Workgroups (Business Meeting) – 13th Meeting of the International Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (IFBA)

8-11/10/2010

Bibliotheca Alexandrina – Alexandria, Egypt

Minutes

Convener/Chairman: David Wardrop, United Kingdom Friends
Vice Chairman: Lorenzo Montesini, Australian Friends
Recorder/Scribe: Prof. Rosalie Cuneo Amer, California Friends

1. Welcome – Chairman Wardrop opened the meeting

2. Self-introduction of IFBA organizations/chapters; (For attendance, see attachment. Members present were requested to print chapter name and personal name on attendance sheet) Two new chapters were introduced/acknowledged:
   A) The Minnesota Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina formed by Dr. Aida Khalafallah, and member Prof. Diane Katsiaficas was introduced.
   B) A chapter in Monaco was announced by Mona El Nashar.

3. Minutes of the October 2009 Meeting were approved unanimously as distributed.

4. Committee on Conference Theme Report. 2010 Theme: Continuity of Egyptian Heritage (H.E. Zaimis, Dr. El-Abbadi, Prof. Amer) – Focus Coptic and Muslim legacies. Prof. Amer reported on the Coptic legacy and Islamic Art and Architecture lectures scheduled for 9/10, and thanked Dr. El-Abbadi and M. El Nashar for getting it scheduled. The lectures by Greek scholars relating to Egyptian heritage in philosophy, mathematics, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Alexandria were acknowledged. Coordination came through H.E. A. Zaimis.

5. Committee on Poetry Proposal Report – A written progress report from C. Ruby, Chair, (in absentia) was distributed by Prof. Amer. Implementation developed during the year for the first Poetry Day scheduled for 11 October 2010 through the initiative and expertise of L. Abdelhady, Ambassador H. Islambouly and others on the Bibalex staff. The International Friends are looking forward to the celebration of exploring Arabic poetry on “Poetry Day, Food for Thought.”

6. Progress Reports (from previous meeting)

   A. New Youth/Young Professionals Initiative as Registered NGO – Dr. A. El Awady

   Dr. A. El Awady presented the HYB Youth Initiative in attachment form. In it he seeks an arm of youth with the IFBA, and wants recognition for young Alexandrians – locally, regionally, nationally, globally. A center devoted to regional youth development should be formed. El Awady reported on 2000 members through Facebook. The HYB Association is an emerging NGO in Alex. Discussion ensued on EU-Egypt facilitation to bring young Alexandrians into EU countries. Annica Dahlstrom commented on problems with the Anna Lindh Foundation relating to Euromed. S. Girard commented on reality of social network communication through YouTube, Facebook and blog communication. She also commented that logistics are a problem. M. El Nashar stated the Dialogue Forum has been involved with the Infomall.
B. Encouragement/Recruitment of Chpts Attending Annual Meeting– M. El-Nashar, L. Montesini

M. El Nashar reported she had written to several Friends chapters to attend the annual meeting, including the Spanish, Finnish, and Portuguese, without response. Several groups apologized including Morocco, Canada, Switzerland, and S. Africa. A new group from Monaco established through the Monaco Mediterranean Foundation established by Prince Albert of Monaco has been formed. A Japanese group is in formation. Subcommittee was formed on the recommendation of L. Montesini charged with encouragement/recruitment of members (new and returning). S. Girard recommended an interest group to increase membership be formed.

Several friends volunteered for Subcommittee membership: A. Riolo (Baltimore), A. Khalafallah (Minnesota), S. Girard (Americas), A. Dahlstrom (Sweden), A. El Awady (Egypt), S. Gamal (Egypt), A. Muslimany (Egypt), M. Mounes (Egypt), and M. El Nashar (BA).

El Abd (Baltimore) recommended a promo handout be designed to encourage membership, both recruitment and retention, in IFBA. Incorporated into the promo document was what the BA Library does, what Friends are about. The document would be posted online.

During the 13th annual meeting the Subcommittee planned to meet, with A. Dahlstrom supplying a promo piece her group had designed. A. Riolo was to record notes of the meeting. To date (6/2011) no written report has been filed.

There was a separate discussion on Egyptian Friends communication with Arabs at a meeting of the Arab Forum. How can support chapters for the BA be formed in Arab countries? Commentary by M. Bahrany, A. Al-Moslemany, S. Gamal. Other Egyptian and international friends joined in a lengthy discussion.

C. Alexandria International Festival (AlexFest) –Status report. D. Wardrop, Chewikar Abdel Aziz, Dr. El Awady.

The Chairman commented that the 2009 AlexFest is now history. He complimented Chewikar Abdel Aziz and James and Malak Edgar for their tremendous efforts to bring together AlexFest 2010 and wished them all success.

Mr. Edgar presented a ppt report including several points:

“Marketing Alexandria from an Excursion to a Destination City”. 500 million people reside around the Mediterranean. Alexandria has a population of 5-6 million people. “United we stand: culture, commerce, community. Alex can.” How can the islands (culture-arts-sports-heritage) be united? Culture is the glue that binds. A credible, long term vision and a spirit of renewal are needed. The Istanbul model, which J. Edgar has studied, including a visit, may work for Alexandria.


D. Laila Dowidar Memorial Project update– M. El-Nashar reported on Dr. Serageldin’s encouragement of the special account established in memory of Laila (Jeri) Dowidar through the Friends of the BA Foundation in NYC. Contributions can be made to it for individuals who pay U.S. taxes.
E. Special U.S. Tax Deductible Account - Friends of the BA Foundation – R. Amer reported on several memorial donations through the Friends of the BA Foundation, and a meeting she had with Lamia Abdel Fattah, Interim Chief Librarian about the detailed information within the BA’s bibliographic records linking donors with library gifts or monetary donations and what the BA ordered.

