not Arabs, and, for millennia, were nomads. When Herisson-Leplae's parents visited on vacation, her host family arranged for them to meet some nomadic cousins. "We drove out to the desert where they lived. Imagine my parents when we all gathered in large tents made of woven goat hair. We ate lunch from common bowls while the family's goats wandered in and out. They were quite proud of the television, which was on the entire time showing 'Dallas' reruns dubbed in French. The TV was powered by a car battery."

During school breaks, Herisson-Leplae worked with Catholic Relief Services conducting research for household water needs among families in the Rif and Atlas mountains. "This was a very rural area. The women work so hard. They are up at dawn gathering wood for tea and the bread they bake, which is exquisite. The men get up late. Hashish is a common crop in this region. The women feed their chickens hashish seeds to keep them mellow."

Herisson-Leplae took the long way back to the United

(Continued on page 14)

In Memoriam: Jim Bernstein

Jim Bernstein died Sunday, June 12, at home surrounded by family. He was 62.

The son of Jacqueline and Robert Bernstein, Jim was born Oct. 21, 1942, in New York City.

Throughout his life, he looked forward to spending time each summer at the family home in Aquinnah. After graduating from Johns Hopkins University, Jim left the United States for a two-year Peace Corps experience in Morocco, where he met and married his wife and life partner, Susan Dill. Jim went on to receive a master's degree from the University of Michigan in hospital administration.

At 26, Jim became the director of the Indian Health Services for northern New Mexico. In 1970, he was awarded a three-year fellowship in the U.S. Public Health Service and moved to North Carolina to study at the University of North Carolina. Jim concentrated on rural health, and this focus became a passion that sustained him for the next 35 years.

When still in his twenties, Jim was chosen as director of the first office of rural health in the United States. The North Carolina Office of Rural Health works to improve health care delivery to people in rural areas throughout the state. Under his 30-year leadership, 81 community-owned rural health centers were created and more than 1,800 primary health care providers were recruited to North Carolina. The North Carolina Office of Rural Health has served as a model for the country.

Most recently, Jim served as assistant secretary for

health, overseeing North Carolina departments of facility services, medical assistance, mental health, minority health, public health and rural health.

Jim loved life's challenges and took them on with great gusto. He was an avid skier, tennis player, golfer and world traveler. He had a passion for art, good food, the latest gadget and adventure. He made life exciting for those around him, particularly his family, upon whom he showered his greatest love and devotion.

Jim is survived by his wife of 40 years, Susan Bernstein; his daughter, Lori Allen, her husband, Richard Allen, and their daughter, Emilia Allen; his son, Eric Bernstein; his daughter, Donna Bernstein; his sister, Ann Holz, her husband, Ron Holz, and their two children, Bob and Jon Holz; his sister, Jane Bernstein, his brother, David Bernstein, his wife, Monica Bernstein, and their two children, Sally and Sam Bernstein; many friends who are as close as family; and finally his irreverent blue and gold macaw, Murray.

Memorial contributions may be made to: The North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs Inc., Attention: Jim Bernstein Community Health Leadership Fund, P.O. Box 10245, Raleigh, NC 27605. For further information call the North Carolina Office of Research Demonstration and Rural Health Development at 919-733-2040.



► Nelson C. Brown Elementary/High School, Nouasseur

This was a DoDDS school located on the now-closed American Nouasseur Air Base from 1952-1963. The alumni association is looking for all former students from all grades. It also has a database for other former base schools located at Ben Guerir, Port Lyautey/Kenitra/Wilhoite, Sidi Slimane and in the Rabat area. Visit the website to reconnect with old friends and share some wonderful Morocco memories at <http://www.nouasseur.com>

(Moroccan-American Communities - continued from page 5)

[Morocco Foundation](#) is a non-profit organization established and introduced in the United States by a few dedicated, humble and ambitious Moroccans, who come from all of walks of life. Clothes, toys and school supplies donations gathered in the U.S are awaiting funds to finance the shipping to Morocco. The donations will be distributed to orphanages through a growing network of partners such as La Banque Alimentaire in Casablanca and the Lions Club Tilila in Agadir.

