MESSAGE FROM THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

THE PASSING OF MR ABU'L-QASIM AFNAN

We were deeply grieved to learn of the passing of Abu'l-Qasim Afnan, kinsman of the Blessed Báb, who will be remembered as a valiant promoter and defender of the Cause. His long record of distinguished service included devoted custodianship, for more than three decades, of the House of the Báb in Shiraz; membership on the Spiritual Assembly of that same city; appointment as an Auxiliary Board member in the Cradle of the Faith; and valued contributions in the field of Bahá'í scholarship through the articles and treatises he authored on the early history of the Faith.

We are offering fervent prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of his steadfast, noble soul in all the worlds of God and for the solace of the hearts of his beloved wife, Minu, and his cherished daughters, Maryam and Laleh, and their families.

The Universal House of Justice
FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Dearly loved Friends

The National Spiritual Assembly regrets to announce the passing yesterday morning, 22 October 2004, in Swindon of Mr Abu'l-Qasim Afnan.

The National Assembly recalls with deep admiration and great respect Mr Afnan’s long record of distinguished and illustrious service to the Cause of God which included his Custodianship of the House of the Báb in Shiraz.

The National Spiritual Assembly conveys its loving sympathies to the family of Mr Afnan and will pray for the progress of his noble soul in all the worlds of God.

With loving Bahá’í greetings
National Spiritual Assembly

Kishan Manocha
Assistant Secretary

HOLY DAY MESSAGE FROM HOME SECRETARY

The National Spiritual Assembly is very happy to inform the friends that a letter of greetings has been received from the Home Secretary David Blunkett MP, addressed to all the Bahá’ís on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Birthday of the Báb.

I would like to extend my best wishes to yourself and all members of the Baha’i faith on the Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb on 20th October.
Best Wishes
David Blunkett

BAHÁ’Í COUNCIL FOR WALES

WALES INSTITUTIONAL GATHERING 2ND OCTOBER 2004

Attendees at Wales’ Institutional Gathering where uplifted by the presence and contributions of Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi and National Spiritual Assembly representatives Kishan Manocha, Pete Hulme and Rita Bartlett.

Representatives from Wales’ priority clusters, South East Wales and West Glamorgan, shared their successes in increasing fivefold the number of friends who had completed each of books 3 through to 7 in 8 months. Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi commented that it was the ‘Most dramatic growth in institute process she has ever seen...through the love and devotion of the believers and institutions in Wales’. Pyramids which looked like drawing pins now looked like pyramids. The increase of the community of interest had increased by 100% in addition to smaller increases in the number of devotional meetings and children’s classes.

During the planning session representatives from South East Wales decided to increase their community of interest from 30 to 50 by January and to 75 by Ridvan. The Cluster was also committed to keeping the momentum underway in the institute process by planning to increase the number of book 7 graduates from 9 over 30 by Ridvan. The cluster had also increased growth form 1 to 4 declaration in the year. These plans will be put to the Cluster Reflection Meeting on 17th October for consultation. In light of reviewing the progress in the South East Wales cluster the Council in its meeting of 3rd October decided that it meets the criteria for a B category cluster.

The Council is very pleased with the work the Welsh Training Institute Board, its co-ordinators, facilitators and of course the attendees of the Ruhi books for making this advance in the institute process possible. The Council is happy to see other core activities multiply and urges the friends throughout Wales to redouble their efforts in these last 19 months of the 5 Year Plan.

Loving Bahá’í greetings
Bahá’í Council for Wales

TRAINING INSTITUTE BOARD FOR ENGLAND

AT LIVERPOOL BAHÁ’Í CENTRE
Book 4 Mon 22nd Nov to Sun 28th Nov
Book 6 Mon 22nd Nov to Sun 28th Nov
Book 5 Mon 27th Dec to Sun 2nd Jan
Book 7 Mon 27th Dec to Sun 2nd Jan

To register for Liverpool, contact Nava Hinrichs nava.hinrichs@kcl.ac.uk 07773 986184

AT CRANMORE TOWER, SOMERSET
Book 6 Tue 14th Dec to Mon 20th Dec
Book 1 Wed 22nd Dec to Sun 26th December
Book 7 Mon 27th Dec to Sun 2nd Jan

To register for Cranmore, contact Viv Craig viv@vivcraig.freeserve.co.uk 01275 846227
OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
PRESS LEAD FOR CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH 12TH NOVEMBER

The suggested press release given here is short and basic - it can be added to or modified as you wish for your local media. You will see we have suggested putting some of it as reported speech by a local community member: the press like this sort of personal touch but of course it is up to you how you use the material and you will want to make sure that anyone named is happy about this. We also suggest submitting it before the event, as news that is going to happen. Please do not miss this chance to share with the people of your area information about the Faith.

Example of text:

BAHÁ’IS CELEBRATE FOUNDER’S BIRTH

November 12 is one of the most important days of the year for the (local town) members of the Baha’i Faith. On this date in 1817, the founder of their religion was born.

