



ON THE MAC POINT
Moroccan American Circle (MAC)
DECEMBER 2005/ JANUARY 2006

MAC is a Moroccan-American organization, founded in 1982, whose mission is to build bridges in the social, business, educational and cultural areas, between Morocco and the United States.

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BEST WISHES FOR "AÏD EL KEBIR" AND A HAPPY AND FESTIVE SEASON!

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Message from the President



Our 23-year-old Association, the Moroccan American Circle (MAC), has a long experience of developing friendships between the Moroccan Kingdom and the United States of America, and a rich history of activities. After a short period of hibernation and in less than a year, MAC gained large recognition and credibility:

- Gathering a large community composed of a network of Moroccan U.S. University alumni and professionals doing business with the U.S., and American residents in Morocco.
- Attracting high level decision makers in the private and public sectors, Moroccans and Americans.
- Organizing memorable events in different areas.

MAC is now valued, allowing opportunities to play an even bigger role in the Moroccan-American bonds. Hence, the next steps are even more challenging, particularly given the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the months to come. I indeed consider that the FTA will change progressively but drastically the relations between Morocco and the United States. Nevertheless, conditions for success of the implementation should be further scrutinized and efficient relays need to be put in place accordingly.

MAC is now raising the bar to live up to new standards:

- We have launched the process of creating local chapters: the Rabat chapter is on track. I would like

to seize this opportunity to wish the Rabat leading team and community good luck and assure them of our unwavering support. The stakes are clearly very high in the capital.

- We are developing the MAC website, which will represent for our members, our community at large as well as our partners, an important tool to network, access data and information, and communicate among themselves.
- This newsletter, "On the MAC Point", will be a periodic platform for news and exchanges, focused on short-term activities and on important issues. We would, of course, welcome suggestions and input for the next issues.
- In the process, we will organize a number of projects: social, business, education and community outreach, in cooperation with various partners, actively involving our constituents.

We will thoroughly contribute in different ways to strengthen Moroccan – American relations, with a concrete orientation towards building bridges between people, in the business world, in the universities, in the NGOs, etc. MAC's mission statement and today's program represent without a doubt a brick in the process of development, hence, for all of us a great challenge at the service of the country.

It is my ambition to mobilize, in a friendly atmosphere, all the energy, efforts and creativity of our community in this exciting endeavour. I thank you in advance for your commitment.

*Mousslim (Slim) Kabbaj, Ph. D.
 Mason Fellow, Harvard University*

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Tuesday, December 13**
MAC Rabat Chapter Steering Committee Elections
 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m..
Villa Mandarine
- **Wednesday, December 21**
MAC Roundtable Event
Topic: Valoriser les ressources humaines et les ascenseurs sociaux
Place: Hotel Sheraton, Casablanca
Chairmen: Mr. Abderrahim Benkirane and Mr. Slim Kabbaj
Sponsor: Sopriam (ONA)
Tentative speakers: Mr. Mikael Naciri, Mr. Omar Slaoui, Mr. Ali Belhaj, Mr. Karim Chraïbi, Mr. Mekki Zouaoui.
Time: 7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Reception to follow.

JANUARY 2006

- FTA Panel Discussion Event**
- Social Event**
- Book Club**

More information will follow shortly.

Meet the Board Members...



The new Board of Directors of MAC was elected at the General Assembly meeting held on October 26, 2005. The Board consists of three former members and four newly elected members.

Mouslime (Slim) Kabbaj



Mr. Kabbaj is INPG Doctor (France), Ph.D. from Laval University and was a Researcher CNR (Canada). He also holds an Executive

Masters Degree and is a Mason Fellow in management from Harvard University. Mr. Kabbaj managed large projects for public and private organizations on an international arena, including Morocco, France, Canada, and the USA. He is a specialist in leadership and communication, as well as a professional coach, from the Coaching Academy in Great Britain. Mr. Kabbaj is currently professor at Ecole Hassania des Travaux Publics. He is also co-owner and President of the scientific counsel of the Institut Supérieur de Formation et de Coaching (IS-Force).

