New East Side Masjid (Mosque)

Last fall, on September 16, 2014 to be exact, Br. Kamil Samara, who manages the ISM’s east side properties, noticed that a closed church building located across the street from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Student Union had a “for sale” sign on the front lawn. Br. Samara immediately brought the matter to the attention of the ISM administration. The administration of the ISM immediately recognized the great opportunity that had presented itself, by the Grace of Allah (SWT). For years, the ISM owned a duplex about one block away from the UWM Student Union. Unfortunately, this facility (the Musalla) was not sufficient to meet the needs of the students at UWM nor the east side Muslim community. Besides being far too small to accommodate any programs, the facility was not zoned as a place of worship. Although the tenants who resided in the Musalla (and others) were able to perform their daily and Friday prayers at the facility, there was insufficient room available for all the brothers who wished to offer their prayers, much less the sisters who represented a significant percentage of local Muslim students on the UWM campus. It is estimated that there are over 600 Muslim students at UWM, with at least 100 of them being from our local community.

After quick discussions involving the Executive Board (Shura) of the ISM and the Board of Trustees, an offer was drafted on September 25, 2014 and emailed to the Seller’s broker the next day. Unfortunately, the Seller totally ignored the very reasonable offer that was submitted by the ISM. When the ISM contacted the Seller’s broker seeking a response to its offer, the broker claimed that the Seller was not getting back to him. On Friday, October 3, the ISM administration again contacted the broker. The broker informed the ISM that another offer had been submitted to the Seller on October 2nd (the previous day) and the Seller accepted the offer on the same day!

The administration of the ISM was perplexed by the broker’s explanation and extremely disappointed that they were not able to purchase the facility. What was perplexing was that the ISM had an open and pending offer and the offer was never countered. Normally, if there are multiple offers, a competent broker would allow (and even encourage) the potential buyers to get into a bidding war to extract the highest purchase price possible. This did not happen. The ISM’s offer was totally ignored. When the ISM administration discussed what had transpired, most felt that the only (Continued on page 10)
On Sunday April 26, 2014, the Islamic Society of Milwaukee held its Annual General Body Meeting. The annual meeting, which has been held every year since the inception of the organization, provides a forum for members of the community to review the activities of the ISM for the prior year, to examine and assess the financial condition of the ISM, to discuss upcoming programs and events, to listen to community concerns and suggestions and to announce the results of the ISM elections.

Unlike many organizations that seek to serve the Muslim community in Milwaukee, the ISM is unique in that it operates with complete openness and transparency. The ISM is audited yearly by a recognized accounting firm. At the annual meeting in April, ISM Treasurer Nabil Salous provided members of the ISM with a detailed overview of the income and expenditures of the organization, including operating expenses, construction costs, investment properties and all other financial matters. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and to express their concerns.

ISM President Ahmed Quereshi provided his “State of the Society Address” in which he gave a general overview of the health of the organization. (A summary of Br. Ahmed’s remarks can be found on Page 3 of this newsletter). ISM Executive Director Othman M. Atta briefly spoke about some of the strengths of the Muslim community of Milwaukee, especially its diversity. He mentioned that the ISM leadership has always worked to maintain this diversity and will continue to do so in the future. He indicated that, with the addition of a new Masjid in Brookfield and another across from UWM, the religious leaders in the community will be called on to make Khutbas (Friday Sermons) and to hold programs at all of the ISM facilities. This “rotation” will help maintain the ISM’s diversity, will expose the ISM members and attendees to different religious leaders and perspectives, will expose the religious leaders to a wider audience and will promote greater interaction among all segments of the community.

At the end of the Annual Meeting, the ISM Election Committee, composed of Sr. Huda Al-Kaff, Dr. Aijaz Qhavi and Sr. Soniya Yunus, announced the results of the ISM elections. (See box below). We thank the ISM Election Committee for all of their work in reviewing and selecting eligible candidates and for tallying the election results. Jazakum Allah Khair.

**ELECTION RESULTS**

For 2015, there were five positions that were up for election. (The ISM Executive Board is composed of 13 members who serve three year terms. Elections are staggered. That is, either four or five of the thirteen positions are up for election each year). Over three years, all Board members will be up for elections.

The five positions up for election in 2015 were: (1) President; (2) Treasurer; (3) Religious Chair; (4) Education Chair; and (5) At Large Member.

For President, Br. Ahmed Quereshi, who was the incumbent, ran unopposed. He was confirmed as president.

