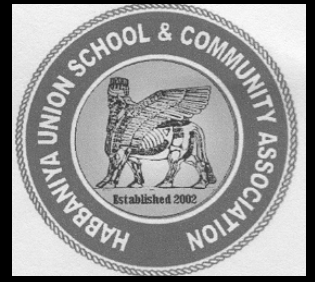


# HUSCA

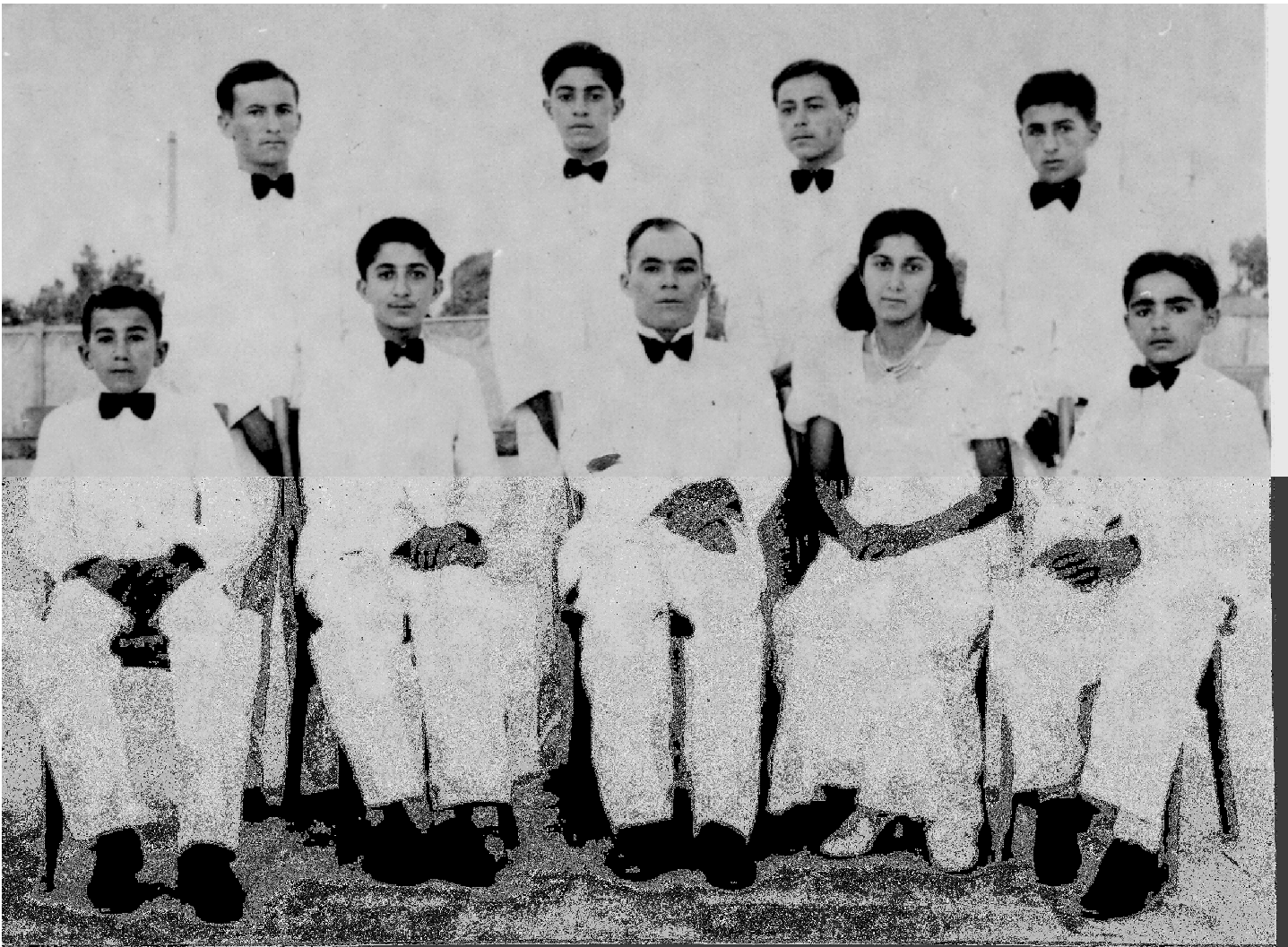
5th Issue  
Vol. 3, No. 1  
Spring-Summer 2004

The Magazine of  
**HABBANIYA UNION SCHOOL  
& COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**



To inform, to connect with and to preserve old ties and memories between former schoolmates and residents of Habbaniya local "town"

## Class of 1940



**The first graduates of Raabi Yacoub Bet-Yacoub's Union School in Civil Cantonment, Habbaniya.**

Secondary C Form (Middle School). Standing from left: Hrand Yesayel Sayadian (UK), Avisha Yonan Orahim (Australia), Khoshaba Odisho (deceased), John David (Modesto, CA); Sitting: William (Avia) Ewan (deceased), Eshaya Hormis Isaac (Skokie, IL), Raabi Yacoub Bet-Yacoub, School Headmaster (deceased), Nina Nweia Shabbas (deceased), Khoshaba Kamar (deceased).  
(The class included several other members who dropped out before they could graduate)

**HUSCA Magazine**

**Editor:**

Mikhael K. Pius  
3504 Setrok Dr., Modesto, CA 95356, USA;  
Tel. (209) 545-4120;  
E-mail: mkpius@comcast.net

**Administration Manager:**

Benyamin E. Yalda  
9350 N. Parkside Dr., Des Plaines, IL 60016;  
Tel. (847) 296-7587; Fax 847)297-0303;  
E-mail: Benyalda@yahoo.com

**Consulting Editor:**

Basil K. Pius  
218 N. Cottage Gr., Miles City, MT 59301;  
Tel. 406-232-0366;  
E-mail: Basilp@midrivers.com

**Membership Subscription**

USA.....US\$ 10.00 per year;  
All other countries.....US\$12.00  
(HUSCA is a semi-annual periodical)

**Checks or Money Orders to be made payable to: Habbaniya Union School**

**& Community Association and mailed to the Administration Manager**

The Editor welcomes for consideration from readers contributions of articles, letters, photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, or other memorabilia relating to former Hinaidi and Habbaniya and their local people. These maybe of a current or vintage nature and may be on any subject, other than politics—if it can be helped!

**Publication Deadlines:**

**March 31 and September 30**

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are the writers' own and do not necessarily represent those of this newsletter or its Editorial Staff.

Material from this newsletter may be reproduced by other sources, provided proper published credit is given.

**Habbaniya Union School & Community Association**

Registered with the Illinois Secretary of State as a not-for-profit organization on 11/22/02, Letter No. 6254-6875 Under No. 0021332279, EIN No. 43-1985805

**Board of Directors:**

Benyamin Yalda, Illinois  
Mikhael K. Pius, California  
Zacharia O. Zacharia, California.

Affiliate of:

**Habbaniya Union School Reunion**

**The Founding Committee:**

Sargon Y. Aboona  
Odisho Warda  
Benyamin E. Yalda  
Zacharia O. Zacharia

**Represented by:**

In California—Zacharia O. Zacharia  
In Canada—John Aghajian  
In England & Europe—Andrious M. Jotyar  
In Australia & New Zealand—Dinkha Warda

**IN THIS ISSUE**

	<u>Page</u>
Class of 1940 (Cover Picture).....	1
HUSCA Masthead, Contents, and Julius N. Shabbas Scholarship.....	2
Chit-chatting... with you.....	3
Express Yourself! (Readers' Letters).....	4-9
Assyrian Engineer in England recalls CC Habbaniya, by Youel Tammoo.....	10-11
Boy Scout & Girl Guide Seniors, and Levy Company in Palestine (Pictures).....	12
Habbaniya was home of hockey, By M. K. Pius & Andrew Simon.....	13-15
Some Snapshots from the Past (Contributed by Readers).....	16-17
Blue Eyed Marganita (Story) By Mikhael K. Pius.....	18-21
Former Habbaniya bike repairer is Assyrian educator, By M. K. Pius.....	22-23
Assyrian class in Government Middle School, By Solomon S. Solomon.....	24
Assyrian School of Mar Gewargis Church By Mikhael K. Pius.....	25
Bio-Obituaries (4) By Mikhael K. Pius.....	26-29
Wedding Anniversaries (3) by Mikhael K. Pius.....	30-31
Assyrian Levy Officers in London (Picture).....	32

**Foundation sets up Scholarship Fund in name of Julius N. Shabbas**

The Assyrian Foundation of America has endowed a scholarship fund in the name of Mr. Julius N. Shabbas in recognition of his more than 20 years of editorship of its well-known and respected magazine, *Nineveh*, and his many contributions to the Foundation and its various educational and charitable activities for Assyrians. The Fund was announced in the 4th Quarter 2003 issue of *Nineveh* Magazine and the public has been invited to make contributions to increase the assets of the Fund. Scholarships will be given by the Fund to Assyrian students at the college and post graduate level who are pursuing Assyrian studies. Students outside the U.S. are especially encouraged to apply.



Julius has devoted a good part of his life to his people, studying and writing about their history, their trials and tribulations, and their contributions to civilization and Christianity. He is a resourceful person and a dedicated patriot, with a sterling character. As The Editor, he was *Nineveh* Magazine itself. With editorial assistance from his Assistant Editor, Dr. Joel Elias, Julius was involved in the production of the magazine from start to finish, including the addressing, labeling and mailing of copies. And he was a dependable communicator with his copy contributors and his subscribers alike, by letter and by phone. And the magazine grew in both quality and stature during the years under his editorship. There was a time, in 1991-92, when the magazine carried more than 90 pages of text in English and Assyrian, with pictures. Julius encouraged material about the former Habbaniya and its people and *Nineveh* carried regularly articles on the subject (dozens of them by this writer alone), so much so that the magazine was identified with Habbaniya.

Second of seven siblings, Julius was born in Baghdad in 1926. He was raised in the local camps of the RAF Stations of Hinaidi and Habbaniya and had his elementary schooling at *Raabi* Espanya's school in Maratha Lines and his secondary education at *Raabi* Yacoub's Union School in Civil Cantonment before his family moved, in the early 1940s, to Baghdad, where he completed his high school and college education and then came to America to pursue higher education. He has a son and two daughters. He lost his wife Violet, a kind and cheerful person, two years ago.

In appreciation of his friendship and service to Habbaniya community and members of Habbaniya Reunion, this Association, H.U.S.C.A., has donated a sum of \$250.00 towards the Julius Shabbas Scholarship Fund — **Editor.**

## Just Chit-chatting...with you

### Hi!

Here we are once again, with yet another issue of our Association magazine. I say “magazine” because that’s what it has become from this issue onward. Actually, we started it as a newsletter with the intention that it was going to contain mostly news and pictures about former Union School and its students and teachers. But from the very first issue it was apparent that its contents not only encompassed both the school and its local community but also consisted of feature articles that are usually carried by a magazine. Our old friend Aprim “Dosta” Abraham from the LA area correctly classified it in his letter (published in our previous issue) as “HUSA Newsletter—which is fast becoming HUSA Magazine, if it hasn’t already.” A few of you other readers have also called it “magazine.” And so magazine it is now, alongside, we hope, of other respected Assyrian magazines... You will note that we have also changed its name. Since the magazine covers the local camps of Civil Cantonment and Levy Lines (or Levy Camp) and not just the former Union School and its student body, we thought it more appropriate to rename our Habbaniya Union School Association “Habbaniya Union School & Community Association” (HUSCA instead of HUSA). The front cover will carry from now on only the nameplate in English, and the back cover the nameplate in Assyrian, with a special full-spread picture on each cover, with appropriate caption, without the lead of an article or story as in the past... Actually, one of our former Union School teachers, *Raabi* Albert Babilla (who moved to London a year ago) suggested in his letter published in our maiden issue that we call it HUSRA (Habbaniya Union School & Residents’ Association). Although we had already registered it as HUSA, we indicated that we would consider his suggestion. And consider it we have, *Raabi*, but we thought “Community” instead of “Residents” is more fitting because not all of the local residents (Arabs and Kurds for example) were connected with Union School. The great majority of the student body and teaching staff was from among the Assyrian residents, with some Armenians and a few Indians, and that, in our opinion, was the “community.” Right?... A few of you have suggested that we print the covers in color, laminated. Unfortunately, this process would shoot the printing cost through the roof, and we just can’t afford it on our current shoe-string budget. Our budget is generated only by limited membership fees and occasional personal donations and is not supported, like other Assyrian periodicals, by a well-financed club or organization. But when, and if, a couple of hundred additional members join, perhaps we can swing it. And there are literally hundreds of former Hab-

baniyans out there who really should be members. *Kaitoun Marit qeerat?!...* Meanwhile, we’re thinking of printing the covers on smooth, light-colored paper. Wouldn’t that give the magazine a more distinctive look? Well, we hope so. Perhaps we should try the idea... A feature of special interest in this issue is, I believe, the letter-article from Engineer Youel Shawil Tammo of Cornwall, England. But in order to obtain sharper reproduction, I do wish, Youel, you had sent me the original prints instead of the laser copies! Your contribution, Youel, is interesting not only because it is nostalgic but also because it is a portrait of one slice of our life as we lived it more than half a century ago. And it’s not so much about yourself as it is about other people. (Youel’s family picture and the biographic information in my footnote to his article were obtained on request)... But do you know something? We always write about the good things that were in Habbaniya. I’m yet to see something written about the negative aspects of our life there. Was it really all wine and roses or are we all sentimental fools?... A new feature I have introduced in this issue is fiction, a Habbaniya serial love story, “Blue Eyed Marganita.” I’m hoping the story will be found of interest. Perhaps it will also take some of the once-young-now-“mature” guys and gals down their Habbaniya lovers’ memory lane. Will be interesting to know the reaction, won’t it?! How about dropping me a few lines on this subject, guys and gals?... Brother Basil Pius, our consulting editor, who was a junior college teacher of English Literature—English language, poetry, and drama (and Middle East culture)—in Miles City, Montana, for 30 years, read “Blue Eyed Marganita” and suggested cutting out about one page from it. He thought I had too much stream of consciousness (Shim-shon’s thoughts) and detailed description (“even though some of it excellent”) of historical locale, local color, family and living conditions, etc, that were slowing down the story. In truth, his shorter version made the story easier to read because it moved at a faster clip. The story line and the characters developed mostly through dialogue without stopping here and there to read Shimshon’s mind and view physical aspects and historical landmarks, etc. But I thought the compression diluted some of its Habbaniya character and made it more of an American rather than an Assyrian story. So we compromised. I retained some of the essential stream of consciousness and the descriptive passages and local customs with which the senior readers can better identify and I kept as close to a English translation of Assyrian dialogue as possible without sounding archaic...As you can see, we’ve been receiving many letters of support and encouragement from readers, together with personal pictures (often without date or description!), but

## What's on your mind?

# Express Yourself!

Dear Mike,

I received today HUSA and St. Thomas Church newsletters. I read the articles and looked at the photos and cried and cried and cursed you for making me cry. This is the second issue of HUSA I'm receiving. It is excellent.

You have done a good job of editing the story of Yosip *Dusakhchi*. It shows you have mastered the art of editing...

[In your e-mail] You mention that you were amazed to see on TV so many educated persons with degrees and Ph. Ds. running for Turlock's Civic Club positions. From my brief experience with the *Assyrian Star Magazine* [in Chicago in early nineties], I was disappointed to learn that none of such people could or would write to the magazine. In my opinion the best educated [Assyrian] is Gladys Warda who reviewed your book. Her insight is amazing. That is an educated person!

