

Building ties Arab Americans aim to flex political muscle

By Tim Richard
staff writer

After a daylong convention in Southfield, many Arab Americans have May 27 circled on their calendars. It's the deadline for filing petitions to run for precinct delegates in the Democratic and Republican primaries.

"We're not involved in either party as a collective group," said Jumana Judeh, who lives in Westland and chairs the Arab American Democratic Federation. "We seek one voice that will speak in both parties. We put on this conference to get in the political mainstream."

Significantly, many speakers at the Arab American Institute gathering were from other ethnic groups — black, Italian, Hispanic. Judeh spelled out why. "We're no different than any other ethnic group. We may be starting to play the game later than the others, but we're playing catch-up."

"We need to stress the importance of building ties," said Judeh, a former aide to U.S. Rep. George Crockett Jr., D-Detroit, and now a Michigan Bell manager.

"BUILDING TIES." The theme came out repeatedly as ethnic leaders, professional politicians and a top lobbyist addressed nearly 100 Arab Americans in the Michigan Inn.

Suburbs home to many Arabs

Some 2.5 million Americans are of Arab ancestry, according to Dr. James Zogby, executive director of the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C.

Regions with high concentrations include southeastern New England, metropolitan New York City, western Pennsylvania, northern Ohio and Illinois, southeastern Michigan and southern California.

In Michigan, largest concentrations are the suburbs of Detroit and the Flint area. Jeff Mansour of the AAII in Michigan says the largest group is from Lebanon with Palestinians second. Others are from Yemen, Egypt and Jordan.

In the suburbs, Dearborn is estimated to be 20 percent Arab American, the largest group being from Yemen. Jumana Judeh, a Michigan Bell manager and Democratic leader, says good numbers of Palestinian Americans live in Livonia, Westland and Garden City. Chaldeans make up 10 percent of Southfield's population with lesser concentrations in Farmington Hills, Royal Oak, Oak Park and Birmingham.

"It's no secret Arab Americans have been on the sidelines for a long time," said Isa Hasan, who lives in Livonia, runs a pharmacy in Dearborn and is national chairman of the 5,000-member Arab American Republican Federation. "We could have a very decisive input into our state government."

The 1984 Reagan-Bush campaign already knows what Arab Americans can do. It credited the Arab American bloc with registering more new voters than any other ethnic group.

"We petitioned the National Heritage Council — that's the ethnic arm of the Republican Party — for admission to their group," said Hasan, "and they voted us in unanimously."

BECOMING A precinct delegates is a first step to political influence, said lawyer George Bashara, a former state Court of Appeals judge and now a Republican member of the Wayne State University Board of Governors.

"How many of you are precinct delegates?" Bashara asked. About five hands went up.

"Next election every one of you should run for precinct delegate. Get 20 signatures on a petition. It's the simplest thing in the world," he said.

Next steps will be seeking political appointments and government contracts, several speakers said.

HARDLY ANYONE mentioned Israel, although it was in the back of everyone's mind. The reason is that Arab Americans are seeking to influence foreign policy by starting at the grass roots.

"People used to see us as a one-issue community — foreign policy in the Middle East," said Democrat Judah (see other story on this page).

Republican Hasan says they seek to soften the United States' "blind support for the state of Israel."

By building ties to other ethnic groups, Hasan added, Arab Americans seek to mitigate the "stereotype of the ugly Arab, the terrorist." His voice hardened as he talked about such films as "Delta Force" and "America Under Siege."

BITS OF practical advice were many.

Conrad Mallett Jr., aide to Detroit Mayor Young and former aide to Sen. Patrick McCollough, said politicians will ignore a demand "as long as they can" until a group achieves prominence. Once Hispanics were ignored in Texas, but now "every candidate works the Hispanic group very, very hard. . . . It's a long, slow process, but there is no alternative."

George Salton, deputy solicitor and one of nine top aides to U.S. Labor Secretary William Brock, said, "Having people on the inside is where it's at. I have 900 employees reporting to me, 600 of them lawyers. Everyone knows I'm an Arab American because I wear my ethnicity on my sleeve."

"It doesn't matter to me if you're a Democrat or



'We seek one voice that will speak in both parties,' said Jumana Judeh, chairman of the Arab American Democratic Federation.

Republican — or a socialist. If you're part of us, we're going to promote you."

