



## *Iftar, 2003*

*Hosted by the Zayed Centre for Heritage & History  
Catered by the Intercon Hotel Chefs staff*



On the steps of the Zayed Centre for History and Culture in Al Ain  
*Article by Amal Baky - Photos compl. Zayed Centre*

Editor's note: Credit for the success of this event goes to Amal who was in charge and to Mervat, Dr. Al Naboodah's executive assistant, along with Sami (banqueting, Intercon), Simon (head chef, Intercon), Dr. Al Naboodah (generous beyond words), Intercon staff (efficient and unobtrusive), the speaker, Dr. Adnan . . .

Without doubt, one of the most pleasurable aspects of exploring different lands, traditions and cultures is the cuisine. The Middle East and Arab region is no exception.

Arab hospitality is legendary showcasing itself at mealtimes. For centuries Arabs have invited any passerby to their tables. Failing to do so, a whole tribe or community risks being stigmatized by odes expressing repugnance and abhorrence for their despicable, scandalous and unforgivable behavior. The *rawi* or community narrator would travel from one tribal territory to the other singing or reciting the poems till they are instilled into peoples' minds, colloquialism and native folklore so that the tribe or person's name featured in local proverbs and nursery tales and rhymes. It would take such as stigma many a year to wear off if ever!

From the Aegean Isles to the bazaars of Persia cooking traditions in the Middle East date back many centuries. Although recipes have regional variations, the hundreds of years of interchange, migrations and largely undocumented history make it difficult to trace the source of any one dish to a definite origin.

Many ingredients in Middle Eastern cooking are widely used. Among vegetables eggplant, spinach and okra are common. Chickpeas, lentils, rice and bulgur wheat are also popular. Lamb and dates are integral to tribal based Arab communities. Chicken, yogurt, and olives are also very widely used throughout but are more popular in the Levant and Jordan. Arab cuisine is also famous for its wonderful aromatic spices that tease the palate and salivate the mouth. Among these are cardamom and nutmeg in the gulf, turmeric and saffron in North Africa, cinnamon and sumac in the Levant and cumin and *mistika* in Egypt.

It is worth mentioning that women do virtually all of the cooking in these very traditional and painfully patriarchal Arab communities. Without further ado, here then are the Iftar recipes.



## *National Clean up UAE Day Campaign – 12/12/2003*

Article by Brien Holmes – photos by Will Moore

**Al Ain's National clean up campaign was an incredible success this year. At right, Khalifa Al Kaabi, Brien holmes and numerous participants gather after a successful campaign.**

Thank you to all those who pitched in Friday morning to clean up a desert area near Al Masoudi. I did not get a precise count, but there were in the order of 200 individuals involved, the majority young nationals from Al Ain schools.

To put the event in perspective, it is important that you recall the event a year ago: three or four vehicles and seven or eight ENHG types picking up garbage in Fossil Valley.



The credit for the turnout goes to EEG **volunteers** who made phone calls, sent fax messages and produced all the t-shirts, gloves, signs and other bits and pieces necessary for such an event. And a great deal of credit goes to the Al Ain Municipality, and Salem al Kaabi in particular. Approximately 72 hours before the event, there really was no event. But Salem and his department worked very hard to make it hap-pen, including ambulance (there were two casualties Friday morning that I know of) and work crews. Salem made a point as we were packing up Friday morning that he

wanted to work with our organization again next year to make it an enviable campaign. The start was delayed as busloads of school children kept arriving. This was due in part to the fact that Salem and I only agreed on the site at the last moment and there had not been time to send maps and other details to all the schools in the city. We know this will not be the case next year.

I will be meeting with Salem and his staff Saturday and Sunday to review the event and to share photographs. For the Natural History Group, it was a rewarding experience as **we collected several beetles and other specimens** for the collection.



Again, thanks to all those who volunteered. I know picking garbage is not an especially popular field trip activity but, considering the relative free hand we enjoy in touring the country, it is a small sign of our appreciation.