I am also amazed at the details you have mentioned in your article on Raabi Espanya's [school]. You were not more than one year older than me during the events of Hinaidi and Maratha Lines [camps], which I had visited both. The only thing I remember is when I had a bath in the splendid public bath house with hot and cold water. I also remember seeing Julius Shabbas playing football [soccer] with a group of boys at the rifle range. He was wearing white shorts and white shirt. I was surprised that his cloths did not get dirty.

Anyway, thanks again for the newsletters, even though you made me cry and caused my eyes to be red and I had to go out so that nobody home would see me crying.

Best Regards, "Youki"

**(Youkhanna Patros Youkhanna)  
(12/29/03) Turku, Finland**

>>> *Youki, I've lived in Maratha Lines*

*six years. I remember there were communal bath houses in the camp but "splendid" with hot water in them is news to me! Aren't you confusing them with Murad's commercial public baths in C.C. Habbaniya over a decade later? Or is my memory on this issue foggy? Incidentally, I'm not one year older than you. We're both pushing 78, or is it 79?*

*(Youkhanna is a life-long friend. Like most former Habbaniyans of his age group, he's not even a middle-school graduate. But he is one of the most well-read Assyrians I know. Unlike many of us Assyrians of today, he's neither patronizing nor hypocritical. He has a perceptive and analytical mind, which he voices candidly. He's not a social butterfly or a public figure. He derives his pleasure from reading. He has read many of the classics and literally hundreds of books, some on history, not to mention magazines and other reading matter.*

*We were co-workers as second-grade stores accounts audit clerks at Air Headquarters in Air Ministry Audit Office in Habbaniya for a few years at the turn of the 1940s. He was a dedicated auditor and I was a lousy one; my interest centered on writing for The Iraq Times—letters, sports reports and short articles, some of which I typed on the sly at the office during our "break" time. Being bookworms, we were almost like two peas in a pot, and we hit it off well.*

*While a few of my office mates made fun of my writings, he analyzed and commented on them and I found it helpful. But after he was promoted to grade one clerk over me, I thought he became sarcastic and bossy (or could it be that I was jealous?) and not long after that I found work in Baghdad and left AHQ and Habbaniya. But we linked up in Baghdad and have maintained our friendship. In Baghdad, Youki worked for many years for U.S. Information Service and for the Baghdad Observer daily newspaper—Ed.*

Dear Ben:

Herewith my dues for 2003. First I paid \$8.00. I don't know, it was for 2002? Anyway, thanks.

**Eshai (Jesse) Solomon**

**(Undated) Mount Prospect, IL.**

Dear Benyamin:

I regret my belated reply, due to the busy tennis season. I won our club's over-60-year-olds tennis singles championship. It was very exciting for me.

God willing, I will visit Chicago and California in May 2004, when I will take care of my membership. I didn't want to remit a minor amount, but a worthwhile amount to cover few years. I greatly value your excellent efforts and those of others to produce such memorable magazine, in particular Minashi for his untiring efforts.

I received the [gift] book "An Assyrian's Youth Journal." It is very interesting and reminds me of youthful activities and our blossoming age and place where we grew up.

**Andrious J. Simon**

**8/19/03**

**Ealing, London, UK.**

>>> *Andy Simon was dubbed the field hockey "wizard" player in Habbaniya and was also a top tennis player. He and the singles champion William Daniel as a team won the doubles challenge championship of Iraq in 1955 and in 1956 and many other local competitions. (For stories, see HUSA issues for Fall-Winter, 2002 and Spring-Summer, 2003.)—Ed*

Dear Ben & Mikhael:

Thank you for printing the teenage picture of my late husband Nimrud, it was very nice of you. I received the newsletter [Spring-Summer 2003]. It looks so much better and I always enjoy reading it.

In January [2003] I visited my son Freddie and his family in Phoenix, Arizona, and stayed with them until Easter, when I then visited my daughter Leweza Kashto in Los Angeles, California. After that I spent three joyous weeks in May with my cousins Robert and Albert in Turlock, California. While there, I was fortunate to reunite with many of my old

friends from Habbaniya. I then returned to my daughter and family in L.A. After staying with them until July 26, I visited again with my son and family in Phoenix, returning home in Philadelphia on August 6.

I thank the Lord for the opportunity I was given to see my family members and all of my grandchildren. I had a marvelous time and cannot wait until I have the chance to travel and revisit everyone again.

I am enclosing a check for fifty dollars. I am also sending a prayer I copied from *Sunshine Magazine* in 1981 when we first came to U.S.A. I have memorized it and have said it every morning since the first day I read it. It gives me so much strength for my day...

**Lena N. Lazar**

**(10/10/03) Philadelphia, PA.**

>>> *It was a pleasure publishing your late husband's school picture and we thank you for your generosity, both material and moral. And the poem you sent is spiritually comforting and uplifting. Thanks again, Lena—Ed*

Dear Mikhael,

I have been meaning to drop you a line or two since the latest issue of HUSA arrived just before Christmas. But with so much else on my mind, or may be due to wear and tear brought on by *saybootha*, [old age] I did not get around to doing it until now. Why now? Because I ran into Jack Youhana three hours ago outside a shop where I was buying *khoormeh*. [dates] He was there to purchase *baqleh* [fava] and he reminded me of you. He told me that he had called you today, or yesterday, for a chat. He then mentioned that he wanted to get hold of a copy of your first book, *Assyrian Tales and Confessions*. I told him I happened to have a spare copy and I thanked him for reminding me to drop you a line or two.

Firstly, thank you so much for the Christmas and New Year wishes. [as per circular letter]. I wish you a fruitful, productive, successful 2004.

Producing HUSA must have been your most challenging and satisfying

task in 2003. The latest issue, in my opinion, is the best so far. You have put so much effort into it. The reproduction of so many historical photos is of top quality, and the printer must be congratulated. Judging from the volume of mail you have been receiving, those who receive the newsletter must be very pleased with what you are doing.

I noticed, in HUSA, two very clear photos of the late *Rab Emma Baijan Peeko*. A few years before he died, I recorded eight one-hour cassette tapes with him. He talked to me vividly about the memories of his childhood years, his teen years during the First World War and his involvement in the 1941 events [the Battle of Habbaniya]. I left the tapes with one of his grandsons.

You must be well advanced in compiling the next issue of HUSA. Good luck and wishing you continuous enjoyment in what you like doing most, which is writing, recording and preserving our history.

Regards and best wishes.

**Philimon G. Darmo**

**(1/10/04) Elderslie, Australia.**

>>> *It was a pleasure receiving your email, Philimon, and hope the Iranian dates did satisfy your sudden craving for the fruit. And it was very nice chatting with Jack and his good wife Penny, both of whom are real nashey d'khizmy. I told Jack that my first book was sold out but that you were likely to have a spare copy of it, because I always had a feeling that you paid me for a few copies more than you had sold!*

*The tapes you've made of the late Rab-Emma Baijan Peeko are a treasure now. I sure hope his grandson has treated them as such..*

*It's a pity not many of us thought of recording some of our knowledgeable elders' narrations. We realized our mistake too late!—Ed.*

Dear Mike:

I always enjoy your thorough reporting which gives the reader inti-

mate feel for the drama along with your postscripts [Editor's Notes] that bring the articles up to date. There is always plenty to amuse and instruct. That said, I must admit to a lingering satisfaction from reading the topic in HUSA of the late Ex *Rab-Khamshi Youarish Darmoo* titled "A page from the Assyrian Levy history." However, I would like to let you know of other *Rab Khamshis* who were not included in the list. One of them is my late father *Warda Khamoo*; also *Gewargis Zorzan* (now in Australia) and the late *Elia Samano*, all of Gargan. I'm including a photo of my father with his company in active duty in Palestine in 1941. Their main responsibility was to protect the strategic infrastructure, while the bulk of the Allied Forces were busy fighting the Axis Forces at Al Alamein, Egypt,

A very blessed new year for all Assyrians throughout the world.

**Andrious Warda Khamoo**

**(1/19/04) London, England.**

>>> *We're pleased to reproduce your late father's picture (See P.25). As regards the exclusion of the three names—and maybe a few others—from the list of Rab-Khamshis, my assumption is that these officers were not commissioned at the time (1921-32) about which Youarish is writing. because I know for sure that Gewargis Zorzan was not an officer at that time. You will note that Youarish, though a Rab-Khamshi himself when he retired, has not included his own name either, because he was not an officer then. You will also note that Zaia Gewargis, who was Rab-Khaila when the Levy Force was disbanded in 1955, is listed as Rab-Khamshi at the time written about.—Ed.*

Dear Editor:

I read both the letter and the article "Is Assyrian New Year April Fools' Day?" by Mr. Aprim K. Abraham in Fall-Winter 2003 HUSA.

*Kha B'Neesan* was observed by our ancestors perhaps long before the Christian era... It was a celebration to praise the beginning of new life on

**More on next page ?**

**Express Yourself (Cont'd)**

earth... and first of April was considered the beginning of the new year... If Mr. Abraham is embarrassed and believes we are ignorant because we are celebrating the event of April First, then the Americans and the Canadians are also ignorant and equally embarrassed for celebrating the Thanksgiving Day because in essence the reason behind the Assyrians' celebration of April First is the same as that of Thanksgiving Day celebration.

As regards his statement "More than 420 years have now passed since the New Year's Day was changed from April 1 to January 1 and we Assyrians still have not found out about the change," this passage gives the impression that the Assyrians are foolishly stuck on the old calendar. If the reader will think that the first day of our year is April first, there from the reader will believe that the Assyrians are four months off the track and that all our events are covered by that date. Mr. Abraham is wrong! All Assyrian churches, clubs, radio and TV stations, etc. date their events by the current calendar.

If Mr. Abraham consults an Assyrian calendar he will find all events are scheduled to take place according to the Gregorian dates. The First of April is mentioned only as the traditional Assyrian New Year and is not used for any [other] Assyrian event.

**Aprim Ablakhad Murad**  
(1/1/04) **Madison Heights, Mich.**

Dear Minashi:

I once again congratulate you and your colleagues for your efforts and dedication in producing such a priceless magazine, containing photos of our once-young now-aged generation. I cannot comment on every thing you publish, but I would say every article is fantastic and I would urge certain readers to encourage you rather than criticize you...

Finally, I beg you to keep on doing your task and ignore those who cannot see the "pillar in their own eyes."

I enclose herewith US\$50 covering my subs for 2004.

Good luck and God bless

**Andrew J. Simon**  
(1/20/04) **Ealing, England.**

>>> *Thank you for your encouraging words and support. However, Andy, we are always open to expression of readers' opinions and criticism, if sincere, relevant and of general interest.*

Dear Ben:

Greeting you at Christmas and wishing you every happiness in the new year, I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 for HUSA.

Kind regards.

**Julius Shabbas**  
(Undated) **Benicia, Calif.**

Dear Ben:

Greetings to all of you and a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I am sending this check [\$20] which is for 2003-2004.

**Shushan Abraham**  
(Undated) **New Port, Virginia.**

Editors of HUSA:

Merry Christmas and all the best of prosperity for 2004. [Check for \$15 was enclosed]

**Zia Moshi Youkhana**  
(Undated) **Augustin, Germany**

Dear Ben:

Thank you for your nice letter and for the newsletter.

My check for the renewal of HUSA membership is enclosed herewith.

Many thanks for the beautiful diary of yours that my brother sent me.

Regards and all the best in the New Year.

**Juliette Aboona**  
(12.17.03) **Modesto, Calif.**

Dear Ben:

Thank you very much for the 4th Issue of HUSA. It is really very interesting to read the news from friends all around the globe. You and Menashi are

doing a wonderful job. Keep the magazine alive.

Enclosed is my subscription and a donation to HUSA for 2004.

Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

**Jesse (Esha) Solomon**  
(12.22.03) **Mt. Prospect, Mich.**

Dear Ben:

Please accept this check as my subs to HUSA. God bless you for your effort. You are doing a good job.

Best wishes for you and Mikhael.

**Eva DeKelaita**  
(Undated) **Morton Grove, IL.**

Dear Ben:

May the beauty of His birth be with you this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Sorry I am late. Keep up the good work. Getting the newsletter always brings a smile on my face.

**Dr. Barino Zado**  
(11.29.03) **Grand Blanc, Mich.**

Dear Ben:

Enclosed is a check for \$20 for my subscription and donation for the year 2004. I enjoy reading HUSA. Please keep up the good work.

God bless Assyria.

**Edward Nadirsha**  
(undated) **Niles, Illinois**

Dear Ben:

The matter of sending payment to renew my subscription to HUSA had completely escaped my attention until this morning. Sorry.

Herewith check for \$10 for renewal for next year.

**Yooshia K. Poloss**  
(12.29.03) **Hollywood, Calif.**

Dearest Ben & Staff:

We wish you a merry xmas and happy, healthy new year. We enjoy your magazine. Keep up the good work. Thank you.

**Dolphine David**  
(undated) **Skokie, Illinois**

Dear Ben:

Enclosed please find my check

for \$20. It's always a pleasure hearing from you. Keep up the good work.

**Shamiran W. Cramer**  
(undated) **Fort Wayne, Indiana.**

---

Dear Mr. Benyamin:

Thank you very much for your letter. Enclosed is a check for \$25 as my sub and membership of my brother Youel. [address given]

My brother is one of the students who completed the primary and intermediate schools in Habbaniya and secondary [school] in Falluja with high marks. It helped him to be sent to England to obtain B.Sc. in Engineering.

He lives far away from Assyrian communities and I am sure HUSA will help him to follow his friends and Assyrian news.

I will highly appreciate it if you send him a copy of the last HUSA.

**Shmoel S. Tammo.**  
(12.22.03) **Boston, Massachusetts**

---

Dear Ben:

Recently, I received 4th Issue of HUSA. As a member to this beautiful magazine, I enclose my check for \$50, as a donation for the nice work you are doing.

God bless you and the rest of the members who are helping you in this respect.

With best wishes to you and your family, and Happy New Year.

**Leon Sarkis**  
(12.29.03) **Chicago, Illinois.**

---

Dear Ben:

Sincerely hope you are all fine.

Pleased to enclose US\$40 for our subscription to your interesting HUSA magazine, which we very much enjoy reading. Wish you continued success.

With seasonal greetings and best wishes.

**Ashur & Kathie Gamliel Shliemon**  
(12.29.03) **Cheam, England**

---

Dearest Ben:

Enclosed a check for \$20 to cover two years' subscription fees for HUSA.

Keep up the great work. You are doing an excellent job.

**Jack Adams, CPA, CTP**

(12.30.03) **Scottsdale, Arizona.**

Dear Family & Friends:

Once again I thank the Lord for enabling me to convey our Christmas greetings to you and to family members and relations and friends.

The year 2003 has passed very quickly for us. The first six months in California, the last six in England. But it has not been favorable for Jane, and it is now four years that she has not been well.

Soon after our return to UK in June she fell down. Although she did not hurt herself much, our family doctor confined her to a short stay in hospital to find out why she had been in pain for 3½ years. They gave her a special injection and then transferred her to a convalescent home. Her recovery was remarkable. But before coming home, she collided with another patient, fell down and broke her right thigh bone. She already had a left hip replacement in 2001. Surgeons tried metal plates to support the bone but without success. Jane is still in hospital. Her surgeries are healed but she will be transferred to another convalescent home close to our daughter Julia's home. Julia and her husband Derek have been of tremendous help to us.