The [Association of Moroccan Professionals in America \(AMPA\)](#) is a non-profit organization established to promote networking between experienced, successful, and active Moroccan professionals in the United States of America. Our goal is to provide our members with a comprehensive platform where they can easily share their knowledge and contacts to advance social and professional development.

[Tingis](#) is a quarterly magazine that highlights the cultural concerns, ideas, and issues of Moroccans, friends of Morocco, and all those who have some interest in Morocco or the larger Arab and Muslim worlds. Because Moroccan views have no representation in English-speaking cultures, particularly in the United States, Tingis fills this gap and, at the same time, highlights the diversity within Arab and Muslim thought. The magazine also seeks to present the views of non-Muslim Moroccans whenever possible.

The [Tangier American Legation Museum \(TALM\)](#), a thriving cultural center, museum, conference center and library in the heart of the old medina in Tangier, is housed in the only historic landmark of the United States located abroad. Saved from destruction by a small but dedicated group now known as the Tangier American Legation Museum Society, (TALMS) the museum now operates with a locally-hired staff under the leadership of the Museum Director, Thor Kuniholm. TALMS

offers seminars in Washington, DC during the school year.

[Moroccan American Center for Policy \(MACP\)](#) at <http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com> is a non-profit organization whose principle mission is to inform opinion makers, government officials and an interested public in the United States about political and social developments in Morocco and the role being played by the Kingdom of Morocco in broader strategic developments in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. It is an initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI that focuses on enhancing a broad range of Moroccan-US relations. [www.FreeThemNow.org](#) is a project of the [Moroccan American Center for Policy](#) which is a petition for the Release of Moroccan Prisoners of War held by the Polisario Front. MACP is a registered agent for the Government of Morocco.

The American Council for Moroccan POW's at <http://acmpow.org> is a non-profit organization which acts in order to free and defend the rights of the Moroccan POW's (civilian and military) held by the Polisario Front in Tindouf and other locations in Algeria.

The Moroccan American Trade and Investment Council (MATIC) at <http://www.moroccanamericantrade.com> is an American based non-profit trade association that assists the country of Morocco in its quest to promote economic growth and stability through the promotion of its private sector.



(Ash Khabarna - continued from page 2)

welfare state, I am still delighted to be surprised occasionally by experimental social initiatives. In this case, I am even grateful, for the opportunity to take a mid-life pause.” Contact Peter at ohman_peter@hotmail.com >.

Brenda J (Paccioretti) Starr—Rabat & Sidi Fatah 65-67 writes, “As of August 1, 2005, I am retired from nursing profession after 37 years. Last work with Kaiser Permanente as the Director of Surgical Services in Walnut Creek, CA. No immediate plans except to spend time with my parents, husband, family. Eventually will do some traveling.” Contact Brenda at zstarr@sbcglobal.net >.

(Corps Beliefs - continued from page 11)

States by staying in France for two years as an English teacher. Despite the lapse of some 20 years, the lessons from her tour in Morocco remain integral to her life. "I saw how you can have a rich life with few belongings. Our days and weeks were rhythmic, governed by the two market days per week, walking to the reservoir for water and the call to prayer five times a day. You feel closer to the earth and more in control of your life."

After Sept. 11, (2001) tourism dropped to zero in Morocco, so Herisson-Leplae joined a charter flight of former

Moroccan volunteers returning to their host country to illustrate its safety and boost the economy. "They booked us into four-star hotels because the cost was so cheap then, but I quickly headed out for Midelt," she says. "I didn't know if my family was even alive after 15 years, but I ran up to the house and knocked. When they opened the door, it was as if I'd never left. I was so happy."



