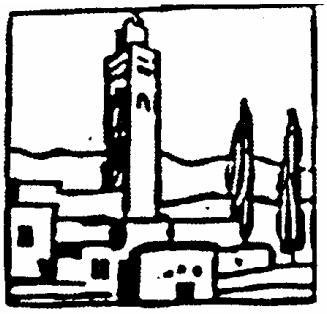


Friends of Morocco

اصدقاء المغرب

Spring 2005

www.friendsofmorocco.org

Our Man in Morocco: Ambassador Thomas Riley Brings Silicon Valley Savvy to a Country in Transition

By Matthew Stannard (This article was originally published in the San Francisco Chronicle *and is reprinted with permission)*

When the phone rang and changed everything, Thomas Riley was in the office of his Mountain View startup. The caller was White House Personnel Chief Dina Powell. It was May 15, 2003.

"I've got some very good news for you," she said. "The president has decided to nominate you to serve as the next ambassador to Morocco."

Riley looked around at the whiteboards and cubicles, the cups of stale coffee and life-size cardboard cutouts of video game heroes that programmers had brought with them when they defected from Electronic Arts. It was a jarring scene to reconcile with the Arabian images his new offer prompted.

He heard Powell warn him against telling anyone -- he may have been a friend of the president's since business school, but until he was thoroughly vetted nobody was to know he was up for an embassy appointment. Then he hung up and tried to refocus his attention on a conversation about integrating Java coding into a gizmo that could take digital photographs and stream them wirelessly for insurance and real estate companies.

Less than 24 hours later, on May 16 -- before he was even able to track down his vacationing wife, Nancy, with the news -- everything changed again. A dozen suicide bombers detonated themselves across Morocco's teeming seaport of Casablanca. Riley watched CNN as the body count came in: 41 dead, including the bombers. More than 100 injured.

Overnight, Morocco had gone from being one of the only places in the world where Islamic tradition and Western modernity cheerfully coexisted, a country so open to both worlds that it had served as a host for Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, to looking like the next candidate for a collapse into religious extremism and hatred. As top government officials scrambled a team in Washington, D.C., to search for ways to keep that from happening, Riley sat in his Palo Alto home watching television with one thought going through his mind:

"I hope the president doesn't change his mind. I hope he doesn't think I'm not up for it. Because I'm ready to go."

Nine months later, in February 2004, with little more training than several weeks of intensive State Department classes and a stack of guidebooks could offer and little direction beyond his own ideals, Riley arrived in Morocco's capital of Rabat as U.S. ambassador extraordinaire and plenipotentiary to the kingdom of Morocco.

His task was simple: Represent the president of the United States and lead a staff of Foreign Service professionals as they tried to help Morocco halt creeping extremism and make itself a shining example of how a nation can succeed in cooperation with the West while maintaining an independent Islamic identity.

Last month, Riley sat down with a year's worth of old calendars to take stock of himself and his approach to that position -- bringing the perspective and energy of a Silicon Valley startup to the bureaucracy of an embassy on the edge of Africa, to use his own sense of California-style networking and dot-com business savvy to market an idea of America to the Arab world.

"The world that we're in right now, it's almost like we've come to a new kind of war with terrorism. There are no borders. There are no nationalities," Riley said in his quiet,

(Continued on page 20)

Table of Contents

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.*

Elizabeth Romanella—Sidi Ifni 02-03 writes, "I was evacuated from Morocco in April 2003, and then transferred to Jamaica and completed service in October 2004. I am presently taking first steps to market products made by a women's group in Jamaica." Contact Elizabeth at <romanella6@yahoo.com>.

Ronald Cardoos—Rabat 70-72 writes, "For the past 5 years, my wife Sheree and I have imported fine specialty food and artisan cheeses from Greece, Crete and Cyprus under the Mt. Vikos brand. We create new products, work directly with cheesemakers and dairies. Still living just south of Boston." Contact Ronald at <cardoos@adelphia.net>.

Mohamed Benjelloun works in international trade with MBI Corporation and lives in Great Falls, VA. Contact Mohamed at <benjmbi@aol.com>.

Elizabeth (Betty) Pope—Rabat 83-86 is the registrar at South County Hospital in Rhode Island.

Kathy (Staley) Miller—Settat/Agadir 84-87is an attorney with the Indiana Court of Appeals. Contact Kathy at <momtomyra@hotmail.com>.

Bernie Ryan Hoff—Agadir 97-99 is an adjunct faculty member at Copper Mountain College in California.

Melissa Wyers—Rabat 88-91 lives in Washington, DC. Contact Melissa at <melissawyers@hotmail.com>.

Frank Golino—Tangier 64-66 is a retired foreign service officer. Contact Frank at <fgo1156726@aol.com>.

David and Mary McCaa—Settat 99-01 are retired and live in Brookings, SD. Contact the McCaas at <dmccaa@hotmail.com>.

Rob Rucker—Rabat 96-98 is a librarian at North Carolina State University. Contact Rob at <r.rucker@lycos.com>.

Stewart Bolinger—Tangier/Casablanca 68-71 writes, "As I plan for retirement, I continue my lifelong profession as management auditor. That has taken me around the word and the U.S. Morocco was my first trip overseas. I am at the 38 countries and 46 states mark now. My two collies impose my only family obligations and they restrain my travels." Contact Stewart at <ihughgarce@mailcircuit.com>.

Susana de la Torre—Fes 87-89 writes, "We have just moved (again). Celebrating 9 years of marriage to Dan Simon (RPCV Ecuador and Nicaragua). We have 2 daughters: Elena and Eva ages 7 and 5 respectively. I provide pre-natal care to recently-arrive Hispanic women and also teach pre-natal classes in Spanish. Still trying to come up with a business idea to undertake in Fes. I'd love to hear from anyone I knew in Morocco."

Susan Schaefer Davis—Sidi Kacem Zaiya 65-67 writes, "I've gotten a Ph.D. in anthropology (did research at my PC site), taught at the college level in the U.S. and in Morocco (at Al-akhawayn), wrote 2 books on Morocco, worked as a consultant in development, began a website selling Moroccan textiles, and have put rural women in two villages on-line selling their rugs. I'm doing all but the teaching now." Contact Susan at <sdavis@uslink.net>.

David and Sherry Rider—Taza 69-71 live in Bloomsburg, PA where David is an assistant professor at Bloomsburg University and Sherry is a teacher in the Bloomsburg School District. Contact them at <rider@bloomu.edu> or <srrider@yahoo.com>.

Jerry Lampe—PC trainer 1971 is the deputy director/national advisor at the National Foreign Language Center. Contact Jerry at <glampe@nflc.org>.

Elizabeth Letts and Ali Alalou—Tinghir/ El Ksiba/Marrakech 83-87 write, "After leaving the Peace Corps, I attended nursing school and became a certified nurse-midwife. Ali got a Ph.D. in French linguistics at UC Davis and is now an assistant professor at the University of Delaware. For the past few years, I have been concentrating primarily on writing. Ali and I co-authored a children's picture book set in Morocco which will be out in 2005, and I have recently sold my first novel. We have three kids, ages 12, 9 and 6." Contact Elizabeth and Ali at <lafayette3@comcast.net>.

Anne (Nagle) McIntosh—El Ksiba 82-84 writes, "After returning from Morocco, I got a master's in international affairs from Columbia, and an MBA from Kellogg. I've been living in Chicago since 1986 where I manage the learning and development function for HSBC. My husband, Mark, and I have two children, Liza and Nathan." Contact Anne at <hopewell241@yahoo.com>.

Emil Paape—Mohammedia 87-89 lives in Shoreview, MN and can be contacted at <bpaape@sumn.edu>.

Trina Janes—Sidi Addi 91-93 works as a public affairs consultant in Chicago. She chaired the 2004 NPCA

(Continued on page 3)

In Memoriam

Bill Wright (Al-Hoceima 91-93)

From the *Green Bay News-Chronicle*
By Joe Knaapen

The Sturgeon Bay mayor who negotiated in 1995 for the state to own a replacement for the Michigan Street Bridge died without seeing the project come to fruition.

William O. "Doc" Wright, 76, died Tuesday at a nursing home in Green Bay, where he was battling Alzheimer's disease.

Wright, who could be as curmudgeonly as he could be charming, served as alderman and mayor, directing the shape of Sturgeon Bay for nearly three decades.

A major coup for Wright came in 1995 when the Wisconsin Department of Transportation decreed the Michigan Street Bridge, completed in 1931, to be functionally obsolete.

At the time, the state wanted the city to take ownership of any replacement bridges, but Wright and then-city engineer John Kolodziej negotiated for the state to build and own a replacement bridge.

Then the floodgates of public opinion opened, and the decision was put on hold while the debate extended to how many lanes the new bridge should contain and at what location it should be built.

"Doc went out of his way to convince the state to own the bridge," said Kolodziej, who is now Door County highway commissioner. With help from the Common Council, Kolodziej said, Wright convinced area legislators to get involved in the bridge settlement.

"Doc was the first major figure to bring the bridge issues to my attention," said State Sen. Alan Lasee, R-Rockland. "We did what we could to make sure the state maintained ownership."

"If Doc Wright had his way, we'd be driving on a new bridge, not arguing about it," said Ken Brey Jr., who served as an alderman during the 1990s. "Doc and I didn't always see eye to eye, but he always put the city first."

Many of the bridge issues remain unresolved, but the DOT has agreed to rehabilitate the Michigan Street Bridge in 2006 and to own and maintain both the old bridge and any new downtown structures built across the bay.

Contrasts - pros and cons, give and take, insults and apologies, tall tales and straight facts, veterinarian and humanitarian, motorcycle rider and convertible driver - were part and parcel of the mix that made Doc Wright a genuine Door County character.

"He was interested in the human condition," said Stephen Johnson, the Sturgeon Bay lawyer who operates a law practice in the Oak Street building that once housed Wright's veterinary office.

"I had a great deal of respect for him," Johnson said, adding that he and his associates got involved in getting Wright re-elected in 1995 after a three-year hiatus from public office. "He did what he thought was right, but only after listening a lot and seeing where everybody else was coming from."

Listening to other opinions, however, did not necessarily mean Wright would change his mind, Johnson conceded.

"Doc and I probably disagreed more than we agreed," said Bob Starr, who was elected mayor after Wright finally stepped down in 1998. "He was strong-minded, and he wasn't afraid to make a decision and then stick with it."

Wright, an Indiana native, moved to Sturgeon Bay in 1960, was elected alderman in 1970-75 and served as mayor from 1980-89 and again from 1995-98. Wright was mayor during the '80s when Sturgeon Bay rose on the economic highs of a boom in shipbuilding and fell with the bust in the industry.

By 1988, employment at city shipyards plummeted from thousands to a few hundred. In the wake of the industrial shakeup, Wright and Gov. Tommy Thompson convened an economic summit at Sturgeon Bay High School to plan the future of the Peninsula. Thompson pledged a partnership with state and helped with legislative initiatives in job creation and transportation.

The partnership of city, county and state with local

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 2)

conference and is currently president of the Chicago Area Peace Corps Association. Contact Trina at <trinajanes@hotmail.com>.

Alison Baker published *Voices of Resistance: Oral Histories of Moroccan Women*. Contact Alison at <alisonbak@aol.com>.

Debra Snell—Azrou 78-80 is an ESL lecturer at Georgia State University. Contact Debra at <dsnell@gsu.edu>.

Huda Fadel—Fquih Ben Salah/Midelt 79-81 is the manager of research at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Contact Huda at <hfadel@msn.com>.

Sonya Malone—Ouarzazate/Rabat 89-91 lives in Cantonment, FL.

Terry Lajtha—Beni Mellal 77-79 is a documentary film editor and lives in Irvington, NY. Contact Terry at <TerryLajtha@aol.com>.

Stephanie Root—Tata/Agadir/L'Hena 01-02 is a geologist/hydrologist and lives in Beverly, MA. Contact Stephanie at <stephanieroot@yahoo.com>.

Christy Schildwachter Sheerin—Beni Mellal/Rabat 88-91 writes, "I recently moved to Eugene, OR with my family after living in Washington, DC for about 12 years. Since leaving Morocco, I've

(Continued on page 14)

Cinémathèque de Tanger

Cinémathèque de Tanger (CDT) will open its permanent home, the Cinéma Rif, on the historic Grand Socco plaza, in the heart of Tanger, Morocco. The theater stands at the auspicious intersection of the old city (the medina) and the new.

Today, as one of a handful of active cinemas in Tanier, the Rif plays B-rated Bollywood films. Our ambition is to transform this beautiful historic building into Morocco's leading movie house for independent cinema and repertory programming. The CDT's mission is to bring the great films of cinema history to our audience, to become Morocco's premiere venue for world cinema releases, and to archive and bring to light the unseen legacy of Moroccan film.

The 1948 building will be renovated into a comfortable and modern cinema; the theater's outdated projection and sound equipment will be replaced with two state-of-the-art 35mm projectors, a 16mm projector, and Dolby SRD sound. The new theater will accommodate 360 armchair-style seats. The cinema will also be equipped with a video projector to screeen DVD and other digital formats in addition to traditional celluloid prints.

The CDT worked with acclaimed architect Jean-Marc Lalo to design a multi-faceted home for a new cinema culture in Tangier. A spacious café will encourage relaxed conversation among filmgoers and other visitors. The adjacent reading room will be a resource of newspapers, cinema magazines and journals—in Arabic, French and Spanish—and an extensive library of books on the history and craft of cinema. The video library's eight private screens will allow *à la carte* viewing for individuals who want to dig deeper into our collection, which will emphasize documentary films.