Baha’u’llah - meaning "Glory of God" - was born into a wealthy and noble family in Persia, and seemed set for a career as a courtier. But instead he devoted himself from an early age to helping the poor and needy. He saw how vital social justice and religious reform were, but the Persian authorities became fearful of his influence at a time when they were trying to hold back change in their country. Baha’u’llah was banished.

He spent the last forty years of his earthly life as a prisoner and exile, but it was during these years that he gained an ever increasing following. His teachings were then gradually spread worldwide. He passed away in 1892, and his tomb near Acre, in the Holy Land, is now a beautiful place of pilgrimage visited by people from all over the world.

"We see this anniversary as a happy time," said local Baha’i (name), "not just to remember the birth of Baha’u’llah, who we believe is God’s Messenger for today, but to give thanks for his life and teachings."

(Locality)’s Baha’is will mark this special occasion with (give information of local activities for the Holy Day).

COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL PIONEERING AND TRAVEL TEACHING

BANANI SCHOOL, ZAMBIA, NEEDS DORM PARENT

Banani School, Zambia, needs a dorm parent as soon as possible, ideally to arrive mid-December. It requires a mature single female, willing to come for minimum 1 year, preferably longer. Possibility of a longer term position in the future.

The person appointed would be provided with a small one bedroomed apartment within the senior dorm block. During term time the position calls for the dorm parent to be on duty 6 days a week, and even when not on duty there is no escaping the noise level of 50 teenage girls before lights out at 10 pm. There is an early morning start. However the school holidays are mostly free and certainly much quieter. During the day there would be time off, though some part time teaching or other duties would be included depending on the skills of the person appointed.

Banani International Secondary School for Girls is situated on a campus 80 km from the town of Lusaka, facilities include free e-mail and web access and a swimming pool.

The following are the most important requirements for the position:

*A dedicated Bahá’í who upholds the laws of Bahá’u’lláh in her daily life (the person is under constant scrutiny from the students).
*Able to exert authority over teenage girls in a firm loving manner.
*Emotionally self reliant. Someone who can give comfort and encouragement and not need to receive it, (except in exceptional circumstances).
*Although a qualified nurse is employed, ability to deal with minor complaints and assess if they require medical attention, would be useful.
*Most importantly, to be a role model for non Bahá’í teenage girls, to dispense wise advice, and be a support should the need arise.

Contact CIPTT secretary.ciptt@bahai.org.uk, and Banani Matron mrouhani@banani.sch.zm

For more info on Banani and other openings see the CIPTT website www.bahai.org.uk/pioneers. If you don't know the password please contact icouldtravel@hotmail.com

APPEAL FROM THE BAHÁ’Í COMMUNITY OF MONACO

Dear Friends,

I’m writing this letter with my heart full of hope. These last few months our community has experienced moments of great emotion when our hearts have vibrated, many tears have been shed, the power of divine assistance has been so present as to be tangible, moments that we ourselves never thought possible.
The community of Monaco, daughter of the Ten Year Crusade, has celebrated her half century of life. But after the Jubilee one of our pioneers has left and the second will leave at the end of December. In January 05 there will be only 6 of us because the seventh person isn't in good health. We aren't just a "weak" assembly. We are disappearing off the Bahá’í world map.

While I'm writing, I'm thinking of the Guardian who cried every time that the light of an assembly went out. Here, ours isn't a metropolitan local assembly, but it's the assembly of a whole country, a "micro" state. Must this country be erased from that map? Can we really allow this country to be set aside? Can we forget all the work and energy that have been exerted? Can we turn our backs on the five Knights of Bahá’u’lláh, the first of whom was Madame Nellie French who was 85 years old when she first arrived here?

Monaco tops the list of the Continental Board of Counsellors’ priorities for Europe. During the celebration of our Jubilee, appeals were made by diverse Institutions and by Mr. Nakhjavani who was among the speakers and who personally supported this appeal.

From the National Spiritual Assembly of France: "The two latest pioneers of Monaco have accepted the challenge with devotion. May their example be followed, may this Conference resemble that of Wilmette in 1953 and awaken the vocation of pioneering. Monaco urgently needs them."

From the Secretary of the Continental Board of Counsellors: "We wish to affirm that the consolidation of the community of Monaco remains a priority in Europe and, for every Bahá’í the geographical teaching objective mentioned by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi remains unchanged. We also wish to launch a warm appeal to all the European communities so that with a courageous implementation of the processes of the Five Year Plan they can help in the growth of the Cause of God in Monaco."

And finally extracts from Mr. Ali Nakhjavani's speech: "...the native population of Monaco is only 6000 people. One per cent of that is 60, and two per cent is 120. That's right, isn't it? This means, dear friends, that while we are speaking, there are in this country, in this Principality, a minimum of 60 people who are searching for the truth, who are searching for Bahá’u’lláh. And as for us, where are we? Where are we? Today, I've heard some appeals, many times, and naturally I support all the appeals to have some pioneers in Monaco. Certainly, the Assembly is weak, there are eight and a half members and if we lose this local assembly, an assembly which should become a National Assembly according to Shoghi Effendi what must we do? How will we answer to Bahá’u’lláh when we stand before Him?" I see nothing more to add. These speakers have launched appeals, I'm launching a cry. Who will come and help us and support us? Monaco is a pleasant country from all points of view. The only inconvenience is the price of rentals, certainly high, but less than those of London. We need a couple of pioneers and if they have children it would be a blessing upon blessings. It must be a solid couple who know the Faith well, who can help consolidate and expand the community. Although French, English and Italian are spoken here, it is important that future pioneers know French. People of any nationality can settle in the Principality the moment they can prove to have financial means to live.