(Human Development Initiative - continued from page 3)

are objectives of the Initiative. More than any other project, potable water decreases infant mortality and illness among the population. Modern irrigation maximizes the utility of water supplies and creates the opportunity for schools, clinics, women's coops, and other service centers to be built by increasing the land that has access to water. Fruit trees diversify household incomes and can help prevent rural dislocation caused by free trade with the United States. Morocco's forests face "serious threats" that impact 4 million people, according to its High Commission for Water, Forest, and Anti-Desertification. The "National Day of the Tree" should be celebrated earlier in the season and be backed by the Initiative to include the planting of millions of additional fruit and forestry trees and saplings every year.

Strategy 5: Create an "Agency of Coordination": An "agency of coordination" is an administrative framework that organizes the achievement of the previously described strategies. It has the flexibility to operate at local, provincial, national, and international levels in order to negotiate partnerships (among communities, government agencies, and NGOs) that promote local development. Active support of the King is necessary to enable this proposed agency to ensure the Initiative is implemented in ways that reflect its "vital" goals.

The King said that "...it is deemed appropriate to establish objective criteria in order to determine urgent cases and select potential beneficiaries on a priority basis." Among the priority cases may include rural villages that neighbor Morocco's national parks and nature reserves, which are located throughout the country. In many cases, these villages are statistically among the most isolated and poorest in the country. New income generated in these communities would reduce local dependence on the natural resources of the protected areas, which in turn advances nature conservation. In this way, economic development in itself furthers environmental goals. Thus, the Initiative should consider initially focusing its efforts in these areas and others that multiply benefits.

Based on dozens of local development experiences in rural Morocco over the past 12 years that resulted into projects similar to those the Initiative intends to extend

nationally, I believe that a realistic financial projection would be that of \$100 million to achieve the Initiative's development goals for about 500,000 people. The United States and Europe should do all they can to assist Morocco's self-declared mobilization to bring development to impoverished areas susceptible to extremism, to rural communities that may suffer economic hardships similar to Mexico's due to free trade, and create a model for the region. The international community should double the Initiative's proposed annual budget and support projects that local Moroccan communities have determined for themselves, which will also build much-needed international trust. Morocco must also work hard to raise funds from the international community (foreign governments, businesses, and individuals). Some important Moroccan dignitaries are already doing this.

For a relatively low cost, far less than that of typical aid programs, these strategies included in the Initiative's action plan may turn out to be among the most effective ways of achieving its goals. The strategies are, in a sense, natural extensions of the Initiative and share its ultimate objective enumerated by the King: "Enable all Moroccans, men and women alike, to avail themselves of a wide range of possibilities and opportunities." He stated that public participation is the method that effectively attains this. The question for the Initiative is: Will it implement public participation in communities across the Kingdom, whereby local people design and manage projects that meet their unique needs? If it does, it will better realize the bold and potentially historic vision for Morocco presented King Mohammed VI.

Jason Ben-Meir is President of the High Atlas Foundation (www.ghatlasfoundation.org) and an RPCV (1993 to 1995). This article was published in Morocco's Le Matin, June 26, 2005.

Peace Corps Helps Better the World Community: Volunteers Share Their Experiences Upon Their Return

Zabel Hooks, Morocco 2000, wrote the following article for Peace Corps week for the March 14, 2005 Asheville, NC CITIZEN-TIMES READER for their "Our Stories" section and is reprinted with permission.

ASHEVILLE (NC) — The Peace Corps recently commemorated its 44th anniversary week, Feb. 28-March 6. Thousands of former Peace Corps volunteers, representing service in more than 135 countries, shared their overseas experiences in communities around the United States. They helped raise awareness of the Peace Corps as a resource for educators who want to incorporate volunteers' stories in the classroom and to provide information to the general public.

The more than 7,700 volunteers currently living and working in more than 70 nations around the globe have assignments in such diverse fields as education, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment and agriculture. Their mission: "To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans."

My Peace Corps service took place in Morocco in the sector of small business development working with craftsmen, weavers, iron workers, furniture manufacturers, artists, barbers and even shoemakers

We blended with warmth and understanding, continually learning from each other and growing in spirit mutually.