## The Annual Fall Photography Competition – 2003

### Judge's Choices

#### 'Scapes:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Barrier Dunes" by Jerry Buzzell  
 "The Old Man in the Mountain" by Jerry Buzzell  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Chasing Clouds" by Geraldine Kershaw  
 "Jazeera Road" by Geoff Sanderson  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "Shade" by Will Moore

#### Culture & Heritage:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Abandoned" by Geoff Sanderson  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Past in the Future" by Eniko Telegdy  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "Maritime Commerce" by Jerry Buzzell

#### Flora:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Maiden Hair" by Geoff Sanderson  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Atypical Effect of Irrigation" by Brigitte Howarth  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "*Anticharis glandulosa*" by Bob Reimer

#### Fauna:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Task Accomplished!" by Anna Venter  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Asilidae (Assassin flies) Mating" by Bob Reimer  
 "Gecko, Gekkonini *Stenodactylus leptocymbotus*" by Bob Reimer  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "Oh, So Beautiful! Female Lime Butterfly, NOT on Lime!" by Brigitte Howarth  
 "Lizard Fish" by Joyce Zomer

#### Archeology & Architecture:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Collateral Damage, Jebel Akhdar War, 1958" by Laurence Garey  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Archway and Bird Shit" by Jerry Buzzell  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "Fujairah Doorway" by Anne Weeks

#### People of the UAE and Oman:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Study in Patience" by Josette Garey  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Swimming" by Bob Reimer  
 "Lady in Red" by Jerry Buzzell  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "Workers Wandering Home" by Geoff Sanderson  
 "Qalhat" by Anna Venter

#### Miscellaneous:

- 1<sup>st</sup> "Burying the Past" by Geoff Sanderson  
 "Sunlit Doorway" by Geraldine Kershaw  
 2<sup>nd</sup> "Can't Get Any Higher" by Will Moore  
 3<sup>rd</sup> "After the Rains" by Geraldine Kershaw

### The People's Choice



"*Anticharis glandulosa*" by Bob Reimer

"*Anticharis glandulosa*," a member of the figwort family, can be found on page 498 in Marijcke Joenbloed's Comprehensive Guide to the "Wild Flowers of the United Arab Emirates."

A group of us were looking for a route to Jebel Dahat near Khudra. We happened upon this isolated plant in flower near a solitary residence west of Khudra.

I documented the location and took a variety of pictures. The flower on the plant is about 1 cm long. The stiff hairs and gland are very fine and barely visible to the naked eye. Geoff Sanderson was able to identify the plant for me from pictures.

Since it is quite rare, we will return to try to collect seed from it.

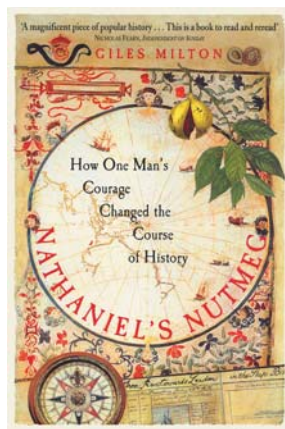
#### Editor's note:

This year's competition saw 133 entries into seven categories. A special "Youth" aspect was included and all entrants received a roll of colour film for participating. Well done Luke Howarth, Hannah Kershaw, and Philip Kershaw.

The evening was a success largely due to the diligence of the Intercon staff who kept the FIFA event from interfering. The food was just right and the evening went smoothly. Three judges determined the winners beforehand – thank you judges – and the People's Choice was determined by those attending. Congratulations to Bob Reimer! And a thank you to Gerald Buzzell for his fine organizational skills.

## Book Review

by Will Moore



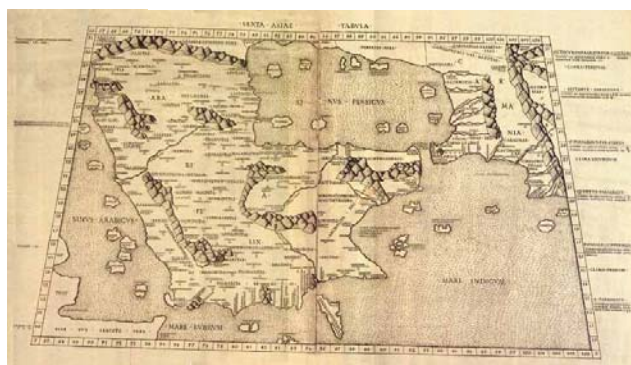
### Nathaniel's Nutmeg

"Nathaniel's Nutmeg" by Giles Milton is a great read. Thoroughly researched, it tells the tales of the many people involved in the Great Spice Race during the 15 and 1600s. It is an interesting tale as it is a true recounting of events. It is a grizzly tale in that it spares no detail of the truly horrifying acts of torture, murder, assassination and war indulged in by various captains, governors and potentates involved as the ships traveled from Europe round the Horn of Africa, to the Middle Eastern peninsula and on to India, finally arriving just south of New Guinea in the South Pacific, at the Islands known as the Spice Islands.