The theater's location in Tangier's main square allows the theater an unparalleled visibility and accessibility, and the cinema will take advantage by holding special open-air screenings on the Plaza from its projection booth—simply by rotating the projector 180°.

Tangier is an ancient city filled with young people, and is poised for a cultural renaissance. The public is thirsty for culture, and there is a large turnout for the city's small number of regular cultural happenings. This audience is ready and waiting for the next chapter in the cultural history of this international city. An investment in the CDT is an investment in that future.

The Rif Cinéma is a limited liability company, and the Cinémathèque de Tanger, operating in parallel, is a not-for-profit organization under the Moroccan tax codes.

For more information about the Cinémathèque de Tanger, go to www.cinemathequedetanger.com.

Morocco and Algeria Hold Rare Talks

ALGIERS, March 23 (Reuters)

Moroccan King Mohammed and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika held rare talks on the sidelines of an Arab summit which officials said on Wednesday will help ease tensions in North Africa.

"They had very cordial and fruitful talks last night and more talks are planned. I don't know exactly when," an Algerian Foreign Ministry official told Reuters.

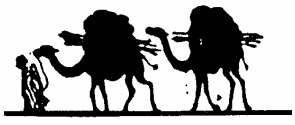
Decades of poor ties between the two countries have undermined stability in North Africa, closely watched by the West as a possible source of Islamic militancy and a springboard for illegal migrants to Europe.

Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem was quoted by official APS news agency as saying the talks have led to a thaw in relations - mostly strained over the Western Sahara.

Better relations are expected to inject new life into a stalled United Nations peace plan for Western Sahara, a desert territory seized by Rabat in 1975 after colonial power Spain pulled out. Algeria has traditionally backed the territory's Polisario Front independence movement living in exile in Algeria.

Efforts to normalise ties between the two countries have been hampered over the past three decades by the dispute.

It was King Mohammed's first visit to Algeria since ascending the throne in 1999. He briefly held talks with Bouteflika during the funeral of the monarch's father.



Hakim's Car Fund Closes at $3,816

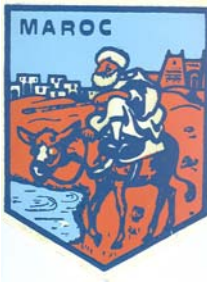
Friends of Morocco members have been extremely generous in contributing to Hakim's Car Fund with total contributions at press time totaling $3,816. For those who missed the earlier articles, Hakim Illi has been the receptionist at Peace Corps Morocco for more than 20 years. Mobile with a wheel chair and a specially-adapted car, Hakim has been and inspiration for volunteers, Peace Corps staff and Moroccans not only in coping with his disability but also his vibrant and out-going personality. Announced in the Fall issue of the FOM Newsletter, at the suggestion of M'Hamed El Kadi, Peace Corps Morocco Information Resource Center Director and FOM Liaison, Hakim's Car Fund has had an excellent response. Reports Peace Director Bruce Cohen, "I have talked with Hakim about his car fund and he wanted to be sure that I relayed to everyone involved how moved he was by this very kind gesture. He is extremely grateful to Friends of Morocco for initiating such a generous and kind activity and he wanted me to pass a very special thank you to everyone who contributed. There is a big smile on Hakim's face whenever he talks about the Hakim car fund. Understanding that the sum of money is significant but not sufficient to buy a new car, Hakim is prepared to use the funds to recondition his current car and feels that the money will help him get at least two to three more years of use from his car." Friends of Morocco also thanks its members for this extraordinary response and their generosity.

Lynne Cortes sent the following letter with her donation: "In my P.C. days, we teachers needed to find a summer project. I ended up becoming acquainted with Denise Tabernacle who was working to establish a Cheshire Home for disabled kids in the medina of Marrakech. Hakim was one of the 'charter' boys.

My husband and I went to Morocco in the spring of 1999. We ended up in Rabat and, really by accident, happened upon the P.C. offices. We went in to chat and found a personable guy at the desk. The talk turned to Marrakech and I suddenly realized that I was looking at Hakim after all those years. I knew him by his eyes and truly got goosebumps when I said his name! This small donation is in memory of Denise Tabernacle who was dedicated, creative and adventuresome!"

Contributors in addition to those persons listed in the Winter 2005 issue of the Friends of Morocco Newsletter are listed below:

Mark B, Apel, Ouarzazate /Ouirgane 82-86
Cameron Brown, Youssouffia 84-86
Sylvia Cabus, Rabat 00-03
William E. & Mary Jane Caruthers-Parmentier, Ait Ourir/ Nador 86-88
Lesta A Chandler, Beni Mellal Skouria 84-86
Angela Ciesla, 95-97
Lynne Cortes, Marrakech 66-68
Susan Schaefer Davis, Sidi Kacem Zaouia 65-67
David and Merry Frederick, Rabat 86-90
Lisa Hawes, Safi 84-86
Alison Hyslop, Meknes/Azilal 88-90
Noreen Polk Kilby, Errachidia 84-86
Charlie Kellet and Karma Barsam-Brown, 94-96
Patrick McGuire, Tiznit/Rabat 85-88
David McKenna, Marrakech 82-84
Garrett T Mumma, 97-99
Aldo & Helene Parcesepe, 01-03
Rob Peterson & Jessica D Deeter 94-96
Christina Schildwachter Sheerin, Beni Mellal 88-91
Amelia Sparks 94- 96 Taza Province, 94-96
Michael Urbano, El Borouj/Settat, 91-93



Morocco's Justice and Reconciliation Commission

by Susan Slyomovics from the Middle East Report Online

April 4, 2005

From independence in 1956 through the 1990s, the Moroccan state sent thousands of dissidents and political opponents to prison. During these decades, known to Moroccans as the "black years," the act of expressing an "unauthorized opinion" could earn years of arbitrary detention. Political opponents of King Hassan II's regime, many of them leftists or Islamists, were often "disappeared" in the manner of dictatorships in Chile and Argentina and tortured or killed while in state custody. In 1990, Hassan II established an Advisory Council on Human Rights to begin the rehabilitation of his regime's reputation for repression. These official efforts intensified after the king's death in 1999. Anxious to burnish Morocco's new image as a developing democracy, and pushed at every stage by vocal and organized survivors of the prisons, as well as Morocco's vibrant community of human rights activists, King Mohammed VI has endeavored to fulfill his father's 1994 promise to "turn the page definitively" on the rampant abuses of the past.

On January 7, 2004, the king appointed Driss Benzekri to head the newly formed Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Benzekri, himself a former political prisoner (1974-91) from the outlawed Marxist-Leninist group Ila al-Amam, presides over 16 commissioners, eight drawn from the Advisory Council on Human Rights (in Arabic, al-Majlis al-Istishari li-Huquq al-Insan or in French, Conseil Consultative des Droits de l'Homme) plus eight nationally recognized experts in law, medicine and women's rights. Among them are other former political prisoners and victims of torture and "disappearance."

According to the commission's multilingual website, its mandate to investigate human rights violations begins with independence and ends with the establishment of the 1999 Indemnity Commission, an earlier attempt to redress 43 years of the regime's war against its own citizens. Both the Indemnity Commission and the Justice and Reconciliation Commission accord blanket immunity from criminal prosecution to perpetrators and victims alike. The competence of the commission is non-judicial (dhat ikhtisasat ghayr qada'iyya). Like Chile and Argentina before it, Morocco chooses to circumscribe justice, eschewing punishment to concentrate on identifying, verifying and reporting the process of uncovering the truth about arbitrary detention and secret torture sites.

The story of forcible disappearance, torture and deaths during police custody or in secret prisons is therefore told about the past from the perspective of the present and entirely in the victims' voices. By the filing deadline of February 13, 2004, over 22,000 requests for reparation had arrived at the commission's headquarters in the Moroccan capital of Rabat. Despite the limited purview of the commission, it is collecting an enormous volume of testimonies and depositions that constitute an important resource for counteracting the repression of Morocco's "black years" with transparency and accountability.

CRITICISMS

Reactions to the state-mandated Justice and Reconciliation Commission (in Arabic, Hay'at al-Insaf wa al-Musalaha or in French, Instance Equité et Reconciliation) are mixed. Government brutality to suppress rural armed uprisings and urban riots was directed against a panoply of actors, from political parties to trade unions, each of which has complex reservations about the state's attempt to "turn the page" on the past without penalizing perpetrators of abuses. Mustapha Laamrani, a veteran of Morocco's national liberation army, gave testimony about his torture as part of the liquidation of nationalist fighters by Moroccan leaders of the Istiqlal Party eager to consolidate power in the immediate post-independence years. Although many such political figures grew to know well police station and prison interiors, as yet no member of the Istiqlal leadership has stepped forward to confront muddy histories as victims and perpetrators, not even those minimally complicit with the regime's violations.

Other critics note the content of Morocco's anti-terrorism law, Number 03-03, swiftly enacted by Parliament in reaction to multiple bomb attacks in Casablanca on May 16, 2003 that targeted foreign and Moroccan Jewish sites and killed 46 people. Like the United States, Morocco makes claims in regard to a global war on terrorism that place their respective nations' safety above various legal rights. The Moroccan version, now integrated into the country's penal code as Article 218, defines terrorism as any premeditated act, individual or collective, whose purpose is "attacks against public order through terror or violence." This phrasing is reminiscent of French colonial-era statutes that enabled the capricious incarceration of generations of Moroccans. Based on profiles of the perpetrators, in the wake of the 2003 bombings waves of arrests have targeted specific groups, primarily those belonging to organizations labeled Islamist.

There is a distinct echo of the past when the Moroccan government acknowledges that more than 1,000 people are detained incommunicado under anti-terrorism laws. Human rights groups double and treble the government numbers.

Moreover, newspapers link US and Moroccan anti-terrorist efforts in a macabre fashion. According to Amnesty International and press reports, detainees held by the US as unlawful combatants at Guantánamo Bay were transported to a Moroccan secret detention center for questioning under torture. Many Moroccans deplore their country's contribution to the war on terrorism, one in which the international community recognizes Moroccan expertise in torture. Those who point to continuities between the "black years" of 1956-1999 and contemporary government abuses assert strong opposition to the efficacy of any truth commission. Security forces operate secretly and with government protection, and retrograde laws

(Continued on page 15)

Friends of Morocco — أصدقاء المغرب

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: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Fax:_____ Email: _____

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:

_____ newsletter	_____ local FOM chapter	_____ speakers' bureau
_____ trips to Morocco	_____ recruiting PCVs	_____ putting RPCVs/Moroccans in touch
_____ hospitality	_____ reunion/gatherings	_____ career/readjustment services
_____ fund raising	_____ development education	_____ FOM officer position

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	
Individual	_____ $50.00
Multiple (two people, one address)	_____ $65.00
MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF MOROCCO **ONLY**	
Individual	_____ $15.00
Multiple (two people, one address)	_____ $20.00
Overseas NPCA members - please add $20 for postage	_____ $20.00
Additional contribution to Friends of Morocco (tax-deductible)	$ _____ (shukron!)
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED (make check payable to *Friends of Morocco*)	$ _____

Spring 2005

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

Friends of Morocco — أصدقاء المغرب

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

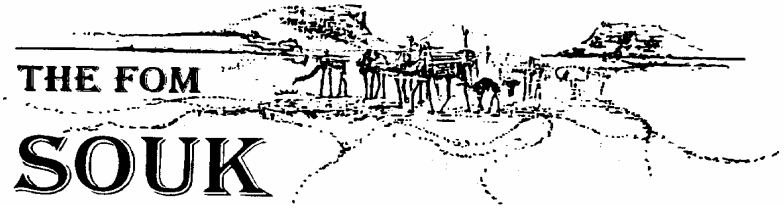
1. Briefly, what have you done since leaving Peace Corps? What are you doing now?

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



►The **Moroccan American Association of California** in cooperation with Khalid Oujdi would like to invite you to a Moroccan gathering on Sunday, May 8th at Fred Hesse Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. The event will feature a potluck barbecue, a soccer tournament, a monologue play by member, Smael, (One man Masrahia), Moroccan chaabi as well as Charki music. (DJ or a live band if possible!). The event might be attended by local countrymen fluent in the international business arena! Your kids will enjoy a nice play area and the party will be held in a social hall equipped with, dance floor, kitchen, barbecue area, clean restrooms, parking,etc... The event will also present an opportunity to elect new board members to the association and all of you are welcome to participate as voters or potential board members.

Soccer tournament: 10:00 AM with teams from North Hollywood, Santa Monica, South bay and Long Beach. Khalid Oujdi at (818) 943 8488

Barbecue and potluck party: 12:00 PM-07:00 PM.
Contact Haj Daki at: (310)225-2634 or (949)302-1224

►**Seattle's Best Moroccan Restaurant** If you live in the Northwest you have to check out Kasbah, Seattle's newest and best Moroccan restaurant. Tucked away in a quiet neighborhood on the outskirts of Ballard, the place is all done up with the usually fancy ponges, drapey fabric, and ornate tables but somehow it still feels homey and relaxed. It's the sort of place where you could sit and drink mint tea for hours and their food is fantastically authentic. Their b'stilla has just the right balance of savory and sweet, and the couscous—well, you know that one woman in your village that everyone admired because, even though she used the same stuff as everyone else, whatever came out of her kitchen was always somehow special—it's like having couscous at her house.