For Treasurer, the incumbent Br. Nabil Salous was challenged by Dr. Mushir Hassan. Based on votes cast, Br. Nabil Salous was confirmed as Treasurer.

For Religious Chair, Br. Salah Sarsour, who was the incumbent, ran unopposed. He was confirmed as Religious Chair.

The candidates for the Education Chair and the At Large position did not receive the number of votes necessary to be confirmed. New candidates will be solicited and a new round of elections will be held to fill these two vacancies.

**THE ISM WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO RAN IN THE ELECTION. MAY ALLAH (SWT) BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES.**

**THE ISM WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE TWO OUTGOING SHURA MEMBERS:**

Dr. Shaykh Sayeed completed multiple terms as religious chair. Per the requirements of the ISM Constitution, he is required to remain outside of the Shura for at least one year. (After one year, he will be eligible to run for any open position). Br. Sandid completed one term as an At Large member.

May Allah bless them and their families for the efforts they made “fee sabeelillah” to help their community and their faith.
I delivered the State of the Society at the ISM Annual Meeting on April 26, 2015. Below are some highlights from the talk, which will update those not present about some of the activities of the ISM during the past year.

If I had to give the past year a name, it would be “The Year of the Two Masajid”. First, there was the new ISM Brookfield masjid. The ISM broke ground in July (Ramadan) 2013 and completed construction and opened the masjid in January 2015. Construction was completed at a cost of $2.5 million and the land was acquired for a little over $500,000, so the entire project cost about $3 million.

Masha’Allah, the ISM Brookfield community has been very active. I thanked the ISM Construction Committee, the ISM West Task-force and all those who participated or donated.

The second masjid is the “gift” that I had been dropping hints about in the announcements following the Friday prayers in April. Alhamdulillah, the ISM has purchased a former church building at 2225 E. Kenwood Blvd., directly across the street from the UWM Student Union, just a few days before the Annual Meeting. The purchase price of the masjid was $700,000. Insha’Allah, the worship space will be ready for Ramadan, but other substantial repairs will have to be made after Ramadan. The purchase price of the new masjid was done through using the ISM’s line of credit. I explained the history of the failed offer on the building in the fall and the need for confidentiality in dealing with the seller and therefore the inability of the ISM to fundraise for the project in advance. The ISM plans to sell the Musallah (after obtaining permission from NAI) and the Muslim Student Center and fundraise the balance, probably during Ramadan. The new UWM masjid represents a great opportunity for the ISM. From a purely location standpoint, it is in a high visibility spot in the City of Milwaukee, being located directly across the street from the UWM Student Union. UWM’s increased visibility over the last couple of years also factors into this. The masjid could serve as a focal gathering place for programs involving visitors and academics as well. We have about 600 Muslim students currently attending UWM. The location of this masjid and its size should make this a highly successful place to serve our youth.

I also spoke about the ISM’s commitment to train young Islamic leadership from our own community. Rami Bleibel and his wife will be starting a training program after Ramadan, perhaps in Lebanon, sponsored by the ISM. We also plan to sponsor Hafiz Amer Hamza in another training program, Insha’Allah.

I also spoke about the acquisition of land, potentially for Salam School. The ISM closed on a trucking terminal facility located at 4866 S. 13th Street on Eid-ul-Fitr in July 2014. The purchase price was $642,500. The ISM put down 40% of this and two Muslim investors put down the other 60%. The investors must be paid back by April 2017. The property cash flow is good and it is an excellent investment. At the same time, the ISM extended its lease with Bon Ton over at 801 W. Layton Ave. This lease will also expire in April 2017. There will be choices to be made, which might involve a decision to use one of the two properties for Salam School expansion in the fall of 2016.

I also reported that the ISM has invested $340,000 in improving vacant space in the 801 W. Layton Ave. building for MCHC. The cost of the build out is being shared on a 50/50 basis with MCHC. MCHC is going to operate the “Sakina Senior Center” out of that facility, as well as continuing its free medical health clinic. Providing service to our seniors and free medical care to the needy is part of the ISM mission to serve the social needs of our community, even if the decision for liability reasons was to require that two separate legal entities be used.

I discussed the improvement of the land behind the Islamic Center at a cost of about $60,000, the installation of the green lighting and the beauty of looking back from the new parking area at the Islamic Center in the middle of the Ramadan summer night last year.