The countless opportunities and insights into the realities of another country present boundless experiences which prompt Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to share upon their return with family, friends and their communities. The 25th anniversary of the RPCV association took place Aug. 5-8 last year in Chicago. More than 1,000 RPCVs gathered together at the legendary Palmer House Hotel to celebrate and meet with the outstanding people who have contributed their time and are still involved in spreading efforts for peacemaking globally.

Featured speakers ranged from Kevin F.F. Quigley, NPCA president (Thailand); Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle (Tunisia); Ohio Gov. Bob Taft (Tanzania); Chris Matthews of MSNBC's "Hardball," (Swaziland); and Peter Yarrow of "Peter, Paul and Mary," and Hedayat Amin-Arsala, a government official from Afghanistan.

An overwhelming finale to the conference was a 1000-member march with 170 huge flags representing 170 countries along the Lake Michigan shoreline for the citizenry to enjoy. This event ended at the famous Buckingham Fountain where hundreds of doves were released as a symbol of peace spreading its wings around the world.

There is more to be said about our National Peace Corps Association and its opportunities for those who would like to investigate them regardless of age.

Suffice it to say, I would be happy to take calls for more information at 253-2323. Or you may call the Peace Corps directly at (800) 424-8580. Press 1 to speak to a recruiter.

Through the Peace Corps Partnership program, individuals, schools, service organizations, Peace Corps volunteer alumni groups and others can help support volunteers' work with tax deductible donations to projects in the hundreds of communities where Peace Corps volunteers live and work.

"The service that former volunteers perform in their communities to help Americans better understand other peoples and cultures is immeasurable," said Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez.

"When former volunteers speak about their Peace Corps experiences, they share their deep understanding of people with cultures around the world. Their unique volunteer service demonstrates the heart of the Peace Corps — the best of America."

Zabel Hooks is an artist who lives in Asheville, NC.

Thank You!

Merci!

شكرًا

Many thanks to the people listed below who contributed to Friends of Morocco above and beyond their membership fees.

Trina Janes
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Brenda Starr

Debra Snell
Jerry Lampe
Lisa Howard
Valerie Staats

Anne Herisson-Leplae
Susan Schaefer Davis
Gordon Gray

News from Morocco

400 to benefit from English courses

About 400 young Moroccans aged between 13 and 16 are scheduled to benefit from English classes in Taghazout near Agadir this summer, announced a communiqué from the State Secretariat in charge of Youth. Beneficiaries of the courses are to be divided into four groups of 100 each. Each group is scheduled to stay for 15 days and participate in intensive English classes as well as a number of cultural, educational, and artistic activities, all of them in English. Parents of the first group of participants who benefited from classes from July 3-17 expressed their satisfaction at the program, wishing it to be extended to other languages such as French or Spanish.

Child mortality increases to 40%

Morocco lost ground in the battle against child mortality with mortality rates increasing from 36.6% in 1997 to 40% in 2004, reported the French language daily *L'économiste*. According to the newspaper, despite a decrease in the fertility rate from 3.1 in 1997 to 2.5 in 2004, mortality in children under five increased from 36.6% to 40%. As for the infant mortality rate, it increased from 45.8% in 1997 to 47% in 2004. This disastrous increase is mainly linked to a reduction in awareness-raising campaigns on TV and radio, previously funded by UNICEF. It is also linked to a lack of human resources, especially in rural areas, and the insufficient budget allocated to health. Other figures show that the number of women losing their lives when giving birth went through a slow decrease, with 332 deaths out of 100,000 in 1992 against 227 in 2003.