I thank the Lord for the measure of my health and strength and for His blessings. My four score birthday was celebrated at our daughters'—Doreen, Julia and Nadia—on separate occasions, and each was a treat in itself. Another great occasion in August was the wedding of our eldest granddaughter Hannah, to Stephen, making Nadia and Ian parents-in-law.

I moved into our flat in early October, but I visit Jane every day. As in Turlock I worship with a small fellowship and take great comfort from Matthew 18 v 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them." Another consolation is that our fourth daughter Lydia and family live less than 20 miles away from us.

Once again we wish you all a joyous Christmas season in celebra-

tion of the birth of the Savior of the world. Also a blessed new year.

Love from

(Dec.2003) **Jane & Albert Babilla**  
**Eastbourne, E. Sussex, U.K.**

---

Dear Ben:

Thank you for HUSA Magazine. It is very interesting. We are grateful to you and appreciate your efforts in producing the newsletter. Keep up the excellent work, and God bless you.

Enclosed is a check for \$20 for our 2004 subscription. Best regards.

**Yacoub Nona**  
(1.1.04.) **Glenview, Illinois.**

---

Gentlemen:

I was born in Habbaniya and now reside in Canada. I would like to thank you for your informative and interesting magazine HUSA. Also I would like to commend you on a job well done.

Enclosed please find US\$50 to cover my membership fees and for any previously published issues commencing with Volume 1 to the most recent publication.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, and may God bless you.

**Narsa Youiel Irmya**  
**1/19/04. Toronto, Canada.**

>>> *Thank you very much for your interest and the remittance sent. All four issues of HUSA published were mailed to you 2/6/04. We are happy to welcome you as a member—Ed.*

---

Dear Mike

I hope all is well with you and the family. Yonia and I are quite well except for missing our girls who are as you know on a working holiday in London and lucky for them it appears that their winter is quite mild, hardly any snow fall.

I received your latest issue of HUSA and I have passed it on to Jacob Yohanan to read as per telephone conversation he had with you some weeks back. Hopefully he will subscribe and support the newsletter.

I am sending a small contribution of US\$60.00, with *Raabi* Yosip

More on next page ?

### **Express Yourself (Cont'd)**

Bet-Yosip who is returning to Turlock, towards the newsletter and I am also thinking of approaching close friends and relatives to collect some more contributions to support your wonderful work together with that of Ben Yalda just to give encouragement particularly to you to continue your most appreciated writings.

Shlameh from Yonia and myself and all the best in all your endeavors.

God bless.

**Romeo Hanna**

**(undated) Bosley Park, Australia**

>>> *We are very grateful for your support and appreciate your assistance. (See also Editor's note under the next letter.)—Ed.*

Dear Ben:

Enclosed is a check for \$22 covers subscription for my brother Wilson Rasho in Australia and myself. I enjoy reading HUSA magazine very much. Keep up the good work. Regards to Lena, Dorothy and Sargon and Almas Aboona.

**1/23/04. Janet Jacob  
Surprise, Arizona.**

Dear Ben:

Thank you very much for 4th issue of HUSA. I read it thoroughly and found it very interesting. Roza my wife, Dawood my son-in-law and I appreciate your efforts and those of the Editor, Mr. Mikhael K. Pius, for the excellent work you guys are doing. Keep up the good work.

I have not lived in Habbaniya but my father was a Levy soldier in Habbaniya during the last years of World War II. Later he was transferred to Mosul with No. 17 Company under the leadership of *Rab-Emma* Jendo Lawando (grandfather of today's Assyrian singer Juliana Jendo). He was a Sergeant Major and remained in Mosul for four years. When he returned home in Syria in 1948 he spoke to us about the beautiful days he spent in Habbaniya and of the wonderful people during his three years' stay there. And now

reading through your newsletter makes me believe how true he was.

I will be mailing you soon a check for \$100. Forty are a donation to HUSA and the balance of \$60 are to cover my membership from 2004 through 2007.

Thank you again and best regards to you, Leena and Dorothy as well as to Mr. Mikhael K. Pius and his family. Please also remember me to Sargon and Almas Aboona.

May God bless you all.

**David T. Yacou**

**2/4/04. Prairiewood, Australia.**

>>> *Thank you very much for your appreciation of our work and for your generous donation as well as for your five-year membership payment in advance.*

*Although you, like member Romeo Hanna, have not lived in Habbaniya, you two are in fact role models for some of those who did live in Habbaniya—particularly some sportsmen—who were educated in Union School and spent their youth enjoying what benefits, especially social and athletic, that community afforded them, and about some of whom has been written so often during the years, particularly by this writer, but who, regrettably, are still not supporters of our efforts!—Ed.*

Dear Ben:

Greetings and thanks for sending me the 4th issue of HUSA.

Really the contents were interesting and bring back happy memories of our teenage days.

You and Manashi are doing a good job. *Chaibo* to all of you and keep it up.

I am sure you received my check for \$10 for subscription for 2004.

**Pius Haddad**

**(2.14.04) Turlock, California.**

>>> *We have received your check, thank you—Ed*

Hi Ben!

Hope all is well. Attached \$10 check subscription fee as requested.

Thanks. Keep up the good work.

**(2.10.04) Ben Shabo**

**Apex, North Carolina**

Dear Ben:

I just want to thank you for HUSA, 4th Edition. Herewith I enclose a money order for US\$12.00 for 2004 subscription.

Thank you.

**(2.14.04) George Younan  
Etobicoke, ON, Canada.**

Hi Benyamin,

I missed the great Habbaniya newsletter after I left to Glendale, Arizona. Please keep me on your list.

Thank you.

**(Undated) Elia Nooro Elia  
Glendale, Arizona.**

Dear Ben:

Enclosed herewith my check \$20 towards subscription for HUSA for 2004. Please mail the issues with my compliments to Mr. Avraham S. Rehana in London [address given].

Also mail him a copy of your spring-summer 2003 issue. Avraham's father is among the graduates of Henaidi Union School. He would love to see the photo.

Appreciate your excellent work. God bless you and Minashi.

**2/22/04. Jesse (Esha) Solomon  
Mount Prospect, ILL.**

Dear Ben:

Apologies for this very long delay in joining HUSA. Here is my application form.

Hope all goes well with you and the family. Very best wishes.

**Shmouel (Sam) Essa  
3/2/04. Middlesborough, England.**

Dear Ben:

Thank you for the two latest editions of HUSA and the relevant application form. I'm returning the form along with another one for my brother-in-law, *Shamasha* Hawel Youseph, duly completed, together with £10 note from each of us.

I am grateful to Esha (Jesse) Solomon for telling me about HUSA and paying for my subscription...Esha and I are old friends, since our boyhood days in Habbaniya...

Regarding the picture on the front



cover of HUSA Vol. 2, No. 1, I think Minashi is correct in assuming the picture was taken in the early 1930s, but the name of my father should read “Shoshou Rehana” (not Shosho Shino).

My father, who was a member of the organizing committee, was a keen participant in sports, cultural and church activities, and for some years [in Habbaniya?] he was the treasurer to the Assyrian Orthodox Church, along with Baba Mirza, *Qasha* Iskhaq and later *Qasha* Israel (Enwiya’s father).

My father was born in 1880 into Kallo’s clan in the village of Marbeshoo. While a teenager he travelled to Russia and from there went by ship to America. He lived on Clark Street in Chicago and worked on the production line of Ford Motor Company for a while. He then moved to Detroit, Michigan. When World War I broke out he traveled to Toronto, Canada, and enlisted in the Canadian Army, thinking he would be sent overseas to the Middle East where he would be closer to his family and people. But when his ship reached England the contingent for Gallipoli had already left. After a brief rest his battalion was sent to fight in France and Belgium. He was awarded by King George two medals for bravery. When he was demobilized, he returned to his old job at Motor Ford Company and lived in Detroit.

In early 1920s he heard his family members had left MarBeshoo and were living near Baghdad. He took a lengthy leave from his employer (with the intention of returning) and traveled to Baghdad through Lebanon. But he found work with the RAF [in Henaidi?] as a car mechanic. He also married Sadeh (my mother), who was sister of Yonan, father of the late Avimalk Yonan Avraham, President of RAF (Assyrian) Employees’ Club [during the late 1940s and early 1950s],

God bless you and Menashi for cultivating and keeping the Habbani-

ya kinship and fellowship alive.

**Avraham Shoshou Rehana  
(3.12.04) London, England.**

>>>Thank you very much for your interesting letter. But in order to conserve space, it had to be compressed and only the relevant portions could be published.

*Our apology for our error in your*

## H.U.S.A. CONTRIBUTION

**As a result of a donation drive spearheaded by Mr. Benyamin Yalda on request from his son Sargon serving with American Forces in Iraq, ten boxes of school supplies, with an estimated value of \$600.00, were delivered to the Chicago Chapter of Assyrian Aid Society last December to be forwarded to the children in Iraq. The contributed supplies were received and acknowledged by the Chapter President, Mr. Robert W. Mulhim, in an official letter to the Habbaniya Union School Association.**

**The cost of one-third of the supplies were donated by H.U.S.A. members and two-thirds by Mr. Kiryakos “Kirk” David from his One-Dollar Store in Chicago, for which the Association thanks him.**

### Sorry, wrong number!

**In the previous issue of HUSA we indicated that Mr. Ashour Marano made a \$15 payment. The figure should have been \$30. We offer our apology to Mr. Marano for the error.**

*father’s name. I believe Shino was the first name of one of your three uncles? And, incidentally, I think it was the late Qasha Polous Gewargis—our next-door neighbor during our early years in Habbaniya (in C2/155) and the father of today’s Bible Preacher Paul George of Turlock—and not the late Qasha Iskhaq who was succeeded by the late Qaasha Israel as pastor of As-*

*syrian Orthodox Church in Habbaniya. Qasha Iskhaq of Anhar was in fact the Orthodox priest in Gailani Camp in Baghdad.—Ed.*

Dear Ben:

I am Andrew Shino. I was raised in Habbaniya. I like to become member of HUSA newsletter. This is a check of \$10.

**Andrew Shino  
(Undated) Chandler, Alabama**

Dear Ben:

Enclosed is a check for \$20 from my wife Victoria Polus participating in your HUSA.

We wish you every success in your good work.

**John Enwiya  
4.15.04. San Jose, California**

Dear Ben:

Sorry for the delay in sending my subscription. Enclosed is my check for \$25 covering a two-year renewal and the balance as a donation for HUSA keeping the good work. God bless.

**Oshana Y. Michael  
4.20.04. Niles, Illinois**

My dear Sargon: [her brother]

I enclose a check [\$12] for HUSA magazine. Please tell Ben I didn’t have his address, also tell him I am very impressed by the good job he and Menashi are doing via this interesting magazine. Love to you and all the family. Khawa.

**3.28.04 Kay [Khawa] Pearce  
Dorset, England.**

Dear Ben:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Habbaniya Union School Association.

I have always appreciated the work and events HUSA has carried out. Please find enclosed a donation as part of renewing my membership.

**Andy Y. Darmoo  
Slade Green, Kent, UK. ?**

## Memory Lane

## Assyrian engineer in England recalls past life in Habbaniya

Dear Mikhael:

I received a copy each of the maiden and three subsequent issues of HUSA from my brother Shmoel “Shuwa Shawil” Tammo of Roslindale, Massachusetts, who wanted me to see if they would inspire any dormant thoughts; if I could recognize any of the people portrayed.

Well, HUSA certainly performed well. The CC plan you drafted, albeit simple and not to scale, brought back some sweet memories of the place of my birth.

I grew up in house numbered C2/120, a distance of 50 yards from the Roman [Chaldean] Catholic Church and 30 yards away from [the tennis champion] William Daniel’s house. I attended the [government] primary school headed by that feared and yet respected Sayed Antwan for six years, the last two of which I was taught English by Sayed Hamdi Al-Rawi...

Among my playmates were Shimshon “Shisho” Francis [Warda], Ammanuel “Ammo” David, Sargon Sargis, and Paulo Esha Neesan, nephew of the beloved Khammo the Cobbler. And whenever he escaped his sister’s [Christina’s] supervision, a curly dark-haired, brown eyed lad with a mischievous smile, clad in white *disdasha*, rocking back and forth on his feet, would appear, eager to join us. And why not? He was a kid just like us. It was none other than your brother “Kooya” [Meshael]—God bless him! (I see from Wiska’s photos that, like me, Kooya has lost most of his curly hair!). Ammo Baba’s younger brother, “Tarzan,” was another playmate.

We played football [soccer] barefoot with tennis balls (most likely William Daniel’s discards!) behind *Mukhtar Haido’s* house [in A-Type] and in front of the Sikhs’ Temple. We played there for hours on end—until we were chased away by Haido’s Alsatian dogs!

My contemporaries were Edward “Didwa” Ishmaiel, Shedrak “Tillo” Akhko, and from Levy Camp Dinkha Warda and Baba Esakhan. Instead of taking the usual *siesta*, Edward and I spent many a hot summer afternoon in the shade of the house in front of Aprim Kambar Abraham’s house chatting and admiring the “Charles Atlas” physique of Aprim’s younger brother Meshak. Sometimes we were joined by Ludiya Oshana, Edward’s sweetheart.

It was during this time [late forties/early fifties?] that I made the acquaintance of your [late] brother “Appy.” Wiska describes him as “resourceful, definitely with foresight and sociability.” But I would add that he had a “Midas touch.” He succeeded in every venture and deservedly so, for he was a hard worker. He talked my late older brother William Shawil, into subscribing for *Captain Mar-*



Ramadi Secondary School students by the ancient tower in Hilla in 1952. Left to right, back row: Shidrak Yosip (later Iraqi international soccer player and coach), Shuwa Shawil Tammo, Wiska Khammo [Pius], Dicko [Polus], Middle row: Atniel David, a Kurdish lad, Khoshaba Slevo, Ammo Baba (later famous Iraqi International soccer player and coach), Shmoel Lazar [Essa], Mehse Hassan; Front: Wilson Polus [Rasho], Zia Moshi [Youkhana].

*vel*, *Superman*, and *Picturegoer* Magazines that he sold in his little bookshop by the side of the CC winter cinema, convincing him that they would improve the English vocabulary of his brother (i.e. me). And he was dead right!

In the year I graduated from primary school, the first intermediate school in Habbaniya was built near the girls’ school but on the opposite side of the main exit route lead-



Lunch time at Ramadi Secondary School. Back row, L to r: William Youkhanna, Albert Tattar, Sabah Naomi, Khoshaba Aboona, Shmoel Lazar [Essa]; Front: Ramsey Neesan, Atniel David, William Khoshaba, Robin Philip [Rasho], Ben Khoshaba, and Shuwa Shawil [Tammo], munching their home-made sandwiches.

ing to “London Gate” (and not as shown on your plan). By this time Wiska and Rafael Khammo [Pius], Shuwa Shawel, Albert Tattar, Shmoel Lazar and others had well established the Habbaniya-Ramadi school bus route. [The group was known as “Habbaniya Bus Brothers.”]

My classmates were Shmoel “Chuvve” Youkhanna



At Um-al-Taboul (Yarmouk). Habbaniya’s Assyrian Ramadi School students serving Army conscription. From left, Peter\_\_\_\_, Shuwa Shawil, Gewargis\_\_\_\_, Lt. Enwia\_\_\_\_, Benyamin\_\_\_\_, and Putros “Petto,”\_\_\_\_, taking a breather following drill session.

