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September 11: Two Years Later

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On September 11, the Khadeeja Islamic Center in Salt Lake City held a prayer service to mark the second anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Originally designed to be a solemn event within the Muslim community, it ended up being a gathering of faiths within the Salt Lake Valley. Clergy from the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian Science, Episcopal, Gnostic, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, Methodists, Unitarian, and United Church of Christ faiths spoke during the hour long prayer service. The Muslim community was represented by Masood-ul-Hasan, ex-President of the Islamic Society of Salt Lake City. The religious leaders from the various faiths spoke on the need for peace and unity.

Two years later after the heinous events of September 11, 2001, the Muslim communities across the United States continue to feel the after effects. Polls conducted

across the United States show that most Americans still have mistrust for Muslims and believe Islam to be a violent religion.

In many ways, September 11 was not only a call to awaken the Americans of the dangers that exist throughout the world, but also a test to see how Muslims would respond in the aftermath.

While the jury is still out on how Muslims have responded, it appears that there is a lot of work still left to be done. This work can only be accomplished as a result of assimilation of Muslims into their communities. The only way to convince someone is by showing them who you are and gaining their trust. Unfortunately, due to language and cultural barriers, most Muslims have remained behind closed doors. Until these doors open, the process of healing can not start.

"We all find the time to do what we really want to do."

William Feather

The SLAM Festival

Babak Darvish

Islam is one of the most attractive faiths in the world today. Obviously, it is inescapable, because one out of every five people in the world is a Muslim, which makes the idea of an American-Muslim Cultural Festival more important than ever. Depending on whom you talk to...Islam is the spiritual lifeblood of more than one-fifth of the world's population, the greatest threat to Western civilization, a foundation upon which Western civilization was built or a big stereo-typing bonanza.

The Salt Lake American Muslim Cultural Festival (SLAM) for short, started off with a reading from the Quran, a rendition of the national anthem and a speech by Mayor Rocky Anderson, which signaled the start of the festival Sunday Sept. 7th 2003. Then, Forrest Cuch, executive director of the Division of Indian Affairs for Utah, took the stage.

"According to the history books, American Indians were the first terrorists in this country," Cuch said in a surprisingly direct speech that compared the American Indian and Muslim experiences with stereotyping and racial profiling. He praised the Muslim community for inviting those representing Utah's indigenous population to help celebrate Muslim culture. "They are a traditional people," he said. "And by giving respect to the traditions of others, you show respect for your own traditions."

Event organizer Ghulam Hasnain said most people think of Salt Lake City as white and LDS, a perception Sunday's event aimed to change. "Many people don't realize there are 20,000 Muslims of all denominations here," said Hasnain.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

- Community Events
- Commentaries on Media and Government
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Moving Forward

Dr. Asif Saberi

This issue of the Forum Monthly celebrates a step forward for the Muslim community of Salt Lake. In mid-September, the general body of the Islamic Society of Salt Lake approved a new governance structure based upon a wider participation of people and broader distribution of authority. This is modeled after one view of the *Shura* system alluded to in prior editions of the monthly. In my view, it is characterized by three attributes that will determine its success or failure. That it does away with rancor and divisions in the community is its strength. That it depends upon wider participation of the community is its presumption. That it does away with divisive elections is, well, a chink in its armor.

A successful democratic institution requires certain necessary in-

gredients – an involved constituency, a healthy opposition and a conscience – i.e. a free press – are foremost on that list. And these elements must exist in the order stated. From an involved constituency comes a healthy opposition and a free press. The existence of an opposition without the involvement of people is anachronistic and does little but to trap the wheels of the organization in quicksand of disputes.

The proof of this is our past. Does this imply that we did not need a new governance structure? Not necessarily. Sometimes we need a symbolic event to break loose from the choking hold and viscous cycles that we trap ourselves in. This adoption of the new governance structure provides such a seminal event. But if the common member of the Muslim com-

munity does not involve himself or herself in the affairs of this largest Muslim organization in the valley, revisions of the governance structure *ad infinitum* will not change our course.