Kasbah Moroccan Restaurant
1471 NW 85th St.
Seattle, WA 98117
(206) 788-0777

►Website for the **American Legation in Tangier**: www.legation.org.

►**Morocco VI is having a 40-year reunion** on Jeckell Island, GA on Oct 13-16, 2005. For more information, contact Sam & Helen (D'Amico) Perry at <samandhelen@bellsouth.net>.

Morocco III hopes to have one in October 2006! Place as yet to be determined.

►**Conference on Moroccan Sufisim and West at Columbia University** The American Moroccan Institute and Columbia University are pleased to invite you to attend an international conference on the topic of Sufism and its contributions to the promotion of religious tolerance and dialogue between civilizations. Focusing on Morocco, the Maghreb, and Europe, our panelists will discuss Sufism as a spiritual medium for Islamic, Christian, and Judaic interactions, and as a potential solid front against all forms of religious fundamentalism and global terrorism. Other issues and questions to be addressed include: How does Sufism reconcile its vision with the "secular" values of modern society? What is the relation between Sufism and Euro-American mysticism? What impact does Sufism have on the Muslim diaspora in Europe and the US? How does Sufism challenge fundamentalist interpretations and distortions of religion?

We look forward to welcoming you to the conference, followed by a Moroccan reception, to share your thoughts with our distinguished participants and guests.
Date: **Friday, April 15, 2005, 6:00 P.M**
Place: **Columbia University**, 116th & Broadway, New York City, Havemayer Hall, Room 309 Reception (Moroccan food) to follow at: Columbia University Maison Française, Second Floor, Buell Hall
To confirm, please contact Harvey Stark, Academic Affairs, AMI at info@amius.org

Morocco at the Movies #9 - *Raja*

By Dan Cahill (Kenitra 68-70)

Love and its intrigues, straddling the classes and cultures of contemporary Morocco, is the subject of "Raja", a 2003 release by French director Jacques Doillon. Fred (Pascal Greggory) is a wealthy French expatriate, living in a sumptuous villa in Marrakech. He spends most of his time overseeing the maintenance and improvements to his home, which he hopes eventually to convert into a small hotel. He has a notably warm and casual relationship with his two older female housekeepers. They speak frankly with each other, teasing and joking. Their scenes together exude a humanity and affection that rarely cross these class boundaries in real life.

The equilibrium of Fred's somewhat empty life is shattered when a new gardener comes to work for him. Raja (Najat Benssallem, in an award-winning film debut) is at least twenty years his junior, and not especially attractive. Fred nontheless declares his desire for her soon after they meet. She is an orphan with uncertain living circumstances, an unemployed temperamental boyfriend, and an overbearing brother who threatens to marry her off to a cop in Casablanca. Her impoverished life is full of frustration and sad experiences. In one especially moving scene, she reminds her best friend of the night they were raped by two clients when they were prostituting themselves in a nightclub. At that point, she prefers working for Fred, even though the pay is less. "Money of the night," she laments, "never sees the light of day."

Money is a constant presence in her involvement with Fred. She and her fellow gardeners are always aware of his creature comforts. He frequently offers money to solve problems that arise either between them or in her private life. There is a lot of negotiation and back-and-forth movement in the development of their relationship, leading to a conclusion which is as heartfelt as it is uncertain. Fascinating as the story is, it as important as the sum of the film's other parts, which are effective and memorable.

Every performance is natural and nuanced. Pascal Greggory is a seasoned actor with 30 years of experience in over 50 films, and one would expect the high-quality work he delivers. But the Moroccan actors, none of whom has any prior film appearances, are wonderful. Each appears as a very real person, sincere and relaxed before the camera. It is especially sweet to hear Maghrebi Arabic spoken and subtitled: "labas" and "wakha" don't often appear in the dialogue of other films shot in Morocco. Language also plays a role in some of the subtler scenes. The gardeners feel free to mock Fred in Arabic while he stands by smiling, frequently oblivious.

Marrakech itself is not the usual tourist destination that we always see on screen. There is no Djemaa el Fna, no Koutoubia, not even the ornate shops of the Rue Souk Smarine. This is a mundane Marrakech, where quotidian activities are played out: nondescript side streets, a gas station, a hotel bar, ordinary rooms in small homes-- all serve to envelop the characters in an authentic atmosphere where real people live and work.

The craftsmanship is excellent. Cinematographer Hélène Louvart has done an extraordinary job of capturing the different qualities of light that fall on Fred's villa and garden. As a visitor to Marrakech, I have often marveled at the beauty of the ambient light that is unique to that region, but I've never seen it so handsomely rendered on celluloid. The audience's ears are also rewarded-- some potentially awkward scenes are given great poignancy by the music of Philippe Sarde, surely one of France's most prolific composers, with 197 films scored since 1970.

I consider it one of my missions in this column to introduce my readers to films that they might otherwise not know. "Raja" was first seen in the U.S. at the New York Film Festival in October 2003. It had a subsequent limited theatrical release, and is now available on DVD only through its distributor, Film Movement. I suggest going to their website, www.filmmovement.com, and linking to "Film Catalog" at the top. On page two you will find "Raja" for purchase at different prices for subscribers and non-subscribers. [Please note another fine film on page 3, "Inch'allah Dimanche" a recent French-language film about an Algerian woman's painful adjustment to life in France after moving there to join her husband. Like "Raja", it is well-made, intelligent, and important for those interested in North African life and culture.]

I am frustrated that such a worthy movie as "Raja" is so difficult to find, but thankful that it is available at all. I recommend it for its unsparing view of the multiple strata of Moroccan society, and its acknowledgment of the sexual tension that underlies each subtle glance and every casual eye contact between the sexes and across the cultures of such a complex country.

NOTE TO READERS: I have recently become frustrated by the diminishing number of Moroccan films left to cover in this column. There are many such films which never make it across the Atlantic, and I would like to start a non-profit enterprise, the goal of which would be DVD distribution of subtitled Moroccan films for U.S. audiences. This can't be easy, given the fractured nature of the film business, but I'd like to give it a try. If anyone has any suggestions, objections, contacts, or advice to offer, please e-mail me at the address above.

Contact Dan at <cahilld@nyc.rr.com>

The Moroccan School of Meat

By Kyle McDonald

I like to eat. Especially between sunrise and sundown. You probably know the hollow angry feeling when you go hours without a meal, right? Have you ever observed a smoker who needs a nicotine fix? Okay, imagine not just yourself, but everyone in the city, no, make that everyone in the country, going without food or cigarettes from sunrise to sunset. Now take that vision and throw in some garbage, mud houses and the odd donkey. Welcome to Morocco during Ramadan.

By my second week, I'd managed well enough. An occasional hidden snack here or there, but for the most part the pattern was the same: starve until sundown and then eat like a king. I entered the town square as the sun decided enough was enough and the air-raid siren began to wail, signalling it was now time to put food in your mouth. I was famished. A wonderful smell hit my nose: barbeque. I walked straight up to the vendor, bought a sandwich and I bit in. Finally: food, wonderful food. Nothing could beat barbequed meat after a day spent fasting. I looked over at the vendor with a mouthful of hot meat and asked him: "What kind of meat is in this sandwich?" "What type of meat? In this sandwich there is heart...and what do you call it, oh yes: fat".

I choked down my feed thinking how, under different circumstances, I would choke up my feed, and left the town square. A row of sheep's heads smiled at me from the counter of the street side butcher shop and I noticed an official-looking certificate on the exterior wall just behind a long-tailed carcass hanging from a metal hook above the sidewalk. Dog? Likely. A customer brushed up against the skinned beast, allowing the certificate to come into clear view. Despite not being able to read Arabic under normal conditions, my mind was fortified from a heavy dose of heart and fat. I was able to read the certificate clearly. It said: "The Moroccan School of Meat was established to ensure the quality of meat Morocco-wide. Its rules are few, but well-followed by all purveyors of meat from north to south, east to west."

Rule 1: Meat must never be refrigerated

Rule 2: A mop and bucket is a labour-intensive cleaning method. A cat is automatic and self-cleaning.

Rule 3: All chicken's feet/heads should be given to dogs. Dogs must march around the city streets proudly showing off their prize before eating.

Rule 4: All meat must be cut on wood. This wood must never be washed. Water and soap may cause the wood to rot, this will make future meat taste bad.

Rule 5: Chickens must be transported live and in an inverted position, held by their legs. If waiting for a bus, the chicken must be allowed to stand with one leg tied to a bicycle or other stationary object.

Rule 6: At least 4 cats must always be present on the street outside every butcher shop.

Rule 7: Public distaste for cow tongue is prohibited.

Rule 8: All blood from animal products must flow out of a butcher's shop, across the sidewalk and into the street on its way to the storm drain. There must be ample room for no less than three thirsty cats or two thirsty dogs.

Rule 9: Heart and fat make a delicious combination.

Rule 10: All meat must be transported through crowded markets and be touched by several children before reaching a butcher shop.

Rule 11: All meat products will be hung from metal hooks over the sidewalk and must be inadvertently bumped by no less than ten people before being sold.

Rule 12: All sheep and/or goat heads must be transported by bicycle.

Rule 13: After arriving by bicycle, all sheep and goat heads must be displayed facing the street upon open-air counter tops with either their tongues hanging out or parsley/ assorted garnish jammed between their teeth.

Rule 14: All fish heads must be left on the street in plastic containers. It is a crime for cats to eat fish head. Fish heads must be eaten by kittens.

Rule 15: It is impolite to laugh loudly if a tourist approaches your butcher shop, pointing to a piece of dead animal and asks: "What's this?" Preferably, butchers should emit a small chuckle or a wait-until-they-turn-the-corner 'knee-slapper' outburst.

http://www.bootsnall.com/articles/05-03/the-moroccan-school-of-meat-morocco.html

Our Man in Morocco

By Jack Sundell, PCV Azilal

It's February now in Azilal, and it's so cold in my house today I can see my breath every time I exhale. It began snowing last night at 9:00, and we'd probably gotten five or six inches by the time it stopped about 10:00 this morning. It's snowed several times this winter, which didn't happen at all last year; but January was warm and pleasant, giving me the false impression that I'd be frolicking in green grassy fields by early March. I can't help but be reminded of the chorus of a song that Blind Colorado Crawford used to sing:

> It's cold in the mountains where I'm living
> Cold in the mountains long 'bout winter time
> And if you want to come to the mountains
> Long 'bout winter better change your mind

So the penetrating chill of the High Atlas winter dominates my thoughts and small talk and strongly influences my eating habits and wake-up strategy. For people here, however, it's an annual occurrence, a part of the only life that most of them have ever known, so I'm glad to endure it in the name of cultural exchange.

Back in the last half of October and first half of November, I experienced my second Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. The first time Ramadan came around we were still in training; I had planned to fast the entire time, but in the end I only fasted about 15 days due to a combination of mostly American company and digestive failure. This year I was in Azilal for most of the month and paid closer attention to when, what, and how much I ate, all crucial components of a successful Ramadan. I broke fast almost every evening with the Anfetouak family, the family here in Azilal that has adopted me as their own. The traditional Ramadan breakfast consists of dates, warm milk or coffee, a fried pita-type bread with olive oil, hard-boiled eggs with salt and cumin, a tomato-based soup called *harira*, and a sweet honey-dipped pastry called *shabakiya*. It's a delicious spread, but my favourite aspect of the meal is the festive atmosphere: Family and friends gathered around the table, faces beaming with the joy of long hours of anticipation about to be satisfied, and the grateful mouths that really taste the food that's put into them, as I so often don't when food is something of which I'm never deprived.

I found the month of fasting to be a very rewarding and thought-provoking endeavour. First of all, it teaches patience, mindfulness, and will-power through daily practice. The first few days when 3:00 rolled around, the hunger and thirst were uncomfortable and distracting enough to keep me from concentrating. Day after day, however, I found myself in the same situation, and little by little I learned to control the desires, to focus my thoughts despite the emptiness of my belly and the dryness of my throat. It takes less energy perhaps to sit around and wait for the sun to set, but two or three hours a day for a month seems like too much time to have slip through your fingers like that. The hours pass a lot faster when you focus on the present moment rather than on a point in the future that will arrive in the same amount of time whether you think about it or not, and this seems like a good lesson for life in general.

A second thing I like about Ramadan is the idea of a society taking a whole month out of its year and living a completely different lifestyle. The school schedule changes, post office hours change, and restaurants and cafes don't even open until sunset. Everyone agrees to do this, and they do it for 29 or 30 days. Thirty days is long enough to form new habits and settle into a new routine. You don't forget about the way life usually is, but you become totally accustomed to the new system, and new systems lead to new situations and new ideas. Also, people who do this every year must know that Ramadan is never more than eleven months away, making it a sort of fixture in their mental landscape. This would help them to appreciate their normal schedule, the eleven non-Ramadan months—a cup of coffee in the morning, a glass of tea after lunch, or even lunch itself. Ramadan is probably not something I'll observe once I'm back in the United States, because there would be no camaraderie in fasting or in breaking the fast. But being in a Muslim country I think it would almost feel unnatural not to take part.