American wheelchairs to needy handicapped in Casablanca

of a batch of 280 wheelchairs, 40 were delivered to disabled people at a ceremony that took place in the Nour Rehabilitation Center in Bouskoura, close to Casablanca. The donation was made by the American Humanitarian Organization "Wheelchair Foundation", US Rotary clubs and the Moroccan Association for Handicapped (French acronym AMH). The ceremony was attended by American ambassador to Morocco, Thomas Riley, President of "Wheelchair Foundation", Kenneth Behring, and members of "Rotary International". This charity action is the second after the first that took place in September 2004 when 280 wheelchairs were distributed to needy disabled. The third operation, which is to be funded by the Wheelchair Foundation and the Moroccan and American Rotary clubs, will be the largest with some 1,400 wheelchairs to be delivered. During the ceremony, Riley underlined that a total of 2,000 wheelchairs will be granted to recipients from all over Morocco to help them become active producers in their communities. The wheelchair foundation is a non-profit organization, which has been offering, since its foundation in June 2000, wheelchairs to handicapped children all over the world. The foundation aims also at promoting awareness among the international public opinion of the physically handicapped needs. Behring, for his part, promised that the foundation would try, in the next

five years, to do its best to deliver one million wheelchairs for the needy.

Morocco to get female caïds by 2007

"Following a High Royal decision, the access to the authority agent training course will be open to female candidates starting from next year," announced Mustapha Sahel on July 15 at the diploma ceremony of the Kenitra Ecole de Perfectionnement des Cadres (school specialized in the training of executives for the Ministry of Interior). Starting from next year, the entry examination will be open to female candidates. Successful ones will be able to follow the school's two-year theoretical, military and fieldwork training period to become caïds. Just like their male colleagues, the new female caïds will have the status of a civil servant with special powers. They will be part of the Moroccan Ministry of Interior and will represent the State and take decisions in its name, as part of the decentralization of the power process, in various fields such as health or urbanisation. They will also play a coordination role between various institutions. One might wonder whether the new female caïds will be accepted by the population, but this idea does not seem to trigger much worries among the school staff. "We are not worried that women might be rejected. The police introduced women among their members before us, and it worked. The female agents will probably be assigned to municipalities and administrations for a while before being moved to other sections," said Commandant Chaouki who works at the school, adding that "people need a little time to get accustomed to having women in such a position of power, but they will eventually do."

5.9 million students to start classes in September

92% of 6-year-olds and 95% of children aged between 6 and 11 will attend school classes in 2005-2006, announced Nabil Benabdallah in a press conference held following a government council meeting. The Minister of Communication and Government spokesperson explained that, according to Minister of Education Habib El Malki, the total number of students in primary and secondary state schools should reach about 5.9 million in the next school year, i.e. 6.2% more than in the previous one. The next school year will also be the time when several reforms will be applied, especially the application of new programs, experimental regional school programs and the further development of teaching in Amazigh (Berber language), reported MAP.

New fossil giant reptile species discovered in Moroccan phosphates fields

New fossil vertebrate species were discovered in Moroccan phosphates fields as part of research by scientists of the French National Museum of Natural History (MNHN), National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and of the Universities of Montpellier and Bilbao. In this respect,

(Continued on page 17)

(News from Morocco - continued from page 16)

Morocco and France signed in Paris, a cooperation convention on research on fossil vertebrate palaeontology in Moroccan phosphates fields. The research revealed species of giant reptiles and crocodiles, prompting the MNHN to further develop Moroccan-French collaboration in the field, notably with the universities of El Jadida and Marrakech, and with the Khouribga Museum of the Moroccan Phosphates Company (OCP). The new research convention was signed by MNHN Director General, Bertrand-Pierre Galey and OCP Director General, Mourad Charif, as well as by representatives of the Moroccan mining ministry and presidents of El Jadida and Marrakech Universities. A document made available to the press, said the Moroccan phosphates fields (Oulad Abdoun and Gamtour) contain a wealth of sea fossil vertebrates going back to the end of the Cretaceous and early Tertiary period.