The governance of the Islamic Society has an additional responsibility that we should not neglect – it has to prepare Muslims in the community to participate in the greater American democracy. There elections are unavoidable. But we must look the other way for a moment and pretend that this issue is of import, but may serve a backseat to other pressing issue of involvement of the greater constituency. But let us remain mindful of its importance as we move beyond our immediate problems.

Halloween: A Perspective

Asad Kudiya

The question that effects many Muslim families today in America, is if it is plausible to celebrate holiday's such as Halloween or Valentines day even though we do not necessarily follow the set values that they represent.

The focus of this piece is on Halloween since it is coming upon us in about a month. but the article itself can apply to all of the non-Islamic holidays that are not really claimed by any religion in America, or around the world.

For example, is it alright for your child to go get candy at people's houses on Halloween because it is a tradition, even though that tradition is surrounding and based upon non-Islamic beliefs? It is not as if the child is worshipping the devil as he or she is going out for the night, however, he or she is entrenching the values of the holiday unknowingly.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) issued a firm warning: "Whoever imitates a nation is one of them." (Abu Doud). Although the context of this statement may have

been towards a particular instance, the generalization that can be drawn from it is clear. Halloween stemmed from an ancient Celtic pagan festival, where in one setting people would believe that the souls of those who had died were able to reach the "Land of the dead."

Back in those days people would leave food and drink for those who came in masks, which clearly represents what is happening in today's world.

Entrenching the values in and of itself is wrong and I know I have done the same myself in the past. However, entrenching the values does not mean that the child is actually worshipping a pagan festival or anything like that, but once the family or the child knows, then they should stop and consider the fact that all Muslims have a job to do. The job is to spread the light of Allah (SWT) all over the world and by participating in these holiday's, we are ignoring our task and following the rest of the ignorant.

In Islam there are only two real festivals that can be celebrated and

those are Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr and all other celebrations are non Islamic. Critically analyzing what we are doing when we do participate in these holiday's and what in means in the big picture under the scope of Islam is they key to what we should do in the future. The way to change people in the big picture is to start at the roots.

Even though a holiday like Halloween is not necessarily a root of a culture, it is a branch of one and we must change the core, if we wish to spread the word of Islam all over the world. As Muslims we must follow the Qur'an and Sunnah alone and that is all we will need to overcome the evil in the world, but at the point those values our skewed in our own minds then we may be led astray for the rest of our lives. That is why one must be very careful if they do wish to participate in such holidays and realize exactly what values he or she is entrenching.

One Woman's Advice and Experience with the Media

Kirin Nabi

It started about a year ago when the Salt Lake Tribune featured an editorial cartoon on their Opinion Page that portrayed Muslim women in a negative light. Unwilling to sit quiet Abtihah Raji-Kubba and three others went to the Tribune to protest.

The protest however, became an educational experience, and a discussion in which the Editorial Board "listened with interest", says Raji-Kubba, and they "claimed they had not stopped to think about the cartoon that way."

A simple apology, however, was not the end of Raji-Kubba's experience with the newspaper; shortly thereafter she received a call inviting her to be a part of the Salt Lake Tribune's Advisory Committee to the Editorial Board.

The Tribune wanted a Muslim voice to join Hispanics, liberals and other minorities in making sure facts and numbers are accurate. "They were so open minded," said Raji-Kubba, "I was surprised how curious and eager they were to do what is right."

Occasionally members of the Editorial Board call her to verify perceptions, and they have given her an open invitation to daily come and look through the news and to edit it before it goes to print.

In addition, the Tribune has

given her space to write what she wants, when she wants, with the promise that they will publish it. Thus far she has written three pieces which have appeared in the Opinion section on Sundays.

"I am completely overwhelmed by their openness and understanding," Raji-Kubba says of the Tribune staff, "If these people represent the media, then we have not spoken fairly. Locally they have done a good job."

In fact Raji-Kubba feels most of the blame for continuous bias reporting falls on those individuals who sit and complain and do nothing productive about it. "Most of us can be powerful," she says, "the editorial staff sits around and reads the 'Letters to the Editors' and they ask me why more Muslim's don't write."