Currently I find myself very busy with work. Several teachers from the local high school and I are setting up a cinema club, the aim of which is to show films to different community audiences, like dormitory students or women's groups, in order to spark discussions about relevant social issues like illegal emigration and prostitution. I have no idea how a public discussion about prostitution would go over in Azilal, but I hope to soon find out. I've also been working on starting a chess club at the youth center. For the time being we're meeting on Saturday mornings, but I'd like to expand the hours to give more students a chance to participate (some kids have school on Saturday mornings). Another activity I've been doing lately is called the World Map Project, a popular project for Peace Corps volunteers worldwide. It was started in 1988 by one Barbara Jo White, a volunteer in the Dominican Republic. The idea is to draw and paint a large map of the world on the wall of your choice by copying a map that's provided in the project guidebook. First you draw a grid of 1,568 square blocks on your target wall, identical to the grid overlying the map in the book but a lot larger. Then you copy the map square by square, paint everything, and finally erase the grid. Our map is about five meters wide and two and a half meters tall, and, believe it or not, it actually looks like the world. The project foremen have been two friends of mine, Aziz Anfetouak and Mohamed Elhansali, and working with about ten students from my English classes we completed most of the work during the two weeks of holiday for Aid Elkbir, the Feast of the Sacrifice. I was turned on to the project by Gerry Kaufman, a friend and fellow youth development volunteer near Fes. It's been a great and educational experience so far, and I can see that there will be a real sense of accomplishment when we finish.

(Continued on page 14)

Making Tracks Around Marrakesh

By Ethan Arnheim

I almost stopped running when I saw the man with his bleating sheep. With its legs tied, the animal teetered precariously on the back of the motorcycle. The driver steadied the sheep with one hand, steered with the other, and was unaffected by the sheep's cries or the bystanders he dodged. He was bringing the animal to his family for the upcoming Eid-Al Adha celebration. I was intent on completing the 16th Annual Marathon de Marrakesh, and I gawked at the sight.

Anticipation of such unusual sights led me to register for the race. The greatest obstacle for me was not the endurance required to run a marathon's 26.2 miles. Instead, I struggle to maintain focus during a task that requires hours to complete. Even the most dedicated runner can lose interest while running a marathon. Having never been to Morocco before, I reasoned that I would be fascinated by the surroundings and the three and a half hours – what I hoped would be my finishing time – would pass quickly.

My expectations were a tapestry of my Middle East experiences. I envisioned passing through narrow, cobble stoned streets, with captivating smells found in the souqs of Jerusalem or Damascus. Like my many walks in Sana'a, Yemen I anticipated circling the city's dusty, ancient walls. I figured that there would be throngs of youngsters, a reflection of the exploding demographic rate common in the region.

I was right on only the last count. The race organizers provided water every five kilometers, and runners were swarmed by children clamoring for the half-empty bottle after each water station. I couldn't figure out the appeal of a plastic bottle to the kids, but I was grateful for their presence. A passing high-five to the crowd elicited encouraging cheers. With the exception of truckers frustrated by the closed streets, Marrakshis seemed genuinely fascinated by the runners.

The race never approached the city's walls. It circled the city, passed through the sprawling gardens and orchards built by the King, and around resorts and golf courses. The socioeconomic contrasts were vividly demonstrated. A few kilometers after traversing a palatial estate, runners passed shacks made of corrugated tin siding. To run through the less privileged areas with blithe indifference made me uncomfortable; I, perhaps foolishly, took solace that there are marathons held in places in even more desperate poverty and that the range of international initiatives designed to improve Morocco will help mitigate these disparities.

From a runner's perspective, Marrakesh is an ideal place for a Marathon and it attracts more than half of its participants from abroad. Held annually in January, runners are treated to weather dry and temperate. Although the Atlas Mountains loom in the background, the city is almost completely flat. The race planners have progressed in their organization of the race. Prior participants complained that they were kicked off the course if they did not finish in four hours and numerous thoroughfares were not blocked off, requiring runners to dodge cars. A group from the American Embassy advised me to be grateful for this year's race, which required that we only dart across one active highway.

I didn't quite make my goal of three and a half hours. My traveling companion, Becca Gillespie, a NASA scientist, finished twelfth among the woman's field, a testament to her enviable time of under four hours and that the field of 1600 was largely male. The Moroccan Olympians competing in the race bested our times by nearly two hours. Gracious in victory, two of these professional runners who had come from Fez to participate escorted us to another the perfect Middle Eastern place to ease strained muscles: the hammam.

Ethan Arnheim is an Associate at Development Alternatives, Inc. He was previously the Associate Director of Programs for the Middle East Institute. He has lived in Israel and Yemen and now resides in Washington, DC. You can reach him at <ethanarnheim@gmail.com>.

(Our Man in Morocco - continued from page 12)

A last activity that's been keeping me in motion is a SPA proposal I'm writing with a local neighborhood development association. SPA stands for Small Project Assistance, and is a funding source given by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to the Peace Corps to distribute to its volunteers. The goal of our project is to protect the art of traditional Berber rug-making by teaching young women how to make these rugs. In addition, the theoretical sale of the rugs made in the teaching process will generate income for the women who teach, and for the association, which will use the money to accomplish other neighborhood projects like paving roads and providing electricity to houses that don't have it. The grant we're requesting will be used to purchase three large, high-quality rug looms and enough wool for two months' worth of rugs, as well as to pay the teachers for their work. Once the project is rolling, the sale of each month's rugs will provide money for the next month's wool and the teachers' salaries, making it a sustainable project. All of this works on paper and in my head, but we haven't even gotten the grant yet, so it will be awhile before I know if it works in practice.

Daily life is busy and exciting, and I guess that's one of my favorite things about living in a foreign country. There's always something strange and new happening, and sometimes I still stop and marvel at the fact that it's all happening in Arabic (at least for me; a lot of the local folks speak Berber). I have about ten months to go, and the time seems to pass faster and faster every day. I remember remarking to a friend recently that if I were doing a college year abroad, I would just be getting started, and more importantly I would feel like I was just getting started—the innocent enthusiasm brought on by brand new smells and brand new faces, blank agendas and empty living quarters. That's not at all how I feel now, because that's not at all where I am, but it's funny how different ten months can look depending on your perspective. My thoughts have also been drifting more and more to the question of where my life might be heading after the Peace Corps. Thinking about what I'm going to be doing, while to some degree necessary, makes me feel like I'm getting ready to leave. I don't really like this feeling, because it's not time to go yet. There are still ten months left, a full one eighty-sixth of a seventy year life. These are not to be spent on planning the next ten months, but on steeping myself in the rest of this once in a lifetime circumstance, waking up lively with the new morning dawn, being aware of the time moving on, being aware of each breath as its drawn, and staying right here till the day that I'm gone. That will make for a successful experience.

Jack Sundell is a Peace Corps volunteer currently serving in Azilal. Jack writes periodically about his life in Morocco as a PCV. He can be contacted by email at jacobsundell77@yahoo.com, or by regular mail at B.P. 99 / Azilal 22000 / MOROCCO

(Ash Khabarna - continued from page 3)

worked at the Peace Corps office in Washington and as a social worker in foster care and child welfare." Contact Christy at <dcsheerin@msn.com>.

Anne Herisson-Leplae—Midelt 84-86 is the executive director of the Alliance Française de Milwaukee. Contact Anne at <annehl@hotmail.com>.

David and Merry Fredrick—Rabat 86-90 write "Merry is in charge of Self Help International, a PVO with projects in Ghana and Nicaragua. David is the international admissions specialist at Wartburg College. Contact the Fredricks at <mdfredrick@mchsi.com>.

Jeffrey England—Ksar Tazarine (Errachidia) 95-97 is senior program office at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Contact Jeffrey at <engworld@rocketmail.com>.

Dave McKenna—Marrakech 82-84 is a judge of the Hillsboro (OH) Municipal Court.

Thomas and Margo Wilson—Tangier 71-73 write, "Margo is vice president of the Scottsdale (AZ) Sister Cities Association and chair of the Marrakesh Committee. We are coming close to cementing our sister city relationship with Marrakesh." Contact Thomas and Margo at <mewslp@swlink.net>.

Jerry Bookin-Weiner—Rabat-Sale 71-73 is in the process of moving to the Baltimore/Washington area where he is now the Vice President for Institutional Relations with The Scholar Ship which is a transnational campus at sea where multi-national learning communities engage in the development of global competence by shaping beliefs, attitudes, and values through high quality university level education programs and field experiences. It is backed by Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd., and expects its initial voyage to set sail in January 2007. Partners will be a group of 7-8 colleges and universities world-wide that is in the process of formation now. Students will be recruited world wide. Jerry can be reached at jbookinweiner@aol.com or jbookinweiner@thescholarship.org.

Frances Lyman—Martil 97-99 is retired and living in Ann Arbor, MI. Contact Frances at <flyman@umich.edu>.

(Truth Commission - continued from page 6)
prohibiting "attacks against the monarchy" have led to prison terms for prominent journalists whose newspaper articles investigate royal family matters. The most famous case concerns Ali Lmrabet, editor of the magazines Demain and Doumane, who was sentenced to three years in June 2003 for "insulting the king's person" and "undermining the monarchy." Lmrabet had reported that one of the king's palaces was to be sold to tourist developers.

Even as the new commission meets and passes judgment upon the truths of pre-1999 brutalities, new victims are being created daily by the unchanged, untouchable legal, police and prison apparatus. These new victims fall outside the commission's mandate and compromise its mission.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Beginning in Rabat on December 21-22, 2004, followed by Figuig, Rachidia and Khenifra, with upcoming sessions planned for El Hoceima in the north and Laayoun in the south, the Justice and Reconciliation Commission is holding a series of public hearings featuring victims' oral testimonies broadcast on Moroccan television and posted on the commission website. Although no polls on the numbers of viewers or the effects of the hearings are available, Moroccan newspapers report the profound emotional impact on the viewing public. W omen's accounts are deemed especially moving, perhaps because many are pronounced not in literary Arabic but in darija (Moroccan Arabic dialect) or Amazigh/Berber, the two languages spoken and understood by Moroccans. During the televised hearings, speakers could not name their torturers. Given the extensive literature by political prisoners and numerous articles listing torturers that are published regularly in the Moroccan press, this prohibition reflects less the commission's desire to protect the rights of due process, even for high officials known to have been torturers, than the immense power and reach of television.

Impunity, or the Moroccan state's disinclination to prosecute or even name the perpetrators, has lead to a parallel series of public hearings by various non-governmental organizations in Morocco and Europe. In Rabat on February 12, 2005, the Moroccan Association of Human Rights, despite little publicity, heard testimony from nine people challenging the mandate of the commission to remain silent about perpetrators' names and to avoid human rights abuses committed since Mohammed VI ascended the throne in 1999. Speakers such as El Ghalia Idjini from Laayoun described her own rape as part of systematic sexual attacks against thousands of Sahrawi women, while the Italian wife of Aboulkacem Britel, an Islamist detained following the Casablanca bomb attacks, spoke as well. So did Maria Charaf, wife of Amine Tahani, a Marxist political prisoner who died in 1985 as a result of torture in Derb Moulay Cherif, Casablanca's secret detention center. Charaf had filed for indemnities during the 1999 commission. Currently, she is pursuing a civil action through the Moroccan courts.

Reconciliation occupies a special place in the title, competence and powers of the commission, whose mandate is "to develop and promote a culture of dialogue and to establish foundations for reconciliation directed toward consolidating the democratic transition in our country, reinforce building the rule of law and implanting values of the culture of citizenship and human rights." Unlike the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Moroccan one so far has not talked much about reconciliation. Moroccan perpetrators are under no compulsion to step forward because reconciliation possesses no legal standing to request amnesty or avert prosecution; it is a moral principle incumbent on the victim, not the torturer, as part of a political compromise. The "culture of human rights" and "rule of law," phrases expressing praiseworthy international norms, do not respond to one witness's cry from the heart: "With whom do you want me to reconcile?"

ARCHIVES

While debates rage about the role of the commission in deflecting responsibility away from the government, or worse, its capacity to undermine the rule of law by legitimating the powerlessness of the Moroccan criminal justice system to pursue prosecutions, it is noteworthy that the important daily work of the commission continues with little fanfare. Each request for reparation, mailed or presented in person to the commission, produces a file. Each file adds to the overview of Moroccan history by contributing to the computerized database about violations and torture now accessible according to date, region and even torturers' names. Ordered chronologically, the archive begins with section "A" to designate immediate post-independence political events from 1956 to 1960, moves to section "B" chronicling the 1958-1959 uprisings in the northern Rif region, and proceeds down the decades until the death of King Hassan II, the endpoint of the commission's mandate. Exceptions to the decade-by-decade record are "AH" for the region of the Sahara, where violations among the Sahrawis know no specific date constraints, and "AJ," a catchall category of individual cases not linked to specific years in which uprisings, mass political trials or groups deemed dangerous by the regime are categorized.

While the main working archive of 22,000 files owes its existence and formation to applicants and deponents who met the 2004 commission deadline, more data derive from two additional research archives that consist of more than 8,000 files from the 1999 commission plus those who missed February 13, 2004 deadline (with some overlapping cases) but still filed. At the Rabat headquarters, follow-up procedures by commission statement-takers include additional oral interviews, many audiotaped and videotaped single or group testimony sessions immediately transcribed, and internal videotaped commission sessions organized thematically in the form of day-long witness testimony on such topics as prisons, secret detention centers and deaths of famous political martyrs.

In addition, commission note-takers travel to the

(Continued on page 17)

News from the High Atlas Foundation

By Jason Ben-Meir (Rabat/Marrakech 93-95)

Dear Friends,

We hope you are having a wonderful spring!

The High Atlas Foundation and our partners would like to update the community of Friends of Morocco on the progress of our projects that aim to bring prosperity to a country we all love.