Moroccan domestic trade creates 1.2 million job opportunities in 2004

Moroccan domestic trade has created 1.2 million job opportunities and generated some MAD 22 billion (nearly US\$ 2.5 billion) of added value, i.e. 13.25% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2004 said, Moroccan Minister of Industry, Trade and Economy Upgrading, Salaheddine Mezouar. In an interview with the daily "Assahra Al-Maghribia", Mezouar noted that 2004 was marked by the creation of 29,583 new companies. He ascribed the improvement of Moroccan trade competitiveness to the measures taken to simplify financing procedures, improve the trade competitiveness and adopt an accountability system. He said that the Moroccan economy faces several problems notably the market openness, domestic competitiveness needs, the fiscal and judicial frame and mainly the peddling, which constitutes an unfair competitiveness to the formal sector. He said his department has undertaken a series of measures to fight peddling, notably through a model operation that was launched in Fez (Central Morocco) to create two trade centers for peddlers. As for consumers' protection, Mezouar underlined that his department has started the second phase of a project aiming to reinforce the role of consumers' protection associations, noting that sensitization campaigns will be organized for consumers.

Around Euros 2 billion earmarked for ONEP 2005-2008 program

The Moroccan drinking water utility ONEP is investing MAD 20.4 billion, around Euros 2 billion, part of its 2005-2008 program, to, inter alia, supply water to 4.2 million additional people in rural areas. The ONEP-Moroccan state contract-program, presented here on Tuesday to the utility governing board, is also to upgrade drinking water supply flow to 6,000 litres per second, provide water for 193 localities and ensure water purification in 108 villages. The "Office National de l'Eau Potable" governing board met to review the utility's achievements in 2004 and set the 2005 budget. The office netted a MAD 130.1 million profit in 2004, recording a rise of 2.6% to 2003 and a 60% progression of the water access rate for the populations in rural zones. The added value increased 5.8% compared to the previous year in spite of the lack of

price alignment. The ONEP governing board pledged to curb the deficit of the office in used water purification, which amounts to 5% only of liquid waste. The office plans to treat liquid waste in 100 priority towns by 2007. The program in this respect started in 2002 helped process used water in 22 towns. The office water supply in rural areas, which was 14% in 1995, is expected to cover 70% by the end of 2005 with the objective of 90% by 2007, according to the office schedule. Moroccan water and environment minister, Mohamed El Yazghi, also president of ONEP governing board, told the Moroccan News Agency, the office performance "is very encouraging", for it went beyond the goals set in the government program.

Justice 542 granted Moroccan nationality since 2003

A total of 542 were granted the Moroccan nationality between 2003 and 2005, announced Mohamed Bouzoubaâ. The Moroccan Minister of Justice, who was answering questions by the Parliament about the slowness of the process, explained that 79 requests have been submitted in 2005, against 199 in 2004. A total of 211 people applied for the Moroccan nationality in 2003, 207 of which were given a positive response. He added that the reason why the process took so much time was that applications had to go through the government council, the Council of Ministers and its presentation to the general secretariat of the Government Council, before their publication on the official bulletin. Until now, the process has been slowed further, because the commission in charge of the examination of nationality requests did not meet for a certain time. According to the present law, Moroccan nationality is mainly transmitted through fathers or grandfathers. As for Moroccan women, they cannot transmit their nationality.

Human rights council examines elaboration of 'citizenship charter'

Chairman of the Advisory Council for Human Rights (CCDH), Driss Benzekri, announced that the council is examining the elaboration of a global project on the "citizenship charter". Benzekri said in an interview published in *Al Ittihad Al Ichtiraki* daily that the charter, to be drawn up on instructions of HM King Mohammed VI, will define basic human rights of citizenship within a democratic society, ethics, and the principles which the State and the society should respect. CCDH will give priority to social, economic and cultural rights, said Benzekri, who was appointed this month chairman of the Council, adding the Council will make proposals aiming to draw up public policies guaranteeing human rights respect. HM King Mohammed VI said recently he expects the Council to efficiently contribute to rooting the concept of responsible citizenship in Morocco, with all that implies in terms of congruency between rights and duties. Created in 1990, the CCDH is the ombudsman of human rights in Morocco

Moroccan Family Code Now Available in English

By Stephanie Willman Bordat

The Morocco field office of Global Rights is pleased to present our unofficial English translation of the 2004 Moroccan Family Law (*Moudawana*), prepared by a team of English and Arabic-speaking lawyers and family law specialists at the Global Rights head office in Washington, DC and our field office in Rabat, and a professional Arabic-English translator. The translation is available on our website at www.globalrights.org.