While she tries to avoid questions concerning Muslim inactivity with the paper, she questions the Islamic community in general. "How many of us take time to read the papers," she asks, "how many of us care about the community?"

She encourages people to take the fifteen minutes to write to the paper, and not only on subjects about Islam, "but also on topics relevant to the community: the environment, the PTA, the Main Street Plaza controversy, anything."

Raji-Kubba sees it as a natural process. "Newspapers report on what is happening, if you are not doing anything, what are they going to report on, they won't report on the inside of our homes."

She further explains, "They report on the Salt Lake Community, and Muslims are a part of that community. It is our duty to be in places, making a difference, doing good and telling people we are Muslim or letting them recognize it for themselves."

She suggests that "you simply let people know that you are approachable, normal, and reasonable and people will contact you." The biggest problem in her opinion is that, "We complain, yet we don't think what to change and how to change it," says Raji-Kubba. "If we don't take the first step, what are we trying to do? If we are serious and want to make a difference we need to take a proactive role," she says.

Professionally Raji-Kubba is not a journalist, but an engineer. And to the community she is an example. Proof that it is possible to get involved and make a difference, rather than waiting around for someone else to do it.

To read Abtihah Raji-Kubba's articles, go to www.sltrib.com click on Archives and type in Raji-Kubba.

Islamic Society Adapts Shura Structure

Nadeem Tusneem

On September 14, 2003, the General Body Meeting of the Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake voted 42 to 8 in favor of adapting the new governance structure for its organization. The proposal calls for 15 to 30, with the possibility of increasing to 40, individuals to express their interest in being in the Majlis-e-Shura. This body will be the legislative and decision making body. The Shura will make routine decisions regarding the operations of the society. To be part of the Shura, individuals would have to fulfill the requirements of being a member of the Society.

Once formed, the Shura will form various committees including but not limited to Mosque Affairs for Noor and Khadeeja Mosques, Finance, Burial, Education, Dawa, Records, Media/Public communications, and Youth.

The Shura will also appoint a minimum number of persons as required by law to be listed on legal documents. These trustees shall hold the trust only for the benefit of the Society, and are not empowered to make any decisions on behalf of the Society, except as needed to maintain the property in the name of the Society.

Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of the Muslims living in the Greater Salt Lake area. To achieve these goals, it will help Muslims practice Islam as a way of life, offer a forum for Islamic teachings and activities, share understanding of Islam with people of other faiths and traditions, and promote cooperation with other organizations toward shared goals, as deemed appropriate.

A Step (Part 3)

Benan Zahawi

In the first article in this series (July issue), I tried to group Muslims according to how they might look at unity in Islam. In the second article (August issue), I tried to present some of the reasons that could affect unity among Muslims. In this article, I will try to show how unity is deeply rooted in the teachings of Islam. This will be done by shedding the light on an advice given by one of the great Muslim leaders and teachers. The man is Imam Ja'far Al-Saddiq (as).

Before going to his advise, I would like to give a brief presentation on how Imam Ja'far (as) is seen in both Schools of Thought.

Ja'far Al-Sadiq(as), is the great grandson of Imam Ali(as) and considered the sixth Imam in the Shia Ithnai Ashari School of Thought. He is also known to be the one who laid down the foundations of the Ithnai Ashari School of Thought and that is why it is sometimes referred to as the Ja'fari School of Thought. His classes were attended by many Muslim Scholars who did not follow his School of Thought. It is a well-known fact that he was the teacher of Imam Abu Hanifa, one of the greatest Sunni Scholars. He was so respected that Abu Hanifa said his famous quote "If it wasn't for the two years, Al-Nu'man would have been doomed." Abu Hanifa was referring to himself and the two years under which he took lessons from Imam Ja'far (as). The advise that I would like to present was given by Imam Ja'far(as) to his followers (i.e. the Shia's). He said to them " Pray their prayers, visit their sick and walk in their funerals."

What did the Imam mean by this advice? To really understand it, one must first understand who gave it, when and to whom it was said. It was not said by an average Muslim nor by a regular scholar. It was given by a great man who was well respected by all Muslims. It was given during a time when his followers were greatly persecuted and it was given to his followers and not to those who did not follow his School of Thought.