Trees, Trees, and Trees: We are very thankful for the opportunity to have helped to secure the donation of 7,000 fruit tree for ten villages near Asni in the Marrakech Province. U.S. Ambassador Thomas Riley played the critical role in obtaining the funding from USAID to purchase the trees. Our profound gratitude to him and the folks at USAID for their dedicated service to Morocco.

Gala Dinner Fundraiser: We rescheduled the gala dinner that honors Morocco's Ambassador Aziz Mekouar for September 2006, to coincide with the United Nation's General Assembly. The gala will be held in New York and we are very excited about making this event inclusive to all people from all walks of life so that together we can reach the ambitious goal of raising $1 million for projects designed by rural communities. Please contact us if you can volunteer your time to help organize what promises to be an evening to remember.

Morocco's rural communities regularly rank tree planting, potable water, and irrigation as their top development priorities and we thank you for your continued support in helping them achieve their goals.

Friends, we ask you for a tax-deductible donation that will make a difference in lives of the Moroccan people. A little goes a long way. Please help us help others.

Warm regards,

The High Atlas Foundation
P.O. Box 21081
Park West Station
New York, NY 10025

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Tax ID#: 85-0478294

(In Memoriam - continued from page 3)

business led to the creation of the Door County Economic Development Corp., which continues to work bolstering existing businesses, creating new economic opportunities and creating jobs.

"When I think of Doc Wright, the sheer number of years of public service - alderman, mayor - stands out," said William Chaudoir, director of DCEDC since its inception in 1989. "Face it, being mayor is the hardest job in the city."

And regardless of the issues, Wright "ran one heck of a good meeting," Chaudoir said. "He was a parliamentarian and really kept things going."

While not a force behind the waterfront redevelopment, Wright and Edgar Allingham, the city's first administrator, engineered the last move to open up the shorefront where Stone Harbor Resort now stands. To clear the area, Wright negotiated a move that took the Department of Natural Resources building off the East Side lumberyard docks and put the offices in a new building next to the launch basin built at Sawyer Park.

Beyond the details of government, Wright was a "gracious" host to formal visitors to the city and served as "an excellent ambassador for the city," Chaudoir said.

Wright was diplomatic enough to oversee the Sturgeon Bay bicentennial celebration in 1976 and to serve as United Way chairman in 1977.

Wright's humanitarian spirit reached a zenith between his two mayoral careers, when in 1991, he and his wife, the former Barbara Stone, joined the U.S. Peace Corps and served a two-year tour in Morocco. Overseas, Wright put to work the skills he honed since 1960 as a veterinarian and since the 1970s as a politician.

Often, Wright would stop at City Hall dressed in his white veterinary coat while en route to or from a farm call.

"With Doc, you always knew where you stood," Lasee said. "He wasn't shy about telling me when I was wrong. He always tried to do what he could, and once he made up his mind, he didn't vacillate, and I had to respect him for that."

As years passed, Wright got out of office and Lasee stuck with state politics, becoming Senate president. Their paths crossed coincidentally a couple weeks ago.

Lasee was shopping in De Pere and stopped to help an elderly couple get a wheelchair out of their car and help the gentleman into it. It wasn't until they were all exiting the store that the woman went up to Lasee and introduced herself as Mrs. Wright.

The meeting triggered a memory of another public works project in Sturgeon Bay, Lasee said. Back in the 1970s, Third Avenue went through a major reconstruction, and for the grand opening, Wright challenged Lasee to a race on elephants on the new pavement.

"It was like riding the roof of a house in an earthquake," Lasee said. "I remember looking over and Doc's eyes were really big, and I think he beat me."

Whether racing an elephant, riding his Harley across the country or taking on a political opponent, Wright always had both eyes open. And a lot of times, he won.

(Truth Commission - continued from page 15)

applicant's home, and teams of field workers are sent for several weeks to regions notoriously hard hit by human rights abuses. During January 2005, 20 commission researchers resided in villages throughout Azilal province, the Berber/Tamazight-speaking Middle Atlas tribal region, where anti-government uprisings resulted in devastating army reprisals. The 1999 Indemnity Commission had introduced Berber speakers to the vocabulary of "dahaya," or victims. The 2004-2005 team of commission investigators report that inhabitants dubbed them "Ait Ta'assufat," the tribe of arbitrary violations, suggesting sardonically that interviewers were there either to uncover or perpetrate the rule of the arbitrary.

Government interviewers faced multiple problems in assessing the stories of individual victims when they were detached from the layered history of revolts that characterized a state of war between the monarchy and this Berber region. Moreover, depositions and forms mailed to the commission had been mass-produced by official village scribes (katib umumi) who wrote in literary Arabic on behalf of an illiterate or non-Arabic-speaking population. Both scribe and victim documented abuses in the most general way without dates of imprisonment or names of prisons or torturers, and the depositions were especially silent concerning the subject of rape. The commission's extended sojourn in Azilal resulted in several thousand more applications filed past the deadline, but with more precise claims describing torture, arbitrary detention, state expropriation of goods, collective punishment and sexual assault, thereby raising the possibility of rape as a military tactic against the population.

REMEDIES

For the moment, although Morocco's Justice and Reconciliation Commission is expected to request an extension to present their findings and recommendations, two crucial remedies are offered. The first is financial reparation in keeping with the majority of victims' preference, checked off in the commission forms, for indemnification over court cases, tribunals or memorializations. One-time, lump sum payments to victims are envisioned, because all concerned lack confidence in the Moroccan bureaucracy's ability to disburse efficiently and without corruption the monthly payments that would otherwise be preferred. Instead of collective indemnification, the commission could recommend rehabilitating targeted regions with roads and other infrastructure and transforming detention centers into community centers.

Second, what appears to be a minimal commission accomplishment -- collecting and tabulating witness testimonies by the enormous number of Moroccans eligible for reparations -- will prove to be its most powerful legacy. Such descriptively ahistorical, yet powerful accumulations of testimony are advocated by José Zalaquett, a lawyer and member of the Chilean Truth Commission: "I would like to draw the distinction between revealing the truth about secret crimes and interpreting the political processes that led to such situations. The distinction between fact and interpretation has become very important in the working of truth commissions. They should largely concentrate on facts, which may be proved, whereas differences about historical interpretations will always exist. The report can make recommendations by pointing to the immediate context of the atrocities, but not to the remote context. This is not the place for an historical analysis of class struggles."

Zalaquett argues for a legal, positivist approach anchored by the research imperative of hearing testimony combined with additional empirical evidence in government archives, when made available. Truth comes about through small, detailed steps, Zalaquett and the Moroccan commission imply, that reconstruct the world of perpetrators as well as reconstruct victims' lives through investigation, acknowledgment and indemnification. In this way, a truth commission need not preempt punishment, but may precede civil suits or even criminal prosecutions. To the criticism that Morocco has experienced no regime change or transition to democracy that heralded the creation of other internationally acclaimed truth commissions, the Moroccan archive claims to be laying a foundation for a society that is attempting to correct itself based on the fact of victim testimonies. Most evident is the remarkably high quality of researchers, interviewers, investigators, note-takers, archivists, psychiatrists and medical staff (many themselves eligible to claim reparation) that attests to and underpins a necessary, future renewal of social science research in Morocco.

Testimony and archiving are the main processes of the

(Continued on page 19)

Thank You! *Merci!* شكرا

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

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News from Morocco

$1.64 billion U.S. dollar investments in Morocco in 2004

Investments in Morocco in 2004 have reached, according to temporary estimates, MAD 14 billion (around USD 1.64 Billion), said a senior official in the Finance Ministry.

In an interview published by Al Moustakil weekly, Hassan Bernoussi explained that the final value of investments in 2004 was not yet counted, saying it could reach MAD 15 billion (around USD 1.76 billion).

He added that the sale of 16% of the capital of Maroc-Telecom will be listed in the accounts of 2005.

Bernoussi recalled that the World Bank report on foreign investments in 2003 ranked Morocco at the top of Arab and African countries. He said stability of economic laws, the geographic location, infrastructures and the conditions of business encourage investors to settle in Morocco.

He cited, nonetheless, that some problems discourage foreign investments, saying public authorities are examining them seriously.

Over 80% of food intoxication in Morocco due to fast food

Over 80% of food intoxication cases in Morocco are due to meals taken in fast food and meals prepared and served outside the house, revealed, on Saturday, president of the Moroccan Institution for Toxicology (SMT).

Larbi Idrissi, who was speaking at the second national day on toxicology, added that 20% of food intoxication cases result from the consumption of meals prepared and served at home.

According to SMT president, these statistics do not reflect the real number of intoxication cases because many are not reported to health services.

He said food intoxication cases are on the rise, explaining that they are mainly due to food contaminated with a disease agent (bacteria, virus, parasites), or chemical products (pesticides...). He said the lack of training of the staff working in the restaurant business and the non respect of the basic elements of hygiene are often at the origin of intoxication cases.

He noted that the majority of intoxication could be avoided if hygienic rules were respected.

Idrissi said the national day on intoxication aims at raising the awareness of medical staff, professionals and consumers in general about this problem and about prevention measures.

Morocco invited to Cannes Film Festival

A new program entitled "All the Cinemas of the World" will be inaugurated this year in Cannes Festival and will be held from May 11 to May 22. This program is aimed at presenting the cinematographic creation of a number of selected countries.

Marrakech reports that the list of countries that were invited to take part in the first edition of this project also includes Austria, Sri-Lanka and several Latin American countries.

Over 2 million disabled persons in Morocco (WHO)

Morocco counts over 2 million disabled persons, that is 7% of the population, revealed figures released by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Figures showed that 90% of disabled people in Morocco live in impoverished areas, 82% are uneducated, 57% are unable to work, 34% are unemployed and that 98% do not have a dole or a health insurance.

Celebrating the International Day of Disabled Persons (March 30th), Morocco has reiterated the importance to promote the situation of persons with special needs who endure harsh life conditions.

To this aim, the country has set up governmental institutions dedicated to promoting the situation of these persons and to promoting their social integration. In 1995, the government established the high body for disabled people to draw up a comprehensive action plan to help this category.

Besides, Morocco has made many efforts to promote the economic and social situation of disabled people under a plan that identified realms of intervention, including awareness, prevention, professional integration, schooling and legislation.

The government has established five acoustic libraries, while seven others are due to be built part of a programme that aims at providing universities with infrastructures dedicated to blind and amblyopic people.

On the other hand, a law was enacted to take into account the needs of disabled persons in urban architecture, transports and telecommunications.

Free trade agreement with USA will become effective in July 2005

Sources have confirmed that Morocco's free trade agreement with USA will become effective in July 2005. The agreement was supposed to start to be active seven months ago, but delays were caused to deal with objections from the American side. Americans want the Intellectual Property laws of Morocco to be amended before they start implementing the agreement.

Morocco has agreed to give guarantees that its IP laws will go under real amendments in order to comply with recent developments in the intellectual property area. All amendments are supposed to take place before the end of 2005. Morocco is keen for the agreement to become effective in order to start benefiting from custom exemptions for their products, mainly fabrics, agricultural and fisheries products.

Over 200 women die while giving birth in Morocco

227 women per 10,000 die in Moroccan while giving birth according to figures of the Moroccan Ministry of Health.

Released on the eve of the World Health Day, organized under the motto "Make Every Mother and Child Count", the

(Continued on page 19)

(News from Morocco - continued from page 18)
figures show that neonatal mortality reaches 27 per one thousand live births, and mortality of children under 5 years old is 47 per one thousand.

The total fertility rate is barely 2.5 children per woman, and life expectancy has appreciably increased to stand at 70 years in 2001. On the other hand, the 2004 census shows that the demographic growth has been slashed to 1.4% owing to the development of the life conditions, but also to the adoption of an efficient family planning program.

Health ministry statistics also indicate that 90% of the children between 12 and 13 months are vaccinated against tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, tetanus (since 2002, Morocco is ranked by WHO and UNICEF among countries having eliminated neonatal tetanus), whooping cough, measles, and recently the introduction of the vaccination against hepatitis B and rubella.

World Health Organization (WHO) in Morocco, Raouf Benammar, told Le Matin du Sahara et du Maghreb daily that despite limited resources Morocco holds a "very honorable position" at the international level that is above even richer countries.

Benammar said that, for better performance, Morocco needs to integrate its health system in the comprehensive socio-economic development program, noting that Morocco's expenditures in the health field remain beneath WHO requirements.

According to a report released by the WHO on the same occasion, "about 530,,000 women a year die in pregnancy or childbirth, more than three million babies are stillborn, more than four million newborns die within the first days or weeks of life, and altogether 10.6 million children a year die before their fifth birthday".

Through the 2005 Word Health Day, WHO aims to raise the awareness of the political organisms about the scale of morbidity and mortality among children and mothers, the sufferings they endure and the consequences of such a plight on the general health and socio-economic development.

37% of Moroccan enterprises run by women

37% of Moroccan enterprises operating in services are run by women, revealed President of the Association for women heads of enterprise (AFEM).

Saloua Karkiri Belkeziz noted in an interview published by 'Al Alam' daily that women run 31% of enterprises in the trade sector and 22% in industry, noting that most of these enterprises have been set up since less than five years.

On the other hand, she said, 30% of their activities are operated at the local level, 44% at the national level, while 21% operate in exports.

Belkeziz said many obstacles are still facing Moroccan enterprises, notably related to the opening of borders, the liberalization of world trade and upgrading. She added that important financial means are needed to face the new requirements of the market.