Our intention was to produce an English language text that reproduces as faithfully as possible the original Arabic

text, rather than to elaborate an autonomous English legal text. We have therefore privileged a literal translation rather than attempt to clarify, explain or interpret the intention of the legislation. Global Rights hopes that this translation will be useful to researchers, NGOs and public authorities interested in family law and the rights of women in Morocco.

(Morocco at the Movies - continued from page 10)

attack from indigenous zealots whose point of view we can understand. This is not a simple achievement.

Kingdom of Heaven (2005)



Scott's most recent film did surprisingly poorly at the box office this year, which may be attributable to a downward trend in film revenues overall. Or perhaps US audiences were turned off by the idea of a Crusade epic when our country is enmeshed in a present day real-life re-enactment. The low revenues of the film are certainly not a result of the breathtaking production values, which result from the bulk of it having been shot in Morocco.

Essaouira is the first location we glimpse, standing in briefly for the Sicilian port of Messina. In one sweeping panorama we look down at the seaport with clusters of warships. The unmistakable ramparts of Essaouira's walls are clearly visible, although computer-generated images fill in much of the frame. The streets of the city are also used later in the film to represent the byways of Jerusalem. The climax of the film is the spectacular staging of the siege and conquest of Jerusalem by the armies of Saladdin. This was executed outside of Ouarzazate, using a "city" constructed entirely for the production. This featured an outside wall hundreds of feet long and three stories tall, with inner courtyards and towers twice as high. Thousands of extras were used, including many Moroccan soldiers provided by the King. The wasteland around Ouarzazate once again provides clear vistas and sweeping backgrounds that augment the realism in Scott's style.

However, there is much more to *Kingdom of Heaven* than widescreen spectacle. Ridley Scott steps in to show us more than religions at war. Imagine it's late in 2003. Coming off of the successes of *Gladiator*, *Black Hawk Down*, and *Hannibal*, Scott is once again able to make any movie he wants to, regardless of budget and content. During a

time of war when world leaders invoke apocalyptic visions of good and evil, Scott chooses to launch a massive blockbuster about the Crusades. It could have been a partisan polemic, demonizing either Christians or Muslims. But he rises to the occasion, portraying the humanity of each side in a bitter blood feud. He sides with tolerance, balance, and understanding. My hat's off to him.

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(Status of Women - continued from page 1)

judge has tremendous authority to determine how to divide the property-oftentimes to the detriment of the woman.

Implementing the Revised Personal Status Code

Ms. Willman Bordat went on to identify several obstacles to implementing the revised Personal Status Code. These include the fact that many judges may not know what the law says; that judges, many of whom are conservative, might not implement the revised law (as they did not implement the revisions made in 1993); that judges have too much power in interpreting the law; and that conservative *aduls* (notaries), who are tasked with notarizing marriages, maintain power in implementing the law (though they have less power than they did under the previous Personal Status Code).

To address these challenges, Global Rights and its partners revised the facilitator's manual they had produced on the 1993 revisions to the Personal Status Code to take into account the 2004 changes. Some women's rights NGOs went to villages to teach women about what the new law says. Another group did a theater piece on the law's revisions. And another organization provided classes on the new law at hairdresser training schools, so that the hairdressers could, in turn, inform their clients about it.

In addition, Global Rights translated the revised Personal Status Code into English and created a poster to explain the revisions to the law to illiterate women. To do the poster, Global Rights worked with 10 NGOs, each of which focused on a different revision. These NGOs brought illiterate women from their communities together with artists and the women explained how they would like the revisions to be depicted. The artists used the women's suggestions to illustrate the changes to the law-and each illustration can now be seen on the poster. Ms. Willman Bordat explained that this poster has been distributed widely.

Questions and Answers

One questioner asked what can be done to combat cultural norms that might prevent women from using the information that they are given about their rights. Ms. Willman Bordat noted that it is important to assess which cultural norms are held by women themselves, and which are ascribed to them by others. She said that in many instances, women tell other women to stand up for their own rights. And this is encouraged and facilitated through the participatory activities Global Rights and its partners organize.