Pray their prayers: It is a well-established fact by

all Muslims, that prayer is one of the most important obligations, if not the most important, in Islam. Group prayer is 27 fold more important than personal prayers according to a Hadeeth by our Prophet (saas). Group prayer is encouraged because it brings Muslims together and unites them. The Imam (as) is advising his followers to go and pray with those who do not follow their School of Thought. No strings attached. He did not say "allow them to pray with you" nor did he say " only if they pray with you". No, no conditions. What he was trying to teach his followers was that Islam calls for broad unity. He was trying to teach them that Islam bridges the differences. He was telling them that the true followers of the household of the Prophet (saas) are those who are true followers of Islam and Islam calls for unity among all Muslims.

Visit Their Sick and Walk in their funerals: The Prophet (saas) has said, " He who does not care for the welfare of Muslims is not one of us." He (saas) also said " the believers are like a body, if one part of it complains of an illness, then all parts of the body come to its comfort". Imam Ja'far (as), being this great teacher was advising his followers of just that. He was teaching them to look after all Muslims, especially in their times of need and hardship, and not only those who followed him. It is at such times that people reveal their true identities. What an affect a visit would have on a sick person or attending a funeral would have on the family of the deceased, especially if those actions were coming from those who are seen to be different or even not part of the Muslim nation.

This advice, simple in its words yet powerful in its meaning, needs to be looked upon by Muslims from both isles. It sends out a powerful message of unity to all the Muslims irrespective of their Schools of Thought. How many of us Muslims have the courage to follow such an advice and take a step to unite Muslims and bring them together.

Silent Tears

Maryam Kathryn Coonce

My Son is my hero; I cry at night, praying to Allah to set my son free. And bring my family back in my life. My son was protecting his family almost 6 years ago from a very violent man. However, he went to Prison and his sister turned against the one who saved her life, her sons life and his own life. And she also turned on her Mother as well. My daughter did it for money. And looked away from her family. Today, my son pays the price, and I cry every night to Allah to Bring my family back. I cannot tell you how proud I am of my Son. And I pray every night, that my son will be free.

I am proud of my son for he does a lot for his Muslim brothers in Prison. I see it has made my son grow up, and respect others, and now has more respect from his Mother than ever before. Allah comes first in Michael life. And that makes me very proud. I Maryam still have so

much to learn. But each day that goes by I learn something new, thanks to Allah and to my Son and the Muslim brothers and sisters that I have meet. I thank Allah for blessing me with Michael. I know it is hard on my son for I have been ill for over 2 years. He prays to Allah to get me through each painful surgery. I have a very high Spirit to live. And no one can break my love for Allah.

I want my daughter back into our lives. And my grandchildren. My Son has not seen his Son for over 5 years. I and my son have forgiven my daughter. And pray that she lets the Lord into her heart. And someday Allah will answer my prayers. I have faith that all will be ok someday. Above all I want to thank everyone who has come in to my life. Especially, my son who is also my hero.

Kid's Corner

Riddle Me This!!!!

What is the least number of scales that can be used on a set of scales to weigh any whole number of kilograms from one to 40?

Carved on the Tombstone of Diophantus, the mathematician, was:

God granted him to be a boy for the sixth part of his life,
 And adding a twelfth part to this,
 He clothed his cheeks with down;
 He lit him the light of wedlock after a seventh part,
 And five years after his marriage he granted him a son.
 Alas late-born child; after attaining the measure of half
 his father's full life, chill Fate too him.
 After consoling his grief by this science of numbers
 for four years he ended his life.

How old was Diophantus when he died?
 Answers on page 8!

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. The Month of Ramadan is also when it is believed the Holy Quran "was sent down from heaven, a guidance unto men, a declaration of direction, and a means of Salvation." It is during this month that Muslims fast. It is called the Fast of Ramadan and lasts the entire month. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith and at the same time continue on with their everyday lives. It is a time of worship and contemplation.