AFEM president also highlighted the need to modernize production means which would help develop products and improve their ability to compete with foreign products.

According to Belkeziz, Morocco's conclusion of Free Trade Agreements will help enterprises improve productivity and develop management methods to take up the challenge of competition.

Judeo-Moslem Committee to hold first meeting in Marrakech

The Judeo-Moslem Permanent Committee is to hold its first meeting on April 5-6 in the Moroccan town of Marrakech, The Swiss "Hommes de Paroles" Foundations said in a communiqué released in the Belgian capital city.

The committee was created at the first World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace held last January in Brussels, under the aegis of King Mohammed VI and King Albert II of the Belgians, by the Swiss foundation. It was created to empower the Judeo-Moslem dialog so that it reflect and act in to find a way out to the problems involving Islam and Judaism.

The committee's 2005 agenda slates the working out of programs that combine debates and on the terrain actions.

(Truth Commission - continued from page 17)
commission to narrate human rights violations and to offer narratives of change and justice. Morocco's commission controls the circumstances of public testimony vigilantly and coercively but less so the relationship between the archive and acts of torture and disappearance. The hope is that the final commission reports, due by the end of 2005 if not before, will answer questions of what happened, speculate on why it happened and usher in a culture of transparency by pointing to those responsible. Their identities are housed, but not hidden, in the archive, open to victims but also to future historians and researchers.

Skeptics who point to the anti-terrorism legislation or the circumscribed mandate of the Justice and Reconciliation Commission raise important questions about the sincerity of the Moroccan state's commitment to human rights. Nonetheless, victims who testify to atrocities, NGO activists who name perpetrators and the archiving function of the commission itself all evince a belief in human rights work as a rational and practical endeavor -- not simply a means of beautifying the regime in the eyes of the international community. When ordinary Moroccans share this belief, then the act of documenting abuses will diminish the effects of a century in which rights have been systematically trampled on by colonial domination and indigenous repression.

Susan Slyomovics is a professor of anthropology at MIT and author of The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco *[University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005*

(Ambassador - continued from page 1)
slightly hoarse voice after a diplomatic function one warm Casablanca night.

"Where do we fly to, to fight this battle? The world. It's realizing we can't afford to let large segments of the population become disenfranchised," he said. "Morocco is not the No. 1 place for terrorism, but you've got to do what you can to fight back."

A framed photo of a young Riley in shaggy brown hair, mustache and red flannel shirt sits in an overlooked corner of the ambassador's official residence. He is sitting with three friends on a couch that screams 1975, the year he graduated from Harvard Business School. One can just see the edge of the cinder-block shelves, a coffee table made of old tires. One of the friends is a very, very young George W. Bush.

Harvard was a critical time in Riley's life. Before graduate school, he was well on his way to being a cog in some corporation's machine. A native of Atherton and Hillsborough whose father owned a successful precision tool company in San Francisco, as a young man he developed a penchant for making charts -- hours slept, hours worked, hours reading. He studied engineering at Stanford University, where he remembers telling an attractive young woman that his major life goal was landing a job with a good enough wage to support a family.

That was more or less exactly the kind of job he landed out of college -- as a "configuration manager" at Boeing, a job that entailed sitting at a desk identical to a thousand other desks and "keeping track of the rivets." His approach to his future was similarly systematic.

"I had an index card, and I had written down what must have been the first 20 years of my career," he said. "I was going to go to business school, then I was going to go to Corporation 1 for five years, then I was going to go to Corporation 2 for five years ... then I was going to have my own company. It was all worked out."

That changed in graduate school, where Riley discovered a kind of intellectual freedom he had never imagined -- and formed lasting personal connections.

George Bush and Riley became close friends at Harvard, going on double dates, playing together on Harvard's football team and spending so much time together that many assumed they were roommates.

Riley's memories of their friendship are remarkable only in their conventionality; he recalled fondly the time a clearly hero-struck Bush invited him over to listen to a tape of one of his father's speeches -- George H.W. Bush then was a special envoy to China -- and the time Bush reacted to a friend referring to Riley as "T" for Tom by declaring that Riley needed a nickname with more substance -- "like T-Bone."

For years the two stayed in touch -- Riley, a man of many acquaintances but few very close friends, included Bush in the latter list, each year sending him a birthday card. Bush went on to dabble in oil exploration and baseball; Riley strayed far from his index-card plan, taking an out-of-the- blue offer to join TRW Corp. in Europe for four years, then returning to California to co-found a company selling construction equipment in Africa.

His success allowed him to support his family along with his wife, Nancy, a polylingual tax attorney he married in 1977, and they were able to send their two daughters to college -- Julia, born in 1985, to Duke, and Aili, born in 1982, to USC.

Riley still had a little of the old cog in him -- his wife recalls a nurse's consternation when her husband offered a graph of her contractions at their daughter's birth -- but having reached the level of success he had aimed for in college, he discovered he still wasn't satisfied to just be part of a successful corporation. The world was changing.

"This is just when Apple was starting, the PC was happening, there were semiconductors. There was a kind of Silicon Valley," he said. "I had friends from Stanford, I had venture capitalists. ... It was crazy. I was selling roadbuilding equipment and the world was changing right outside my door, almost literally."

Riley plunged into the new world, founding and acting as CEO for a series of companies offering everything from automated building controls to Internet- based training to wireless photo delivery. He succeeded -- so much so that when Bush came back into his life, Riley was in a position to be of service.

They hadn't spoken for some time when Bush announced he was running for President, but Riley still dropped everything to help. He invested money in the campaign, and far more sweat equity -- raising enough to qualify him as a member of the "Pioneer Club" of $100,000-plus fund-raisers.

It wasn't really about politics, Riley said. The self-described "California Republican" conceded that aside from his preference for small government, many of his values (pro-choice, pro-gun control) are closer to those of the Democratic party. It was about friendship, the personal connection.

"Growing up in California ... politics is distant," he said. "To know somebody who you liked, who obviously I trusted and I respected, is going to run for president -- I just thought, I want to help."

It was at a California fund-raiser that Bush spotted Riley, calling him out with a quick, chipper, "T-Bone!" Bush had grayed, but looked much as he did in that Harvard photo. Riley wore glasses but no longer had the mustache, showing lines deepening around his mouth. But while his hair was pulling back a touch from his temples, it was thick, brown and wavy, and his wiry figure remained trim, thanks to Pacific Athletic Club and the occasional triathlon.

The old friends chatted briefly about the campaign. Then, as Bush turned to go, he made a startling farewell.
"OK, see you -- Mr. Ambassador," he said. Riley, recalling the moment, shrugged. "He may say that to 10,000 people, too; I don't know."

Bush was serious. Soon, the White House called and suggested Riley start thinking about where he might like to serve. True to form, he turned to a spreadsheet, listing candidate countries and sorting them by language, size, gross national product, importance to U.S. interests. One

(Continued on page 21)

(Ambassador - continued from page 20)
name kept bubbling to the top of the list, a nation he'd never seen, save on a brief vacation spent on beaches and in tourist districts: Morocco.

Dubbed "Villa America" by a vacationing Richard Nixon in 1982, the ambassador's official residence in Rabat is spacious and contemporary, with guest rooms, a restaurant-quality kitchen, a formal dining room and a backyard pool. In the living room, a picture Riley's daughter scribbled in childhood is tucked among abstract masterpieces from Bay Area galleries placed in the home by the State Department's Art in Embassies program. On a table near the picture lies a wooden board of a type used by Islamic students to write verses of the Koran; decades of writing and erasing have given it a polished sheen.

There are a chef and a butler and two liquor cabinets -- one for Riley's personal gatherings, which are paid for out of pocket, and one for official events where at least 51 percent of the attendees are Moroccan. Pay for the household staff is similarly divided.

One barely notices amid the opulence the unusually thick bedroom door, the windows covered with steel shutters, two radios tucked away in corners of the master bedroom. The leather seats and shiny black finish on the official BMW allow one to overlook doors almost too heavy to close with one hand, and windows thick and sealed. The home is lined with armed Moroccan guards who serve a dual purpose: to keep intruders out, and to keep Riley in. Or at least accompanied -- something he discovered when he received a firm talking-to after taking an unaccompanied jaunt to the embassy club with his wife. Since then, his bodyguards confide, they keep a careful eye on him, even sending a guard with him to his door to ensure he goes inside. It's a strange confinement for Riley, an athletic man who used to bike to work and at one point dabbled with auditioning for "Survivor" but who now must confine his workout to a treadmill. "I do sort of miss getting in the car -- getting in your own car -- and driving off whenever you want to, and going off and playing golf and going to the store or something like that. But not enough that it really makes a big difference," he said. "It's a wonderful life. I have no complaints at all."

When he finally was allowed to tell people about his new appointment, one of the first people Riley called was an old friend of his family: Shirley Temple Black, the former child movie star who went on to become a respected ambassador to Ghana and the United Nations. Riley asked her what the process of becoming an ambassador entailed.

"The process is very clear," she told him. "The president calls you, he tells you where you're going, and you say, 'Yes, sir.' "

It was an inspiring phrase that brought home to him that what he was embarking on was not a perk, but a chance to serve his country. But it didn't tell him much about what he would be doing. Some ambassadors become deeply involved with sending reports off to Washington, sharing information they gather at embassy functions. Some treat the post largely as a social responsibility, hosting functions and attending black-tie dinners. A few have been known to take months-long golfing expeditions.

Riley fell back on what he knew.

His experimentation with bringing a Silicon Valley sensibility to Rabat began within weeks of his arrival, when he asked for a whiteboard to use in meetings. Nobody knew what he was talking about. Finally, they brought him a tiny dry-erase board, the size that hangs on a kitchen wall. This wasn't just a matter of office supplies, he realized -- it was a difference of business culture. In Silicon Valley, Riley had used whiteboards constantly, soliciting ideas from employees, tearing his own apart, conducting a form of management where the CEO's words were as subject to the will of an errant eraser as an intern's.

In Rabat, the culture was defined by the words, "Yes, Mr. Ambassador."

After a few months, he took action.

"I said, 'We're going to do an offsite.' I wanted to do a Steve Jobs- beach-T-shirt-motto-gifts-walk-through-the-forest-catch-each-other kind of thing -- without any of that stuff. But you can't do it in a conference room. " The event -- held in a hotel overlooking the Atlantic -- successfully transplanted a bit of Mountain View into Morocco. Embassy staff played along in their polo shirts as Riley put them through the paces: a quiz night where the answers were embarrassing personal tidbits gleaned from spouses. A briefing session where at the last minute Riley mixed members of departments to give one another presentations.

Did it work? Riley shrugged -- at the end of the day, nobody was going to say anything to him but "Yes, Mr. Ambassador." But embassy staffers said they liked the infusion of Silicon Valley informality and Riley's personal touches: the face cards he made of each staffer so he knew them by name when they arrived, the goofy poem he wrote and recited at the Christmas party.

More important, the embassy staffers said, Riley's California business background made him the right person at the right time in the right place: Morocco, at a time when it teetered between hope and disaster.

Casablanca -- "Caza" to the locals -- is home to the Hassan II Mosque, built with traditional handcrafted tile and filigree but on an astonishing scale: 25,000 can pray inside, 80,000 in the courtyard, and the minaret is 700 feet tall.

At midday on Friday, the holiest day for prayer, the mosque draws crowds of the faithful from across the city and beyond. Among them one recent day were two young women, each 18, old friends born in Casablanca -- who walked toward the mosque, giggling arm in arm over a private joke.

The two were similar enough to be mistaken as sisters. But while Marim Rouhi wore a long coat and a hijab wrap neatly covering her hair, Sadia Saifi's dark tresses hung below her collar, and her jacket stopped just below the belt line of her close-fitting jeans.

"It's not that I'm not faithful. I'm faithful. But I don't think [a scarf] is required in scripture," Saifi said.

Her friend disagreed. "I'm convinced I have to wear it, because it keeps people from looking," Rouhi said. "[But]

(Continued on page 22)

(Ambassador = continued from page 21)
people should be free to do what they want to do."

Saifi shrugged. "It's not an issue," she said. "Frankly, between us, we've never really talked about it."

For many Moroccans, that is the spirit of their nation: an easy tolerance, even within official bounds of religion and tradition. A common Moroccan saying is, "Nothing is permitted; everything is tolerated."

Perched at the northwest corner of Africa, the nation is in many ways the crossroads of the world, bridging Africa and Europe, ocean and desert, Atlantic and Mediterranean, East and West, Christianity and Islam, tradition and modernity.

Today, history has left Morocco a remarkable cultural stew, with streets offering French colonial villas and mosques with square minarets filled with people in both business suits and traditional hooded jebella robes speaking two, three, four or more languages -- Moroccan magazines have been known to show editorial cartoons where you must speak three languages to get the punch line.

There have been indications of unrest amid the tolerance. Embassy employees more than a decade ago were shocked to see thousands protest the first Gulf War -- thousands more protested the second. Surveys of Moroccans have found attitudes about the United States more similar to Saudi Arabia than to France, with more people describing Osama bin Laden as a popular world leader than Tony Blair or Bush.

And in the 2002 election, before the bombing, Moroccan voters shook the country's political structure by helping the Islamist Party of Justice and Democracy triple its representation in Morocco's parliament, giving it the third-largest block despite the party agreeing to a royal limit on its level of participation.

