

## **JACKSONVILLE**

Correspondent: Julia Farhat

### **Weddings**

Lee-Catherine Yasmeen to Deno Anthony Hicks. Their proud parents are Mr. and Mrs. Charlie and Susan Bateh, and Mr. and Mrs. Tony and Kathryn Hicks.

Hattie Nichole to Elias Ramzi Salameh. Their proud parents are Mr. and Mrs. Ramzi and Poline Salameh, and Mr. and Mrs. Randy and Pam Carter.

Congratulations to the Newlyweds!

### **Graduations**

Elizabeth Alexis Farhat, daughter of Mr. Joseph & Diana Farhat graduated from Florida Coastal School of Law with Honors; passed the Florida Bar Exam and was sworn in as an Attorney. She will be joining her mother's practice, which will now be doing business as Farhat & Farhat in Jacksonville, Florida.



Jamie Katherine Farhat, daughter of the late Farhat Farhat and granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ziadeh Farhat, graduated with a bachelor's in Sociology/Psychology at Florida State University in Jacksonville, Florida. She plans to pursue a Masters in Counseling Psychology.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries**



Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Mary Farah Abboud celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011. They will celebrate with their children and grandchildren at a family vacation in Wyoming in August of 2012. They have two children, Dawn Abboud Shelley, of Spotsylvania, VA and Scott Abboud, married to Julie, of Alpharetta, GA. They have four grandchildren: Andrew, Caroline, Samantha and Steven. Mary is the daughter Mrs. Bahia Farah and the late Ziadeh Elias. Congratulations to Tom and Mary.



Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Isa and Muna Farhud of Jacksonville, Fl., who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on January 14. They have 4 daughters, Munisa (Jimmy), Julie (Jim), Paula (Robert) and Angela (Peter) and 10 grandchildren, Natalie, Amanda, Matthew, Brandon, Blake, Brett, Kelly, Erika, Alex and Emily. May God bless them with many more healthy and happy years together.

### **Club News**



The Hanania Automobile Family of Dealerships which consists of Acura, Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Hyundai, Fiat, Honda and Audi, presented a visit by Jacksonville Jaguars star running back Maurice Jones-Drew at the Ramallah Club on Sunday January 15th, prior to our general assembly meeting. Maurice is a three-time Pro-Bowler - most recently selected to the 2011 Pro-Bowl - and was the NFL's leading rusher for the 2011 season. Maurice shared his inspiring life story from growing up in Oakland, California to becoming the heart of the Jacksonville Jaguars. He allowed time for questions as well as taking pictures and signing autographs. There was a huge turnout and everyone had a wonderful time. Many thanks go out to Jack Hanania, and President Ronie Rukab for organizing the event. (From Left to Right: Ronie Rukab, Nader Farhat, Maurice Jones-Drew, Mark Hanania, Jack Hanania JR, Debbie Hanania and Jack Hanania)

### **RBPN News**

#### **Youth Club News**

A Youth Club party was held at Mrs. Sireen Bateh's house on Friday night, December 9<sup>th</sup>. It was a huge success full of great friends, food and fellowship. Approximately 35 youth members and their parents attended. The youth participated in a Chinese Christmas gift exchange while the parents contributed an appetizer or dessert. Huge thanks go out to Mrs. Sireen Bateh and Mrs. Lisa Ghanayem for hosting the party.



On Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 47 Youth Club members took a day trip to Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. Everyone had a great time! Huge thanks go out to the following chaperones: Lorraine Bateh, Shereen Bateh, Ghada Batteh, Hanya Farah, Marian Bateh Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Osterhoudt, Alexis Osterhoudt, Noel Ridsdale and Paula Rukab.