M. El Nashar distributed a BA Banking Information sheet with Bank Information necessary to carry out international transfers, for individuals not contributing through the special U.S. Tax Deductible Account.

F. Oral History of International Friends

L. Abdelhady thanked those early chapters which provided oral histories, and encouraged the few remaining ones to file reports.

G. Luna Park Pre-construction Excavations – On Sunday the Friends visited the Luna Park site as a token manifestation of their support for the continuing campaign to ensure that the site is comprehensively excavated and researched before planned construction commences. The IFBA ‘recognises the exhaustive precautions taken on the instructions of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities prior to the construction of the Bibalex and wishes to maintain close links with equivalent initiatives for the development of Luna Park and will work with the Egyptian authorities and international bodies to raise the visibility of this important work’.

7. Securing Interim and Chief Librarians after Dr. S. Wastawy’s departure Sp 2010,

L. Abdel Fattah has been appointed Acting Chief Librarian after Dr. Wastawy’s departure, and the IFBA wishes her well in her new position.

8. Library and Other Sector Reports/Presentations from BA staff

A. Technical Services: Cataloging, including 500,000 items from Bibliotheque nationale

L. Abdel Fattah, Acting Chief Librarian, reported on the Library Sector, with 524,046 donations in 2009, including the gift from the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. It is estimated to take 3 years to process the 500,000 items. Other areas addressed were the virtual international authority file, the Technical Services Directorate with Arabic standards, enabling libraries in Arab countries to establish standards.

B. Technical Services: Collection development and new collections.

Nazly Farid was announced as the Director of Francophone Library Department and gave a report. Mention was made of the new Map Library which opened in April 2010, just prior to the departure of Dr. Wastawy. Friends were encouraged to visit the new Map Library and enjoy the focus on Egypt and Africa.

C. Institute of Peace Studies

M. El Nashar reported that currently there is no head of the IPS. The Chairman expressed disappointment that no director had been appointed.

H.E. H. Islambouly joined the IFBA work session and interacted with several topics of concern in a brain-storming session dealing with communication problems in some cases with ambassadors or consulates in countries and states. How can better relations be established between IFBA chapters and representatives of Egyptian foreign ministries? A. Dahlstrom and the newly formed subcommittee will work on a brochure that Annica already has designed in Sweden.

A. Khalafallah (Minnesota) is committed to work on forming a Friends support group in Cyprus.

R. Amer (California) is discussing with the current Egyptian ambassador in Ankara in late October about forming a Turkish chapter. Formerly the ambassador was CG in San Francisco.

A. Nature of Communication of BA/Chpts. with Foreign Office/Ambassadors – L. Montesini

A. Zaimis (Greece) and L. Montesini (Australia) planned on a visit to the Foreign Office in Cairo to work with Egyptian ambassadors on encouraging support for the BA., perhaps even through S. Mubarak with the Foreign Office.

A. Zaimis recommended the Friends create a letter to send to Friends groups which don’t regularly attend annual IFBA meetings.

A review of chapters not in attendance included Portugal, Morocco, Spain, Switzerland and Russia.

Many Friends commented on methods to encourage greater attendance.

B. Chapters to Submit Names to Recommend to the BA for an Invite – L. Montesini, R. Amer

C. IFBA Long Term Planning – 5 Year Plan – Where do we want to be? – Deferred


A. Aristocracy for Peace (special request made by F. de Wardal for new agenda item).

Dr. Gabriella Lavorgna, President of the foundation “Il Mandir Della Pace” and Dr. Giovanna Filetti of Italy spoke on their cultural activities involved with peace, intercultural exchange, and the culture of peace. Coming Sept. 11 is an event in Assisi, Italy dealing with dialogue among religions. The Chairman asked how can the IPS become energized again. ElAbd (Baltimore) queried what is the connection to the BA with the interfaith venues. He commented further that the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., conducts interfaith dialogue.

B. “Egyptian Corner” was presented by ElAbd of the Baltimore Friends and Sister City Committee.

C. Why the IFBA? – Roundtable discussion - Deferred

D. IFBA Program for 2011

1. Election of officers discussion. Note: Election occurs at FA 2011 annual meeting

A nominating/elections committee was formed: A. Zaimis, A. Dahlstrom, and a member from Egypt.
E. Friends Poetry Reading: What do the Friends want in the future?

The Friends recommended for Swedish Friend Kerstin Signeul to fully assume coordinator role for next year, and to encourage her to return to Alexandria for the next year’s annual meeting.

F. Other –

The IFBA wishes to express gratitude to the Greek Friends for their strong and endearing support to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Sherif Hassan of the German Friends communicated to the IFBA Executive Board that it was an impressive meeting.

The Chairman expressed deep appreciation to Mona El Nashar, Heidi El Shafei and office staff who help to coordinate the IFBA meetings, programs, and special tours with the Egyptian Friends, and communicate with us throughout the year.


Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie Cuneo Amer

IFBA Scribe/Recorder, Chair, California Friends

Compiled Jan-June/2011, during and after the Egyptian revolution.

Corrections on 23/10/2011: Spelling of A. Zaimis throughout document, and retitling 6.C (p.2) content with Mr. Edgar’s ppt presentation “Marketing Alexandria from an Excursion to a Destination City”.

Please note: All attachments will be distributed in hard copy at the 14th Annual Meeting of International Friends.