But many outside observers, and Moroccans, saw Morocco's changes more as expressions of dissatisfaction with U.S. policies than any genuine dislike for the West or support of terrorism.

They saw Morocco's ambivalence neatly summed up in a joke popular around the first Gulf War: The good news, the joke went, was that Morocco had developed a Scud missile that could hit the United States. The bad news was that the missile couldn't leave the ground because too many Moroccans were holding on for the ride.

Then came May 16, and the world discovered another Morocco that had opinions of its own.

The children's voices echoed off the concrete walls and dirt floor of their schoolhouse as they chanted lessons that would be important to them in coming life: first the alphabet, then the Koran. On the wall was an Arabic proverb: "He who teaches me a single word, I'll be his slave forever."

In May 2003, the building that now houses the "School of the Light" was a tiny, unregistered mosque. It was here that the bombers reportedly came the day before their deadly task to pray one last time.

They came from the nearby shantytown of Carriere Thomas, a warren of homes built over the decades out of concrete, sheet metal, scraps and garbage. The Moroccans call it a bidonville, for the cans -- bidon in French -- and plastic bottles sometimes used for siding and shingles.

Over the years, as rural Moroccans have fled drought-stricken villages in the hinterlands for the promise of work in the city, bidonvilles have sprung up around Casablanca, Rabat, Fez and Tangier. The larger ones, like Carriere Thomas, have tens of thousands of residents, with small shops, mosques and schools -- but often without water, sewage, transportation or hope.

The Moroccan government has recently embarked on a new program in the bidonvilles, upgrading some with water and electricity, straightening streets, establishing ownership of houses and demolishing the most rickety structures after reimbursing the owner. In others they are helping residents move to relatively modern Western-style apartment buildings built by the government.

But there are many bidonvilles and only so many resources. Carriere Thomas' streets are still filled with young men without hope, just like those who turned themselves into walking weapons that May. Nobody supported the violence -- at least not publicly. But many said they understood what had happened.

"Our sons are going mad because they have no jobs," said Kbira Kankouri, a mother of five sons ages 5 to 26. She called out her 24-year-old, a smiling young man, his body twisted into uselessness by a painful birth defect. Doctors have prescribed him a slew of medicines, Kankouri said, but just one - - carbamazepine, a specialized pain reliever -- is about 106 dirhams a box, or roughly $12 -- enough to feed her family for a week. "[My oldest son] tried to go illegally abroad, but they caught them and brought them back. We saw none of what the government promised. He has a computer degree but no job. They promised a house and we have no house," she said. In Spain, even an unskilled illegal laborer can earn enough in a day to pay for a week's worth of carbamazepine.

On the edge of Carriere Thomas, in a muddy no-man's-land of sheep, chickens and trash, Mourad Haimed remarked on how the fruitlessness of a job search in Morocco drove his brothers to Spain.

Thousands of Moroccans every year board rickety boats and try to cross the narrow Strait of Gibraltar, and hundreds die in the attempt. The constant flow led the monthly Parisian journal Le Monde Diplomatique to proclaim in 2002 that "Morocco is to Europe as Mexico is to the United States."

It's an apt comparison. A third of Morocco's population is younger than 15. Half of those older than 15 are illiterate, a rate even higher among women. Per capita income is roughly $1,200 per year, and 1 out of 5 urban Moroccans is unemployed. A similar number subsists on about $1 per day. Despite continuing reforms, Morocco's middle class is small compared with the privileged and the poor, and struggling with tax laws that leave them paying a disproportionate share.

Haimed, too, had tried to slip into Spain, but was caught en route. All they did, he said, was ship him back to Carriere Thomas -- punishment enough. Haimed was 25, the same age as many of the bombers, and he remembered them well. "They were like everybody else. We played football

(Ambassador - continued from page 22)

with them. They were friends with everybody," he said. "They all had an education, but they had no jobs."

He looked out across the muddy swath. "I have no answers," he said. "I keep thinking, but I have no answers."

Moroccans united after the bombings, holding mass rallies of defiance against fear and papering the walls with posters featuring the red hand of Fatima -- an ancient symbol to ward off the evil eye -- and the words "touchez pas ma pays": Don't touch my country.

But the rest of the world began looking to Morocco as a possible exporter of terrorism. Moroccans were suspected in the bombing of a Madrid train, in the assassination of a Dutch filmmaker and found among the foreign troops battling Americans in Fallujah in September. Some even recalled that Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called 20th hijacker in the Sept. 11 attacks now awaiting trial, is Moroccan.

Their association with international terrorism frustrates and even offends many Moroccans, who are quick to note that in many of these cases, including Moussaoui, the alleged assailants were second- or third-generation immigrants who grew up in France, Spain or the Netherlands. Yet while many Moroccans insist the country has no history of fundamentalism or extremism -- save a brief dalliance with Saudi Wahhabism in the 1970s, when the hard-line Sunni sect was seen as an antidote to the political Shiism that rocked Iran – a visit to the mosques of the working-class slums and bidonvilles outside the cities on the eve of the bombing found a different reality.

Reda El Abbadi, a former journalist for the Moroccan magazine Le Journal, had interviewed an up-and-coming young cleric who went by the name Abu Hafs about six months before the bombing.

An energetic and forceful man in his mid-20s, Abu Hafs met El Abbadi at his office on the outskirts of Fez, and for more than an hour bragged that since the Sept. 11 attacks his mosque was filled every Friday and his taped sermons sold as easily as those of any Wahhabi imam from Saudi Arabia. Abu Hafs called the Sept. 11 hijackers heroes and excoriated Moroccan imams and officials who sent condolences to the United States -- comments dangerously close to takfirism, a philosophy holding that Muslims who fail to participate in jihad are apostates. It is also a unifying principle of global radical Islam.

Abu Hafs himself was arrested shortly before the May 16 attacks for inciting violence; after the attacks he was convicted of being a spiritual leader of the terrorist cell and a link to al Qaeda and sentenced to 30 years in prison in Morocco. Thousands of other suspected Islamists were rounded up after May 16, many convicted, others allegedly tortured, drawing sharp criticism by international human rights groups.

Today, in the gritty neighborhoods where Abu Hafs preached, many men still wear the Pakistani-style baggy pants and long shirts favored by Moroccan fundamentalists who fought the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Few would speak with a Western reporter; those who did universally rejected the kind of violence used Sept. 11 and May 16. Residents of a bidonville in the area recalled with relief the sweeping arrests that followed the May 16 attacks. "We were very uncomfortable when they were here," said Hachmi el Majdaoui, a 47-year-old farmer. "After what happened they disappeared overnight."

But that is no reassurance for Abbadi.

"They don't show up, but it's even more dangerous," he said. "There is nothing more dangerous than an Islamist without a beard."

The bombings were a wake-up call -- not only in Morocco," said Wayne Bush, the deputy chief of mission in Morocco. "They were also, I think, a wake- up call for Washington." A member of the Foreign Service since age 22, Bush is no relation to the president, as he has had to make clear on more than one occasion.

Bush is Riley's No. 2 man in Morocco, with broad organizational authority in the embassy. When Riley is out of the country, Bush assumes the ambassador's powers as charge d'affaires. With a life committed to the Foreign Service, Bush is always pleased to see a fellow career officer named ambassador, but he believes that as a political appointee Riley brings two traits to Morocco a Foreign Service officer wouldn't: a personal connection to the president -- critical in Moroccan culture, where such connections often mean more than a good resume -- and a business background that no Foreign Service officer could match.

Bush was named deputy chief of mission before Riley was named ambassador, and was in Washington, D.C., awaiting transfer to Rabat, when the May 16 bombing happened – giving him a firsthand look at the American response to the crisis.

"Here was one of our allies in the region, a country that was ... moderate, tolerant, a country that has historically tried to play a constructive role in terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Bush said. "But here was terrorism appearing to take root even in Morocco."

Soon after the bombings, Bush was named to a State Department policy coordinating committee with representatives of the various government agencies, tasked to make recommendations to the department heads that advise the president.

Those recommendations were unprecedented in Bush's long experience. American military assistance to Morocco doubled. Economic cooperation quadrupled. In June, Morocco was named a major non-NATO ally; and in July Congress approved a free trade agreement with Morocco -- America's first with an African country. And in November, Morocco was the only Arab country invited to apply for Millennium Challenge Account funds, a multibillion dollar pot of U.S. aid designed to reward good governance in poor countries.

Morocco's government, too, reacted to the bombing, arresting thousands of suspected extremists -- but also accelerating the process of reforms it had begun in 1996. Morocco now has a Justice and Reconciliation Commission, designed to compensate victims of past false arrests,

(Continued on page 24)

(Ambassador - continued from page 23)

headed by a former political prisoner. Women's rights improved dramatically under a January 2004 family law reform, and journalists in Morocco say their freedoms have expanded surprisingly -- while occasional arrests for criticizing the crown are still reported, one newspaper recently published the king's salary without consequences, and another even published a political cartoon featuring the monarch.

The actions on each side of the Atlantic pointed toward a single goal: to stabilize Morocco's business, social and government infrastructure to encourage foreign investment and allow Moroccan businesses to access the global market. The formula is one the State Department hopes can work broadly: stabilizing nations by offering potential extremists better social, political and economic opportunities.

In Morocco, it was the embassy's job to help Morocco turn the new flood of resources into opportunities.

The embassy plan is complex, but much of it can be summed up in two programs. One is the free trade agreement, approved by Morocco's parliament this past January and expected to take effect within a month, which eliminates tariffs on 95 percent of industrial and commercial goods. Moroccan officials hope it will open new export possibilities for products such as wine, handicrafts and olive oil while luring businesses with the promise of ready labor and access to the world's biggest markets; embassy staffers hope the requirements built into the agreement will stabilize Morocco's economy and help it comply with labor, environmental and anti-corruption laws.

The embassy is at the same time supporting microfinancing programs -- one of the hottest ideas in 21st century international aid. A typical microfinance program is operating in Douar Lhsasna, a tiny village on the outskirts of Casablanca. Like many rural areas, Lhsasna has struggled in recent years, as a series of droughts decimated unirrigated farmland, driving many to seek their fortunes in the bidonvilles or in Europe -- where U.S. and Moroccan officials say they can become disaffected and disenfranchised, easy recruits for criminal or terrorist organizations.

"Everyone who had the opportunity to get something in the city left," said Fatiha Bensaad, a 40-year-old mother of three. "Those of us who had nothing in the city stayed here."

With few options, Bensaad might have joined the migration. But three years ago, a Moroccan organization called the Zakoura Foundation organized her and some of her neighbors into a microfinance group and gave them small loans -- about $5 to start -- to be paid back with interest in a matter of weeks. The term was short, but with neighbors supporting one another, it was enough for Bensaad to buy a calf, raise it to maturity and sell it for meat.

Then she bought two calves. Now she has three -- and between them, her small but tidy home and her children, who help pick wool and feed the cows, she is content. And the bidonvilles no longer beckon.

"Life is never easy," she said. "They're helping us, and we appreciate it. We'll pay them back even if we starve."

It's not a universal solution, but it works here, say the residents of Lhsasna. And it works, say the Zakoura Foundation workers, in large part because of a grant from USAID, administered through the embassy.

But when asked, the residents of Lhsasna don't know that the foundation support is funded in large part by the United States. That's a problem, from the embassy's perspective. And that's where Riley comes back in.

As a businessman, Riley learned he mainly enjoyed two phases of a business: Starting a business, with all the exciting risk taking and strategizing that entails, and marketing a mature product, figuring out who needs it and how to make them aware it exists.

In Morocco, Riley found a company -- the embassy -- that already had developed a product: the package of programs and funds designed to help Morocco reach stability. It was a good product, even a great one. But Riley could see in his daily Arabic press briefings that their customers weren't buying.

"The stories are, 'Americans come in with their programs and try to force democracy down our throat.' 'They're coming in to take over the Middle East because they want our oil. ' 'They don't respect our religion, they don't respect our people; they just want to expand, and they want to show their muscle,' " he said.

At the same time, the embassy needed to be discreet. What Riley saw as worthy programs, like last year's Forum for the Future conference in Rabat that brought many of the Arab world's leaders together to discuss economic cooperation and reform, could trigger huge street protests based strictly on U. S. support for the program.

Yet too much discretion, in Riley's eyes, was also a problem: He vividly recalled Moroccans thanking Abu Dhabi for tents shipped into the country after a devastating earthquake in 2003, not knowing that while the tents were marked Abu Dhabi, they had been purchased and shipped with U.S. funds. There must be a way, he thought, for the United States to get credit for its work.

"It's not to say, 'Oh, aren't we wonderful people'; it's really to help combat what is unfortunately a growing or certainly a strong anti-American image," he said. "If you don't say anything, it's just going to keep getting worse."

Riley's solution has been to be as visible as possible, as often as possible. That means going to other embassies' functions -- all of them, not just those of major American allies. His first was with Bangladesh's ambassador to Morocco, who still calls Riley one of the best ambassadors the United States has ever sent abroad.

It means some old-fashioned marketing know-how. In December, Riley helped arrange a $3 million USAID grant to Morocco to fight locusts infesting the south, the kind of basic support that would normally be handled behind closed doors by bureaucrats. But at Riley's suggestion, the grant was announced at a news conference featuring a multimedia presentation of ravaging locusts, during which the ambassador got to say some nice words congratulating Morocco for helping to fight a scourge affecting not only itself but also its neighbors.