Dr. Alfred Rotondaro, head of the National Italian American Foundation, said his "fiercely bipartisan" group will give an award to Democratic Gov. James Blanchard. "Why are we honoring the governor? You don't need an answer. He's the governor."

The lineup of other speakers indicated the Arab Americans had caught Lansing's attention: Dr. Agnes M. Mansour (Lebanese), director of the state Department of Social Services; Spencer Abraham (Lebanese), state Republican chairman; Secretary of State Richard Austin; and Senate Majority Leader John Engler of Mt. Pleasant.

WORKING ON campaigns is more important than giving money, though that's important, too.

State Sen. Patrick McCollough, D-Deerborn, said, "You folks as a group have been a political target and scapegoats. . . . Whether you're Democrat or Republican, you have to join a party. (Presidential candidates) go after the precinct delegates."

McCollough, whose home town is 20 percent Arab American and whose district stretches to Garden City, advised, "Don't give huge sums to a party. Once you give it, they can use it for their purposes, not yours." He advised "being a friend" to office holders and candidates.

James Karoub, head of a 70-client lobbying firm and Lebanese by ancestry, said people lobbying a legislator must understand that others are lobbying from the other side — and respect the lawmaker's delicate position. "You tell him, 'You're going to lose 40,000 friends by helping us, but we're going to give you 200,000 friends.'"

Karoub blistered Arab Americans for failure to contribute money to their causes, adding, "I respect the way they (Jews) have worked within the system."

Survey reveals liberal streak on some issues

"Arab Americans, although mostly Republicans, are somewhat liberal in their political makeup," says Dr. James Zogby of the Arab American Institute.

A March 1985 survey at a Washington, D.C., conference showed 52 percent consider themselves Republicans and 23 percent independents.

Nine percent wanted to increase the defense budget (considered conservative) while 72 percent disagreed. Some 72 to 88 percent favored increasing such domestic programs as encouraging small business and aiding students (considered liberal).

ON CANDIDATES, 70 percent preferred Democrat Jesse Jackson, a black minister, for president, and 60 percent actually voted for Republican Ronald Reagan when Jackson failed to get his party's nod.

A mere 15 percent voted for Democratic nominee Walter Mondale, who angered the bloc early in his campaign by rejecting donations from Arab Americans.

Those attending last weekend's Michigan conference in Southfield listed themselves as 27 percent Democrats, 26 percent Republicans and 47 percent independents.

Among gubernatorial candidates, according to incomplete results, incumbent Democrat James Blanchard and Republican William Lucas, the Wayne County executive, were in a virtual tie.

"AN ARAB American political agenda" includes more than modifying the pro-Israel bent of U.S. foreign policy. Those attending the Southfield conference were polled and said they wanted these items in the agenda (ranked in order):

1) "The development of a strong presence in the Republican and Democratic parties."

2) "The creation of an Arab American commission or post in the State House to see that Arab Americans receive their fair share of government appointments."

3) "Establishment of an affirmative action program for Arab Americans which would require state agencies and departments, and state institutions of higher education, to give Arab Americans preferential treatment in hiring in order to overcome the effects of past discrimination."

4) "The development of special social services aimed at the thousands of new Arab immigrants arriving each year in the state."

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

● CHANGING HATS

Randall Elliott of Farmington was named director of planning and marketing at the Rehabilitation Institute in the Detroit Medical Center.

Elliott came to THE Rehabilitation Institute from Radius Inc., now a health care subsidiary of the Detroit Medical Center.

The 175-bed Rehabilitation Institute is the largest rehabilitation hospital in the Midwest.

● PR FIRM CHOSEN

Birmingham-based Eric Yale Lutz & Associates, a real estate and investment company, has chosen Herinmoff & Associates of Farmington Hills as its public relations agency.

Founded in 1976, Eric Yale Lutz & Associates is one of Michigan's largest development and real estate investment businesses. Acquisition in 1985 exceeded \$70 million.

● NAMED VP

A 20-year employee of the R.L. Polk & Co. was named vice president and assistant general manager for the Motor Statistical Division.

Mack Summers will be responsible for the Motor Statistical Division's sales and production, as well as assisting in the management of the division's day-to-day activities.

The Farmington Hills resident joined Polk in 1968 as a management trainee in Cincinnati, Ohio. He became manager of market analysis that same year. In 1969, he transferred to Polk's Detroit sales office as an account executive.

Summers moved to Carson, Calif., in 1977 to establish a Motor Statistical Division branch office there. He served as West Coast sales manager until his recent promotion.

