

# Ottawa Focus

Highlighting the Arab Community of Ottawa

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SPRING/SUMMER 2006

## INTERESTING FACTS:

- There are 22 Arab countries and Canada has immigrants from all of them
- Ottawa is home to 15 Arab embassies
- Census 2001 reported over 35,000 Canadians of Arab origin in Ottawa/Hull
- Google Maps reports over 80 shawarma restaurants in Ottawa

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## Speaking Up for the Community

By Bahija Reghai, CAPCA President

The Coalition of Arab Canadian Professionals and Community Associations (CAPCA) has been involved in bringing together Arab Canadians in the National Capital Region (NCR). We are committed to strengthening relations between our communities, to enhancing and promoting mutual understanding and collaboration amongst ourselves and with other communities and the Canadian society at large. Through advocacy, education, and community involvement, CAPCA is also dedicated to standing up for the rights and the advancement of the Arab-Canadian Community.

We are facing challenges that require better information on our rights and responsibilities, and on the availability of support in the National Capital Region (NCR). Therefore, we have, and will continue to provide forums and venues for government officials from all three levels, local, provincial and federal, to reach out to Arab Canadian communities in the NCR, and opportunities for our communities to express themselves through the proper channels.



CAPCA member, Nour Kadri, next to NDP leader Jack Layton at a National Press Club event in Ottawa

Thirty-six years before President Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural Address, Arab American poet and philosopher Khalil Gibran, in his work *The New Frontier* (1925), challenged us: "Are you a politician asking what your country can do for you or a zealous one asking what you can do for your country? If you are the first, then you are a parasite; if the second, then you are an oasis in a desert."

We hope this challenge thrown down before us, years ago, by a young man of Arab background will be taken up by many Arab Canadians who want to make a difference.

## Lebanese Cultural Club

The **Lebanese Cultural Club (LCC)** is an academic, socio-cultural student organization recognized and subsidized by the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (SFUO). The LCC is a non-profit, non-religious and non-political club. The **Lebanese Cultural Club** aims to promote the Lebanese culture and Heritage in the university and the community. The Club's motivation is based on creating an atmosphere of solidarity, and mutual aid between members of the Lebanese community with no discrimination; encouraging multi-cultural activities

on and off-campus; maintaining solid and fruitful bonds with the Student Federation (SFUO) and the International House and other clubs within the University; and contributing to the success of the "International Week" at the University of Ottawa by organizing the club's traditional event **LEBANON DAY**. To learn more about LCC or how to become a member, visit: [www.ottawalcc.com](http://www.ottawalcc.com) or e-mail: [info@ottawa.com](mailto:info@ottawa.com)



# Ottawa's Lebanese Community Rejoice in a Celebration of their Culture

By Sara El-Ayouby

For the last fifteen years, the Lebanese community of Ottawa has come together to celebrate its culture by organising the Lebanese Fun Festival. Children laugh and play while adults gather around tables as they enjoy Lebanese cuisine and arguileh under tents. Popular Lebanese beats and lyrics saturate the atmosphere at this annual event, and so behind the magnificent St. Elias Cathedral- a little Lebanon is recreated.

Despite tension in their homeland, the Canadian-Lebanese decided to continue with their cultural festivities. As one of the officials mentioned to the masses, if there were any time in which the Lebanese community should come together and share its beautiful culture with the city of Ottawa, it would be now so as to express support and cultural-cohesiveness among the Lebanese-Canadian community and raise awareness to other Canadians.

Yolanda Hanna, the co-chairperson of the event stressed the importance of bringing the Lebanese community together, filling the atmosphere with Lebanese vibes, and exclaiming the true Lebanese spirit.

With forty thousand guests in 2005, the Lebanese fun fair expects at least as many attendees for 2006. Spanning a course of five days (July 19-23), it is no doubt that this year has been an even more attractive festival, with musical performances by *Dunia Dick, Krista Khoury, Basem Dib and Karl Wolf, both in English and Arabic*. A series of performances continued over the course of the festival, including an appearance by the renowned Canadian-Lebanese artist *Massari* which has drawn a lot of attention to the festival. It is no doubt that this festival has captured the attention of non-Lebanese Canadians, as their curiosity of the Leba-



nese culture has been ignited due to the current situation in Lebanon. By setting a donation stand for all 5 days of the festival, the Canadian Red Cross was able to receive funds so as to send supplies of nourishment and aid to Lebanon. The admissions fees for June 20 were donated in their entirety to the Canadian Red Cross as part of their humanitarian effort in Lebanon.

Even though far away from their home land, Canadian-Lebanese were once again immersed in a heritage they are proud to identify as their own.