It includes excellent details of Frobisher's, Barent's, Henry Hudson's and Sir Francis Drake's early voyages, but focuses on the life of one Nathaniel Courthope, a simple factor who protected the rights of England to the island of Run, the smallest most insignificant island of the Banda Group, commonly known as the Spice Islands or Moluccas. The Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch all vied for superiority and control of these islands and they made bloody war upon each other, all and sundry - ceaselessly. People died of scurvy, dysentery and pneumonia. They died heroically and they died in vain. The book provides good maps and lots of illustrations from the journals these people kept. Thanks to Nathaniel, a forgotten hero of the times, England kept a finger in the business. And as an added feature, a very quixotic bit of information is included which I cannot reveal. This book is a must for history buffs and a good read for all. How easily we forget!

## Map Corner

by Peter Hudson



Ptolomy's map – showing latitude and longitude.

### Claudius Ptolomy

(Father of Geography) 87 – 150 AD.

He was an Egyptian astronomer and geographer living and studying in one of the most important trade centres between west and east, and home of the greatest library of any period; Alexandria. This meant that he could study ancient authorities and consult contemporary travelers and merchants. From this wealth of accumulated knowledge Ptolomy produced his *Geographica*, a work of considerable genius which dominated the whole of the Christian and Moslem world for an astonishing 1500 years! and which was still appearing as reprints by different producers up to 1840! He introduced the concept of latitude and longitude to form a grid covering the whole world so that it would be possible to plot the position of principal landmarks on the map by observations and then to fill in other information from other sources including the notes and "Itinary of Marinus of Tyre", perhaps the most accurate source available at the time.



## The Triple Crescent - #1 Jebel Qatar

By Will Moore



Friday morning, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 am, a group of ENHGers and friends gathered at the base of Jebel Qatar for the first of three ascents in the Triple Crescent Award. Some had camped the night there and others had just arrived. As we perused an excellent photographic map of the area, a herd of some 100+ goats wandered down out of the mountain headed for their home a short distance out in the valley bottom. We were 14 in all, a good mix of men and women – one amongst us stood out as she was 73 years old. The first

bit is just an introduction to the hike – we assured ourselves that “This is the hardest part!” again and again. The hike wasn’t really difficult, we climbed up a couple of short steep pitches and crawled beneath a ledge or two, but mostly we walked upright. We walked from shade patch to shade patch under the guidance of our leader, Mr. Ibrahim Zakhour.

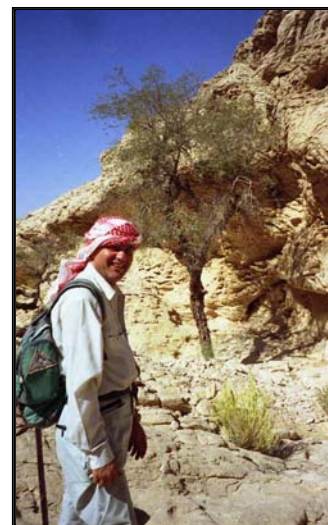
The initial ascent lead to a hidden valley, running away to our right as we climbed. And off to the right of this valley a small notch in the rocks led to the first lookout. Along this route we identified a tree quite rare in these parts, the Maringa sp. known by its long edible–seed pods and fine long needle–like leaves. And a real find at the lookout itself – two snakes coiled up in a rock pothole beside a small pool of water. These were photographed for identification, but otherwise undisturbed.



