

Thursday, July 6, 1978

(F11B)

# Rashid families' reunion falls on appropriate week

By ALICIA GILLETTE

When is a gathering of the clan not a family reunion?

In the case of the Rashid families of metropolitan Detroit, it's when you get together, 35 strong, to plan the official family reunion.

A series of these mini family get-togethers have been taking place every three weeks for the past six months to pave the way for the 50th annual family reunion of the Rashid Club of America, which will take place tomorrow through Sunday at Southfield's Sheraton Southfield Hotel.

While most families would consider having 35 relatives over for the evening a command performance, the 71 Rashid-related families in Michigan consider it a normal family gathering.

For the 63 Detroit-area families who trace their Lebanese heritage back to five Rashid cousins who came from Jafet Marjaroun, Lebanon in 1896, a true reunion is one that attracts at least 500 of the 1,200 members of the family from 28 states and Canada.

That's the way it will be in Southfield this weekend.

And it wouldn't be a real Rashid family conclave without delegates, caucuses, an agenda, parliamentary procedure and a large committee to plan it all. This year's Rashid Club national chairman is Dr. Robert Salloum of Troy.

The annual meeting will take place on Sunday morning following a special family mass that will be celebrated according to the Eastern rite of the Melkite Catholic Church to which most of the families belong.

Traditionally, Rashid family conventions also include an Arabic dinner, a dinner dance, special events and endless conversation.

This year, being the golden anniversary of the club, the reunion will include all the aforementioned and then some.

A home-cooked Lebanese meal for 500, prepared by five Rashid women, is scheduled at the hotel on Friday night. After dinner entertainment will include a "Song Show" series of humorous skits and a commemorative slide presentation by Fran Zakoor of West Bloomfield, whose mother Adele Rashid Zakoor donated her Pepper

Hill Condominium kitchen for most of the cooking sessions.

The Saturday agenda includes a luncheon trip for the young children to Farrell's Ice Cream parlor, a hotel disco party for teenagers and an excursion to the Renaissance Center for the adults. A cocktail party and golden anniversary dinner dance will round out Saturday evening.

"THEN WE'LL SIT UP ALL NIGHT JUST TALKING," said Sally Beshara of West Bloomfield, whose late father George Rashid was the nephew of one of the original settlers and club founder Rasheed (William R.) Rashid, known as "Uncle Will."

Sally and her sisters, Bunny Kalil and Rose Marie Rashid, reminisced about the old days in their mother, Emily Rashid's, West Bloomfield kitchen recently.

Tagged by her sisters as the "most ethnic and best historian" of the sisters, Mrs. Beshara, 46, spoke about Uncle Will's "dream" to maintain close family ties by starting the Rashid family club in 1928.

Together with his cousins Farah (Frank), Jadioun (John), Said (George) and Julia, the Rashids, who trace their heritage back to the seventh century, fled the Turks in the late 1890s.

By the ages of 15, they had emigrated to the United States where they moved through the midwest peddling dry goods, rugs, trinkets and groceries. Eventually, they were settled in Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota and Michigan. They were soon followed by hundreds more Rashids from Lebanon who spread into Nebraska and Wisconsin. All went into business for themselves as grocers, farmers, merchants or shoemakers.

According to Mrs. Beshara, the formation of the family club by "the four horsemen," Uncle Will, Uncle John, Uncle Frank and Uncle George, took place in Davenport, Iowa on July 4, 1928 with about 50 family members present.

Mrs. Beshara attended her first reunion of the club in 1931, as "a babe in arms," and has been going ever since.

Mrs. Kalil, who is nine years younger than her sister, described the founding fathers as "colorful, outgoing and forceful" at family meetings.

"If they were living, they would get up and talk two hours," she said. "And then if they got into a debate, God help us. At the meeting they could sound like they would cut each other's throats, and then afterwards have a friendly drink together. Parliamentary procedure saved the club."

In the early days, family reunions consisted of an all day picnic on a Sunday, which allowed the men to wind up their Saturday work day in their various self-owned businesses. The present convention format was adopted in 1961.

"IN THE OLD DAYS the big thing was the Sunday picnic when everybody brought food. It went on all day, and then on Monday everybody would leave," said Rose Marie.

"Nobody slept in hotels or motels then. They stayed with family. I can remember Uncle Will and his family staying at our house," said Mrs. Beshara, who added that "there still are diehards in the family who would like to go back to the picnic deal."

One of those diehards is Josephine Rashid of Detroit, the daughter of the Julia Rashid who accompanied her four male cousins to the United States in 1896.

Speaking in a gentle, warm voice at an early June reunion-planning session at the Farris Kalil's home in West Bloomfield, Miss Rashid admitted that many of her generation would like to revive the old-time picnic. "But this way is more fun for the younger generation," she conceded.

