



# Layalina Productions

Quarterly Newsletter / Winter 2007

## On the Road In Post-production

We are pleased to announce that we wrapped production of the 12 episode first season of our reality travelogue series, *Ala al-Tariq fy Amrika* (On the Road in America). On the Road is produced in association with Visionaire Media of Los Angeles and made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation of Indiana. We have delivered the first 6 episodes to our regional licensee, Middle East Broadcasting Center Group (MBC), the Arab world's leading satellite television broadcaster. The second installment of 6 episodes is currently being edited and will be delivered to MBC in mid-February. The show is slated to air in primetime early next year on MBC. We continue to pursue a domestic broadcaster through our distribution agreement with New Line Television to augment our cash flow.

When we last wrote, our young stars, Mohamed, Sanad and Ali were halfway through their 6000 mile journey across the United States and had just left Montana for California. Their first stop in the Golden State was Los Angeles where they attended a pre-E Emmy party, took a VIP tour of Universal Studios and visited film sets. They met Rachel Bilson, who plays "Summer" on the hit TV



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## Layalina Welcomes Director Cutler



Courtesy of Meridian Center

Ambassador Walter L. Cutler was elected to Layalina's Board of Directors in September. In addition to a long and distinguished career in the Foreign Service, Cutler served for seventeen years as the President of Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Cutler was twice ambassador to Saudi Arabia, ambassador to Tunisia and Zaire, and was ambassador-designate to Khomeini's Iran before diplomatic relations were broken. In addition to a previous assignment to Iran, he served in Algeria, Cameroon, Korea, and Vietnam. He was also Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, and Staff Assistant to the Secretary of State.

Cutler states, "Having spent many of my Foreign Service years in the Middle East, and having subsequently directed an organization dedicated to promoting global understanding, I am keenly aware of the continuing -- indeed, the growing -- need for greater dialogue between the United States and the Arab world. Thanks to today's technology, the opportunities for meeting this need are growing, as well. As a private-sector, not-for-profit initiative, Layalina is playing a credible, creative role in strengthening the mutual understanding, respect and trust that are so essential for resolving the many problems and challenges of our times. I am very pleased to be a part of this important effort."

Ambassador Cutler is a Senior Advisor to the Trust Company of the West. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Diplomacy, and the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs. He regularly visits Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Ambassador Cutler is a graduate of Wesleyan University and holds an M.A. from the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy.

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# Chairman's Message

Dear friends,

I am delighted to welcome Ambassador Walter Cutler to our Board of Directors. I look forward to his counsel and advice as we pursue our vision of increasing effective communication between our country and the region.

I am also delighted to inform you that we have concluded production of the first season of *On the Road in America* and are now hard at work on editing. Since I last wrote to you, I traveled to Dubai for meetings with senior Arab satellite television executives. My interlocutors were excited to hear about the various shows in our production pipeline, including *The Hour*, our proposed news magazine program, and are eager to air our offerings once we raise the necessary funds to complete them.

I also attended the Monaco Media Forum, where I met with leading media executives from around the globe and discussed issues relevant to the industry.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe and warm holiday season. We hope that as the end of the tax year approaches, you would consider making a tax-deductible donation to Layalina to help us continue the momentum we have gathered into the New Year.

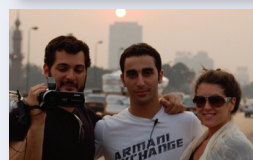
Thank you in advance for your help.

With kind regards,



Richard Fairbanks  
Chairman of the Board

## On the Road



(continued from cover) show *The OC* and visited the Laugh Factory where they took part in discussions with eight Jewish-American and Arab-American comedians, followed by performances by the comics.

The cast also met with Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, and learned about his successful efforts to aid in the rehabilitation of gang members and ex-convicts through providing counseling, education and employment training services. The boys then met with a California Superior Court judge. They also visited King Fahad Mosque in Culver City and engaged in a discussion about what it means to be Arab in post-September 11 America.

From L.A., Mohamed, Sanad and Ali drove up the coast to Big Sur to appear in a conference on U.S.-Arab initiatives hosted by the Esalen Institute. The two day conference was open to the community and attended widely. Panel moderators consisted of accomplished public diplomacy

practitioners, including Mrs. Anisa Mehdi, an Arab-American filmmaker. From Big Sur, the boys continued their drive North and visited the Bay Area where they got a preview of upcoming video games during a stop at Electronic Arts. The cast then toured San Francisco and summed up their experiences in the United States during exit interviews before flying back to their respective countries.