(a close friend and colleague now but my main class rival then), the late Edwin, son of Benyamin Jebrial (NAAFI manager), Fraidon Yacou, Pnoel Aghassi Babilla [later “killed in action,” as a captain, in Iraqi Army in July 1968], Yonan Maqsud and Edward Ishmaiel [Yalda].

After I graduated from intermediate school our family moved from C2 to C1 neighborhood, close to the open-air cinema. (We watched quite a few free movies from the rooftop, lying on our beds!)

For our secondary education, we decided to go to Falluja [now “famous” in world news] rather than Ramadi because the route was shorter and the road better maintained



Ramadi Secondary School students soccer team. Back row, 1 to r: First 8 persons Not Known, Shuwa Shawil Tammo (extreme right); Front row: Mehssen Hassan, N/K, Wiska Khammo Pius, Kurdish lad, Khoshaba Aboona, with glasses N/K, Khoshaba Slevo, Wilson Polus [Rasho], N/K, Ammo Baba, Shmoel Lazar Essa, Dicko Polus.

and so another school bus route was established...

Mikhael, I was deeply saddened to read about William David’s departure. He certainly was a debonaire and popular chap. Two distinct pictures of William stand out in my mind. The first one is of his lying down on the prison floor as Yosip in “Joseph the Dreamer” play, while the song “*Yosip bruni kmetwa keena...*” was sung. Even now it brings tears to my eyes. (My cousin Maqsud played the role of King)

The second picture is that of William on the dance floor of the [Assyrian] Employees Club, one summer night. The sweet sound of a Spanish recorded song was blaring out when all of a sudden William and a short chubby chap (an *Urmishnaya*) started to perform a “Torro” dance. When they finished, there was a thunderous applause from everyone around. It was so beautifully and artistically done that it still sticks in my mind!

I am sure William will be badly missed and I convey my sincere condolences to his family...

In conclusion, Mikhael, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the newsletters and I am fervently awaiting the arrival of the next issue. My congratulations to you and to your team for a job well done. And God bless.

**From: Youel Shawil Tammo  
1/4/04. Cornwall, England.**

>>> *Thank you very much for the extracts from a well-written and highly interesting letter as well as snapshots. You painted some nostalgic pictures of the past. This is the kind of material HUSCA hopes to receive from contributors, text and pictures of general interest that paint a portrait and shed light on certain aspects of our former life in RAF Stations of Hinaidi and Habbaniya local camps.*

*Youel Tammo [in his late sixties, I assume], is the youngest son of Shawil Tammo and Anna Khammo. He is a 1962 graduate of University College London with a B. Sc. (Eng) in Civil Engineering. He has been working as a qualified chartered civil engineer for the Cornwall County Council since April 1968 and is a Principal Design Engineer in the Structures Office specialized in design and assessment of highway bridges and associated structures in Cornwall. He is married, since 1961, to a Cornish girl named Margaret who bore him (in Daura) in 1964 a daughter, Najat (now married, with three sons) and a son, Nigel (also married, with a son and a daughter. Nigel is also a civil engineer with a B. Eng. degree.) After graduating from college, Youel returned, with his wife, to Iraq and lived with his parents in Daura from 1962 to 1967. Youel reads and writes Assyrian. “Thanks to my mother,” he writes, “who taught me Assyrian at home in Habbaniya.” And guess what! His English wife also learned to speak Assyrian while living in Daura. (See his family picture on P17)—Editor*

*PS to Youel: I have no idea about drawing! I drew the sketch of Habbaniya local camps from memory, bolstered by the memories of a few other former Habbaniya residents I consulted. However, I should be very grateful if you could, as a civil engineer, redraw the map for me, with the amendments you consider necessary, ensuring that the writing or print is not rendered too fine to read when sketch is reduced to 8.5”x11”. How about it?*

## Some of the Seniors of 1st Iraq (Habbaniya) Boys Scout and Girl Guide Groups

**FRONT ROW:** from left: 1. Albert Aviqam, 2. *Qasha* Toma Esho, 3. Britisher, 4. Khoshaba Kamar (Asst. SM), 5. Britisher, 6. Khawa Abbona (Girl Guide Commissioner), 7. Sargis S. Shallou, 8. Andrious M. Jotyar; **2ND ROW,** from left: 1. Daniel Iskhaq, 2. Ben Esho Yalda, 3. Wilson David, 4. Elia Isaac, 5. Ammanuel Shmouel, 6. Youkannia Sarmo 7. William Kamar, 8. Ben Ishmaiel Yalda, 9. Wilson Shallou; **3RD ROW,** from left: 1. Naima Ishmaiel Yalda, 2. Agnes Baba Sarmast, 3. Clara Aviqam, 4. Catherine Abbona, 5. Violet Fernandez, 6. Margaret Peters, 7. Lily Awrahim Baba, 8. Agnis Karam Gewargis, 9. Sarah Goshal, 10. Wardia Kakko Poloss, 11. Mary Sharma, 12. Margaret Awisha; **4TH ROW,** from left: 1. Shimshon Gewargis Daniel, 2. Christie Shlemon, 3 (?), 4 (?), 5 (?), 6. Yerjanik Babayan, 7. (?), 8. Newton Elisha, 9. (?), 10. (?), 11. (?), 12. (?), 13. "Baby Boy" Apostoloff, 14. (?), 15. Avia Nimrod Khammo, 16. (?), 17. (?); **BACK ROW,** from left: 1. (?), 2. (?), 3. Albert Roy, 4. George Nikola, 5. Awrahim Shlemon Yacou, 6. Atniel Youkhanna, 7. (?), 8. Eliya Saada, 9. George \_\_\_\_\_, 10. (?), 11. Benyamin Kanna, 12. (?), 13. (?), 14. (?), 15. (?). Photo courtesy Kay [Khawa Aboona] Pearce, England; names by Mikhael Pius, Davis and Liza David and Zacharia O. Zacharia, Modesto, and Ben Yalda, Chicago.



## RAF (Iraq) Levy company on active duty in Palestine in 1941

*Rab-Khamshi* Warda Khammo (foreground) of RAF (Iraq) Levies, with his company on active duty in Palestine in 1941 to "protect the strategic infrastructure, while the bulk of the Allied Forces were busy fighting the Axis Forces at Al-Alamein, Egypt." Photo and caption courtesy Andrious Warda Khammo of Ealing, England. (See also his letter on Page 4).



# Habbaniya was home of hockey in Iraq

By Mikhael K. Pius

(With feedback from Andrew J. Simon)



**1953: RAF Assyrian Employees Club's forwards Andrew Simon (left) and Aram Karam fighting their way in through the Station defense in the third-time draw final for the Joyce Rolling Cup at Habbaniya. Photo from Andrew Simon.**

Habbaniya was a Royal Air Force base in Iraq. But it was commonly noted for two things: Assyrian Levies and sports, soccer in particular.

Assyrian Levies were the finest soldiers in the Middle East, not only for their smart attire and precision drill and march, but also for their fighting skill and spirit, which they proved on several occasions on behalf of the British government. They were particularly noted for their loyal and gallant defense in May 1941 against the much larger number of Iraqi Forces laying siege to RAF Station of Habbaniya, as well as for the resultant routing of the enemy and the fight for the town of Falluja, which they occupied and subdued in a matter of days, with some help from a few old RAF airplanes and a contingent of King's Own Regiment.

In sports the Assyrians excelled in three games: Soccer, tennis and field hockey. Assyrian teams dominated the Habbaniya soccer fields and produced a stable of high grade players, who became the cream of Iraqi international soccer in the late fifties and sixties. But some Habbaniya Assyrians also excelled in tennis and won most of the local competitions, not to mention a few who attained high records in field and track athletics. And there was a crop of Assyrians that attained top standard in field hockey game in Habbaniya.

Hockey, which was introduced to Iraq by British Indian personnel in the 1920s, was not a particularly popular game in Iraq. But Habbaniya became home of the game in Iraq two decades later. It was the second most popular sport, next to soccer. There were a few Iraqi military hockey teams, but they were of a low standard.

In the early years (1930s and early 1940s) Assyrians did not have hockey teams; only a few Assyrians played

among Indians working for the RAF. The Indians had two teams, W&B (Works and Buildings) and Supply Depot, that played in organized competition. They had the upper hand against RAF teams. But in later years, the Assyrians came into their own as more players joined the game and they formed teams of their own that took part in organized matches and put up very stiff competition not only against Indians but also against the British RAF teams.

During the late forties and early fifties there was a good number of hockey teams in Habbaniya, such as CC "A", CC "B" and CC Select teams; RAF Employees' (Assyrian) Club and AMWD (Air Ministry Works Directorate) Club teams; RAF Levies (soldiers), Levy C (civilian clerks), and for a short time, CC (or Habbaniya?) Stars, and Indian Stars teams.

CC Stars was really a make-over of Levy C team after the latter team disbanded in 1951 and Indian Stars was organized by two Indian brothers who owned Iraq Sports Stores and was mainly made up of AMWD Indian players. I believe these two teams actually played for a short duration mostly friendly games in Habbaniya and elsewhere.

RAF had a number of unit teams which usually competed against each other in RAF Station League and other inter-unit competitions. But they had three strong combined teams, RAF Station (or Station Select), Station "A" and Station "B", the last two of which participated in RAF Station Open League and Joyce Rolling Knock-out Cup competitions against the local teams. Armenians, Kurds and Arabs did not have hockey teams of their own, but a couple of Armenians and several Arabs and Kurds played for CC and AMWD teams.

In the early years, what competition was available was mostly dominated by the Indian team W&B (later

**Cont'd on next page ?**

renamed AMWD) against RAF teams. But in later years, the Assyrian teams came into their own and gave them a run for their money, winning many of the championships. For instance, on record, CC (Civil Cantonment) team won 3-0 the Joyce Cup against AMWD team in 1947 and, in 1948, also won 3-1 against RAF Station team. (Joyce was a rolling cup donated by a Lt. Col. Joyce.) CC also bagged the same year and in 1950 the RAF Station Open League championship. At least six or seven of the eleven CC players were always Assyrians. In 1951 Levy Civilians (all Assyrians) won the six-a-side final against AMWD, the latter team fielding the veteran Indian sportsman Ambrose Vincent and three of his young sons, Teddy, Allan and Clarence, among others. But the same year AMWD team (fielding Andrew Simon, an estranged Assyrian Employees' top scorer, who netted all three goals), beat the Assyrian Employees' Club 3-1 in the Joyce Cup final. However, Employees' Club (including Andrew Simon) came back



**1936: W&B team, winners of RAF Station, Hinaidi, Iraq, field hockey competition. The team is a mixture of Assyrians (2), British (2) and Indians. Back row, 2nd from left is Nimrod Babona and 4th is Francis Warda; Sitting, 2nd from left: Mr. Ambrose Vincent. Rest not known. Photo from Shimshon Francis Warda, Modesto.**

Stars thrashed Royal Iraqi Air Force team 8-0 at Rasheed Camp, Baghdad; the same month Assyrian Employees beat RAF Levy team 4-2 and Habbaniya Stars thrashed Station "B" team 8-1; in December 1953 RAF Station team demolished Kuwait Oil Company team 12-2 and CC beat Station Select team 3-1.

The following players, listed along with the local teams they played for, were the hockey players who had a good measure of multiple skills in the game, such as tactics, stick work, speed, dribbling, scoring, passing, teamwork, etc.:

Andrew J. Simon, probably the highest scorer of all, played for AEC (Assyrian Employees Club), and CC (Civil Cantonment) teams. He also played in post-Habbaniya for ASC (Assyrian Sports Club) and DC (Dora Club), both in Baghdad; William Daniel, Youra Eshaya, Sargis Shallou, Ammo Baba: AEC; Hormis Goriel and



**1947-48: CC team, Joyce Cup winners v RAF Station. Standing: Andrew Simon (did not play in final due to injury), Ahmed Jowhar, Mansor Benyamin Zodo, Hormis Goriel, Philip Esakhan, Kumar Vello (Sports Sec.); Sitting: Mr. J. Bann, Jerair Chachanian, John Isaac (Capt), Etalius Shawel, and Mr. Edwards; Reclining: William David and Jamiel Jowhar. Photo from John Isaac, Turlock.**

and beat AMWD in the same year in RAF Station Open League. Employees also bagged the League championship for 1953 and were joint winners, with Station "A" team, of Joyce Cup, after very exciting, fiercely-fought, amazing three-match draws.

The following are some of the documented *friendly* hockey games played:

In November 1951 AMWD beat Royal Military College team in Baghdad 2-0; in January 1953 Kuwait Oil Company team (all players British) drew 1-1 against RAF Station and lost 2-3 against CC team in Habbaniya; in February 1953 Assyrian Employees team thrashed 4-1 115 Maintenance Unit, cup winners of RAF Station Inter-unit League; in March 1953 Habbaniya Stars lost 0-1 to Iraq Petroleum Company K2 in Baiji; the next month Indian



**1953: Andrew Simon (right) bullying off against Squadron Leader Brolin during an Assyrian Employees' Club v Station "A" team match. Photo from Andrew Simon, Ealing, England.**



1951: AMWD team, winners Joyce Cup by 3-1 against Assyrian Employees Club. Standing from left, Jamiel Jowhar, Ibrahim Ismaiel, Sabri Ahmed, Qadouri Ahmad, Edward Polish. Sitting: Mr. Ambrose Vincent, Andrew Simon, Not Known, Teddy Vincent, and Mr. J. Bann; Front: Henry \_\_\_\_, and Clarence Vincent. Photo from Andrew Simon, Ealing, UK.

William Kamar: AEC and CC (and ASC); Youel Gewargis, John Isaac, Avia Nimrod Khammo, Etalius "John" Shawil and William David: AEC and CC; Aram Karam: AEC, CC, and Levy C; Andrious Mama Jotyar: AEC and Levy C; Mr. Naqwee, Ambrose, Teddy, Allan, and Clarence Vincent, Ibrahim "Dabboo" Ismaiel, Edward Polish, Mr. Vargas, Mr. Asghar, Ahmed Salma, Hassan Jumaa, Majeed Sayid, Ahmed Mohammed, Ibrahim Haidar: AMWD (Air Ministry Works Directorate); Jerair Chachanian, John Baijo Rehana, Yacoub Youkhanna, Philip Esakhan and Sam Jitto: CC; Mr. J. Bann, Ahmed Jowar, Mr. S. Edwards, Jamiel Jowhar, Qaddouri Ahmed, and Sabri Ahmed: CC and AMWD; Toma Rohan and

Andrious Aprim: CC "B"; David Shlemon: CC and Levy C; Skharia Ziano, Youash Giliana, Rehana Baijo Rehana: DC (Dora Club, Baghdad); Sargon Yacoub Aboona, Zaia Esho Yalda, Edward Nimrod Khammo: Levy C; *Rab-Khamshi Moshi* \_\_, *Rab-Emma Lazar* \_\_, Sgt. Adam Odisho, *Rab-Khamshi Awia Yacoub*: RAF Levies; Squadron Leaders Cabbolt, Brolin and Brown, Warrant Officer Coward, Flight Lieutenant Bernard, Corporal Wilson, Flight Sergeants Ryan and Lee: RAF Station; Francis Warda and Nimrod Babona: W & B.

There were of course other good players who, unfortunately, cannot be remembered.