The next day, Riley gleefully showed off newspapers

(Continued on page 25)

(Ambassador - ontinued from page 24)

repeating his pro- Moroccan comments -- under an oversize headline reading "American gift to support anti-locust fight in Morocco."

Maybe, Riley imagined, some young Moroccan out there might read that and wonder, "I just read an article that the United States is only here for oil. But if they're only here for the oil, why are they here for the locusts?"

"You're not going to change the world," he said. "But you can try to have a little balance out there."

As enjoyable as he finds them, those kinds of PR events are not what Riley considers his most important outreach. After all, as any marketer knows, selling to an audience who wants to buy your product is always easier than selling to somebody who doesn't.

One night, as his bombproof BMW rumbled through Casablanca after an event launching the American Chamber of Commerce's new Moroccan Investment Guide -- highlighted by a brief, upbeat speech from the ambassador -- Riley recounted what he considered to be one of his more important meetings in his first year.

It was fairly early on, he recalled, and he was reviewing a list of Moroccan political parties he had yet to meet when he noticed an omission -- the Party for Justice and Democracy, the Islamist party that stunned Morocco in the 2002 election. The explanation he received -- that the PJD was opposed to U.S. policies and so contact with them was generally held on a lower level -- didn't satisfy him.

"There are a lot of people here against our policies," he said. "There are a lot of people in the United States against our policies. But if I'm not going to be at physical risk or anything, why not?"

Ultimately, Riley met with several of the PJD's top leaders.

"I actually asked them, 'Has it been a long time since an American ambassador met with the PJD?' They said, 'Yes -- never.' I said, 'Wow, that is a long time.' "

Riley laughed at the memory of what came next.

"He said, 'First of all, I would like to tell you that we know you have your election coming up ... and we just want to tell you that all of us here at the PJD pray every day that your president will lose,' " he said. "I thought, 'Good, we're off to a good start -- nobody's holding back.'

"Ninety-eight percent of what was going to be accomplished was accomplished just by being there. The rest of it was saying, 'Yes, I'm willing to listen. I'd like to hear it. You're not going to convince me, and I'm not going to convince you of anything, but at least we've shown that we can sit down and talk, and I would like to listen and I would like to understand your point of view,'" Riley said. He gestured behind him, toward the hotel filled with American and Moroccan business leaders he had just addressed.

"This is kind of a friendly group here. These are people that are interested in doing business in the United States, and I certainly want to support that. But I value even more that ... meeting with the PJD," he said.

"Even though from a certain perspective you accomplished absolutely nothing... in a way I think it has more of an impact in terms of progressing what we're trying to do. Instead of having a good time with the people who agree with you, having not such a good time with people who don't agree with you. You probably make more progress."

In some ways the approach Riley and the embassy are taking -- increased economic aid on the macro and micro level, cultural exchange opportunities, and aggressive public relations -- is new, at least for a country like Morocco. Wayne Bush compares the level of activity in Morocco more to the level he saw working in Paris, one of the United States' largest and most important embassies, than in any of the Third World nations where he's served.

But in other ways, the level of activity is nothing new; it was status quo for past diplomacy. But with the end of the Cold War, government support for expensive public diplomacy declined as policymakers looked for a domestic "peace dividend." Funding for everything from consulate libraries to Fulbright scholarships declined after 1995, as did embassy staffing.

Support for, and interest in, the Foreign Service declined so much that in 1995 and 1997 the State Department did not even hold the exam.

Shortly after his arrival in Morocco, Bush recalled, he met with a Moroccan businessman who gave Bush a stern lecture on U.S. diplomatic strategy.

" 'You did what no business should do, which is you abandoned a winning strategy,' the businessman told Bush. 'You won the Cold War on the basis of outreach and presence and engagement and participation, and you won the hearts and minds of much of the world, and once you had won you withdrew. You dismantled these programs you used to run like exchange programs and university programs and speaking programs and libraries. You did away with a lot of that, and as a result you weren't prepared for the crisis that came here later in the Middle East.'

"There's a certain amount of truth in that," Bush said, and while the trend is beginning to reverse in Morocco and elsewhere -- in 2002 26,000 people took the Foreign Service exam, and 5,000 officers have been hired in the past four years -- "I think we still have a ways to go to make the headway we need to make."

Riley's office is filled with pictures -- historical shots above his desk of Churchill and Roosevelt meeting in Casablanca, modern pictures from President Bush scrawled almost illegibly with best wishes to "T-Bone."

And in one corner, where Riley can see it from his desk, is a framed photograph of Riley shaking hands with an anonymous Moroccan farmer. The farmer is a man Riley met in the Atlas Mountains. Where his neighbors' fields were withered with drought, the farmer's were lush with waving stalks of grain.

Riley asked about the man's success, and was told, through a translator, than decades ago the man had been part of a U.S.-backed program to bring hardy hybrid grain to Morocco. Nearly everyone had forgotten the program had ever even existed, but the farmer remembered, and

(Continued on page 26)

(Ambassador - continued from page 25)
decades later he was reaping the benefits.

"Sometimes, you don't see the results right away and you have to be patient. It's a window of 20 years," Riley said. "In some cases, you want things to happen right away – in others you have to be patient."

Patience with America is something Morocco has had experience with. More than 200 years ago, it took the young democracy more than two years to recognize that Morocco – before any other nation – had recognized it as a new, independent country. When in 1789 President George Washington finally responded to that overture, he apologized for the delay in response, explaining that things had been a bit tumultuous -- what with a revolution and global war and whatnot -- and hoping the sultan would understand.

"Within our territories there are no mines either of Gold or Silver, and this young Nation, just recovering from the Waste and Desolation of a long war, has not, as yet, had time to acquire riches by agriculture and commerce," Washington wrote. "But our soil is bountiful, and our people industrious and we have reason to flatter ourselves that we shall gradually become useful to our friends."

Today, a copy of that handwritten letter hangs by the door on Riley's office wall in Rabat, where he pulls visitors aside and points out the promise from America's first president to the people of Morocco.

THE BUSINESSES

Mikou Med has a business outside Fez buying jeans and stonewashing them for export to Italy and France. Business has been good -- he boasts that it is because he pays his workers $200 a month, $30 more than the legal minimum.

But he worries what will happen when the free trade agreement with the United States takes effect, eliminating tariffs on most goods and opening the floodgates of international competition.

"They are going to eat us. ... We're simply not ready for it," he said, as mostly female workers outside his window buffed style into jeans, wearing masks against the floating denim dust.

"The Moroccan industry is mostly small companies, and small companies can't work with the United States," he said. "Even if we can be competitive in the employee costs, we can't compete in raw materials."

In the next breath, though, he said he supported the agreement.

"It's like when you graduate from high school. It's an orientation problem. What are you going to do next?" he said. "In the short run, we might have a slap in the face. In the long run, Moroccans have shown an ability to adapt to new situations. But it will come at a cost.

"I know that the future is the American market ... but I will not go blind."

Amina Yabis is not going into the American market blindly, either -- she's going eyes wide open with enthusiasm.

Yabis is president of the Women's Cooperative of Sefrou Cherries, a tiny organization in an ancient village south of Fez -- known for its annual cherry festival -- specializing in making carpets and tiny, knotted buttons by hand.

Yabis' cooperative survives with assistance from the Peace Corps, which briefly left Morocco after the May 16 bombing. But the Corps has since returned, and Yabis now is looking forward to selling her wares through American middlemen, or directly to Western consumers on the Internet.

Moroccan and embassy officials hope rural businesses, especially those supplying unique Moroccan handicrafts, can help reduce the flight of rural poor to the bidonvilles and European slums -- and Yabis is a believer.

"I have children. I need to feed them. I was thinking of going to the city. The only reason I stayed is that I have a job with the cooperative. ... Now both my sisters and a brother want to come here," she said. "[People who go to the cities] go to prostitution or to steal. People take advantage of them because they are very vulnerable. Mothers end up selling their children on the street in Casablanca."

-- M.S.

THE DEBATE

At 80-odd years old, Mohammed Janah's mind is still sharp, his memory intact. Strolling through his tiny village, he recounted in detail the time when Gen. Dwight Eisenhower visited the base where Janah was working. Somebody on Eisenhower's staff offered Janah a trip to America, he said -- he declined, and regrets it.

"We were the first ones to recognize the States. Because of that, we were always brothers. And the United States is always on our side," he said proudly, walking along the muddy track dividing his neighbors' homes and cows. "Soon, we will be like the States. You'll see."

The fact that Morocco was the first in the world to recognize the new America is widely known there, and a source of pride to many. But attitudes about the modern America are a little more complex.

Secular Moroccans, who sniggeringly refer to the increasingly common women in all-covering Islamic dress as "ninjas," cannot wait for modernity to take Morocco to points west.

"Morocco now is a laboratory. Like Hungary in the '80s," said Said El Akhdar, a Berber living in Rabat. "Hungary was a laboratory for all of Eastern Europe, and Morocco is now the same."

A librarian at a nuclear laboratory, El Akhdar was still grinning over his one-man counter-protest at an Islamist-backed demonstration against Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Rabat. "All these people will tell you, 'Oh, Iraq, Palestine, invasion.' For me, this discord is repetition. It comes from Arabic channels, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya," he added. "In Morocco, we have a state, we have sovereignty, we have institutions, we have political parties, we have democracy. ... We are not like Palestine."

But while El Akhdar's ideas might resonate among the metropolitan intelligentsia of Rabat and Casablanca, far more common are opinions like those of Yasin Khalifi, 23, who took a job at his family shop when he couldn't find a job with a law firm.

(Continued on page 27)

(Ambassador - continued from page 26)

As the multilingual Khalifi cheerfully helps Western customers pick out bargain gifts for a Christmas he does not celebrate, he said he likes Americans and is prepared to deal with them -- but it makes him uncomfortable because of American policies in the region.

"We are first Arab, Islamic. Then Moroccan. If Palestine has a problem, we have a problem," he said, speaking between customers in Rabat's souk, where he sells water pipes, traditional daggers and platters painted the traditional blue of Fez.

"In Morocco, we have two opinions. Some people like bin Laden. Some people don't like bin Laden. Most people are with the second. But the United States needs to change its policies," he said. "Bin Laden doesn't understand Islam. But the problem is in America."

It is that intense discomfort with American policy, more than support of radical Islam, that helps explain Moroccans marching in support of Iraq in the first Gulf War, buying Osama bin Laden T-shirts before May 16, said Jack Wald, longtime pastor of the mostly expatriate congregation at Rabat's RPF International Church.

"Nobody wants to be ruled by Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden, because both of them would ban the kind of Islam that is practiced here. But anybody who can stick his thumb in the eye of the United States is appreciated."
-- M.S.

THE ISLAMISTS

Friendly and urbane, Mustapha Ramid welcomes guests to his modern Casablanca office with a smile. One wall is lined with Arabic commentaries on the Koran; a coatrack supports a poster of a tired man weary under a heavy load labeled, in English, "Palestine."

Ramid is a senior member of the Party of Justice and Democracy, or PJD, Morocco's sole legal Islamist party, which in 2002 tripled its representation in Morocco's parliament despite a limit on its participation.

"We didn't want a political revolution. We didn't want to scare people," Ramid said. "We would have had a massive success, but it would not be understood by Western countries, and the government wouldn't like it. ... But it's still our choice."

After the 2002 election, Ramid was widely quoted saying his goal was a society run by Shariah, Islamic law, in which women are veiled and thieves have their hands chopped off. He insisted his words were taken out of context.

"As a Muslim, a man who believes in the Koran, if you ask me do we have to cut off someone's hand because he stole, I cannot say no," he said. "Let's be serious. Even if we wanted to in 2007 [the next elections], do you think we are going to implement such rules?"

The Koran requires a near-perfect society before institution of Shariah, Ramid said -- a standard he said does not exist in Morocco and may not exist any time soon.

Of course, if those standards were somehow met, Ramid said, and a person stole without need, "then yes, we support cutting off his hand."

The PJD is the public face of Moroccan political Islam, but the private face is Adl Wal Ihsane, a technically outlawed but tolerated association whose spokesman, Fathallah Arsalane, lives in a tidy home in a working-class neighborhood in Rabat.

Arsalane complained bitterly that Islamists have been unfairly blamed for the May 16 attack -- which he suggested darkly may have been the work of unknown parties seeking to frame the Islamists and stop their rise to power -- and argued that political Islam has been smeared by a few extremists.

"Stalin killed millions of people, but maybe his ideas were noble at the beginning. It's the same: You can promote a religion, start a religion and still have some people go out and do things that don't fit what we intended to do in the first place -- extremists," he said. "Well-educated people should be able to tell the difference between Taliban and other Muslims. "

He gestured around his comfortable living room. "Look at my house. I'm not going to destroy all this to go back to the camels."

Arsalane cut the interview short, explaining that he was needed onsite at one of his organization's employment programs. Ramid, too, closed an interview pointing at the line of working-class Moroccans going out his door -- all seeking his legal advice.

That, said Reda El Abbadi, a former Moroccan journalist who interviewed leading Moroccan radicals before May 16, is at least part of the secret of the Islamist groups' success. While some longtime observers say the Islamic movement has taken the mantle of political reform once held by Communists and others, it is also true that in a country where the government is still seen by many to be inefficient and unequal, the Islamists get things done.

"They work like government. Like a real government. If you lose a job, they try to find you a job," he said. "This is why they don't try anything now. They just wait for the fruit to ripen and fall."

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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

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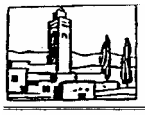

أصدقاء المغرب

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