During the Fast of Ramadan, strict restraints are placed on the daily lives of Muslims. They are not allowed to eat or drink during the daylight hours. Smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden during fasting. At the end of the day the fast is broken with prayer and a meal called the *iftar*. The fast is resumed the next morning.

On the evening of the 27th day of the month, Muslims celebrate the *Laylat-al-Qadr* (the Night of Power). It is believed that on this night Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Quran. And according to the Quran, this is when God determines the course of the world for the following year.

continued ———>

Express Yourself

Expressing yourself is an important thing. If you express yourself you can not only become light hearted but also create unique things. You can express yourself through art, writing and poems. When my cat died I was having an emotional break down and mom thought it was a good idea to right a poem about her, I did and I was surprised to see that I felt a lot better. Here is the poem.

My cat Fifi

She was kind and loving.
 She was sweet and exiting.
 I cannot forget that soft purr,
 Of when I held her in my arms before.
 I cannot forget those big blue eyes,
 Of when she wanted to come inside.
 Fifi was one of a kind.
 She had her own place in my mind.
 Fifi was indeed special,
 Maybe because of her tail.
 When she was in the mood to play,
 She would pounce on anyone all day.
 No one can forget her cute way to run,
 It was our own fun.
 Fifi had made a spot in my heart,
 That no one can tear apart.
 I love her dearly and still do.
 She will be missed by al whom she knew.
 Maybe she is in a better place.
 Fifi if a loving memory that no one can replace.

Every time I read this poem I remember the good things like the time we spent together and the fun that we had. By expressing your self you relieve the sadness and gain the good memories. You can also express your self when you are happy. Either way expressing you self is not only good for creating cool things but also good for your health.

Amna Sial

Ramadan (continued)

When the fast ends (the first day of the month of Shawwal) it is celebrated for three days in a holiday called Id-al-Fitr (the Feast of Fast Breaking). Gifts are exchanged. Friends and family gather to pray in congregation and for large meals. In some cities fairs are held to celebrate the end of the Fast of Ramadan.

The editors and reporters of the Forum Monthly are always eager for new stories, fresh ideas, and original works. The *Forum Monthly* covers every subject: international, national, and community news, religion, health and science, business, media and entertainment, sports, education, cuisine, and the arts. We are also interested in analysis, commentaries, and opinions on subject areas of interest to both Muslims and non-Muslims in the the Salt Lake community. The views represented in the *Forum Monthly* do not necessarily represent the views of the Muslim Forum of Utah.

There is also a section for children called the Kids Corner. If your child has written a great story or a beautiful poem, submit it to us. If a beautiful drawing or a cartoon, we welcome it as well. If there is a book you have read, a movie you have seen, or a favorite restaurant you have visited, provide us a review. We are interested in subjects that interest you. If you are interested in being a writer for the Forum Monthly, we are interested in hearing from you. While we don't guarantee that we will publish everything that will be submitted to us, we hope that what we publish will make the *Forum Monthly* one of your favorite newsletters.

How to Submit your story or work to the Forum Monthly?

Please type your story and attach an electronic copy (text format) of your work to the email addressed to: Newsletter@muslim-forum.org. Deadline for all submissions is the 15th of every month!

Forum Monthly Editors and Staff: Kirin Patel (Women's Editor), Amna Sial (Kids Page Editor), Asad Kudiya (Youth Editor), Benan Zahawi (Contributor), Asif Saberi (Editor), Babak Darvish (Editor), and Nadeem Tusneem (Editor-in-Chief)

This Month in the Forum

Media and Law Enforcement Training for Muslims

Dr. Asif Saberi

In the aftermath of September 11 2001, there was an increased interest in understanding Islam and Muslims. Journalists struggled to write and present their subjects in the context of a newly recognized entity – the American Muslim. But they were severely handicapped by the paucity of credible sources on Muslim faith and practices. Compounding the problem was the diversity of the Muslim community – reflected not just in their physical appearance but also in their practices. If we are outraged at certain reporting, we need to recognize that the problem is not just a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Muslims in the mass media; but rather, that it stems from a lack of data. And providing that data is our responsibility.

