

The Network News

A Quick Look Ahead...

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| Sundays | Social Bridge 2 pm to 5 pm Bright Point Royal Women's Hospital |
| Sundays | Golf 9:00 am Abu Dhabi City Golf |
| Monday April 27 | Book Club 1- 3 pm, 7-9 pm Various locations |
| Wednesday April 1,15 | Mahjong 9 am to noon Hemingway's,Hilton |
| Thursday April 2, 16 | Coffee Morning 10 am to noon Khalidiya Palace |
| Tuesday April 14 | Neighborhood Walk Khalidiya Area 10:00 am Details on page 7 |
| Tuesday April 21 | Captain Tony's Rescheduled Sunset Cocktail Cruise 5 to 7 PM Details on page 6 |
| Friday May 1 | Beach Party Shangri La 6:00 PM |

AWN Beach Party Shangri-La Hotel May 1, 6:00 PM



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Don't miss the AWN Beach Party on Friday, May 1 at 6:00 pm. Shangri-La Hotel, Qaryat Al Beri, Plaza Beach.

Imagine...catching the sunset and its reflection on Sheikh Zayed's Mosque; walking bare foot on the sand; enjoying the smell of a delicious BBQ cookout; laughing with friends and dancing under the stars. Don't miss out on this event, which will be the last for this season before summer.

BBQ and soft beverages included for 250 AED per person. Cash bar, shisha bar and complimentary valet parking are available.

Tickets are on sale at the Morning coffees or at your activities groups.

More information at socialevents@awnabudhabi.com

A message from Lee...

Welcome Spring! This is the season when we traditionally think of rain, renewal and rebirth. Don't look for a lot of rain in Abu Dhabi, but there will be some new things going on in the AWN and some new people in charge of planning them. AWN is a dynamic volunteer organization that is characterized and energized by constant change, activity, progress and growth.

Yet, we grow more successfully when given fertile ground left to us from those who have gone before. So, as we say good-bye and thank you to outgoing board members: Media Chair Luanne McCray, Golf Chair Liz Desmond, Philanthropy Chair Nina Brown, and Coffee Morning Chair Denise Schnitzer, we hope they realize that our excitement of new friends taking over their roles will not diminish the contributions they made to AWN. We wish them Godspeed in their new adventures ahead.

Lee Nichols
Co-President, AWN

AWN New Culture Group



On Monday morning of March 16th, the newly formed AWN Culture Group held their first 'show and tell' meeting at The Third Place Cafe. The "show and tell" engaging and interactive activity seemed a fun way to exchange knowledge for both the seasoned culture buffs as well as those who are new to this form of discussion but keen to learn more. Out of the gathering of over twenty ladies almost half were brave enough to either introduce their favorite art piece or alternatively an interesting topic. As encouragement to future participants and to enable everyone to contribute, the group's coordinator thought the presentations should not exceed five minutes.

We were introduced to a number of fascinating objects and stories from the UAE and other cultures. We first

admired a beautiful modern calligraphic *Shahada* (Profession of Faith), followed by two possibly silver Omani daggers called *Janbiya* (one framed), pictures of pierced brass Moroccan lighting, a Persian tile with a central star motif, a miniature brass Dallah (Arabic coffee pot), the same Dallah as featured on UAE money, a hand-shaped pendant (also called the Hand of Fatima), a framed poster of the Indian equestrian portrait of Maharao Sheodan Singh of Alwar from the collection of Louvre Abu Dhabi, an



illustrated story of the Japanese Doll's Day (or Girl's Day) celebrated annually on March 3rd, and finally, a video showing a traditional Emirati *Ayallah* or stick dance, together with the stick. The meeting ended with the presentation of a few examples of handmade Southeast Asian cloths illustrating a great variety of textile production techniques (e.g., batik, ikat), designs (e.g., ship cloth from Sumatra), as well as foreign influences and symbolism.



Memorable moments in the history of AWN...

In early March, Sharon Moynihan, a past AWN president was visiting Abu Dhabi and wanted to meet a few board members at The One, which had been her favorite place 20 years ago. We had a wonderful time hearing about the initial years of AWN.



