

MIDDLE EAST LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION
Reports from the Annual Meeting
San Francisco, Nov. 21–22, 1997

MELA Business Meeting, Nov. 22, 1997
Minutes

The first item of business was to read the day's schedule for MELA activities. An announcement was made that the minutes from last year's meeting had been published in MELA Notes, both the print version and the web version, and that therefore they would not be read. No corrections were suggested, and the minutes were accepted as published. Mary St. Germain gave the Treasurer's report, which was read and accepted. Thanks were given for the contributions of \$200 by Norman Ross, \$500 by George Fawzi of Leila Books and \$1,000 by Muhammad Sulaiman of Sulaiman's Bookshop to assist in covering the expenses of running the meeting.

Midhat Abraham reminded us that at the last meeting a suggestion was made to consider creating a lifetime membership. Brenda Bickett was given this assignment then, but was not able to attend this year to report. Efforts will be discontinued.

A discussion ensued on how to get people to pay dues and confirm attendance at our Annual Meeting in advance. A few had managed to overlook the membership/dues form in the mailing announcing the Annual Meeting. It was suggested that next year the form be printed on brightly colored paper with a statement that dues need to be paid before the Meeting.

There was prolonged discussion of whether there should be a meeting registration fee. A number of issues were raised and debated: 1) Extra money may be needed to pay for a meeting room and refreshments. (MELA has enough money in its bank account so we can already pay for such expenses.) 2) Various fees for memberships, conference registrations and travel expenses mount up, so a new fee might discourage participation. 3) If a fee should be charged, it should be higher for those people who do not register in advance. 4) Perhaps only those people who do not register in advance should be charged a registration fee in hopes that they will learn the error of their ways. Finally a motion was made that the Vice President/Program Chair be authorized to charge a registration fee of not

more than \$20, if it were needed to pay for the expenses of running the meeting.

When it came time to vote on the matter of registration fees, there ensued further discussion as to whether it was legitimate that only the group attending this make the decision. Voting via MELANET was alternatively suggested. The final decision was that those attending constituted a quorum according to the by-laws. The idea of charging a registration fee was unanimously voted down.

There was some discussion of ways to make planning annual meetings easier. The inability to predict how many will attend can be solved by routinely planning for 50–60 attendees after past patterns.

Jonathan Rodgers gave the *MELA Notes* Editor's Report. Issue 64, Spring 1997 has been published in print and electronically (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/Area.Programs./Near.East/melanote.html>). Issue 64 was longer than the 64 pages Mazda subsidizes, so we had to pay for the overrun of 7 pages. Issue 65 is almost ready for press, except for receipt and incorporation of the Annual Meeting minutes and reports. Pending the final typesetting and assembling, it too might exceed 64 pages. Beginning with issue 65, three offprints of articles and reviews will be sent to contributors, and tear-sheets of ads will be provided to advertisers, rather than whole extra copies. Jonathan encouraged the submission of contribution to *MELA Notes* and requested that those attending solicit articles from colleagues. Those with outstanding reviews were encouraged to complete and submit them to the book review editor. Right now there is a small backlog waiting to be published, but that will not last long. One suggestion for submission is descriptions of significant Middle Eastern collections. Such descriptions do not need to be by our members. A question was raised as to whether there is need for funding for student help in editorial matters. The answer was no. Copy editing is performed by the editor's spouse, and library-employed students assist in other minor chores.

Midhat Abraham, current President, called our attention to a gift calendar supplied by Leila Books.

Midhat also led a discussion about MELA's relationship with MESA. He noted that there was no position set aside on MESA's Board for a librarian, or, for that matter, for any other category of person. He suggested that MELA propose the name of a librarian who would serve on MESA's Nominating Committee, and that as MELA members who are also members of MESA attend MESA's business meeting to see that our candidate gets elected. Members agreed in principle but felt that this effort should take

place next year, with better advance planning. Midhat also read MESA's questionnaire for affiliated organizations and gave our answers. There was discussion of whether MELA should give a panel at MESA. A workshop was also considered. The final decision was that we should staff an exhibit booth and field sample reference questions in order to demonstrate our expertise and the value of library reference assistance. Dona Straley offered to look into this matter.