A successful democracy needs not just a viable opposition, but a conscience that is unfettered by political moorings. If such an institution exists anywhere in the world, it does in this country. The Muslim Forum of Utah recognizes the responsibility of the Muslim community to educate the media about the common denominators that define Muslims in their beliefs and practices. In order to do this we plan to conduct a training session on the weekend of October 18th/19th to bridge these gaps in understanding. The training, like all education is an on going process. And in order to be successful, we intend to produce a cadre of interested Muslim individuals who will be responsive to the media needs and capable of conducting future training sessions of this nature locally. It behooves the major Muslim organizations to avail of this opportunity to participate.

For more Information, contact info@muslim-forum.org!!!

Cuisine Corner

Pakistani Pulao (Rice Dish)

4 tbsp. ghee or clarified butter
 1 lg. onion, sliced
 1 1/2 inch piece ginger root, peeled & finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 2 green chilies, chopped
 1 to 4 lbs. of chicken, cut into serving pieces
 1 tsp. turmeric
 1/2 tsp. hot chili powder
 2 tbsp. ground coriander
 1 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. black pepper
 5/8 c. yogurt
 Juice of 1 sm. lemon
 2 c. long grain rice, soaked in cold water for 30 minutes & drained
 1 1/2 c. boiling water

Melt ghee or butter in a large saucepan. Add the onion and fry until it is soft. Add ginger, garlic and chilies, reduce heat to low and fry for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add chicken pieces and fry them until evenly browned. Combine remaining spices, salt, pepper, yogurt and lemon juice in a bowl. Pour mixture into pan and mix well. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 35 to 40 min-

utes or until chicken is almost cooked. Uncover pan and heat to moderately high. Stir in rice and cook, stirring frequently, until most of the liquid in the pan has been absorbed. Pour in the water and cover pan. When the water begins to boil again, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until rice is tender and all the liquid has been absorbed. Serve immediately.

**Submit your favorite recipe to the
Forum Monthly at:
newsletter@muslim-forum.org**

Angoor Ka Sherbat (Grape Drink)

Cook 1 1/2 cups sugar and 3 cups water in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Increase heat to high and bring to boil. Simmer for 1 minute and keep aside to cool completely. Working in batches, Place syrup, 4 cups grapes (red seedless) and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in blender and blend to a smooth puree. Force the puree through a fine sieve, pressing hard on the solids. Discard solids and chill thoroughly. Fill the glasses with crushed ice, pour in the juice and garnish with mint leaves and lime slices.

An Early Look at Arab Americans and the 2004 Elections

Dr. James Zogby

1. Bush Loses Support

If the 2004 election were held today President George W. Bush would win the support of just one-third of Arab American voters. Another one-third indicate that they would vote for whomever wins the Democratic nomination, while the remaining third of Arab American voters are as yet undecided. This is but one of the findings in a recent poll conducted for the Arab American Institute by Zogby International (ZI) of New York. 500 Arab Americans were surveyed nationwide in July 2003 with a margin of error of +/- 4.5%. The results have been compared with five earlier polls done by AAI/ZI in 1996, 2000 and in October 2001, May 2002 and October 2002.

The mere 33.5% of Arab Americans who indicate support for the President's reelection effort represent a significant drop in Arab American support for Bush who, in November 2000, beat Democrat Al Gore by a margin of 45.5 percent to 38%. Green Party Candidate Ralph Nader won 13.5% of the Arab American vote in 2000.

The most significant decline in support for President Bush occurred among the 20+% of Arab Americans who are Muslim. In 2000 they voted for Bush by a margin of 58.5% to 22.5%. The early 2004 poll indicates that this group would now support a Democrat by a 52 to 10 percent margin.

The overall decline in support for President Bush can be seen in the poor job performance rating he is given by Arab Americans. While most polls are showing that Americans as a whole give the President a 60% favorable rating, among Arab Americans only 43% indicate approval for the President's job performance. Fifty-five percent disapprove. This is the identical rating he received from Arab Americans in May 2002, and is down significantly from the 83% positive, 15% negative rating he received from Arab Americans in October 2001.

