

those who smoked to enjoy outside. It looked just like an outdoor Bethlehem coffee house.

On Saturday, about fifty of us attended a membership meeting in the morning with Muna Dayeh presiding helped out by Joe and Arlette Dibs and Diana Bandak. They asked for more members' participation and suggestions about growing the Bethlehem Association. A tentative proposal to have the 2010 convention in San Francisco was welcomed.

The young people socialized at a pool party which gave them a chance to relax and have fun. Others went to nearby Disneyland. The amazing modern and photogenic Crystal Cathedral built by evangelist Robert H. Schuller was only a couple of blocks away.

The Saturday evening gala was attended by almost four hundred guests. Two giant screens showed slides of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour. Father Hanna Sakkab moved us all with one of his classical Arabic poems about Bethlehem. Master

of Ceremonies David Handal cheerfully welcomed everyone at Bethlehem University but is now the Palestinian ambassador to London. Dr. Hassassian inspired us with his uplifting and rousing speech on the steadfastness of the Palestinians living under occupation and his somewhat pessimistic outlook for a political settlement especially since the Israeli settlements have taken over so much of the territories.

The fundraiser was short but successful as so many were inspired by Bethlehem's plight to give generously. People gave either to the Scholarship Endowment Fund for needy students in Bethlehem or the Charitable Fund for helping institutions in the Bethlehem district. Dancing and music by the Nino band and attractive singer Woroud entertained us for the rest of the evening. There were two raffles called later – one that had started at the beginning of the convention for a gold necklace and another for a few prizes that evening.

Sunday Brunch was a time for everyone to take yet more photos and say goodbye to relatives and friends. We were happy to see and visit our Hazboun relatives from L.A. and Sacramento at the convention and I'm sure others had similar experiences.

Our thanks go to the Convention committee – Joe and Arlette Dibs, Muna and Ibrahim Dayeh, Diana Bandak, Suheil & Suad Baddour, Amal Tafesh, Jessica Qattawi, Hazzar Ghaoui, David & Leila Giries, Awni & Nadia Seikaly, Jack & Mary Rock, Tony & Rima Handal, Irin Simon, Samantha Murad and others for organizing such an enjoyable convention and putting so much hard work and effort into making it a success.

Joan Hazbun

**VIEW ALL CONVENTION
PHOTO GALLERIES AT**

www.BethlehemAssociation.org

SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT JACOUB SLEIBI

The Bethlehem Association Scholarship Fund enables students in the West Bank to attend Bethlehem University through your generous donations. One of our scholarship recipients is Jacoub Sleibi. Jacoub is a second year Computer Science student at Bethlehem University

Jacoub had the opportunity to visit England and participate in the Big Hope Congress in Liverpool. The aim of the Congress is to encourage delegates to create a more humane global society. Participants from over 55 countries attended the forum. For Jacoub, who has never been outside of Palestine, this was a life-changing experience.

As he wrote to Board member Dr. Edward Hazbun, "meeting people and making friends from every part of the world is something I never dreamt of! Talking with most of the delegates without discrimination was something that left a major impression on me."

Through your generous donations to the Scholarship fund, students like Jacob Sleibi are afforded educational opportunities otherwise unavailable to them.

Look for more stories of the successes of our Scholarship students in future issues of our newsletter.



Jacoub Sleibi with Mayor of Liverpool



Bethlehem University