In keeping with the cross-cultural nature of the series, we filmed the last two episodes of the show in the Arab world. Five Americans that the Arab students met during their trip throughout the United States, including film crew members, visited the students. Each cast member served as tour guide to his culture and country. Thus, the Americans visited Ali in Egypt, and spent the Eid al-Fitr holiday celebrating the end of the month of Ramadan in Alexandria. Back in Cairo, Ali's family and friends reflected on how he had changed since the trip, and shared their perceptions of the United States in a





heated discussion. Ali met with American students studying in Cairo to talk to them about his experiences in the U.S., and took his guests on a tour of the pyramids, the Nile, and the Al-Azhar mosque.

After their stay in Egypt, the American visitors traveled to Lebanon to see Mohamed. They spent time at the American University of Beirut, where Mohamed conducts his brain cancer research, and met Mohamed's friends to learn about how his feelings towards Americans have changed following his two month long visit to the U.S. Mohamed also took his visitors to Shatila, the Palestinian refugee camp, where he used to volunteer in a health clinic. Finally, Mohamed took his guests on a tour of Dahia, the Beirut suburb, where they witnessed the damages from the war between Israel and Hezbollah last summer.

Following their stint in the Levant, the crew headed for the Arabian Gulf. Sanad, the Saudi student who attends the

American University in Dubai, took his American guests skiing at Ski Dubai and on a desert safari, where tradition and modernity mixed as the group rode all terrain vehicles, camels, and watched a belly dancing performance. Sanad shared his reflections on his trip to the U.S., and his friends shared their thoughts on how he has changed since returning to Dubai. Regional photography concluded in early November with interviews of the visiting Americans on their experiences in Egypt, Lebanon and Dubai.

We look forward to the series helping break stereotypes about "the Other" both in the Arab world and in the U.S., as Arab audiences vicariously discover the United States through the experiences of the Arab students' road trip. Conversely, potential U.S. audiences will learn about Arab cultures and aspirations from the visit of the Americans to the Middle East.





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## Programming Update: *Al-Sa'at* (The Hour)



*Al-Sa'at* (The Hour), Layalina's proposed newsmagazine series has gained positive momentum. Al-Arabiya, the popular news-channel that is making serious inroads into controversial Al-Jazeera's lead in some Arab countries, is strongly interested in the series. Layalina Counselor Don Hewitt will travel to Al-Arabiya's headquarters in Dubai in late January for a week long series of meetings with

senior Al-Arabiya executives and editors. The goal of the meetings is to flesh out the concept of the show and discuss capacity building for this genre of programming.

Mr. Hewitt will be accompanied by Layalina President Ambassador Marc Ginsberg and hosted by Dr. Nabil Khattib, Executive Editor of Al-Arabiya. We are thrilled at the opportunity to introduce serious investigative journalism to television audiences in the Arab world. We look forward to your tax-deductible financial assistance to bring this vital project to fruition.

## Monaco Media Forum

Layalina's Chairman, Ambassador Richard Fairbanks attended the invitation-only Monaco Media Forum which took place October 19-21 in Monte Carlo and was chaired by HSH Prince Albert II, ruler of Monaco. The Forum was co-chaired



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by HRH Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal and Mr. Bob Wright, Chairman of NBC Universal. The French advertising conglomerate Publicis organized the event. The Forum seeks to offer a unique platform where leaders of the media world can convene to share their experiences and ideas to face challenges more effectively. Panel discussion topics included advertising, new media and media in the Middle East.

Ambassador Fairbanks also conducted fruitful meetings with Arab media executives on the edges of the Forum to discuss recent developments in transnational Arab media, as well as to introduce participants to Layalina's mission and programming lineup.

The Quarterly Newsletter is published by Layalina Productions, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit, private sector corporation dedicated to bridging the growing divide between the Arab world and the United States through effective television programming. To be placed on our mailing list, contact us at [information@layalina.tv](mailto:information@layalina.tv).

Support Layalina by making a tax-deductible donation online at [www.layalina.tv](http://www.layalina.tv) or by contacting us at 202-775-3202.