And these were some of the local team captains that can be recalled: Andrew J. Simon: CC (4 yrs) and AEC (5 yrs); Aram Karam: Levy C (5 years); Ambrose Vincent: AMWD (4 yrs); Mr. J. Bann: AMWD (2 yrs); Etalius "John" Shawel: AEC (1 yr); John Isaac: CC (1 yr);

The main goalkeepers for the top local teams were:



1950: Winners Levy C and runners-up AMWD in six-a-side competition. Standing, left to right: Andrious Mama, Youel Gewargis, Avia Nimrod, Kumar Vello, John Isaac, Not known, Allan Vincent, Clarence Vincent, Qaddouri Ahmad; Sitting: William Kamar, Aram Karam, Shlemon Youav, S/L Quittenden (Officer in-charge CC), Ambrose Vincent, Not Known, Teddy Vincent.

Kaako Gewargis Shallou, Baba "Babo" Esho, and Zaia Arabo: AEC and CC; Mansor Benyamin Zodo: AEC and CC (and ASC); Arsen Yasayel Sayadian: CC; Sabri Ahmed: AMWD and CC; Aram Bahram [Marbo]: (DC). ?

*Editor's Note: This account is based on the writer's memory and on some documented records he has, both as a fan and as a sports reporter to The Iraq Times at the time, as well as on recent feedback from a top veteran of the hockey game, Mr. Andrew J. Simon of Ealing, England. The information may not be complete or entirely accurate, but we believe this is, basically, the history of hockey during the RAF era of Habbaniya (1921-1955) as we know it, particularly of the local teams. However, if any knowledgeable person (please note the emphasis) finds anything amiss, or has additional information, I would be glad to hear from them.*



1953: RAF Employees (Assyrian) Club team, winners Station Open League and joint-winners Joyce Cup. Sitting, from left: William David, Etalius Shawel, Andrew Simon, Albert Babilla (Pres.) Sargis Shallou, John Isaac, and Youra Eshaya; Back: Ammo Baba, William Daniel, Baba Esho, Davis David (Sprts.Sec), Yacoub Youkhanna and Hormis Goriel. Photo from Andy Simon.

# SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM THE PAST

Contributed by Readers



Captain Alexander Isaac, Jr., son of Eshaya Isaac's younger brother Alexander, a former resident of Habbaniya. Capt. Alexander is seen being promoted to the rank of Major in the US Army in July 2003 by Maj. Gen. Steven W Boutelle. Photo courtesy Victoria Yohanan.



Baghdad wedding: The late Elia Isaac leading a *khigga* dance, followed by his sister-in-law Mary Isaac and the late Babajan "Sa'atsas" Yonan, all of whom seem to be enjoying themselves.



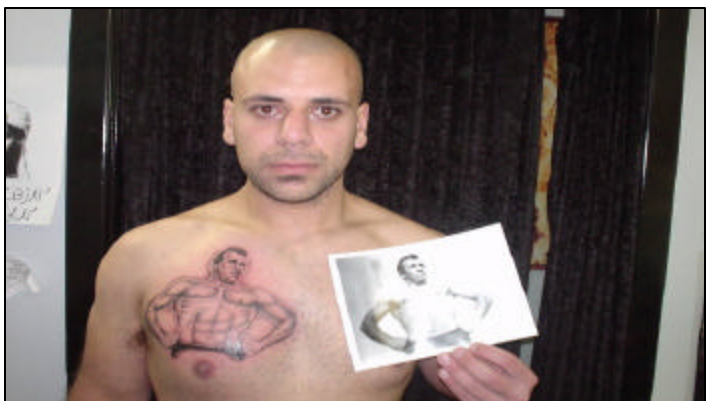
1960: Benyamin Ishmaiel Yalda (second from left) refereeing soccer match at Dora, Baghdad. Building in foreground is government primary school. Photo from Benyamin I. Yalda of Ealing.



Late Youra Eshaya (right), with his team mate Edison Eshay David, during a soccer tour in Russia, posing with boxing champ Shurka (foreground) and his wife in Moscow. Photo courtesy Edison David



CC Team in late 1940s. Standing, from left: Aram Karam, William David Shino, Hormis Goriel, Hrand Yasayil Sayadian, Philip Nimrod Benjamin (referee), John Isaac, Ben Esho Neesan, Sam Eshaya, Albert Aviqam Samuel (lineman); Front: William Kambar, Haido Patros, Fraidon Orahim Iskhaq, Shlemon Youav. Photo courtesy Albert A. Samuel, Sydney, Australia.



2004: Young Michael Joseph from "Down Under," showing photo of his late father, Wilson Meshael Joseph, with its duplicate tattooed on his chest in memory of his father, who died two years ago in Sydney. Wilson, born in Habbaniya, was a body builder in his youth and his son Michael, 25, a warehouse supervisor, has also been doing martial arts for the last six years. Next project: picture of his Assyrian tribal horsemen to be tattooed on his back!



# SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM THE PAST

Contributed by Readers



John Falconer as a young man serving as an MP (Military Policeman) in RAF Station of Habbaniya, in 1954. Photo from Julia Falconer, Modesto.



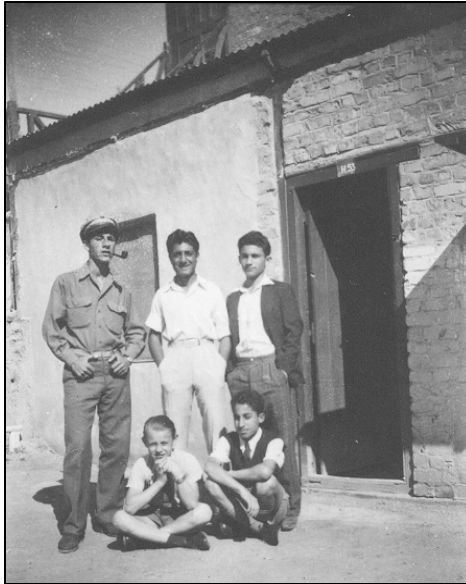
Youel Tammoo today with wife Margaret and their son Nigel with his daughter Hannah near their home in Cornwall, England. Photo from Youel Tammoo.



Team Capt. Andrew J. Simon receiving Joyce Cup 1953-54 for Employees Club, winners 3-0 against RAF Station. (Scorers: (Andrew 2, Hormis 1). Photo from A. Simon



Lilly Orahim Baba (left) and Naima Ishmaiel Yalda, in their nursing days in CC Hospital, Habbaniya, in late 1940s. Photo from Lilly Baba, London.



Albert Aviqam Samuel (pipe), Wilson Khoshaba Isaac, Aprim Khammo Pius; sitting: "Baby Boy" Apostoloff (left) and Wilson David Shino, in front of Aprim's CC Bookshop. Photo from Albert A. Samuel, Sydney.



Yakhanis Lazar with his sister-in-law Madjy, wife of Oshana Lazar the former CC Office chief clerk, in ceremonial dress at a wedding in CC in the late 1940s.

## A Habbaniya Love Story

# Blue Eyed Marganita

By Mikhael K. Pius

It was a warm and humid Sunday night, cloudy and with hardly a breath of breeze. Shimshon, a 21 year young Assyrian lay in his rickety wooden bedstead, alongside several of his siblings' beds lined up in front of his family's mud brick house in a C-Type bungalow on one of the main streets of Civil Cantonment of Habbaniya. His bed sheets were hot and humid too and he was restless. He turned and tossed, but sleep would not come as Marganita's sweet, beautiful face kept stealing into his mind. He finally turned on his back and gave in to his thoughts, fondly recalling how he had met her.

They had met that very Sunday morning on the bus while he was returning home to Habbaniya from a few-day visit with his uncle's family in Baghdad. The year was 1947.

Shimshon had arrived in a horse-drawn *arabana* at Baghdad-to-Habbaniya "Garage" (a bus-and-taxi station), across the street from Padre Pierre Elementary School. The July late morning sun was already a scorcher. Along with several other passengers, he waited for almost an hour in the station shade as other prospective passengers gradually drifted in.

When the bus was about to depart, he and all the other passengers boarded the bus. Just then Shimshon saw from the bus window a well-dressed middle-aged man arrive in a taxi with a young lady. He hurriedly spoke with the Assyrian bus driver and then embraced the girl. She said good bye to him and got on the bus.

Much to Shimshon's delight there was a vacant spot opposite him on the long seat, which she then occupied. Unlike the common Assyrian female, she was not shy. From the start she looked at him, smiled, and said in Assyrian language, "I think I have seen

you once in Habbaniya. My name is Marganita. What is your name?"

Shimshon was surprised by her forwardness. He also found it strange that with all her beauty he had not spotted her before at one time or another strolling with girl friends in the CC with an eye on the dressed-up boys "parading" on the streets.

With a catch in his throat he answered: "My name...my name is Shimshon. But I am not Shimshon *Gabbara*. [Samson the Great] They call me Shimshon *Kutta*. [Samson 'Tich'] He then laughed nervously. His face felt warm and he knew he was flushing.

Actually, Shimshon had fine features and a well proportioned body but he was always embarrassed by his five-foot-two size, particularly regarding his romantic intentions. So he sometimes tried to gloss it over with humor.

However, the unabashed young lady looked at him and said in her soft voice, "You are not tall but you are not *very* short." Then she added, "And you are handsome."

It was the first time a girl was calling him "handsome" to his face. His racing heart flooded with warmth and wedding bells rang in his ears as his eager eyes took a complete stock of her.

Her fair oval face was framed by long, loose golden hair. As she shook her head her hair rippled like liquid gold, cascading over her long nape and resting upon her shoulders and back. Her small ears were graced by button-sized gold earrings.

Her earrings not only reminded him of one of his favorite songs, Bing Crosby's "Golden Earrings," but strangely enough it also symbolized in his mind bridal gold jewelry, bridal wedding clothes, gifts for the bride's

family members and all the expenses connected with a wedding celebration, all of which are customarily provided by the bridegroom's family.

*Ash in my eyes*, he thought, *both my father and I together make a beggarly income that barely feeds the family and here I'm thinking of marriage! And where would I get the nigda? [dowry money] For such a beautiful daughter, her father might demand one or two—or even three hundred dinars, who knows!*

Marganita was slim and wore a flowered, well-fitting dress. And as Shimshon lowered his eyes he saw straight, round, slender bare legs ending with small feet in dainty sandals. Although still in her teens she seemed quite tall for her race, probably topping him by several inches. But when he looked up into her face again, her eyes were what his eyes locked on to. They were remarkable! Under untouched bows of fine golden eyebrows, they were big and blue, blue like a clear summer sky and as inviting as sparkling twin pools in summertime. He had seldom seen Assyrian blue eyes, let alone as blue and clear and friendly as these. They almost took his breath away. And when she smiled, her sensitive full lips reminded him of the fresh petals of an opening pink rose.

The old bus crossed over King Faisal II Bridge, skimmed by King Faisal I Statue, left the city behind and roared up the rutted highway toward its destination, the Royal Air Force Station of Habbaniya, 50 miles westward. A hot wind was blowing in through the half-lowered window panes, almost searing his face. But it cooled his hot and sweating body.

Reengaging her in a friendly chat, Shimshon said:

"I do not think I have seen you

### Habbaniya Love Story (Cont'd)

you in CC. Does your family live in Levy Lines?"

"No," she replied. "I live in Baghdad. I am going to Habbaniya to the wedding of a relative on Saturday. I am in place of my father and mother because they could not come."

"O, whose wedding is it?" he asked.

"Wedding of Shammiran and Ashur."

"O, we are also invited. Which one of them is your relative?"

"Ashur. He is the son of my mother's cousin."

"Do you know...Ashur is one of my friends. *He* has invited me himself."

"True?"

"Yes."

After a brief spell of silence, she said: "You called yourself *Kutta*. I am sure Ashur is one or two inches shorter than you but he doesn't think he is short. I don't know how tall is his *tlibta*; [betrothed] I have not seen her yet."

Shimshon smiled impishly and said: "She is tall like you."

"True?" Marganita said. "How nice this is!" And she broke into a bubbling laughter.

Her joyful laughter was like a sudden whiff of cool breeze that fanned his heart.

After she had stopped laughing, she said: "Of course, I am also going for two weeks to visit my *Aunti's* family. I go and visit them every summer school recess. I like Habbaniya."

"Where is their house?"

"They used to live in A-Type, near our church—I mean the Chaldean Catholic Church. But they got an F-Type house last year."

*Those are the homes of high grade employees!* Shimshon thought with dismay.

"What...what does your aunt's husband do?"

"He's a first grade clerk."

"What is his name?"

"George."

"George?"

"Yes, George Adam."

Shimshon mulled for a moment over the identity of her aunt's husband's. Although he knew most of the hundreds of Assyrian clerks living in CC, he did not seem to know him. He bit his lip and his racing heart slowed down to a painful thud in his chest as he realized that her aunt's husband was probably one of the "aristocratic" members of the community.

"And what does your father work?"

"He is the chief clerk at a big company of commerce in Baghdad."

Shimshon thought that if her aunt's husband was a First Grade clerk and her father a chief clerk, then her family must be of a high class, probably a cultured *Bne-Urmi* family that would not even look at his poor parents, who could not even read and write their own language.

He looked at her and asked: "Are you Catholic?"

She nodded her head. "And You?"

"No. I am...I am Nestorian, Church of the East."

The difference in their faith caused him a nagging sense of disappointment!

However, Marganita's gentle voice uplifted his spirit once again when she said: "I like your Church too. I have been to your church here with my cousin. Masses of both Churches are almost the same." Then she added: "I imagine you live in Habbaniya?"

"Yes I live and work in Habbaniya," he said. "But how happy I would be if I were living and working in Baghdad!" he added with a sigh.

Shimshon was blooming with youth and energy and was always bursting to break out and see some of the world outside the seven-foot-high iron fence of the air base. But he, his father, and thousands like them who had clung to the British for salvation in return to the loyal civil and military services their people had rendered to the British Forces since the Great War were so brainwashed into dependence

on the RAF employment and the lowly facilities and benefits afforded them that they had developed an innate fear of the unknown, not daring to venture outside for better employment and a better life for their families in other parts of the developing country. Furthermore, the British policy had made sure that they, the Assyrians, though indigenous people, not only remained "refugees" in their own country—the majority without the benefit of Iraqi nationality—but also that there was no love lost between them and the governing Moslem inhabitants of Iraq.

Because, and despite, this situation Shimshon had a particular fascination for Baghdad, the fabled city of A Thousand and One Nights, the great metropolis sitting astride the ancient Tigris River. He loved to wander about the city; to stroll with his cousin on the River Street in the waning evening hours and look down from the street at the glowing circle of fire as the fishermen by the river bank broiled delicious *Shabbout* and *Bunniya* fishes, of which he and his cousin had often eaten at a small "casino," or just watch the beauty of a crimson sun setting behind the city skyline across the silent flowing waters.

Actually, his enchantment with Baghdad went back to his early boyhood in the local camp attached to the former RAF Station of Hinaidi near the Capital, when, once in a long while, his father took him to the city on his periodic shopping trips for the family.

Shimshon always hoped one day his family would be able to break the chains and leave Habbaniya and establish itself in his dream town, as his venturesome uncle had done several years earlier and started a small prosperous grocery shop that had provided his family with a good income, and a large two-storey house in the city, with modern furniture instead of the few scissor-chairs and the wobbly table his family had in Habbaniya. So to refresh his spirit, once or twice a

Cont'd on next page ?

year Shimshon visited with his uncle's family for a few days, seeing the sights and cavorting with his cousin.