John (Jack) Rusenko



Mr. John Rusenko is a graduate from Pennsylvania State University, with a Bachelor of Science Degree with Highest

Distinction, in Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering. He is currently the President of Global Education in Casablanca, Morocco, since 1992. He is responsible for the development, management, and coordination of educational, cultural, business, and sports exchanges between Morocco and North America. He is a founding member and International Liaison for the Moroccan Internet Society. Mr. Rusenko spearheaded other major projects, including the Semester at Sea program in Morocco. He created scholarship programs for 15 Moroccan students (total value of \$100,000). HRH Prince Moulay

Rachid visited this university ship in Casablanca, in December 1996. He was also part of the Mohamed VI Civil Aviation Academy partnership. More recently he is the founder of the George Washington Academy, 1998 – a trilingual American school, currently enrolling 516 students and 120 staff. 92 of the students are American citizens – the largest number of any American school in Morocco. Mr. Rusenko is also on the committee of the Casablanca/Chicago sister cities association and has been a scoutmaster for 9 years.

Why is MAC important to you?

MAC is important to me because I am an American living in Morocco and I believe that American education is not well known here. I would like more people to know the great opportunities of American education, and I enjoy spending time with people who have had the same experience as me. I also believe that U.S. alumni have a great deal to contribute to Morocco and I feel that we can be more effective working together.

Meryem Alaoui



Ms. Meryem Alaoui graduated with Honors from Boston University with a Bachelors Degree in 1996. She continued

her studies at Columbia University, where she graduated with a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering (in telecom). She graduated in 1998, and started working at Lucent Technologies as a Software Developer in Whippany, New Jersey. She is currently working at Meditelcom, and starting in January 2006, she will begin a new challenge in satellite communications at Orbcomm as Director of Operations.

Why is MAC important to you?

MAC is important to me because it brings together people with similar mindsets, interests and goals. Various events (cultural, educational, business-oriented) can help us introduce the best of the American culture and spread in our community the values that make the U.S. a leading country. I strongly believe that the kind of people MAC attracts have the talent, desire and means to build a solid bridge between Morocco and the U.S.

Mourad Mekouar



Mr. Mekouar is a graduate of Columbia University and San Diego State University, with a degree in Mechanical Eng. He has been active in

different fields since 1987 including: agricultural machinery, trade and distribution, IT consulting, air conditioning and home equipment distribution, games industry (i.e. loto, scratch). He is currently CEO of M2t, a full technical and commercial management company of a large (Moroccan criteria) sales points network offering On Line transaction processing services (i.e. bill payment, e top-up/ recharge, payment, loyalty).

Why is MAC important to you?

MAC is important to me on three levels:

- To diversify possible exchanges between Morocco and foreign countries, and to multiply experiences and have competitive exchanges (U.S. vs. EU mainly).
- I believe in the value added potential we can get from the United States.
- Local and U.S. networking, professionally and socially.

Said Slassi



Mr. Said Slassi was a Research Physicist from 1992 to 1999 at the Space Sciences Laboratory at the University of California,

Berkeley. He was responsible for the design and development of numerous scientific satellites for NASA and ESA. Said received a Ph.D in Astrophysics and Space Technologies from the Université Paul Sabatier in Toulouse. His research work led him to travel several times to Antarctica. He co-founded Maroc Connect where he oversaw the set up and the management of its infrastructure and services. Currently, Said is a Partner at Vista Ing in Casablanca, a consulting practice serving the business community in the design, the development and the management of custom made Information and Communication Systems. Said is a member of several professional associations including: the American Astronomical Society (AAS), the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE), and the Association des Professionnels des Technologies de l'Information (Apebi).

Why is MAC important to you?

In this emerging era, many people believe that the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural. Recent events on the international scene had a tendency to comfort these ideas of 'clash of civilisations', in particular between the Western and Muslim civilisations. I strongly believe that we all share the same fundamental values and the source for conflict is lack of information and tolerance. Thus, I think that MAC should contribute to building cultural bridges between civilisations by facilitating and reinforcing the exchanges between American and Moroccan people.

Mehdi Bennani



Mr. Mehdi Bennani graduated from University King Hassan II School of Law in Casablanca, in 1996. In 1998 he graduated from Harvard Law School (LL.M), in Boston, Massachusetts. He was admitted to the New York Bar in 2000, and he practiced in New York as an Attorney at Law first with the law firm of Curtis-Mallet, Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP and then with the law firm of Bryan Cave LLP, between 1998-2004. Since March 2004, he has been a Managing Partner of Bennani & Associates LLP, a law firm based off the U.S. model of law firms in Casablanca, Morocco. In addition, Mr. Bennani is a founding member of the Harvard Club of Morocco.