● SHE'S PROMOTED

Farmington Hills-based Grace & Wild Studios appointed Genie Blazoul to the newly created position of account representative.

The Farmington Hills resident will be responsible for servicing the production and post production needs of Grace & Wild's corporate and industrial clients.

Before her appointment, Blazoul was an electronic graphics technician with Grace & Wild, operating the Vidifont character generator system for client projects.

She previously was responsible for the startup, staff training and operation of the Vidifont and compositor graphics systems at Producer's Color Service in Southfield.

● MOVING UP

National Bank of Detroit appointed Celia Dale of

Farmington Hills assistant loan officer in its Eastern Metropolitan Regional Banking Division.

● NAMED SALES REP

Gregory Mamassian joined Bamsal Fastener Corp. of Farmington Hills as sales representative, servicing the Metro Detroit automotive and industrial markets.

The Bloomfield Hills resident was previously employed by TRW Aerospace of Los Angeles and TRW Steering and Suspension Division of Sterling Heights.

Bamsal Fastener, with branch service centers in Dayton and Lima, Ohio, is a full-line fastener distributor.

● NEW IN TOWN

A national franchisor of one-hour film developing has opened a new store in the Downtown Farmington Center.

Moto Photo of Dayton, Ohio, opened its 188th store Feb. 3 at 23346 Farmington, said Michael Adler, president. The owner of the Farmington store is Richard Rafalko.

One-hour photo processing is done on computerized equipment that develops and prints 110, 128, 135 and disc color film. The negatives are developed in 23 minutes, without a darkroom. A technician makes color corrections on each negative with a computerized printer. First-class processing and printing takes less than an hour.

Other Moto Photos in southeast Michigan are at Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn, and Universal Mall, Warren. A store is expected to open in March in Westland Mall.

The Farmington store is equipped to provide same-day enlargements, a portrait studio with proofs in one hour, instant passport photos and a 24-hour dropbox.

The store also offers a child identification program. Children will be photographed and fingerprinted for parental record. Parents will receive a pamphlet to review safety tips with their children.

● MARKETING OFFICER

National Bank of Detroit appointed D. Jane Havenstrie of Farmington Hills marketing officer in its Marketing Services Division.

Havenstrie is responsible for marketing and product management for NBD's outstate affiliate banks.

● SHIFTING JOBS

John Van Wagoner was promoted to the position of assistant account executive at Ross Roy Inc.

The Farmington Hills resident works on the Chrysler/Plymouth account.

He began his advertising career in the Ross Roy management training program.

● JOINS FIRM

Lynn Kirk has joined Ross Roy, Inc. as account supervisor for the Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD) account.

The Farmington Hills resident will be responsible for the account's advertising campaigns.

Farah belted slacks, Value Plus 19.99

RESISTS

WRINKLES AND

STAINS WITH

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POLYESTER

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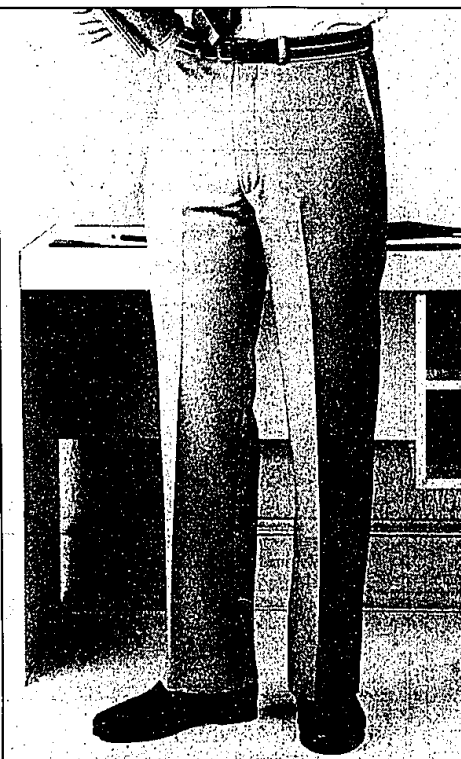
Farah belted slacks of 100% polyester give you a great fit without a lot of hassles. They're machine washable and wrinkle and stain resistant, too. And they're a low Value Plus 19.99. Available in brown, navy, black, grey and tan. Made in U.S.A. and Imported. Sizes listed below:

Waist	27	28	29	30	31	32
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29						
30						
31						
32						
34						

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