## MAY 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## JUNE 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## JULY 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## Community Calendar

- } **May 22**—Yemeni National Day
- } **May 27**—Djibouti's National Day
- } **July 1**—Somali National Day
- } **July 6**—Comoros Islands' National Day
- } **July 15-30**—Cinema of Syria (Library & Archives of Canada)
- } **July 14-16**—Egyptian Festival (St. Mary's Orthodox Church)
- } **July 17**—Iraqi National Day
- } **July 19-23**—Lebanese Fun Festival (St. Elias Church)
- } **July 23**—Egyptian National Day

## St. George & St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Church

In 1995, St. George & St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Church was established due to the growing number of Coptic families in Ottawa. St. George & St. Anthony started with a small group of families renting some facilities in the east end of the city, till the current property was purchased in 1997.

Over the past few years, the congregation of the church has been growing rapidly; hence there was a big need for more space and more facilities to serve the growing young population in the church.

In 2001, the church started to plan for a new project. The first phase of this project was completed in May 2002 and it includes a multi-purpose centre which includes a temporary worship hall, a gymnasium, and

an aghapi (meal) hall. The second phase, the permanent church, has already been designed and the construction phase is now underway.

Furthermore, St. George & St. Anthony Orthodox Church works closely with St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church which is also in Ottawa on several activities and events, including the Annual Summer Coptic Festival, which provides visitors with a taste of Egyptian culture through music, food, and a bazaar. For more information please visit: [www.orthodoxy.ca](http://www.orthodoxy.ca).



## Canadian Council of Muslim Women

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women is a national non-profit organization established to assist Muslim women in participating effectively in Canadian Society and to promote mutual understanding between Canadian Muslim women and women of other faiths.

The CCMW was founded in 1982 when Muslim women from across Canada attended the Founding Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is now a national organization with chapters across the country. CCMW believes Muslim women must develop their Muslim

identity, while being part of and making a positive contribution to Canadian society, along with providing positive role models for Muslim youth.



The primary objective of the CCMW is to attain and maintain equality, equity, and empowerment for all Canadian Muslim women. The activities of the CCMW are varied in scope. Visit CCMW's website at [www.ccmw.com](http://www.ccmw.com)

## Arab Evangelical Church of Ottawa

The Arab Evangelical Baptist Church of Ottawa is located on Canterbury Avenue near Walkley Avenue. The objective and main goal of the church is a religious one, with primary emphasis on prayer focussing on glorifying and honouring Jesus Christ. The ministry of the church goes back to the mid-

nineties when the founders started their meeting.

The church's pastor, Rev. Walid Bitar has been ministering in the church in Ottawa since mid nineties. For more information about the church, visit [www.abcottawa.com](http://www.abcottawa.com) or email to [abcottawa@abcottawa.com](mailto:abcottawa@abcottawa.com).

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# A Taste of Egyptian Culture in Ottawa

By Essam Farag

The Egyptian Festival is an annual event for all ages taking place in mid-July. At this event, people have the opportunity to experience Egyptian crafts, culture and cuisine. It is organized by St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church in at 1 Canfield Rd. off of Greenbank.

The church represents a growing

community of Egyptian-Canadian families that are members of the Egyptian-Christian community, and this event provides the perfect environment to learn more about the Coptic community of Egypt.

The cuisine offered at the festival includes shawerma, vine leaf rolls, falafel, baklava and much more.

Visitors can also take home some hand-made papyrus, Egyptian clothing and jewellery after they have taken a tour of the church while listening to traditional Coptic music. On the final day, proceeds collected from raffle tickets sold for a return ticket to Egypt at the festival are donated to CHEO. Visit

[www.stmaryottawa.org](http://www.stmaryottawa.org)



# Canadian Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry



The Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a non-profit organization that endeavours at developing economic and commercial relations between Canada and Lebanon.

The Canadian-Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CLCCI) identifies its mission as, to promote a commercial exchange between Canada and Lebanon and vice versa; to pro-

vide, to interested parties, information on commercial transactions between Canada and Lebanon; to establish and facilitate contacts between the Canadian and Lebanese business communities; to promote networking between CLCCI members. Organize conferences and meetings about subjects of common interest, for example -- several conferences where held in collaboration with the ACIDI and SEE to encourage

Quebecers and Canadians to participate in the Forum Francophone des Affaires (FFA) that was planned to be hosted in Lebanon in October 2001; and to certify commercial invoices and issue certificates of origin.

The Ottawa Section of the CLCCI was created to enable Ottawa-Gatineau business community and professionals to participate in the activities of the CLCCI and promote its mission and objectives.



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RELATIONS CANADO-ARABES  
**NCCAR**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON  
CANADA-ARAB RELATIONS

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NCCAR was established in 1985 by Canadians who believed that our national interest is best served through expanded knowledge as well as social, scientific and educational exchanges with the Arab world. NCCAR works with governments, the private sector and community organizations to promote Canadian awareness and knowledge about the Arab world.

This newsletter has been created in collaboration with several Ottawa Arab organizations through the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Fund to assist in the coordination of community activities.

## National Council on Canada-Arab Relations

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