With respect to financial matters, much had changed since the ISM fiscal year ended for the year last August. With the purchase of the new masjid at 2223 E. Kenwood Ave., the Gross Budgeted “revenue” had risen to $4.7 million and the Gross Budgeted “cost” had risen to $4.4 million, for a total net “income” of $300,000. However, in all likelihood, the ISM will fall short on revenue, and will only modestly do better than the projected cost. Specifically, the ISM Brookfield expected donation of 2/3rds of the ISM Brookfield construction costs will fall short by around $300,000. In addition the funding of the $700,000 expenditure for the 2223 E. Kenwood masjid might not be realized at all before the financial year ends on June 30th. This would represent a $1 million swing in “Gross Budgeted Revenue.”

I briefly discussed the independent audit for the ISM fiscal year ending 6/30/2014. The audit report was extremely favorable. The report indicates an increase in net assets of the ISM of about $750,000 from $8.9 million as of 6/30/2013 to $9.65 million as of 6/30/2014.

There is still a need for increased social service programs for the refugees and needy, our continued support for the Dawa Center Food Pantry, increased youth and adult educational programs, and working with other masajid to improve relations. The ISM remains active in interfaith matters and was currently engaged in a series of Interfaith programs in Brookfield, including a May 3rd program scheduled for the new masjid. I also thanked Br. Salah, Br. Munjed and Br. Orhan for their service in marital and family counseling.

I concluded my presentation with a discussion of the challenges facing the Society. I first spoke about financial challenges. The ISM must pay for the new ISM East/UWM masjid, while the sale of the Maryland Ave. properties will be attempted “by owner” and it is hoped that a large amount will be recouped, it will be necessary for the community to raise over $300,000 to cover the difference and pay for needed improvements. The parking lot behind the Islamic Center also must be finished at a conservative estimated cost of $750,000. While the parking lot need not be finished “all at once”, it is necessary to make steady, if slow, progress. The City has threatened closure of the parking lot if the work is not done. The development of a new Salam School building is on the horizon for 2017 also. While it will be largely funded from the Salam School budget, it must be expected that the ISM will need to make a contribution as well. The ISM also must pay off the balance of the loan at 801 W. Layton Ave., which is currently approximately $1.2 million. The need to hire additional imams because of the expansion at ISM Brookfield and ISM East is also present. Finally, there is continued need to improve our youth programming and social and family services. Alhamdulillah, the community is generous and Allah (SWT) will provide.

However, there is another kind of challenge that the community faces, which is not financial at all. It is the challenge of what is in our hearts. Once Milwaukee was a small community. Now, we are a community of thousands that has added two new masajid this past year. There are potential divisions between those who had been here for a long time vs. the refugees, the newcomers including our American-born youth; the wealthy vs. the needy, poor, unemployed, underemployed; wealthy vs. poor masjid; urban vs. suburban masjid; educated vs. those without the opportunity for education. Will our community hold fast altogether or will we descend into tribalism? Will we strive to maintain our sense of community or will we let it go or worse? He said while difference of opinion is a strength, during the past year he had heard many strange things, including expression of distrust and disappointment between communities. As we now have become a community, the wealthy, the refugee and the disadvantaged will not be impressed if we choose and act in an un-Islamic manner. May Allah (SWT) grant this community and its leaders guidance and patience in striving to do His will.
Community News

Congratulations On Your Engagement!

May Allah bless your engagement and grant you a beautiful and happy marriage.
- Wala Kheirieh & Mohammad El-Khatib
- Duaa Daher & Rashed Fraij
- Abrar Musaitif & Mohammad Jaraba
- Aateka Samara & Ibrahim Amin

Congratulations On Your Newborn!

The ISM would like to congratulate:
- Tarik & Azza Jamal on the birth of their baby daughter, Malak
- Amjad & Manal Jamal on the birth of their baby daughter, Shadia
- Imad Hammad & Nisreen Falayeh on the birth of their baby boy, Yaseen

Our Deepest Condolences

INNA LILAIHI WA INA ILAIHI RAHI’OUN. TO ALLAH WE BELONG AND TO HIM WE SHALL RETURN.