The enchantment of Baghdad, however, was not on Shimshon's mind. His thoughts were preoccupied by Marganita and her cascade of golden hair, her generous smile and blue friendly eyes. She was all he thought about, all that pervaded his mind, body and soul—till his thoughts were suddenly interrupted when Marganita asked:

"What do you work?"

*I wish I could tell her I'm a chief clerk.* Instead he said: "I am a clerk. Not a high grade clerk like...like your aunt's husband and your father. A low grade clerk." He smiled sheepishly.

"You are young," she said. "My father and George have been working for many years. After some years you will be a high grade clerk too."

Encouraged, he then smiled and asked her casually: "Do you think your father...uh, can find me a job in the company he works? I want so much to leave Habbaniya and...and live in Baghdad."

To his surprise she said: "Yes, I am sure he can. I will tell him if you want." She then smiled and added: "I will tell him that the brother of my girl friend in Habbaniya wants to work in Baghdad. My father is a helpful person and he loves me very much. I am sure he will not refuse," she assured him.

"I would thank you very much for that," Shimshon said, elated.

"And what does *your* father work?" she asked after a while.

*If only I could tell her that he is a chief clerk...or an engineer!*

"He used to work as a machine turner," he replied. "But he lost three of his fingers in an accident at work. So they reduced him to an...an assistant with a lower salary"

"Oh, I am very sorry for him," she said, looking sad.

"But why do you want to leave your family?" she asked after a pause. "I imagine your father needs you to help him take care of the family."

"Yes, I know. But I shall still send...to the family...money from Baghdad, when I work there. And my younger brother has just finished...uh...the middle school. I am sure he will soon find...a job with the RAF here...perhaps as a junior clerk."

"How many brothers and sisters do you have?"

*I wonder what she would think when I tell her!* "I have...I have a herd of brothers and sisters...three brothers and four sisters," he finally reply, smiling from under his eyebrows. "And I am the eldest."

"Oh, how good it is living in such a big family! I would have been very happy to have so many brothers and sisters. But I don't have even one. I live alone with my parents. Sometimes I am very lonely."

Shimshon felt a delicate warm feeling seeping into his heart. *Poor girl!*

After a pensive pause she added: "But it must be very hard for your mother to take care of so many people, especially if your sisters are not big enough to help her."

*Mar'ya, what a kind heart she has!*

After a moment's break she added: "Where does your family live? I mean in the camp."

Expecting and yet dreading the question, Shimshon hesitated for a moment. He wondered if she was truly interested or just curious.

"We live in a C-Type house. Where?"

In order to avoid answering that he said: "You don't know the camp well. You would not...know where if I told you."

"Of course I know the camp well. I have visited my uncle's family many times."

"Uh...uh...we live in one of the first bungalows of houses which are on the main street leading to *Qassabkhana*."

The moment the word "slaughter-house" was out of his mouth, he bit his tongue. *This would definitely scare her off*, he thought.

But to his relief, she smiled and announced: "Oh, I have a *khalta* [maternal aunt] and her family who live in the line facing *Qassabkhana!*"

Anxious to change the delicate subject, Shimshon then asked the question that was burning his tongue:

"As you know, boys and girls...they "smooth" themselves up in the evenings and stroll on the CC streets. How is it...I haven't seen you on the street when you come to visit?"

"The first thing, my aunt is 'old fashion.' She does not want me and her daughter to be on the street much. But Khammy (my cousin) and I go out together sometimes in the evenings and *Aunti* sometimes sends us to the bazaar to buy things for her cooking. Also we go to visit *Khalti's* family near *Qassabkhana*. And who knows," she added with a smile, "maybe one day we will pass by your house."

Shimshon smiled back and felt a ray of hope creeping into his heart.

Aware of her cultured Assyrian language, he asked: "Have you studied Assyrian language?"

"Oh, yes. I received my first education at *Qaasha* Khando's school at Gailani Camp."

"Do you go to high school in Baghdad?" he asked.

"Yes, I have just finished the Nun's High School at Bab Al-Sharji," she replied.

"Will you go to college?"

She pondered this question. "My father wants me to go. But I don't know. Maybe I will not go. Have you gone to college?"

Shimshon hung his head as he replied: "No. I only finished *Raabi* Yacoub's school here...uh...four years ago. It was a middle school. My father could not send me even to finish high school in Ramadi. I started working for the RAF as a junior clerk to...to help the family."

"I'm sorry," she said. "But, you know, not all education comes from colleges only."

To change the subject again, Shimshon asked after a short pause:

### Habbaniya Love Story (Cont'd)

“How is it that you, an Assyrian girl, are traveling alone?”

“Because my father—the man who brought me to the bus—knows the driver will take care of me.”

“And why are you going by bus and not by...by shared taxi?”

“First, because my father knows this driver very well. He is the only one who runs a bus to Habbaniya. Second, taxi is not as comfortable as bus. The sitting place is very tight. Five or six strangers are squeezed together with the driver in this heat for almost two hours. The sitting places on the bus are wider. You can stretch your legs and move. Also,” she added with a smile, “the bus fare is 50 fils cheaper.” They both laughed at this.

The two continued making small talk, exploring each other's backgrounds further and before Shimshon knew it the bus had passed Abu Ghraib and Khan Dari villages and was approaching Falluja town, 18 miles east of Habbaniya.

As they crossed Falluja's iron bridge over the Euphrates River, Shimshon explained to Marganita:

“This is the town that two...or three companies of our Assyrian soldiers of Levies invaded in 1941 after they chased the Iraqi Army from...from the Habbaniya Plateau, with help from RAF airplanes and some English soldiers. And it was on this...this bridge that Private Jallu killed with his machine gun many Iraqi soldiers before they killed him.”

“I know. My father once told me about this. Our Assyrian Levies are such good fighters—and so brave.”

They chatted on about this and that and soon the bus was at Habbaniya's Auxbridge Gate nicknamed “London Gate.” A local *chokidar* [sentry] and an RAF policeman stood, checking all in-comers' passes, including visitor passes, of which Marganita had one.

Even though it was a rattling ride on the bus, the final stop at the Taxi “Garage” in CC, across the street from

Bazaar, was for Shimshon like a boy's disappointment after a joyous and exciting merry-go-round ride (as he had seen in an American movie) that had suddenly come to an abrupt end

Mar'ya, *how time flies!* he thought with regret.

When Marganita picked up her dainty suitcase to leave, Shimshon asked her: “Can you find... your way to your aunt's house? Do you want me to take you there?”

Shimshon hoped to extend his pleasure by walking with her for a few minutes as well as finding out the exact location of her aunt's home. But to his disappointment she replied:

“Oh, no thank you.” And she added with an amused smile: “Don't be afraid, I will not get lost. I know the camp well. And my aunt's house is not very far from here.”

Shimshon then gave her an uncertain smile and had the courage to ask in a joking tone: “Do you think I will see you strolling on the street?”

She smiled. “Maybe,” she replied. Then she gave him her hand. It was warm and delicate and he felt a delicious sensation cursing through his body at the touch. She shook his hand and said goodbye.

After she had gone a few paces, Shimshon's heart did a somersault when she stopped and gave him a backward glance and another sweet smile before walking away.

Shimshon clutched his humble *boukhcha* [bundle of his clothes] and stood for a long time gazing after her receding figure. An acute mixture of longing and a sense of loss pervaded his whole body, as though she had snatched his heart and was taking it away with her. But strangely enough, he also felt happy.?

**Will Shimshon Kutta be able to realize his seemingly impossible dream and win the love and hand of his golden haired, blue eyed princess, or is he headed for a slap in the face and a broken heart? Find out what his roman-**

**tic fate will be in next issue of HUSCA, coming out in December.**

*Note: Although the setting and the local color of this story are based on the life of the time, the story line and the characters are actually fictitious.*

### Chit-chatting... (from P.3)

hardly any articles of substance, except for a few by Solomon Solomon and Basil Pius. We do appreciate very much the input of all of you. But for a few, most of the letters don't say much more beyond “Enclosed please find my membership dues; I enjoy HUSA; you are doing a great job; keep up the good work.” And to fill the gap, I've been falling back on reprints or pieces I'm writing myself. And even obtaining feedback for such write-ups is no easy matter. Often-times requested information or pictures that can be furnished in hours or days sometimes drags on into weeks and even months, not to mention my quest for names and other details for captions. So, friends, how about some quick action—plus some narrative material, enlightening comment or articles of substance? Of course if you have good Habbaniya pictures with a story behind each, or articles of general (not just personal!) interest, send them in by all means, but don't forget the date, names, place and occasion of each photo. And you can trust me to take care of your irreplaceable prints and return them to you safely. Believe me, I've done this countless times during the years. And if you can identify some of the persons not named in our printed captions, or find a name, number, or fact that is incorrect, never hesitate to write and tell me. But please, please spare me the accusing finger for the few typo errors that I make. Even editors are fallible, you know!...By the way, I have just subscribed to a new faster internet service. You will find my new email (and mail) address on HUSCA masthead (page 2)...So for now, so long and God bless. See you next time. Right? —Editor.

A Habbaniya Achiever

## Former Habbaniya bike repairer is Assyrian educator

By Mikhael K. Pius

*Raabi* Jacob Miraziz is one of the former local residents of the Royal Air Force Station of Habbaniya who has transformed himself. As a growing young man, he helped to sell and repair bicycles in his father's shop in CC (Civil Cantonment) as well as learned to be a taxidermist. Today, he is a self-taught man of letters, a retired school teacher and principal and a recognized member of the Assyrian colony in Australia. He has served his community in different capacities for three decades on a vo-

tutored in Habbaniya by the late *Shamasha* Sheem Mekhael at the latter's home. Actually, he also had four years of basic schooling at *Raabi* Yacoub's RAF Union School in the camp. In 1944, however, his father sent him to Baghdad as a boarder to complete his Primary education at St. Joseph's Latin School. The same year, his father gave up the handyman's shop and opened a refreshments shop on the corner of the two main streets close to the Bazaar. This, too, did not provide enough income. He then converted it to a bicycle sale-and-repair business, in 1947. The same year, Jacob began helping his father in running a profitable business for several years. Jacob also joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Habbaniya (Iraq) Boy Scout Group for several months, but his main hobbies were watching soccer games and doing small-game hunting—and of course cycling.

Jacob's father would go on hunting trips and the teen-aged Jacob would often tag along with him and his cronies (among them the late William Shabbas, Rovil Mekhael, and Yosip son of Eramia the shopkeeper). This pastime developed in Jacob an interest in taxidermy. He gradually learned the art and obtained an efficiency diploma from the North Western School of Taxidermy of Omaha, Nebraska, two years after the family moved back to Baghdad in 1952.

In Baghdad Jacob was also able to complete his high schooling in Jaafariya night school and he helped the family to run a taxidermy shop at Al-Tiyaran Square near Gailani Camp from 1957 to 1959.

In 1964, Jacob got married, to Joan, daughter of Aviqam Shmouelkhan, also formerly of Habbaniya. (The couple has a son and two daughters and four grandchildren by their two daughters.) And in 1973 Jacob, like many other former Habbaniya residents, pulled up stakes and immigrated, with his young family, to Australia.

Having a good command of Assyrian, Jacob began in 1976 to teach the language to his people's children at the Assyrian School established two years earlier by AAA (Assyrian Australian Association). He served the school for 22 years, the last eleven as the school's principal.

On invitation from AAA, the noted late scholar *Raabi*



***Raabi* Jacob Miraziz, Principal of Assyrian School of AAA in Sydney in 1999, with staff. Seated, 1 to r: Alice George, Virginia Baba, Jacob Miraziz, Carmen Lazar (Asst. Principal), Shamasha Issa Patrus; Standing, Lilia Shimshon, Doris Askaro, Hirmis Joudo, Suzy Georges, Shamiram Dobato, Sargon Kakko, Katrin Yegorgorji, Sera Jacob, Jema Oshana, Loudia Rowil, Yacoub Obraham, Shamiram Daniel, Atour Joseph, and Domarina Azad.**

luntary basis helping—along with many other dedicated fellow Assyrians, such as *Raabi* Philimon Darro—to compile learning texts and to teach his people's children to read and write their mother tongue in Diaspora, where many others are losing touch with their language, culture and ethnicity.

The third of five siblings—namely Baba (died in 1982), Francis, Jacob, Wilson and Emmanuel—Jacob was born in Kirkuk, Iraq, on September 2, 1931, to Israel Miraziz (of Khusrabad) and Esther Jebrial (of Urmia). The family relocated in 1940 from Kirkuk to Baghdad and shortly thereafter to Habbaniya, where his father opened a general handyman's shop in CC Bazaar. Jacob was a young boy of eight then. He had received his first lessons in his mother tongue from his own mother and was later



**Raabi Jacob Miraziz today with his family. From left, daughter Helen, wife Joan, and son and daughter, Alfred and Nina.**

Nimrod Simonov of Teheran conducted a six-month advanced Assyrian Grammar course in Sydney in 1985. Jacob enrolled and consolidated his knowledge of Assyrian so much so that he compiled two Assyrian Readers for second and third grade pupils, approved by Department of Education of New South Wales in 1988. He followed this up, in 1994, with *Assyrian Language Grammar for Beginners*. He also hand-turned in 1992 on to plastic the Assyrian alphabet for younger school children.