Midhat appointed himself liaison to MESA for the next year with the expectation that the bylaws would be changed to allow for a newly elected board member to fulfill the duty. Leslie Wilkins noted that the President already has this duty.

Ed Jajko read his letter to Anne Betteridge expressing his concern about government regulations preventing contact with listed terrorist groups, including at least 16 Middle Eastern organizations. The membership agreed that MELA should write a similar letter, copies of which should be forwarded to MESA's CAFMENA, to ALA's International Committee, and to Secretary of State Madeline Albright. A committee was set up consisting of Leslie Wilkins, Mary Ann Danner-Fedae, Ali Houissa, Merle Gaston, Layla Mulgaokar and Shaista Wahab to draft the letter based on the text of Ed's letter and continue to monitor similar situations that may arise.

It was suggested that in the future a time and place be reserved during the meeting for members to meet with book dealers, i.e. a Book Dealers Forum.

We voted to make George Atiyeh a member emeritus.

David Hirsch brought up the annual statistical report published by East Asian libraries in the U.S. and suggested that we do the same thing. Roberta Dougherty said she had made that suggestion last year. David was appointed to coordinate efforts. Michael Hopper, who is undertaking a similarly survey within RLG's JAMES group, offered to help.

Chris Murphy reported on activities at the Library of Congress. He requested assistance in informing researchers that books in the research collections are now housed in a building different from that in which the reference libraries are located. If anyone plans to visit from out of town, it would be helpful to give the Reference Section advance notice of the materials to be consulted so that they can be brought out of the stacks.

New officers were elected. Dona Straley is the next President, Basima Bezirgan the new Vice President and Program Chair (The next meeting is in Chicago.), and Ali Houissa, the new Member at Large.

Treasurer's Report, Nov. 19, 1996–Nov. 19, 1997

INCOME

Beginning Balance, Nov. 19, 1996		\$6949.21
Interest Income	113.38	
Other Income (dues, subscriptions)	3039.22	

TOTAL

3152.60

EXPENDITURES

MELA Notes (production and postage for 3 issues)	961.35
Postage and Supplies	299.26
Conference, 1996 and misc.	1307.49

TOTAL

2568.10

INCREASE

\$584.50

BALANCE Nov. 19, 1997

\$7533.71

Respectfully submitted,
Mary St. Germain
Secretary/Treasurer

- Midhat D. Abraham – University of Arizona
 Johnny Bahbah — Princeton University
 Joyce Bell — Princeton University
 Joan Biella – Library of Congress
 Eliezer Chammou – University of California Los Angeles
 Krikor Chobanian – Princeton University
 Sylvia Y. Curtis – University of California Santa Barbara
 Mark T. Day – Indiana University
 Robin Dougherty – University of Pennsylvania
 John Eilts – Research Libraries Group
 John Emerson – Harvard University
 Mary Ann Danner-Fadae – Indiana University, Purdue Univ. at Indianapolis
 George E. Fawzi – Leila Books, Cairo
 Meryle Gaston – New York University
 David Hirsch – University of California Los Angeles
 Michael Hopper – Harvard University
 Ali Houissa – Cornell University
 Edward Jajko – Hoover Institution
 Alissar Khoury – United Nations
 Fawzi Khoury – Juma al-Majid Centre – Dubai
 Connie Lamb – Brigham Young University
 Judy McDermott – Library of Congress
 Suad Muhammad-Gamal – Washington University, St. Louis
 Laila Mulgaokar – Library of Congress-Cairo
 Chris Murphy – Library of Congress
 Catherine Rockwell – University of Utah
 Jonathan Rodgers – University of Michigan
 Simon Samoeil – Yale University
 Mary St. Germain – University of Washington
 Dona S. Straley – Ohio State University
 Mohammad H. Sulaiman – Sulaiman's Bookshop, Beirut
 Shaista Wahab – University of Nebraska at Omaha
 James Weinberger – Princeton University
 M. L. Wilkins – Harvard Law School
 Nassif Youssif – University of Minnesota