Why is MAC important to you?

I believe that MAC, through the diversity of its members and their respective achievements but also through the various events to be organized, will be a tremendous vehicle for spreading U.S. values in our community. Morocco has, for a long time, been influenced by the "French way of doing things" and I remain intimately convinced that economic globalization and its pragmatic implementation in Morocco would translate into the necessity, among other things, to have U.S. methodologies and understandings endorsed by a larger number of talented people in Morocco. MAC can be instrumental in doing so.

Magid Iraqui



Mr. Iraqui attended the Cambridge School in the U.K. during 1994. He graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Finance from Eastern Michigan University in 1998. He worked as a Financial Representative for New England Financial in Toledo, Ohio, a subsidiary of Metropolitan Life Insurance Corporation. In December 1999, Majid joined the CMS Energy group in Jackson, Michigan as a Junior Business Development Analyst. In 2001, he obtained a Master's Degree in International Business, Marketing, and Leadership from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He returned to Morocco as Business Development Manager and is currently the Finance Director of CMS Morocco Operating Company SCA and the Business Manager for the Jorf Lasfar Project.

Why is MAC important to you?

MAC represents the ideal forum for our fellow members to share their experiences, network, promote U.S. education and business practices, and to be the bridge between Morocco and the United States.



Comments and Reflections on MAC from American leaders...

- "...We in the United States owe a great deal to people like yourselves, people who have been educated in the United States, who have come to admire and respect the United States just as we have come to admire and respect your wonderful country..."
- "...I believe that the work you are about to embark upon will play an essential role in the development of the ties between our two countries..."

- "...We have a lot of ideas ...and a lot of talented individuals..."
- "...You all have experienced the intricacies, fallacies and opportunities of the United States. You have seen our weaknesses and our strengths. You know our people. You know our kindness. You know our humanitarianism, and you know your commitment to peace and stability in this region. And most of all, you know our commitment to you..."



MAC's Mission Statement

The primary objectives for which MAC has been created are:

- *To develop strong socio-economic and cultural networks.
- *To contribute to the development of economic, social and cultural exchanges between Morocco and the United States.
- *To strengthen and develop relationships between Moroccan and American universities.
- *To foster contacts facilitating a deeper mutual understanding of Moroccan and American communities.
- *To guide and assist returning Moroccan graduates of American educational institutions, and to increase American students' interests and opportunities in Morocco.
- *To participate in the creation and/or development of any group, and in the publication of any intellectual document coherent with the MAC goals and objectives.

**Message from
MAC's
Founding Fathers**



**Mr. Boubker Mazoz,
Dar America**

MAC was founded in 1982 by a small group of AFS exchange students and former graduates of American universities. At that time, we felt that the number of U.S. graduates and people with some American experiences was growing. We thought that this category of people had a lot of things in common: they speak English; they had the same type of education, they knew the American mentality, the American way of life, the American system of education, learned about the American culture, values and institutions, and therefore they should be grouped in an organized and legal structure. First, to share their knowledge with their countrymen and second, to better use their expertise and know-how in the benefit of their country.

We did succeed in our mission, to a certain extent and at certain times, we compiled a list of 700 graduates and some 100 other individuals who had undertaken professional activities in the U.S. We helped some Moroccan businessmen learn about American business mentality.

We organized round tables and dinner debates to discuss economic, cultural and sometimes political issues of interest to both countries: Morocco and the U.S. These round tables were animated by Moroccan and American experts, university professors, economists, politicians and diplomats. We accompanied the Moroccan handicapped athletes who participated in the Paralympics of Atlanta in 1996. We organized musical evenings annually. We organized sports activities. We had picnics the American way. Today, we are lucky to have some old members who still believe in the

goals of MAC, and fortunate to have new potential members, talented individuals, young and dynamic people, who will bring a fresh and new blood to our Association and will certainly better contribute to the development of our nation.

We are a force that could and should promote understanding, foster friendship ties and strengthen the economic, social and cultural bonds between the American and the Moroccan peoples, communities and nations.

I strongly believe that we are the right people with the best and necessary tools to make solid linkages between the American and Moroccan communities, institutions, and individuals. In a turmoil world that we live in today, we need to act quickly, participate actively and do what we could to help making it a better world.