Among *Raabi Jacob Miraziz's* other works, including articles published in various periodicals, are: co-editing, with *Raabi Philimon Darmo*, *Tkhareh Simonayeh* (Simonian Memoirs), a commemorative magazine published in 1986; co-editing with several other Assyrian colleagues commemorative issues of *Kin'arah Magazine* in



**Raabi Jacob Miraziz receiving in 2001 Long Service Certificate from the president of Federation of Community Language Schools, Inc., in Sydney. (He was also awarded a certificate in 2003 for 22 years of service to the Assyrian community in Sydney)**



**Jacob Miraziz as a young man in Habbaniya in 1952 with some of his friends: Sitting, Left to right: Alfred Daniel Ganja, Jacob Miraziz, Ammo Baba, Sargon \_\_\_\_\_; standing, from left: Edison Eshay [David], the late Youra Eshaya and Zaia Shaul.**

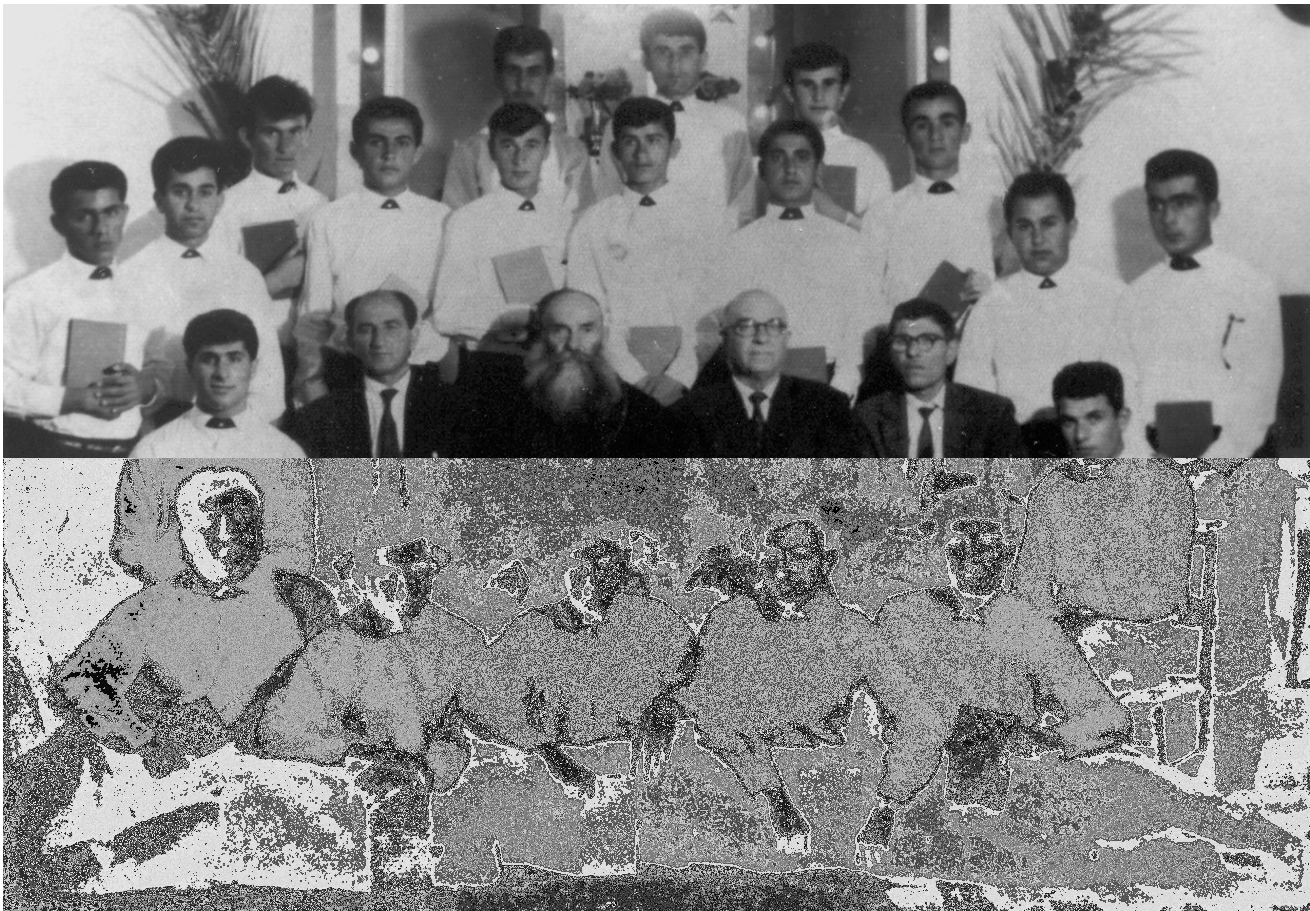
Assyrian and English, on each of: (a) the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1969-99) of the AAA; (b) the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1974 – 99) of the Assyrian School; and (c) the 19<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1980–99) of Nineveh Club; as well as (d) a one-time magazine titled *Assyrian School 2000* on the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1974-2000) of Assyrian School. *Raabi Jacob* also organized and held two exhibitions of his taxidermal work in Sydney. The first was at St. Mary Church hall in 1987 and the other one at Nineveh Club in 1993. Both were very successful and all his bird and animal exhibits were sold. He still carries on with this work at home.

*Raabi Jacob* has served as: (a) A member of the Administrative Committee of AAA and (b) Chairman of the Chaldean-Assyrian Church Council in Sydney for 1996 and 1997; (c) Librarian of Ashur Banipal Library from 1995 to 2001; (d) Member and representative of AAA in

*Raabi Nimrod Somonov* Scholarship Cultural Subcommittee from 1989 to 1997; (e) Member of New South Wales Federation of Ethnic Schools during 1988-89; and (f) Member of *Rabban Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School* Committee since its founding in 1996. On December 1, 2001, he was presented (along with *Raabi Philimon Darmo*) with an Assyrian Language and Literacy award by the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) for his dedicated work; in 1983 he was chosen Assyrian Man of the Year; and in 1986 was awarded AAA Life Membership award.

*Raabi Jacob Miraziz* is short in physical stature but tall in character. A rather shy, soft-spoken and quiet person by nature, he is considerate and respectful of others and is liked and respected in return—a reaction well earned and deserved.?

## Habbaniya's Assyrian language and Sunday Schools



**Habbaniya's Mar Gewargis Church of the East officials with boys' choir in early 1960s.**

FRONT ROW, left to right: 1. Youel Jitto, 2. Gewargis Warda Youkhanna, 3. ?, 4. Shimmon Akhiqar Haaji, 5. Enviya Shimon; 2ND ROW, L to r: 1. Wania Yosip, 2. Raabi Zerro Amro, 3. Archdeacon Akhiqar Haaji (pastor), 4. Shamasha Patros Esho Jelawi, 5. Sh. Hinnar Odisho, 6. Goriel Hinnar Odisho; 3RD ROW, L to r: 1. Odisho Breemo Khoshaba, 2. Benyamin Orahim, 3. Shmouel Iskandar, 4. Aprim Yosip, 5. Youkhanna Petyou, 6. ?, 7. Boudakh Soro, 8. Albert Allawerdi, 9. Yosip Enwiya, 10. Daniel Yonathan; BACK ROW, L to r: 1. Gewargis Touma Haroon, 2. Elisha Yacoub Shimon, 3. Benyamin Odisho Skharia, 4. Albert Allawerdi. Photo courtesy *Nineveh* Magazine and names courtesy Sh. Elisha Yacoub Shimon of Sacramento, Shaul Aviqam Shaul of Turlock, and Sh. Gewargis Warda Youkhanna and Mikhael K. Pius of Modesto.

### Assyrian class in government middle school in Habbaniya

By Solomon S. Solomon

In October 1953 Deacon Warda Odisho sent a petition to *Sayid* Taha Mukki asking his permission to teach religion in the Middle School in Habbaniya after school hours. On Jan 5, 1954 *Sd.* Mukki, who was director of education in Dulaim province, answered asking for *Shamasha* Warda's qualifications and after responding to that, the department gave permission for *Sh.* Warda to teach religion in the Middle School after hours providing that a prior permission was given by the parents of the students; this was on March 3, 1954 and *Sh.* Warda began teaching soon. By accident a quantity of the book "Kati Qusmus" or Catechism, published by *Kasha* Goriel Suleiman, arrived in Habbaniya at this time and *Sh.* Warda distributed copies of it to the class to be used as a Text book. Also a flier, announcing the opening of the class, was distributed. to the community. Assist-

ing Warda was Raabi Zerro Amro on occasion. The Class was about two hours a day, four days a week. The student response was great. The class was a success. But due to the near closing of the base, *Sh.* Warda had to leave Habbaniya on Nov. 19, 1954 and move to Chiasur to work for Khanaquin Petroleum Company and this class was discontinued.?

**Editor's Note:** Another short piece on Mar Gewargis Sunday school in Levy Camp was scheduled to be published in this section. I talked with one of the teachers, Anna Isaac of England (late Raabi Ammanuel Shumon's daughter) and with her husband, Zaia [Iskhaq] Isaac. Both of them expressed an interest in the project. Unfortunately, after a long wait I did not receive any feedback or hear from them before going to press.



## Habbaniya's Assyrian language and Sunday Schools



### Kindergarten class in *Mar Gewargis Church of the East* in Habbaniya in early 1950s.

FRON ROW, left to right: No. 1 ?, 2. ?, , 3. Pnoul Babajan Malik, 4. John Baba Gewargis, 5. *Goriel* Hinnar Odisho, 6. Bluebird Qostan Abbasi, 7. ?, 8. ?, 9. ?, 8. ?, 9. ?, 10. ?, 11. ?; 2ND ROW: 1.?, 2. ?, 3. Ammanuel Youna, 4. Stanley Elisha ("Barber") Tamras, 5. Raabi Liza Aziz Eshaya, 6. Leonard Elisha Tamras, 7. ?, 8. Ben Avişam Yacoub, 9. ?, 10. Remon John Enwiya, 11. Sargon Oshana, 12. David Rowil, 13. ?; 3RD ROW: 1. ?, 2. ?, 3. Yasmin Iskhaq, 4. ?, 5. ?, 6. Violet Shmouel Eshaya, 7. ?, 8. ?, 9. ?; 4TH ROW: 1. ?, 2. ?, 3. Albert Shmouel Eshaya, 4. ?, 5. Shammiran Awshalim Malham, 6. ?, 7. Deanna Eshay Badal, 8. ?, 9. ?, 10. Penna Sultan, 11. Gilbert Sando Awrahim, 12. Son of David "Bicyclchi," 13. ?, 14. Edward Mourad, 15. ?; 5TH ROW: 1.?, 2. Youel Hinnaro, 3. Sargon Geeso Lazar, 4. ?, 5. ?, , 6. Shabi\_\_\_\_, 7. William Akhko, 8. Gewargis *Shamasha* Hinnar, 9. ?, 10. ?. Photo & names courtesy Raabi Liza [Aziz Eshaya] David.

## Assyrian School of *Mar Gewargis Church of the East*

By Mikhael K. Pius

(with feedback from Liza Aziz David)

Raabi Yacoub's Union School in CC (Civil Cantonment), established in 1938, was taken over by the Iraqi Ministry of Education in 1944 and converted into a government elementary school. Shortly after that, *Mar Gewargis Church of the East* of Habbaniya, under the pastorage of Houry Abdul Ahad, established an Assyrian elementary school of its own. It was a regular mixed school, all year round, five days a week, teaching Assyrian language, Bible, English language, Arithmetic and sports, but had no Arabic language class. The school was tuition free.

According to Liza David, a teacher in the school from 1950 to 1955, there was a kindergarten class and the first three elementary classes with a total of some 200 pupils, from both camps, CC and LC (Levy Camp). Classes were held in three classrooms built within the church yard.

During the years before its closure, Pastor Akhiqar Haaji was the school principal, *Shamasha* Sheem Mekhael was his assistant and there were about seven teachers, among them Alice Rowil [Baaba], Wardiya Youna [Miraziz] Gladys Akhakan, Liza Aziz [David], Menanya Ewan and Mary Goriel. Liza's older sisters, Roza Aziz [Simon], (who has been teaching in Assyrian Australian Association's Assyrian School in Sydney for many years) and Penna Aziz [Khanishan] as well as a few others, have also taught in the school for a while in its earlier years.

The school was in operation for at least nine years. But soon after Habbaniya was handed over to Iraq in 1955, the school was closed down because *Qasha* Akhiqar refused to accept the Iraqi Ministry of Education's imposition of male Arab teachers to teach Arabic in the school. ?

## In Remembrance of...

...**Ewan Gewargis, 62**, a native of Habbaniya, Iraq, and a noted and passionate Assyrian patriot and activist of recent times, passed away at his home in Glendale, Arizona, of cancer on October 16, 2003, following months of ill health. He was laid to rest on the third day at Phoenix Memorial Park in Phoenix after funeral services at *Mar Patros Assyrian Church of the East Parish*, attended by more than 400 mourners, some from far-away communities. Church services were presided over by Bishop *Mar Aprim Khamis* and Reverends *Frederick Hermiz* and *Gewargis Haroon*, assisted by several deacons.

Ewan's coffin was draped with the Assyrian flag and was accompanied to the grave by the church choir and a procession carrying Assyrian, *Zowaa*, and Church flags and singing dirges, followed by patriotic songs "*Ya Nishra d'Tkhumy*" and "*Ya Akhuni Qaatukh Baidagh.*" A highly touching scene was when Ewan's sister *Shalim Haroon*, knelt by the graveside and cried out to his *Bne-Umta*, followed by a short passionate speech by his daughter *Linda*.

And among friends and admirers who eulogized him in poem and speech at the memorial luncheon were *Raabi Ben Melco*, Mr. *Simon Mam-mo* (a cousin), and the noted singer, Mr. *Ashur Bet-Sargis*. A very effective eulogy was also delivered by Bishop *Mar Bawai Soro* at a memorial luncheon (also attended by Bishop *Mar Sargis* of Baghdad) held on the Third Day at the Assyrian Association of Chicago, in which the deceased was a long-time member and its president in 1981. *Mar Bawai* extolled his friend Ewan's virtues, his love for his people and his faith in God, and spoke of the patriotism he, himself, had learned from Ewan.

Other speakers at his Third Day memorials held both in Chicago and in Glendale were: *Marlene Khoshaba*, *Sam Darmo*, *Narriman Benjamin*, *Shimshon Warda* and *Noel Kando*.

Tribute was also paid to the memory of Ewan (and two other Assyrian patriots, *Paul Yonan* and *Nadam Yonadam*) by the visiting Christian Representative in the Iraqi Governing Council, *Yonadan Kanna*, during his visit



at the Assyrian American Association of Modesto, California, on May 1, 2004.

Born in Habbaniya, Iraq, on January 1, 1941, Ewan was the fourth of five children of *Gewargis Tammo* and *Shikhme Barooda*. He was raised, and received his early schooling, in Habbaniya, completing his education in Ramadi and then in Baghdad College and the Commercial Institute after the family moved to Baghdad in 1957. He was also married in Baghdad, to *Wardia, Yalda Kakko's* daughter, on February 15, 1967. Ewan worked in Baghdad for some years at the Ministry of Agriculture before arriving in America with his family in January 1975. He settled in Chicago and worked for *Live Insurance Co.* and *A.B. Dick Co.* for many years. He then took an early retirement and in 2001 he relocated with family to Glendale, Arizona.

Ewan was the founder of Chicago's well-produced TV program "*Assyrians Around the World*" and was its chief host and writer for 15 years. He was an effective speaker and a familiar figure in Chicago's Assyrian public rallies and celebrations. Microphone in hand, he would give a running commentary, extolling his countrymen into patriotic fervor. He was a member of *Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party (Iraq Branch)* since 1975 and a fervent supporter of *Zowaa*, *Assyrian Democratic Movement*. His main wish was to see Iraq freed from the brutal despot *Saddam Hussain* and from the *Baath Party*—which he did—and to see love and peace reign in Iraq, which unfortunately is yet to be.

Ewan is survived by his wife, *Wardia Gewargis*; children *Linda Odisho*, *William* and *Pele Gewargis* and families, all of Glendale; brothers *Sargis* and *Anwar Gewargis Tammo* and families in Chicago; sisters *Shushan*, wife of *Andrious Rasho*, and family in Chicago and *Shalim*, wife of *Rev. Gewargis Haroon*, and family in Orange County, California; and by three grandchildren. He also leaves behind his noted cousin, *Mikhael Mammo*, Editor-in-chief of *Hoyodo Magazine* of Sweden.

Former Habbaniyans and Assyrians as a whole have indeed lost a worthy son. —**Mikhael K. Pius**



Ewan the reporter, interviewing *Raabi Yonadam Kanna*, Secretary-General of *Zowaa* (Assyrian Democratic Movement) during the latter's visit to Chicago in 2001.



Ewan the uplifter of Assyrian patriotic spirit giving a running commentary during the Assyrian *Kha 'Neesan* parade on a Chicago street in 2000.



Ewan in a playful mood, with poet *Ninos Nirairi* (left) and *Yosip Rasho*, in a farewell social night in his honor at the club in Chicago just before he moved with family to Arizona in 2001



Ewan the Assyrian activist, with bullhorn in hand leading a demonstration in Chicago against the execution of three *Zowaa* nationalists by *Sadam's* regime in mid 1980s.



Ewan the budding nationalist, speaking at the Assyrian American Association of Chicago in his earlier years.



Ewan the father, proud of his Assyrian heritage, with daughter *Linda Odisho*, in Assyrian ceremonial costumes.