Sharon came to Abu Dhabi with her husband in 1994, after having retired as a Colonel from a 24 year career in the US Air Force Nurse Corp. Her husband, also retired as an US Air Force pilot, worked for the Center for Strategic Studies in the UAE. She credits those military years for providing many great organizational and leadership skills, which she used in her role as AWN president.

At Thanksgiving time, Sharon decided to invite all the Americans she knew in Abu Dhabi to their Hilton Baynunah Hotel apartment. Well over 50 Americans came to celebrate the holiday. Sharon ordered turkeys from Spinneys and the Hilton chef roasted and carved them. The women brought all the other dishes including pies. As a fun activity, the guys started bidding on the pies in order to have a piece. The money was set aside and donated to a local charity. After dinner, the women decided that they'd like to have more opportunities to get together. Sharon agreed to organize a lunch once a month at various restaurants with a short meeting afterwards. Sharon was instrumental in organizing the original 25 or so women who formed the American Women's Network. She went on to serve as AWN President three terms from 2000-2001, 2003, and 2004-2007.

While the annual Thanksgiving pie sale became one of their most popular and anticipated fundraisers, this vibrant group of ladies also organized trips to Dubai and Sharjah and even one to Syria. For the families they organized Halloween Trick or Treating and a picnic in the park each spring. One of their favorite outings was the Dhow cruise along the Corniche in the evenings. Our first version of our AWN Guidebook was started back in 1994 to help newcomers acclimate. They were a committed group of volunteers who set the tone for what is now the American Women's Network.

More memorable moments...Masquerade Party at Dusit Thani. March 5, 2015



Our Bridge Coordinator and Newcomer helper in her own words...

We arrived in Abu Dhabi at the end of February, 2014 and while adjusting to jetlag in the Beach Rotana, I received a message through a co-worker of my husband. "Please email me so we can meet and plan to go to the AWN meeting on Thursday! It's not good to just sit in and around the hotel!" I was feeling anxious, nervous, tired, scared and all those other emotions that happen when you have been traveling for seventeen plus hours and arrive in a new place where you don't know anyone. All I knew was that her name was Rita and so I sent her a note. Well, the rest is history and she has become a wonderful, lifelong friend! Rita refused to let me sit in my room alone and said she was going to show me that I could be as busy or as bored as I wanted while here. I had told her I wanted to get back into playing bridge so her first introduction at the AWN meeting was to Lee Nichols, the AWN Bridge Chair at that time. Going to that meeting, with one person to make me feel like I wasn't lost, was the start of my first great year in the Abu Dhabi. Soon after meeting Lee, I met Kris, Monica, Cathy, Kristie, Nina and so many others! We went on



tours with Explorers, a backyard party, and yes, I found a bridge group! I also volunteered to help Monica with Newcomers when she was looking for a vice chair. I saw it as another way to meet people who I may not have gotten to meet at the bridge table. I wanted to be 'Rita' to others! It has been a wonderful experience and I have found that every newcomer has so much to offer to all of us here!

Born and raised in Northeastern Ohio, I came from a large family so needless to say, I'm fairly comfortable in a group! Abu Dhabi is my first expat experience; however I have traveled the world with my husband, David, who I married in 1975. I graduated from Miami University in OH and immediately went to work. Our first overseas assignment with the Navy was in Spain and that is where I really caught the 'bridge' bug. Like here, my 'job' there was to meet people and learn what the area had to offer. When we returned to the states, we were in the DC area and I worked in an insurance

agency. My working 'outside the home' stopped with children and changes in duty stations. Our last tour was in Colorado Springs, CO and that is where David retired from the Navy, only to start a second career as a government contractor. I spent fourteen years managing a real estate office there. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would find myself in Abu Dhabi, but I guess the good Lord knew there were more people out there I wanted to count among my friends! I look forward to meeting you all. There is something for everyone and my association with AWN has been a wonderful jump start to my life in Abu Dhabi.