While it is still early in the 2004 nominating process, Arab American Democrats and Independents, when asked, indicate preference for three Democratic candidates. Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts and former Vermont Governor Howard Dean each received slightly more than 14%, while Congressman Dick Gephardt of Missouri was favored by 10.5%.

2. The Most Important Concerns

It appears that declining Arab American support for President Bush is due to their concerns with two key issues: the Middle East policy pursued by the Administration and civil liberties. Sixty-Eight and a half percent of Arab American voters indicated that a candidate's Middle East policy was very important in determining their vote. Fifty-three percent said that civil liberties and the treatment of immigrants was also an important issue.

What our July poll demonstrates is that Arab Americans have real concerns with the President's performance in both areas.

3. Civil Liberties

Thirty percent of Arab Americans report having experienced some form of discrimination in

the past due to their ethnicity. After September 11, 2001, concern over this problem has increased, with 59.5% reporting that they are worried about the long-term impact of discrimination against Arab Americans. More than one-third indicate they are concerned about being singled out at airports and a shocking 33.5% state that they haven't flown since 9/11 for fear of being profiled.

Immediately after 9/11 Arab Americans were heartened by President Bush's strong display of support for the community. In October 2001 90% said that they were reassured by the President's support, only six percent were not reassured. By May 2002, those who felt reassured dropped to 54% as opposed to 35% who were not. By October 2002 the ratio dropped further—46% to 38%. In the July 2003 poll only 49% now say that they feel assured by Bush's sign of support for the community while 38% say that they are not assured.

4. Middle East Policy

The Administration's performance in Iraq and in the Israel-Palestine conflict has also caused some concern among Arab Americans. Overall, Arab Americans give the President a 39% favorable, 56% unfavorable score on his handling of Middle East issues. This is up from

While not a monolithic voter bloc, it is clear that the voting behavior of many Arab Americans is influenced by policies that affect their concerns.

the 28%-67% score he received in October 2002 and the very poor 24% favorable 73% unfavorable performance rating Bush received in May 2002.

In part this improvement may be due to some of the Administration's recent efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Overall 74% of Arab Americans support the Administration's "road map to Middle East peace".

As in previous polls well over 90% of Arab Americans support the end of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. When asked which steps need to be taken first to move the peace process forward—ending settlements, stopping the bombings or both at the same—three quarters state their preference for "both at the same time", as is called for in the road map. The same substantial group want the President to apply balanced pressure to both Israelis and Palestinians to move the parties toward peace, but only 19.5% of Arab Americans are confident that Bush will maintain such a balanced position. Similarly, while overwhelmingly supporting a two-state solution, only 12 percent are "very confident" in the Administration's commitment to this goal.

Arab Americans, however, appear to be open minded on this matter, with 38.5% indi-

cating that they would be more likely to support Bush if he takes an active role in pushing both parties toward peace (this includes 29% of those who are Democrats and 42% of Arab American Independents).

On the matter of Iraq, Arab Americans remain divided and concerned with the Administration's handling of the war. Before the war only 34% indicated support for the effort with 64% opposed. Now after the war, attitudes have shifted somewhat, but 55% remain opposed to the war while only 42% indicate support for the war and its outcome.

Conclusion

The poll results are interesting in several regards. While not a monolithic voter bloc, it is clear that the voting behavior of many Arab Americans is influenced by policies that affect their concerns. Clinton carried the Arab American vote in 1996 by a 51.5% to 31.5% margin. That flipped to a 45.5% to 38% margin for Bush in 2000. In the cases of both Dole and Gore, their core support came from Arab Americans with strong partisan attachments. The even split between Bush and a Democratic candidate in 2004 makes it clear that while a Republican or a Democrat can usually count on winning about one third of the community's support (once again largely made up of the Democratic and Republican core vote), about one-third remains up for grabs and will be won by the candidate whom Arab Americans feel will be most balanced on Middle East issues and most protective of the community's rights.