### **Church News**

**Congratulations to all of the Officers and may God Bless them for a successful year.**



The St. George Orthodox Teen SOYO participated in a lock-in on Friday November 18<sup>th</sup>. The night consisted of fun, fellowship, and workshops about the Church and its' teachings. Everyone had an enriching and fun night! A special thanks goes out to all those who donated breakfast, and especially to the advisors Andrew Anthony, Eric Bateh and Poline Salameh. In addition, in an effort to give thanks and help the needy, the St George Fellowship of St John the Divine held a community garage sale the next day to raise money and to donate leftover items to the Jacksonville Humane Society. A special thanks goes out to those who donated goods and to the members of the fellowship for coordinating the garage sale.

On Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> the ladies auxiliary hosted a fish luncheon. Approximately 150 plates were sold and everyone had a wonderful time. Special thanks go out to Hiyam Odeh and Zareefeh Hanania.

On Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> the St George Youth Group was awarded an end of the year trip to the Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida to celebrate the Birth of our Lord by attending "Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party." Parents and other church members attended and the evening was filled with joy and gladness as we all stepped into a Kingdom known as "the best place on Earth."

On Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, a Blood Drive was hosted. Many units were collected. Huge thanks go out to Nadeem Tannous for organizing it and the community for donating the gift of life.



On Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup> approximately 30 ladies and Father Kamal took a day trip to Tarpon Springs to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany and the Great Sanctification of Water. Everyone had a wonderful time. A huge thank you goes out to Mrs. Abla Essa Bateh for coordinating the trip.

### **Sympathy**

The Jacksonville Community extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to the following families:

The Farhat and Akel families for the passing of Albert Abdullah Farhat.

The Hassan family for the passing of George Hassan Sr.

The Salem family for the passing of Mrs. Farideh Boulos Salem.

May their memories be eternal.



**George Hassan SR**  
**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944 – December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011**

George Salem Hassan SR passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family on December 22, 2011. He was born in Ramallah, Palestine on October 15, 1944 and immigrated to America in 1956. He committed his love to his wife, Cecil, of 42 years on a great day in history when Neil Armstrong first landed on the moon. He was a devoted husband, father; grandfather, brother, uncle and friend. He worked tirelessly his entire life to provide for his loving family. George is predeceased by his father Salem, mother Subha and sister Siham. He leaves behind his wife Cecile, son George, Jr. (Ceci); daughters Daune (Sam), Adrienne (Frank), Laila (Mark) and Angie (Anthony); brother Fred (Ann); sisters Sue and Samyia (Essa); grandchildren Said Jordan, Brittany, Ciara, Nicholas, Gabriella, Hannah, Khalil Carson, Ava, Lucas, Heidi, Caitlyn and Oliver; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Mrs. May Cadoura Mardini born August 24, 1940 and passed away on October 12, 2011

The passing of a mother is the first sorrow wept without her. Throughout our lives we experience tribulations that seem almost too heavy to bear. We look for the comfort and guidance of our mothers to shed a light on our worries and to even help carry the burden that lies in our hearts. Throughout her whole life, Tata May has been that guide for her family. She was not only a mother to her four beautiful daughters, but to those who call her their sister, their aunt, Tata, and friend. Now the time has come where our hearts, heavy with grief, will have to seek solace without her bright smile, her wise advice, and her comforting words.

I stand before you tonight to speak about a woman that is the embodiment of grace and class, a woman that I am privileged to call my grandmother, my beautiful Tata May.

Tata was born August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1940 to Khalil and Yasmine Cadoura in Ramallah, Palestine. As a young girl, she was a very quiet child who excelled in school. She was very well versed in the traditional Arabic language and spoke and read it like a scholar. She loved hunting with her father, being a member of the Ramallah Girl scouts, and playing marbles with her sisters and her cousin Karim, who by the way she always beat. She also loved working with her father, Sedo Khalil, in his photography studio which he named after her, Studio May, and always made sure to have the newest and best camera available. As she grew older, her graceful beauty became more evident, as she was a runner up in the Miss Ramallah pageant and chosen to be a model in a local magazine. Of all those who admired her intelligence and beauty, there was only one man who captured her heart. My sido Zohair. When she left Ramallah, to begin a new life here in Jacksonville, she carried her passion of her beloved Palestine across the Atlantic with her. She became an advocate for peace, and was once a participant in a demonstration in front of the White House. Her heart bled for her country, and once on a visit back to Palestine she opened the door of her taxi and called the young boys on the street over, she gathered rocks from the rubble, and handed them each one to throw. She was as passionate as she was reserved.