Coffee Mornings

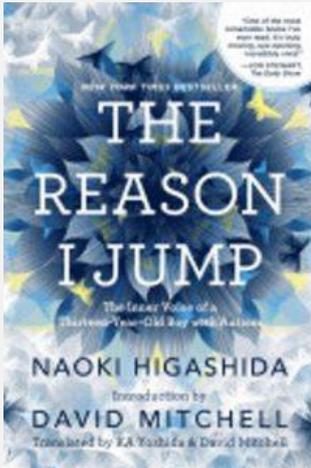
Thursday, April 2 AWN regular socializing coffee morning.

Thursday, April 16 Dr. Al Aly, with the Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, will discuss plastic surgery procedures and answer questions from the audience. Dr. Aly pioneered reconstructive surgery following massive weight loss.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our schedule of speakers is subject to change. For more info, please email morningcoffees@awnabudhabi.com.

Book Club

The book selection for April 27 is “**The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism**” by Naoki Higashida (translated by David Mitchell)



You’ve never read a book like *The Reason I Jump*. Written by Naoki Higashida, a very smart, very self-aware, and very charming thirteen-year-old boy with autism, it is a one-of-a-kind memoir that demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, and responds in ways few of us can imagine. Parents and family members who never thought they could get inside the head of their autistic loved one at last have a way to break through to the curious, subtle, and complex life within.

In his introduction, bestselling novelist David Mitchell writes that Naoki’s words allowed him to feel, for the first time, as if his own autistic child was explaining what was happening in his mind. “It is no exaggeration to say that *The Reason I Jump* allowed me to round a corner in our relationship.” This translation was a labor of love by David and his wife, KA Yoshida, so they’d be able to share that

feeling with friends, the wider autism community, and beyond. Naoki’s book, in its beauty, truthfulness, and simplicity, is a gift to be shared.

Please join us for an enjoyable time with lots of good conversation. There is both an afternoon (1:00 – 3:00) meeting and evening (7:00 – 9:00) meeting. Please RSVP at bookclub@awnabudhabi.com stating “afternoon” or “evening” in the subject line. **LOCATION DIRECTIONS WILL ONLY BE SENT TO THOSE WHO RSVP.**

Shukran!

As always, AWN wishes to thank Khalidiya Palace Rayhaan by Rotana for hosting our Thursday morning coffees. We greatly appreciate its welcoming atmosphere, and its dedication in meeting our needs and expectations. Members please remember that Khalidiya Palace offers 20% discounts in their restaurants following our coffee gatherings.

Notecards

AWN member, Dottie Knopp, provided the artwork for a set of 8 notecards (blank inside) for sale at our coffee mornings. Abu Dhabi inspired designs are sure to delight friends and family. The set of eight cards is priced at 35 AED. All proceeds from the sale go to charities selected by AWN. For more info, please email projects@awnabudhabi.com

Shukran!

A very special “**Thank You**” goes out to our two guest speakers at AWN coffee mornings in March. On the fifth, Jessica Mondo gave an informative presentation about Interior Design. On March 19, Ghislaine Verne, our Social Events Chair, recapped the history of AWN since its founding a little more than 20 Years ago. Looking forward to many more fruitful years to come!



Golf

Golf lessons are underway at Abu Dhabi City Golf Club and due to popular demand we are now offering ongoing lessons. New classes will start at any stage once 4 or more people sign up. Eight lessons @ 400 AED. This will not affect existing groups. Golf lessons will also be held in Abu Dhabi Golf Club after Easter! For further information please email Heidi Garrity at golf@awnabudhabi.com

Explorers

April 21, 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Captain Tony's Rescheduled Sunset Cocktail Cruise is on April 21, from 5 to 7 pm. We will meet at Marina Mall Marina, Jetty C, Near the FAS Heliport. Free to those ladies who participated last year in the original AWN Cruise. Guests and other interested ladies may attend if space allows at the cost of 250 AED.

May 12, 9:30 am. Masdar City facilitated tour. The tour takes approximately 60-90 minutes, and there is no fee but you'll have to provide your own transportation. Cafés and restaurants are available. Please reserve your place as space is limited to 30 people maximum.