The well-respected housemother at the St. Francis Home for Boys credited strong family ties for the success of the unique family club. She believes it is family unity which best describes the family.

"Rashids have mostly stuck together and fought each other's battles," she said. "It wasn't until the last 50 years that they left each other for better opportunities. The reunions started when they found out they were spreading apart."

Like others in her family, Miss Rashid speaks with pride of the prosperity which has blessed the Rashid family and its "well educated children."

"The second and particularly the third generation have done wonders," she said, noting the abundance of doctors, teachers, lawyers, bankers and stockbrokers in the family.

When queried for specific examples, she mentioned her cousin Judge Joseph C. Rashid of the Wayne County Circuit Court, and cousin Bud Rashid of Washington, formerly head of the Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice.

"But I really can't single anyone out," she said. "I'm proud as a peacock of all of them."

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE are these Rashid relations who will convene at the Sheraton Southfield Hotel this weekend?

They have been described by various family members as "warm and hospitable, close, friendly, affectionate, intelligent but clannish, proud, down to earth, patriotic, independent and close knit."

"It's part of the Arab culture to be hospitable and meet everyone well," said Bob Salloum, the chairman of the Rashid Club of America, who lives in Troy.

Salloum, a research engineer for General Motors Research in Warren, earned his Ph.D. from Purdue. He noted that the early Rashid families' custom of going into business for themselves was reflective of immigrants in general.



Antique family photographs, including this wedding photo of Farah Rashid and wife Almaza, will be in evidence this week when the Rashid family celebrates the golden anniversary of the family reunions.

Accompanied by four cousins Farah fled the Turks in the 1890s. The cousins then set up network of successful family enterprises that are now located from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.



When Jadioun J. Rashid and his cousins formed the family club on July 4, 1928 there were 50 family members present at the gathering in Davenport, Iowa. There are now 1,200 family members. Members of the 71 Rashid families living in Michigan say that they don't consider it a real reunion unless at least 500 family members are present.

## 'Father was king'

# Tradition still reigns

By ALICIA GILLETTE

A roster of Rashid and affiliated families from 28 states and Canada is included in a 144 page Rashid Family Directory.

Of the 71 Michigan families listed, 63 hail from the Detroit area. Twenty-four of those families from Oakland County.

In round figures, the family claims over 1,200 Rashid relatives living in North America. Almost 500 will be attending the 50th annual family reunion of the Rashid Club of America this weekend in Southfield.

The following quotes were obtained in recent interviews with members of the family.

Philip Rashid, 61, a retired Southfield builder, whose father Farah was one of the Rashid founding fathers: "My father said large families were all the better for this beautiful country of ours." He said "keep your name clean and raise an honorable family."

"When they came over they were treated as foreigners. In spite of that he said there was no better land on earth. Honor this land and serve this country."

Josephine Rashid, Detroit, daughter of Julia Rashid who emigrated to the

U.S. with four male cousins in 1896: "All our uncles bossed us. Everyone of our uncles was our boss."

Fran Zakoor, West Bloomfield. Teacher and Rashid granddaughter: "I would almost have to marry a man of Lebanese extraction because he would be able to understand about the closeness of the family."

John Rashid, 27, Dearborn. Teacher, son of Judge Joseph Rashid of Detroit and grandson of Jadioun Rashid, one of the five original Rashid immigrants: "I think it's good for kids to have older people around."

"They're better adjusted and grow up so much more secure. They have greater respect and relate better to all ages."

Robert Salloum, 37, Troy. Ph.D., engineer, a Rashid grandson and chairman of Rashid Club of America: "Most Rashids went into business for themselves; but this is true of immi-

grants in general. Most had small businesses in the old country."

Terry Kalil, 17, West Bloomfield. Student and great great niece of Rasheed (William R.) Rashid: "Every summer I look forward to the reunion because it's great to have people come from around the United States. I get to see people like me; it's part of my heritage."

Sue Beshara, 16, West Bloomfield. Student and Rashid granddaughter: "They're (Rashids) different than most people, much nicer. They know where they are going and what they're doing. They are so out-going at meetings."

Rose Marie Rashid, West Bloomfield. Great-niece of William R. Rashid: "So many Rashid families had large markets that if they had banned together years ago they could have had one of the largest super-market chains in the country today."

Mary Zakoor Malhas, 28, Jordan. A Rashid granddaughter married to an Alfa Airlines flight engineer in Jordan, she is home visiting her mother in West Bloomfield: "Arabic people in Jordan are hospitable, wonderful, genuine. (Continued on page 6B)

For more photos of today's Rashid descendants and the recipes for the family feast, turn to page 6B of today's Suburban Life section.



One of the original cousins to emigrate from Lebanon, Julia Rashid and her husband Peter and their children Josephine and Foxy were among the family members to settle in Michigan. Josephine, a house-

mother now at the St. Francis Home for Boys, credits strong family ties for the success of the unique family club.