After a brief stop at the cliff edge, we were pointed towards the final ascent, a not too imposing upward sweep away behind us. This impression was soon dispelled as we struggled to maintain our composure. Some zigged, some zagged and some took lots of rest stops. With lots of encouragement we all reached the top and enjoyed our accomplishment – only to discover that there was another peak of equal height just a few hundred meters further on. And our leader insisted that we join him

Thank goodness he

did, for we would have missed some fine scenery, for the peak was really the edge of another cliff, this one allowing us to look deep in to Oman where the sand flats and basalt outcrops were truly breathtaking to see. The distant mountains begged to be explored. Here we lunched – it had taken us 2.5 hours to make the ascent. We began the descent by a circular route back to the first lookout and soon picked up our well-rested member, and then continued downward, careful not to allow the cramps beginning to take hold in our legs to become disabling. I know lots of Isotonic drink helped this hiker down the mountain. By 2:30 we were once again gathered on the valley floor. Names were recorded carefully and promises were made to do (or not do) the remaining two ascents in the near future. A fine way to spend the day. Thank you Ibrahim for your guidance and joy on this outing.





*The Gularabulu – photos by Geoff Sanderson*



**Termite mound after a bull has attacked it.**



**Quangdong Point to James Price Point along the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail.**



**A giant emu footprint preserved in rock.**



**The Stealing bird or Bower bird blends in nicely with the foliage.**



**Weeping Ghost gums – *Corymbia bella***



## The Gularabulu

### *the people of north-western Australia's Dampier Peninsula*

Presentation and photographs by Geoff Sanderson, article by Will Moore

The first ENHG presentation of September, 2003 was given by none other than our own Geoff Sanderson, relating his experiences in the region of north-western Australia round Broome over the summer break. He shared some excellent slides, gave us some great insights into the aboriginal culture and even played us some musical sounds from the place. He has a personal interest in this region and so took an in-depth tour exploring the gap between the needs of tourists / tourism and the needs of the aboriginal culture of



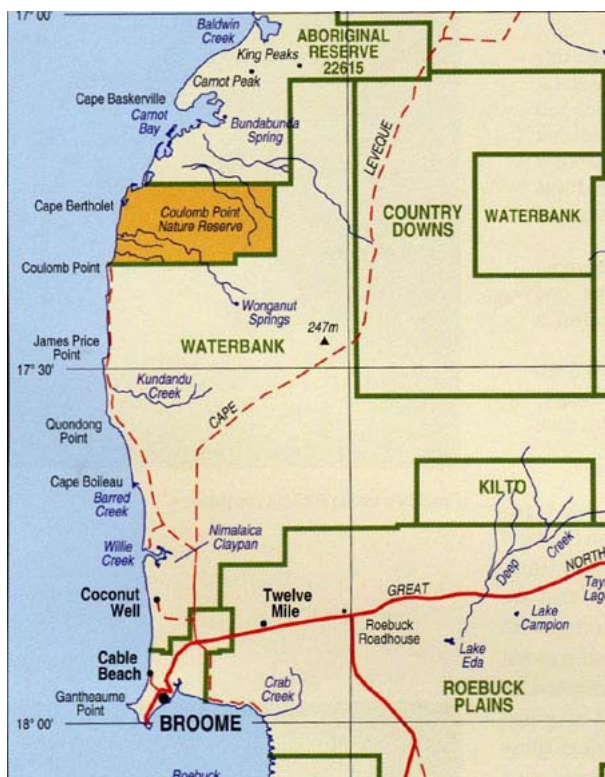
the Gularabulu. What could be more appropriate for an Al Ain ENHG presentation than this?

Waterbank cattle station, a left-over from the European settlers is under legal process for transfer back to the original "owners" of the land, the Gularabulu. It is a 1000 sq. mile tract of land with fences, some broken, and cattle gone feral or wild. These are being exterminated and consumed gradually. The fences are being repaired where necessary and removed where they're no longer needed. Geological and

biological data are being gathered into a database so that the information is available for future planning.

Geoff's talk also focused on a tribal tradition, the Lurujarri Dreaming Trail, a 72 km 9-day long walk along the coast and local interior, which retraces an aboriginal song cycle. Aboriginal history and culture are preserved in songs more than stories. Sixteen years ago the aboriginals began sharing their walk with non-aboriginals in order to educate them to the land as they know it. They guide, teach and share their way of life along the way with whoever is there. Lurujarri refers to the coastal dunes predominant in the area. The walk is now a World Heritage site and is recognized as credit-worthy in some Australian university programs.