Ewan the religious, sombre man, eulogizing the late Patriarch *Mar Benyamin Shummon* on his memorial day in Chicago.

# In Remembrance of...

**...George Esha Oudisho, 61,** who passed away at



George Oudisho (left) co-hosting the Assyria Vision sports program with Aram Karam.

his home in Turlock, California, on February 14, 2004, after a two-year fight against prostate cancer. George lost his mother only seven months earlier.

Some 150 mourners attended his funeral at Mar Addai Assyrian Church of the East in Turlock and partook of

the memorial lunch that followed at the church hall, when Sargon Oudisho gave a brief sketch of his brother's life, followed by a very touching narrative poem written and recited by Romel, son of Battu and Benyamin David (NAAFI manager in Habbaniya), about his departed friend.

George was laid to rest at Turlock Memorial Park following a mass celebrated, with Holy Communion, by Rev. Eshay Yosip. Rev. Auchana Kanon and Rev. Kando Kan-do, of the Ceres and Modesto parishes, respectively, along with several deacons, also took part in the services.

George, second of six children of the late Eshay Oudisho and Nanajan Iskhag Mouishol, was born July 1, 1942 in Habbaniya, Iraq, where he grew up into his teens before his family moved to Baghdad in 1956. There he completed a trade high school and worked for the state for a few years. On May 4, 1973 he married a friend's sister, Nadia Shawkat, with whom he had three children.

The whole Oudisho family came from Baghdad to the U.S. as refugees in November, 1980 after losing their father (also victim of prostate cancer) during their several-month sojourn in Athens, Greece. They first settled and lived in Los Angeles for 13 years, relocating to Turlock in early 1990s.

George's first child, Jesse, was born retarded but grew up into a physically rather big young man. George helped his wife Nadia to take care of him until several years ago when Nadia suddenly left him (and took with her their two girls) to marry another man in Turlock. Thereafter George took care of his son, who was wheelchair bound, as well as attended to his sick mother during

her last few years, with ample financial assistance from the state of course.

Though not a sportsman, George had a keen interest in sports. Some years ago, he assisted, briefly, on a voluntary basis, John Youel and Aram Karam on the sports program of Bet-Nahrain's AssyriaVision.

George is survived by his second wife, Muna Maroun Oudisho, a younger woman he married in Lebanon on August 23, 2000; three children, Jesse, Mary and Merna from his first wife; three brothers, Ninos Oudisho (Hughson, Calif.), Sargon Oudisho (Los Angeles), Johnny Oudisho (Phoenix, Arizona) and families; two sisters, Florence Yacoub (visiting from Baghdad) and family, Violet Aziz and family (Ain Kawa, Iraq); and thirteen nephews and nieces and six grand-nephews and grand-nieces.

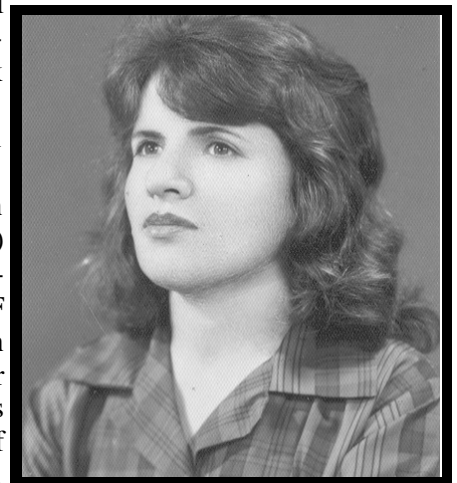
A very friendly person with a constant smile on his face, George was well-liked by all the people who knew him. And being a kind person, he even forgave his former remorseful wife (who attended his funeral and the family mourning) for abandoning him and his son.

It is worth mentioning that his eldest sister Florence administered to her brother's needs during his painful last months and his close friend, Romel David, acted as his voluntary chauffeur and helper in regard to medical visits and treatment. —**Mikhael K. Pius**

**...Regina (Gewargis) Zaia, 68,** who died in

Memorial Hospital in Modesto, California, of a heart attack during an angioplasty procedure on March 10, 2004.

Regina (known to many as "Rajjo") was born in Maratha Lines in RAF Station of Hinaidi in Iraq in 1935. Her father's name was Gewargis, son of Marta and Mirza, and her mother was Mariam, who was the eldest child of



Regina Gewargis Zaia as a young widowed mother

Khava and Kakkio Poloss. Both families were originally from Mawana in Targewar, Persia. Regina's father was a cook for the British, in Hinaidi and in Habbaniya until the early 1940s and in Basrah and in Kirkuk in his later years.

(Cont'd on next page)

### In Remembrance of...(Cont'd)

Regina had three brothers older than her, Awisha, Ammanuel, and Fraidon, and a younger sister, Marina. She was unable to continue her schooling because she became a homemaker after her mother died of an incurable illness in 1944 when Regina was only nine years old. Her father moved the family to Basra where he worked for the YMCA. Shortly after, Regina's brother Awisha was married to a kinswoman and a year or two later her father remarried, a Roza Elias of Basra

Because the new family was not compatible, in 1949 her brother Ammanuel brought his two sisters and younger brother from Basra to Baghdad, where he gave Regina in marriage to Odisho Zaia of Jelu Camp, when she was a pretty innocent young girl of only 15.

But Regina was widowed in 1957, when she was only 22 years old. During her seven years of marriage, she had two daughters and a son. Odisho, though much older, was a good husband and father and had worked as accountant for the Iraqi State Railways for more than 20 years.

Since then, Regina worked for many years in Baghdad and Chicago and took care of her children with honor and the sweat of her brow and put them through school until they were old enough to take care of themselves. She even took in her young brother Zaki and her brother Awisha's son Albert when they were young boys in her children's age group and took care of them for a while

In 1973 Regina took her three children to Beirut and from there the family came to Chicago in 1974 as refugees through the assistance of the World Council of Churches. They lived in Chicago for 14 years and then the family moved to Modesto in 1987.

Regina had been suffering from asthma since her Chicago days and during recent times she also had a heart problem. She was having angioplasty (heart ballooning) procedure at Memorial Hospital on Wednesday, March 10, 2004, when she had a massive heart attack and died.

Her funeral services were celebrated at Mar Zaia Assyrian Church of the East in Modesto, attended by 150 friends and relatives, and interment was in Turlock Memorial Park, followed by a memorial luncheon at Mar Zaia hall, where her brother Zaki delivered a brief eulogy.

All of Regina's siblings have since passed away, leaving only her youngest half-brother, Zaki Mirza, and his family in Sacramento. She is also survived by her two daughters, Shammy DeBaz and Lizu Khachadorian and families in Modesto and her son Zaia Odisho Zaia and family in Chicago; and eight grandchildren. She also leaves behind 13 children of two brothers and a sister, scattered in Chicago, Canada, Holland, Sweden and Australia, a maternal aunt in Canada, a maternal uncle and an aunt in Los Angeles and 19 children, including the writer, of her three maternal aunts and her uncle in Modesto, Los Angeles area, Canada, Sweden, and in Montana.

—Mikhael K. Pius

...John Falconer, 70, who passed away of heart



The late John Falconer seen with his family members at the wedding of one of his wife's nephews, Ray Antar, in May 2003. From left, Julia and John; Lisa, husband Steven and sons Alec and Allan Falconer; and John & Julia's eldest bachelor son Michael Falconer, who has now moved in with his mother.

attack in Modesto, California, December 1, 2003. and was cremated on December 5th. A large crowd attended his funeral services at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Modesto followed by a memorial luncheon at the church hall. Being a Scotsman, bagpipe music was played as his coffin was carried into and out of the church.

John is survived by his wife Julia Falconer; two sons, Michael Falconer and Steven and his wife Liza Falconer and their two children Alec and Allan, all of Modesto; his brothers Alexander and Thomas Falconer; his sister Ella Blight; and by three nephews and two nieces, all residents of Scotland.

John was born June 6, 1933 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a military policeman in 1954-55 in Royal Air Force Station of Habbaniya where he met Julia. In Scotland after World War II John worked as an insurance man and was employed for the last 26 years by Insurance Agency, Inc. in the Turlock-Modesto area.

John and Julia were married on July 23, 1955 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Julia, a tall and slim beauty known in Habbaniya as Youlia Shaul (and Youlia "Lofty" to her intimate friends!), was the fourth of eight children—Maria Philip, Soriya Isaac, Helen David, Julia, Francis David, Margaret Rasho, Nahrain Youkhanna, and Marlene Antar—of Riswaina and Shaul Sulaiman David of Gangachin.

—Mikhael K. Pius

## Aboona couple celebrates golden wedding anniversary



**Julia & Rouel cutting their towering wedding cake on November 21, 1953.**

### Juliette and Rouel Aboona

celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with a dinner and dance party attended by 125 relatives and close friends, at Bristol Court Banquet in Mt. Prospect, Illinois, on November 16, 2003. There was also cake-cutting and live music and singing, and the event was professionally photographed and video taped.

Juliette, or Julia as she is known, and Rouel, known as “Abu Basil,” were married in Baghdad on November 14, 1953 and the wedding was celebrated at the then-famous Embassy Restaurant.

Born in Mosul, Iraq, Julia is the third child of the late Mariam Saada and *Rab-Tremma* Yacoub Khoshaba Aboona of the RAF (Iraq) Levies. Her siblings are Kay (Khawa) Pearce, Sargon Aboona, Kathy Shliemon, and Khoshaba and Youkhanna Aboona. Julia received her early educa-



**Julia and Rouel today at their affluent home in Modesto, California.**

tion in *Raabi* Yacoub’s Union School in CC Habbaniya and in Ramadi, Iraq. In 6th Grade she scored the highest marks in Dulaim Liwa and was awarded a gold watch. She also placed first in her class in a three-month intensive nursing course in England. After returning to Baghdad she worked at Dar-al-Salam Hospital for about two years, but gave up her nursing career. She then worked for the United Nations in Baghdad for 20 years from mid 1960s to mid 1980s, retiring as Head of Management and Administration Department. She receives now a good pension and full-coverage health insurance for herself and her husband from the U.N. at a very affordable rate.

Rouel was born in Alkosh, Iraq. He is the eldest son of Skander Aboona and Shukriya Stephan. He has four younger siblings: Suad, Asia, Najeeba and Adil. He is a Law graduate, but he made business his career. He owned for many years Siera Appliances Showroom in Bab-



**The Aboona Couple with their family members in 2003. Julia and husband Rouel; From left, son Basil and wife Jackie; from right, son Luay wife Lena and sons Andrew (15) and Alan (12)**

Al-Sharji, Baghdad, and later became also a commission agent for big government projects until Saddam came along and took away his business. But his earnings have provided him and his spouse now with an affluent retirement with a very beautiful and elegantly furnished house in Modesto. The couple has two sons, Basil and Luay. Both are married and Luay has two sons of his own—MKP

# Native Habbaniyans celebrate silver wedding anniversaries



Melina & Oshana K. Oshana on their Wedding Day in 1978

## Melina and Oshana Oshana

of Modesto, California, attained their silver wedding anniversary on December 3, 2003. They were married in Dora township in Baghdad, Iraq, on December 3, 1978. They came to Turlock, California, soon after their marriage and relocated to Modesto ten years later. They have an only child, Sargis, 24.

Melina, born in Habbaniya, is the eighth of ten children of the late Khammo Pius and Soriya Kakko Poloss, and Oshana, also born in Habbaniya, is the eldest of three sons of Birishwa Shindo Yalda and the late Kumsor Oshana.

Oshana works at a packing-material machine manufacturing company and Melina is the owner of a dress-making and alteration shop. The couple is always mindful of their social obligations and are generous with their time and money in supporting Assyrian causes and helping those in need.

—M.K.P



Oshana, Melina and son Sargis Oshana in 2004.



25 Years of marriage and still dancing

## Helen and Hormis Adam

celebrated their silver wedding anniversary amid fanfare at a big surprise shindig arranged and given by Hormis's youngest sister, Julie Daniel, at Turlock's Mar Toma Church hall on Sunday evening, November 23, 2003. It was attended by some 200 guests, mostly relatives and church parishioners.

When Hormis and wife, with their two sons, arrived at the church hall supposedly to attend a cousin's engagement party, they were given the surprise of their life! They were met at the door and ushered in with a burst of music, singing and dancing amid a joyous crowd of colored handkerchief-waving women and clapping men. For a



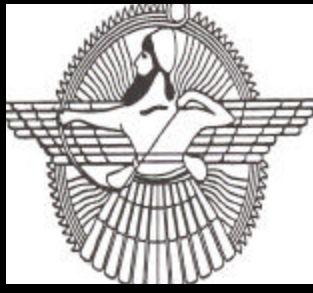
Happy Hormis enfolding wife and sons Ninos (left) and Nienif at the Silver Anniversary party

moment the couple gazed on as if in a trance. But when it dawned on them what the happy commotion was all about, they joined the welcoming crowd and danced in, smiling through their tears.

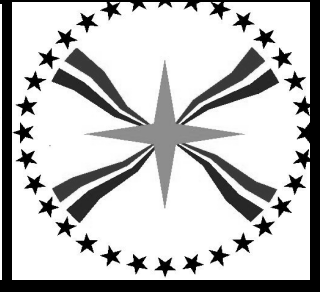
Attending the party from Chicago were also Hormis' older sisters, Joan Kheyo and Judath Hanna and Julie's daughter Geneve Daniel and from Turlock sister Anna Brenner. Hormis, a jolly and affectionate (and kissing!) person who enjoys a good time, is the youngest and the only brother of four loving sisters, and there is apparent love and respect between his sisters and wife, which is not a very common situation among sisters-in-law. Helen is the owner of a prosperous beautifying tattoo business in Modesto.

Hormis was born to the late Mariam Mishael and Arsanis Adam of Mawana in Habbaniya on November 11, 1951 and Helen, daughter of the late Tauris Toma and Khoshaba David Khoshaba of Gippa, Tiari, was born on August 22, 1958 in Baghdad. They met in Chicago and were married on November 18, 1978. After the couple lived together in Chicago for ten years, they moved to Modesto in 1988. They have two big and handsome twin-like sons, Ninos and Nienif—both sporting well-cared-for long hair tied at the back of their heads in fox tails. Hormis, on early retirement, enjoys life fully as it comes along.—MKP

? HUSCA welcomes Silver (25 years), Golden (50) and Diamond (60 or 75) Wedding Anniversary stories from our readers.



מִיָּלָה דְּחַסְרָא 28598592 דְּמַבְדְּחָא דְּסַמְבַּת  
סְבַלְמַחְתָּא דְּחַסְרָא



# Assyrian Levy Officers in London



Some of the 26-man Contingent of ROYAL AIR FORCE (IRAQ) LEVIES [Assyrians]

who took part in the Victory Day Parade in London in June 1946, shown here on a London Street on a tour given to them by a priest of Lambeth Palace. From left: *Rab-Emma* Stepho Neesan, MC; *Rab-Emma* Baijo Peko MC; *Rab-Emma* Warda Esho, MM; Priest of Lambeth Palace; *Rab-Khamshi* Is-khaq Gewargis; *Rab-Khaila* Zaia Gewargis, MBE (Local Force Commander); Corporal Moshi Toma; *Rab-Khamshi* Gewargis Parkho; *Rab-Emma* Shlimon Bukko; *Rab-Tremma* Youkhanna Narsai. ( Photo contributed by M.K.Pius)