Paulette Bodansen, for LSA Monaco

If you can arise to serve in this Top Priority region please contact CIPTT Monaco Liaison pbellamy999@hotmail.com

Pilgrimage Tours

12th to 19th February 2005, one week pilgrimage tour to Haifa. full board 580.00.

27th May to 3rd June 2005, one week pilgrimage tour to Turkey. Full board 590.00.

For more information please contact Mrs. Alaee 0208-361 8102

To make submissions for the News Digest please send

Electronically to bmnd@bahai.org.uk

Or in hard copy to

“Bahá’í Monthly News Digest”
27 Rutland Gate,
London
SW7 1PD
CONTACT DETAILS OF THE CONTINENTAL COUNSELLOR AND AUXILIARY BOARD
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The ABS-ESE Religious Studies seminar will last from Friday 10 December 2004 (6pm) to Sunday 12 December 2004 (5pm). During these 2-3 days academic papers will be presented and discussed. Sessions on libraries, book collecting and publishing will also be held.

**Venue:**
Bahá'í Centre, 30 Victoria Square, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne

**Travel:**
Newcastle is easy to reach from London: it is a one hour plane flight; a 3-hour train journey -- there are frequent trains from King's Cross -- and an approximately 5-hour bus trip from London. Easyjet now flies to Newcastle: [http://easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)

**Accommodation:**
NOTE: IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO BOOK ACCOMMODATION EARLY.
Newcastle has become a highly popular tourist destination and rooms during the weekend of the seminar are already filling up! Please make arrangements as soon as possible.

Bed & Breakfast accommodation in Newcastle is plentiful and not too expensive. The "Jesmond Park Hotel" for example, (quite close to the venue) provides reasonable B&B accommodation starting at around 26 per night (74-76 Queens Rd. Jesmond, Newcastle Tel. +44 [0]191 2812821). See their website at: [http://www.jesmondpark.com/](http://www.jesmondpark.com/)

There is also a youth hostel close to the seminar venue. All ages can stay there with rooms starting at 11.80. For more information see their website at: [http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/hostelpages/69.html](http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/hostelpages/69.html)

The local YWCA provides single rooms for both sexes close to the seminar venue for 16 per night. See their website at: [http://www.neastywcatrustees.sageweb.co.uk/Jesmond.htm](http://www.neastywcatrustees.sageweb.co.uk/Jesmond.htm)

Recommendations for other B&B places and hotels can be provided on request.

Over the last few decades the Religious Studies seminars have to a considerable extent become internationalized. Leading Bahá’í scholars from many parts of the world have attended or presented papers and discussion has included many aspects of Bahá’í scholarship and publication. Opportunity also exists for that human interaction which goes beyond philological or intellectual analysis into something like intimate Bahá’í fellowship. Bahá’ís and other empathetic persons are more than welcome to attend these informal academic seminars. Formal academic qualifications are not required though the papers and discussions are usually of a high academic standard. It is hoped that participants will be socially and spiritually invigorated as well as intellectually stimulated.

**For details regarding these events please contact:**
Stephen Lambden e-mail: hurqalya@blueyonder.co.uk or quinn@oak.cats.ohiou.edu Tel. (U.K from 6 December 2004): 0191 281 8597 (U.S. 1 Sept. - 19 November 2004) 740-592-2376 or Moojan Momen, Tel/Fax: 01767 627626 e-mail: momen@northill.demon.co.uk

**Tentative speakers and topics:**
- Dr. Armin Eschraghi, "Some general observations on the Báb's "Book of the Spirit (Kitáb ar-Ruh)" or "Undermining the Foundations of Orthodoxy".- Some aspects of Babi law in relation to the Shia clergy"
- Mr. Oliver Scharbrodt, University of London, "Between Activism and Quietism: The political culture of the Bahá’í community during the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1906"
- Mr. Erfan Sabeti, University of Lancaster, "Postmodernism: Some Bahá’í Observations"
- Dr. Roger Prentice, Sunderland University, "Some transcendental Elements of Bahá’í-inspired Education"
- Dr. Stephen Lambden, Ohio University "Bahá'u'lláh the Tetragrammaton"
- Dr. Sholeh Quinn, Ohio University, "The Báb's Letter's to Muhammad Shah"
- Dr. Moojan Momen, "Education and Social Development in the Bahá'í Community of Iran"
- Dr. Seena Fazel, "Problems and Opportunities for Bahá’í Studies"
- Ms. Nika Saeedi, "The Spread and Influence of the Bahá’í Faith in Ardestan"
- Ms. Betsy Omidvaran, Chester Beatty Museum, TBA
- Dr. Necati Alkan, TBA

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom
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