Our country needs us and we need to serve it the best way we can.

Boubker Mazoz



**Mr. Brahim El Amiri,
Coca-Cola Export Corporation**

The launch of a newsletter by and for MAC members is another special occasion that fills my heart with joy and pride to have been one of the founders of MAC over 23 years ago.

Back in 1982, following numerous meetings at Dar America with Boubker Mazoz, who had actually initiated the process and done most of the work, and with the contribution of various friends, we had reached the idea of setting up a Moroccan-American association whose members could include both Moroccans with an American experience and Americans living in Morocco.

The association was to serve three main purposes:

- Help Moroccans who come back from the U.S. after having spent a year or more, in an American University or with AFS

(Exchange Program) readjust to life in Morocco, find jobs, set up a network with friends with similar experience and education.

- Give the American citizens living in Morocco an opportunity to know Moroccans who had an American experience and with whom they could communicate easily.
- Contribute to the development of understanding and mutual respect of the Moroccan American relationship.

Our effort was greatly rewarded by the interest and warm welcome that both members and non members expressed regarding our social, cultural and musical activities.

For many years, we had monthly activities which included "Art exhibits", conferences, debates, films and some unforgettable "Moroccan musical evenings" which were attended by hundreds, including U.S. Ambassadors and various Moroccan personalities.

Thanks to Slim Kabbaj and his team who have brought, over a year ago, a new breath and plenty of energy, talent and ideas to MAC, I have re-discovered the enthusiasm I had experienced during those years of "youth" of MAC. Initiatives such as the one taken by Asma Elkasmi and her team to set up a MAC section in Rabat reinforce my confidence and belief that MAC will surprise us in the near future with exceptional achievements.

MAC has grown and its members have also grown, both in number and in quality. The role of MAC should therefore also grow. Besides the social, cultural and networking activities which are essential to strengthen the ties between members, MAC should also find new ways to contribute to the development of the Moroccan economy, social welfare, justice and democracy.

Brahim El Amiri



The Board's 2 year program for MAC



The main suggested axes of development, which were adapted at the October General Assembly meeting, are the following:

- The consolidation of the Moroccan-American friendships and exchanges;
- The mobilization and reinforcement of valuable bonds in our community;
- The contribution of our community to Moroccan development.

Work as a board and in close connection with MAC active members on key projects:

- Contribution to the FTA implementation;
- Multiplication of Moroccan – U.S. exchanges;
- Better participation of MAC community in public and private leadership;
- Support of/and lobby for Moroccan alumni to find adapted positions and jobs;
- Dissemination of advanced ethics, values and know-how within and outside our community;
- Social solidarity;
- Mentoring Rabat chapter, Marrakech chapter, and others.

Specific key actions

- Open mic on the FTA and various alternative approaches;
- Possibly a think tank on barriers and opportunities related to the implementation of the FTA;
- Possibly a public conference on FTA with US and Moroccan speakers (decision makers and witnesses);
- Periodic networking social events: open mics, cinema and music events, activities for families, book club;

- Meetings and reflections on leadership, management, marketing, communication and other transverse issues;
- Job fair and other recruitment facilitations.

Partnerships

- Linkages with Moroccan associations in the U.S.;
- Partnership with U.S. NGOs in view of fighting against poverty and supporting education;
- Organize common activities with other institutions (i.e. AmCham, Dar America, and various alumni associations).



MAC Branches out to Rabat!

The Rabat chapter of the Moroccan American Circle (MAC) organized its first event, a *happy networking hour*, on Tuesday November 29th at the Hilton Hotel, in Rabat. The venue drew a very large and eclectic crowd, amongst them Moroccans who lived and worked in the U.S. for several years and decided to come back to Morocco and share their rich experiences. Others were returning graduates with U.S. university degrees who are eager to bring added value to their communities. A good number of U.S. diplomats as well as U.S. citizens living and working in Morocco attended the event and offered their support to MAC. The Rabat event turned out to be a much needed gathering of friends with common values and interests.