Geoff left us to ponder the mystery of the "ancestors" that inhabit the aboriginal world on a daily basis. Some of Geoff's informative photos are presented on the following page.



**The Lurujarri Dreaming Trail runs from Gantheaume Point in the south, to Coulomb Point in the north.**

## The Levant

### Jordanian Cuisine.



JORDAN



✚ Jordanian food is a form of Arab cuisine. Lamb and chicken dishes are popular, often accompanied by yogurt, bulgur, eggplant, tomatoes, rice or bread. Garlic and mint are most common seasonings. As in the UAE Jordan's national dish is the *mansaf*, whole lamb cooked with yogurt sauce and served on rice.

✚ Our Iftar includes *sheikh al-mahshi* literally the Lord of Stuffed Vegetables!



LEBANON

### Lebanese Cuisine

- ✚ From Lebanon, come many dishes that have become synonymous with Arabic and Mediterranean cuisine such as *tabbouleh*, *humus*, *fatoush* and *baba ghanoush*.
- ✚ Many traditional Lebanese dishes are simple preparations based on grains, pulses, vegetables and fruit. Often the same ingredients are used over and over, in different ways, in each dish. Yoghurt, cheese, cucumber, aubergines, chick peas, nuts, tomatoes, burghul and sesame (seeds, paste and oil) are harmoniously blended into numerous assorted medleys. Parsley and mint are used in vast quantities as are lemons, onions and garlic. Lebanon's national dish, *kibbeh*, consists of ground lamb or beef and bulgur.
- ✚ Our Iftar table brings you the many mazza, mixed grills and the many desserts.

### Syrian Cuisine.



SYRIA



The after dinner talk about Iftar was enjoyed by all.

★ Like the Lebanon, Syrian *mazza*, or hor-d'oeuvres, is appetizingly and colorfully served in bowls and dishes of all shapes and sizes. An elaborate spread of forty or fifty hors d'oeuvres of almost every known green thing and dip; lettuce, radishes, celeriac, baby turnips, beans, peppers, cucumber, tomatoes, carrots, humus, baba ghanouj, tomiyya, etc. indulge you before the main meal.

★ Our Iftar offers you, lamb *maqlouba* or "up-side down" from the Levant. This is a casserole of meat, vegetables and rice served by inverting the baking dish onto a platter thus its name.





## EGYPT

### Egyptian Cuisine

Over the millennia, Egypt has developed a cuisine that boasts unique dishes and ingredients. Due to a history of foreign trade, invasions and dominations by other cultures, Egypt has borrowed lots of food particularly from Turkey, Italy and the Levant. But even those were modified in Egypt to a great extent, making them genuinely Egyptian.

Although Egyptian cuisine is rich in spices, only natural when you consider the ages-old spice trade from Arabia, Ottoman Turkey, North Africa and India, spices are used to enhance, not mask, the flavor of food. The Egyptian table is never free of *baladi* bread made of rye. It is not uncommon for Egyptians to eat using the first three fingers of a hand, and to use bread as a "utensil."



The Egyptians are quick to point out that the best meals are found not in the restaurants but in the homes. In this land of culture and tradition, the emphasis is clearly on preparing your own. One of the most popular meals is a vegetarian dish called *koshari*. Because of its modest price *koshari* is served on every corner and is eaten for lunch or dinner. Our Iftar brings you *koshari*, lentil soup and *sabanikh bil-bashamal*, spinach béchamel from Egypt.

For dessert *umm ali* is also served. It is said that this mix of sweetened milk and puff pastry is the chopped breast of the Egyptian Mamluk Queen Shagaret Al-Dhor. After being killed barbarically in her Turkish bath on the hands of a jealous first wife, umm Ali or Ali's mother, her breasts were cut up and served to their joint husband; *abu ali* in this case. The raisins are said to be her nipples. I hope this trivial tale has not made you swear never to go any where near *umm ali*! It's a delicious dessert but very high in calories. This story was invented by Egyptians, generally well padded, to discipline themselves from eating too much of it. It hasn't worked for we remain well padded.