In my eyes, there is nothing that Tata couldn't do. While running a household and raising four girls, she still managed to be a successful businesswoman by opening and operating Hala Café with Sido. She also served her community as the Ramallah Club recording secretary, and later worked as an Arabic translator at the Mayo Clinic. They say that life is a book and those who don't travel only read but a page. Tata has read that book from cover to cover. I can only hope to travel half of the places she has been, and to see the things that she has seen. She always loved to travel, and collected a charm from every place she went. I remember looking at her charm bracelet and asking her where each was from. Her and sido drove from here to California, and took a plane ride over the Grand Canyon. From Greece, to Alaska, London to Paris and taking the euro rail to Switzerland. Eastern Europe, turkey, and everywhere in between. She said that nothing made her happier than landing in Amman, traveling back to Ramallah, and upon her returns would always say, fishi zay hawa lel blad.

But no matter where Tata traveled, her heart was always in Jacksonville with her family. She was so lucky to be surrounded by her mother, Tata Yasmine, the rock of our family, and her seven loud, funny, and dare I say crazy sisters. Upcoming holidays or Sunday dinners made her the happiest. She spent the whole day preparing food, but still managed to be dressed to perfection, and always had her nails painted the color that I will now call, Tata May red. Our days with Tata were full of laughter, and her famous "laugh attacks". Where she couldn't stop laughing if she tried. Of course I have to mention the Dr. Mario incident, where Tata became so obsessed with a Nintendo game, that she would throw the controllers behind the curio, so she couldn't get to them, and then would later have my brother, Ansar, retrieve them for her when she wanted to play again. Her fun loving attitude, and her passion for family, made her, in my eyes, the perfect wife, mother, and friend anyone could hope for.

To you, Tata.

God has decided that it is your time to leave us. I often find myself trying to swallow the pain that is stuck in my throat when I think of living our lives without you here. To hold our faces in your hands with the familiar sound of your gold bracelets as you squeeze us just a LITTLE too hard. To hear you say AIWA when we ring the doorbell; or give us a smile and an ahlu sahla when we walk into the room. I can't help but smile when I think about everything that you have taught us, even if it is something as simple as picking our feet up when we walk, never gossip, thinking before we speak, or to never paint our nails at Tata's dining room table. Whenever our mom's said that we weren't sick enough to leave school, we would call you. You would be there in a second in your silver Toyota, tapping your fingers on the steering wheel to your arabi cassette tapes. There was nothing better than coming to our second home and sitting in the big den with you in the afternoon or standing around your tunjara of the world's best warak di wali, waiting for a taste. You put your all into everything you did for us Tata. You never missed a recital, a Gymboree class or a grandparents day. It will be hard to walk into your house, and know that you won't be there, but I will always think of you Tata. When I look at your grapefruit trees, when I sit in your spot on the couch. When I hug Yasmine, Ava, and Ana or when I hear a Wael Kfoury song, I will remember a few weeks ago, when even though you weren't feeling well, you stopped in your tracks to snap your fingers and dance as I played one of his songs for you. As hard as it is for me to accept, I can do nothing but thank you for what you have been for us. A beautiful daughter, a loving wife, a wonderful mother, and the best Tata anyone could have asked for. Many people say that it takes a village to raise a child, but I believe that what it really takes is someone like you. You always told me when I was little that I was your queen and I argued with you Tata and said no I want to be a princess, you can be the queen. Now I realize how right I was. You are our queen: the queen of our hearts. We have all been so privileged to have you in our lives; I can only hope that the day will come when we will see you again. I love you.