What the poll data further demonstrates is that while the groups most sensitive to these concerns—more recent immigrants and Arab American Muslims—are the ones whose voting patterns show the greatest degree of change, concern with Middle East policy issues and civil rights also affect a sizeable percentage of first and second generation Arab Americans and those who identify as Catholic and Orthodox Christian.

What this means is that 2004 promises to be an exciting and fluid election for hundreds of thousands of Arab American voters who have not yet decided how they will vote and for many others whose votes may yet change as they weight the behavior and performance of the candidates competing for the presidency.

The above article has been reprinted with the consent of the author. Dr. James Zogby is the Director of the Arab American Institute.

Mission: To improve the image and condition of the Muslim community in Utah by providing educational opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims; foster the correct representation of Islam in the mass media; and develop and establish programs that will improve the conditions of all Utahans.

Vision: We envision a Utah where Muslims can become strong contributors to the economic, intellectual, and political growth of their communities.

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From page 5: 1. 4 scales (1,3,9,27)
 2. Diophantus died at age of 84

Community Calendar

October 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool Center	3 Quran Study; Youth Discussion Group	4 Men's Swimming
5 Women's Quran Recitation Class at Khadeeja Mosq	6	7 Adult Arabic Classes at Iqra Academy	8	9 Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool Center	10 Quran Study; Youth Discussion Group	11 Women's Swimming
12 Women's Quran Recitation Class at Khadeeja Mosq	13	14 Adult Arabic Classes at Iqra Academy	15 Deadline For Submission of form suggesting interest in Shura for ISGSL	16 Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool Center	17 Quran Study; Youth Discussion Group	18 Men's Swimming; Media Training
19 Women's Quran Recitation Class at Khadeeja Mosq Law Enf Train.	20	21 Adult Arabic Classes at Iqra Academy	22	23 Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool Center	24 Quran Study; Youth Discussion Group	25 Women's Swimming
26 Women's Quran Recitation Class at Khadeeja Mosq	27	28 Adult Arabic Classes at Iqra Academy	29	30 Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool Center	31 Quran Study; Youth Discussion Group	

Something interesting to note is that there were representatives of all the different denominations of Muslims in the festival. Culturally, there were a number of ethnic groups represented. There were Middle Eastern, South Asian, and American vendors offering everything from food, clothes, jewelry, handicrafts, to books and pamphlets about Islam and Muslims.

Mayor Anderson pointed out that diversity has two sides; it can help us understand one another or divide us. A day of sharing festivity and food, he said, is a step in the right direction.

Some of the other groups which attended the festival were live entertainers such as The Iranian (Persian) group "Ava", Geenie Baggs, Dr. Lloyd Miller (www.jazzscope.com, www.easternartists.com) and Amoon Javed. Also, there was "Qawwali Music" (which was made famous in the west by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan...the famous Pakistani Qawwali singer) being performed live as well as pre-recorded.

Events for the Month of October:

- Friday (Juma) Prayers
 Khadija: 2 pm
 Noor: 1:30 pm
- Swimming: At Dive Utah 4679 S. 2225 East from 2-4 pm \$3/adult and \$1.50/child
- Quran Study at
 Khadeeja: Friday 8 pm
 Noor: Friday 7:30 pm
 Iqra: Friday 7:30 pm
- Youth Open Discussion at Al Rasool center around Maghrib time
- Dua Kumail at Al-Rasool on Thursdays at Maghrib time.
- Women's Convert Support Group: 1st Saturday of Each month at Whitmore Library. 11:00 am to 1 pm; pot-luck lunch at Iqra Academy of Utah
- Women's Friday Meeting is held at Masjid Al Noor every Friday from 7:30 pm till Maghrib prayer.

Special Events

- October 15, 2003: Deadline for submitting Intent of Interest in Serving on the Shura Committee for Islamic Society.
- October 18, 2003: Media Training For Muslims 9-12 noon at the Union Building in University of Utah (Panorama East Room)
- October 18, 2003: Training Program for Media Professionals on Islam and Muslims from 1-4 pm; Union Building Panorama East Room
- October 19, 2003: Law Enforcement Training Program for Muslims : Union Building Panorama East Room