### Moroccan Cuisine



## MOROCCO

The foods of Morocco take great advantage of the natural bounty available throughout the country. The strong Arab influence found in two of the royal cities, Fez and Marrakech, contributed greatly to Moroccan cuisine, as did the Andalusian sensibilities of Tetuan and the Jewish traditions from the coastal city of Essaouira. Aspects of all of these cultures can be found in one of the best-loved Moroccan dishes: couscous; a fine semolina grain usually piled on a large platter, with the stew heaped on top.

Couscous is a classic Berber dish which has seen many interpretations. Traditionally, it is served for Friday lunch or for special occasions. It is never a main dish, rather it is served as the last dish at the end of a meal. A "couscous of seven vegetables" is common in Fez, where seven is considered a lucky number. The seven "lucky" vegetables are onions, pumpkin, zucchini, turnips, chili peppers, carrots and tomatoes.

From Morocco we bring to you chicken couscous.

Dr. Adnan Abdulla offers a copy of the Zayed Centre's book / CD, "Archaeology of the U.A.E." during his talk.





This excellent article was picked up off the internet by one of our members and found its way to this page – it is that useful. We only have space to reprint the most important information, but for a good read try <http://slate.msn.com/id/2088863/>

### **What's the Best Remedy for a Bee Sting?**

By William Brantley

#### **Pharmaceutical - Excellent**

Caladryl (med/diy/mom), \$6.49/6 ounces.  
Calamine lotion with an analgesic, this pain- and itch-killer calmed my symptoms with a soothing tingle. I applied it while my symptoms were raging at 9, and, within 45 minutes, they had sunk to 2. Four hours later, the symptoms suddenly flared up to 10, but I found that I preferred this dramatic seesawing to the gradual return of symptoms I experienced after using other remedies.

#### **Home Remedies - Excellent**

Paste of vinegar/baking soda/meat tenderizer (diy/doc), \$2.59/16.9 ounces vinegar, \$2.79/2.25 ounces meat tenderizer. Due to the acid/base interaction of the vinegar and baking soda, the concoction fizzed like an Alka Seltzer on my arm. The symptoms raged on at Level 9 for the first 20 minutes but then began to subside. An hour later, the symptoms had gone down to Level 2, and they stayed that way for several hours. Chalk one up for the meat tenderizer, which contains papain, an enzyme found in papaya that supposedly breaks down the toxins in bee (and other) venom.

#### **Best**

Toothpaste (diy/web), \$3.99/tube Crest Advanced Cleaning. Like the Caladryl and meat tenderizer potion, the toothpaste tingled. This not only made it seem medicated, it felt like I was actually scratching the itch, which was both psychologically and physically satisfying. One doctor I spoke to suggested that the glycerin found in most toothpastes dries out the venom concentrated under the sting area. But several others I asked said the tingle was a result of the alkaline toothpaste neutralizing the acid in the bee's venom. Either way, the toothpaste knocked Level 10 symptoms down to 0 in 15 minutes and held them below 7 for more than five hours, but the winner of the experiment ...

#### **Ice**

(med/diy/doc/rex/bee/web/mom), universally cheap. Almost every source I checked mentioned ice as a top remedy. And they were all right. Ice works. A 20-minute application knocked out the symptoms almost immediately and kept them subdued for half the day. Ice reduces swelling by constricting vessels and slowing down the flow of venom-tainted blood. By numb force, it also cancels out pain and itching. Its flaw, of course, is its temperature; it can become uncomfortable without some kind of buffer wrapped around it (which, you know, is simple to do). Then again, ice is very easy to find and it's also super cheap.

### ***Goodbye Ibrahim Zakhour***

As it turns out, the hike up Jebel Qatar was Ibrahim's last outing with the ENHG. After 20 years with the group he is departing in early December for England, where the rest of his family awaits him. He will be sorely missed by those he leaves behind as he was an avid outdoorsman with more knowledge than most. He was largely responsible for keeping the group going for many years. Members enjoyed the tribute prepared by Brien Holmes and friends at the December 9 meeting. Let it be known that the Triple Crescent Award will in future be known as the Ibrahim Zakhour Triple Crescent Award in honor of his energy, love and spirit. So who will look after the Christmas Eve Dinner in the Desert? Anybody sing in Greek?



***Ma'as Salama,  
Ibrahim!***

***Merry  
Christmas!***