Another questioner asked about the rates of marriage and divorce since the law has come into effect. Ms. Willman Bordat noted that it is still too early to get comprehensive data, as the law is just over one year old and family courts are not yet fully established. She said it appears that the rate of marriage has not decreased, nor has the rate of divorce increased. At the same time, Ms. Willman Bordat noted, the law has changed the dynamics of marriage and has given women more power in the relationship.

A questioner asked who negotiates the marriage contract and how the law treats marital rape and domestic violence. Ms. Willman Bordat said the parties themselves

negotiate the marital contract. She said that while spouses could always put their own clauses into the marriage contract, the law now makes this explicit. Still, she said, few women know that this is an option and only about 10 percent have done this. But, once they learn it is a possibility, many women indicate they would like to put a clause into their marriage contract prohibiting their husbands from beating them, Global Rights' focus groups have shown. Ms. Willman Bordat also noted that the revised law no longer requires women to obey their husbands, thus implicitly eliminating the obligation of sexual access.

Another questioner asked about Global Rights' work in Algeria and Tunisia, and the challenges of working in these countries. Ms. Willman Bordat said that in both places Global Rights works with local women and NGOs to conduct human and legal rights education, and to mobilize their communities. In addition, Global Rights trains lawyers to use international human rights in national courts. She said it was difficult to get into Algeria initially, though the government is supportive of NGOs there, and that Tunisia maintains heavy restrictions on NGOs operating within that country.

Finally, a questioner asked how the revised Personal Status Code changed the rights of children. Ms. Willman Bordat said that the preamble to the new law says that the children's rights described within it are taken from international conventions on the subject (namely, the Convention on the Rights of the Child). The law also makes clear that when parents divorce, children must be guaranteed housing comparable to that they lived in before the divorce. In practice, this means that the judge deciding the case will ensure that the child remains in the marital house or that funds are assessed for the child's housing (separate from the funds for child support). In addition, the revised law now allows both boys and girls to choose their custodian at age 15. And it provides that if the mother remarries, she does not automatically lose custody of the children.

Stay tuned to the Morocco section of the Global Rights website (<http://www.globalrights.org/morocco>) where we will soon be launching a Moudawana page with the complete English translation of the new law, online resources for the new law, and more.



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Membership in Friends of Morocco brings you, in addition to all issues of our newsletter, special mailings announcing the annual meeting, reunions, seminars, and special Moroccan arts and craft showings. Membership also brings you the satisfaction of contributing to the goals and aims of Friends of Morocco. At least once a year we do a system-wide mailing to keep our address database accurate and to give people the opportunity to join us. The mailing label below indicates when your membership expires

If you have not paid your membership dues of \$15.00 (individual) annually to the Friends of Morocco, please consider doing that now. We appreciate any additional contributions and recognize special contributors in the Friends of Morocco newsletter.

Contribute to the FOM newsletter

FOM members are encouraged to submit original contributions for the newsletters. Please send any contributions by email as a Microsoft Word attachment (I can't guarantee a typo-free contribution if I have to re-type it) to Kate Trayte, FOM newsletter editor at <k8tr8@yahoo.com>. Any type of contribution is appreciated: photos, book reviews, recipes, fiction or non-fiction, but please make it Morocco or Peace Corps-related.

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Friends of Morocco Newsletter is published quarterly by the Friends of Morocco and is circulated to its members and other interested parties. The organization was formed in 1988 to reunite PCVs who have served in Morocco, to inform members about current events and conditions in Morocco, to promote a better understanding of Morocco and Moroccans on the part of Americans, and to fund or otherwise support development activities in Morocco. Membership is \$15 annually. FOM is governed by a nine-member national advisory board. Mailing address: Friends of Morocco, P.O. Box 2579, Washington, DC 20013-2579. For further information, contact FOM president Tim Resch at 703-660-9292 or by email <tresch@att.net>.

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