The evening started in a networking atmosphere with friends introducing themselves to one another and exchanging business cards. Asma El Kasmi then took the microphone and introduced the instigating group who has been working during the past few months in order to make MAC Rabat happen. Brahim El Amiri, a founding “brother” and previous MAC president then welcomed everybody as he spoke about how proud he was to see MAC branching out to the capital city. Slim Kabbaj, current MAC president, laid down his vision for making MAC a bridge between

Morocco and the U.S. He reiterated the importance of the presence of regional chapters of MAC such as the one in Rabat and that he was looking forward to seeing other regional chapters take off. Slim reminded the attendees that this first Rabat event was only the beginning of many good things to come. He mentioned the significance of the next meeting that would take place on December 13th in Rabat to vote for the regional committee.

*Asma El Kasmi &
Ryad Mouline
Rabat*

Useful Links

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<http://www.maec.gov.ma>

U.S. Foreign Commercial Service
<http://www.export.gov/middleeast>

U.S. Embassy in Rabat
<http://www.usembassy.ma>

US Consulate General
<http://www.rabat.usembassy.gov/services/consular/consular.htm>

American Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.amcham-morocco.com>

USAID in Morocco
<http://www.usaid.gov/ma/>

Dar America
<http://www.usembassy.ma/usmission/pas/irc/daramerica.htm>

Global Education in Morocco
<http://www.globaled.us>

Fulbright Commission
<http://www.aui.ma/macece>

AMIDEAST
<http://www.amideast.org>

George Washington Academy
<http://www.gwa.ac.ma>

Casablanca American School
<http://www.cas.ac.ma>

Rabat American School
<http://www.ras.edu.ac.ma>

Tanger American School
<http://www.as-t.org/>

JOIN MAC TODAY!

Membership Information

Become a new member or renew your membership:

Active Membership

An active member shall be:

- Any Moroccan citizen with a U.S. University degree.
- Any Moroccan citizen who was engaged in a professional activity in the USA for at least one year without interruption.
- Any American citizen presently living or planning to live in Morocco for at least one year without interruption.

Associate Membership

For those individuals who display an interest in MAC and its goals, and meet two of the following criteria:

- Proficiency in English.
- Holding an Anglo Saxon degree.
- Having had professional experience in an Anglo Saxon country, in either public or private sectors or civil society.

All applications are subject to Board approval.

Annual Membership Fee: 200 DH

Join today! You may send your payment as a check, made payable to "Moroccan American Circle," and return it by post or messenger to Attn: IS-Force, Casablanca Technopark, Route de Nouaceur, Angle RS114 & CT1029, Maroc, or by hand at any of the upcoming MAC events.



MAC's Website will be launched soon... Stay tuned!



Talking about the FTA...

MAC will begin to host and organize a series of events in light of the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the United States and Morocco. These projects will be spearheaded by our Board Members, Mr. Mourad Mekouar and Mr. Mehdi Bennani. You may contact them directly if you are interested in participating in any of these events or if you have suggestions and comments on this topic.



LE SITE WEB DE L'ACCORD DE LIBRE-ECHANGE MAROC/ETATS UNIS



The U.S./Morocco FTA web site:
www.moroccousafta.com

Le site web de l'accord de libre-échange Etats Unis/Maroc: www.moroccousafta.com/fr/index_fr.htm



Your suggestions are welcome!

Email us at our temporary email address at info@is-force.ma with your ideas and suggestions on the events and projects you would like to endorse in the future in these areas:

Social events

Community outreach

Business

Education

Culture

Follow Up from the Open Mic Event on November 16, 2005



Important highlights from the open mic meeting:

- Market Morocco and our association in the U.S.
- Create real and virtual (forums on the web site) communities of interests (i.e. social, business, environment, health, education).
- Collaborate with AMCHAM and other associations sharing the same goals as MAC.
- Build credibility by recruiting high caliber members and gain visibility by organizing or participating in events (i.e. cultural, social activities, week-end projects, education.)
- Give benefits to members in order to attract them (i.e. events, discounts, newsletter).
- Organize a fund raising event (i.e. casino night).



MAC congratulates Ms. Soraya Sebti Kettani and Mr. Ali Kettani on the birth of their new baby girl!

We are happy to announce that Ms. Soraya Sebti and Mr. Ali Kettani, former Board members and long-time friends and strong supporters of MAC, are the proud parents of a new healthy baby girl, **KYANE MAYA KETTANI**, born on Saturday, December 3, 2005. We send them our best wishes for the birth of their baby girl!



WITH LOVE !!!