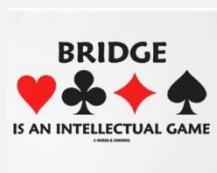
Reserve/ buy Tickets at AWN morning coffees. For more info, email: explorers@awnabudhabi.com

Mahjong

The Mahjong group plays on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 9:00 am to noon at Hemingway's, Hilton Hotel. All levels are welcome including those who have never played and would like to learn. Upcoming sessions are scheduled for April 1 & 15, and May 6 & 20. There is a cost of 35 AED that includes coffee, water and a light snack. If you wish to be added to the mahjong mailing list, please send an email to mahjong@awnabudhabi.com.



Bridge

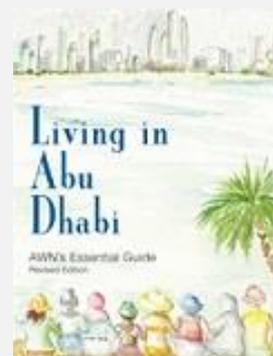


AWN offers bridge play, welcoming all levels (except complete beginners). The AWN bridge group meets at Bright point Royal Hospital (in the Skybox of Al Jazeera Stadium) on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. This group will continue to meet throughout the summer. For further details, please e-mail bridge@awnabudhabi.com.

Beginners can sign up for the next lessons session starting in the fall (October, 2015) by sending an email to bridge@awnabudhabi.com

Guide Book

Attention Newcomers!! Get your copy of AWN's guide book, "Living in Abu Dhabi", **On Sale for ONLY 35 AED** at our coffee mornings. It is an excellent resource and a helpful tool as you settle in and discover what Abu Dhabi has to offer. All proceeds go to charities selected by AWN. For bulk corporate sales, please contact Linda at guidebook@awnabudhabi.com



Neighborhood Walk

Come join us on Tuesday, April 14 for our last neighborhood walk of the season. We will explore the Khalidiya Area, so put on your walking shoes and bring water as it is starting to heat up. We will meet in front of Jones the Grocer, Pearl Plaza Tower, next to ORYX hotel. We will leave at 10:00 am sharp. For more info, email explorers@awnabudhabi.com

Women's Heritage Walk: Mission Accomplished!

At the beginning of March a group of Expat and Emirati women set out from Al Ain on a 140 kilometre trek through the sands to Abu Dhabi. The Women's Heritage Walk was organised by women's wellness coach and AWN member Jody Ballard under the patronage of Sheikha Shaikha bint Mohammed bin Khalid Al Nahyan, to honor the women of the United Arab Emirates who made this journey twice a year not so long ago.



As many of you may know, Denise Schnitzer, our AWN Coffee Chair took part in the Heritage Walk, an experience that she claims to have changed her life. "We gathered at the Al Bada Resort in Al Ain and after a sumptuous Emirati style dinner we prepared to step out in the sand."



Each day the ladies walked about 25 kilometres across the desert, taking up to 12 arduous hours. They experienced searing heat and aching limbs, but also a deep camaraderie reinforced by storytelling over shared meals. Denise tells us that there was laughter, dancing, tears of joy and even quiet time. They were encouraged to leave negative thoughts in the desert and all given the gift of a hand-made button declaring "I am strong, classy, intelligent, beautiful and determined".

One of the ladies said "Every time I walked with a different woman, I learnt something new." Another stated "I suffered a little, but didn't feel tired until the end. The desert was so beautiful". Denise described the team as "cohesive, supportive, hard-working and unified".

Nights were spent sleeping in makeshift Bedouin camps along the way. At the end of the week-long walk, friends and family were waiting to greet the tired but exhilarated women at the Zayed Centre in Al Bateen.

Jody Ballard, the organizer, worked for many hours along with Brenda O'Regan of Esc@pe Events, to bring this walk to fruition. She plans for the Walk to take place annually; maybe even adding a route from Al Ain to Dubai.

Compiled from The National Newspaper, Abu Dhabi* and an article written by Denise Schnitzer

*<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/women-follow-in-the-footsteps-of-sheikh-zayed>

*<http://www.thenational.ae/arts-lifestyle/well-being/30-women-to-embark-on-a-140km-heritage-trek-from-al-ain-to-abu-dhabi>