The ISM would like to extend its condolences to the families who lost someone dear to their hearts.
- We ask Allah (swt) to forgive their sins and bless them with a home in Jannah.
  * Br. Ibrahim Yousef Abdullah, the father of our community member Ziyad Abdullah (Abu Tarek)
  * Br. Zaki Shana, the husband of Randa Ayoub, the father of Ola, Ali and Omar, and the brother of Zuhrieh Ziad, Zahya, Ezdehar, Zaher and Ola.
  * Br. Adnan Qatooni, the father of our community member Dr. Maram Qatooni
  * Sr. Zubeda Abbas Hamdani, the wife of Dr. Abbas Hamdani and their daughters were long-time members of the Muslim community of Milwaukee.
  * Br. Ali Anise Abu-Ain, the brother of our community member Al-Hajj Abdulrahman Abu-Ain (Abu Khaleel)
  * Br. Adnan Muna, the family member of our community members, the Muna family.
  * Sr. Wadad Musa, the mother of our community members Najib Musa and Nuha Awadallah. She is the mother in law of Kifah and Azizak Musa and the grandmother of many of our community members.
  * Sr. Noor Un Nisa, the sister of our community member Br. Sadiq Husain
  * Br. Aden Mohamed, the relative of Br. Abdishakur
  * Al Hajja Um Amer, the mother of our community member Amer Janabi (Abu Hawra)
  * Br. Hasan Hasoona El-Sheikh, the father of our community members Mohamed and Hussam El-Shiekh.
  * Sr. Muneeera Awad, the sister of our community member Br. Nabil Safi
  * Sr. Qamra Jrabbaa, the mother of our community member Br. Emad Jrabaa
Our Deepest Condolences to the family of Abdellatif Alaya

The Islamic Society of Milwaukee would like to extend its heartfelt condolences to the family of Abdellatif Alayya who passed away on May 8th, 2015.

Abdellatif Alayya, who was 12 years old, is the son of Mohammad (Abu Khalil At-Tarifi) and Nour Alayya, and the brother of Khalil, Yazan and Amer and the grandson of Abu Khalil Abdulrahman Abu Ein.

We ask Allah (SWT) to provide his family members with strength, patience and perseverance in dealing with their loss. The family has demonstrated tremendous faith over the past years in dealing with their son's illness and now with his passing.

Our Deepest Condolences to the family of Sr. Behbood Ashraf

The Islamic Society of Milwaukee would like to extend its heartfelt condolences to the family of Sr. Behbood Ashraf who passed away on April 19th, 2015.

Sr. Behbood is the wife of Br. Iqbal Ashraf and the mother of Fatima (mother-in-law of Ibrahim), Maryam (mother-in-law of Minhaj) and Zainab (mother-in-law of Ravi). She is also survived by her grandsons Ismael, Yousuf and Musa.

Sr. Behbood was an active member of our Muslim community and will be deeply missed. We ask Allah (SWT) to forgive her sins and bless her with a home in Jannah.

MAS Milwaukee’s 9th Annual Conference

The Milwaukee Chapter of the Muslim American Society held its 9th Annual Conference from April 3rd to April 5th at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport Hotel.

The conference’s theme for this year was “Why Islam” which focused on how Islam is a mission and a message for all generations.

Alhamdulillah, more than one thousand individuals attended the conference and benefited from a wide range of knowledgeable and dynamic speakers. Special guest speaker, Sheikh Yaser Birjas, presented his popular workshop, “Love Notes” to a full house. Br. Abdulhakim Mohammad delivered a number of lectures focused on family relations. He also delivered a very interesting and captivating lecture about the “Beauty of Paradise”.

The conference had a special section that was geared toward the youth. The programs were well attended and our youth enjoyed Br. Mohammad Zeyara and Br. Imran Salha's lectures about the important role of young Muslims in our community.

The younger children also had a special program at the conference, including a wonderful school program and an arcade room. On the final day of the convention, attendees enjoyed a tasty dinner and entertainment with Br. Yaha Hawa and our local debka groups, Sanabel Al-Quds and Firket Al-Ghorabaa.

Jazakum Allahu Khairan to all who attended and we look forward to seeing you next year, insha’Allah!

*Pictures from the MAS Milwaukee 9th Annual Conference can be found on the following page.

- Ala Ismail
Assalamu Aleikum Brothers and Sisters,

Midwest Senior Select, Inc. is an independent insurance agency that has provided insurance services to the Muslim community for over 20 years. We understand the insurance needs of our Muslim brothers and sisters, and take great pride in providing an array of valued insurance services to the community.

We seek to inform our clients about the rapidly changing health insurance environment, taking as much time as necessary to put all our clients at ease about their options and choices. At Midwest Senior Select, Inc., we work to develop relationships ... Not just sales. We listen to your concerns and needs. We cordially appreciate the opportunity to share our message with you.

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Visit our Web site: http://www.mwselect.com/
President: Naji Abu-Lughod

At Midwest Senior Select, Inc., we understand how the task of choosing the right insurance product(s) can be confusing, and at times frustrating. Our Agency offers a full range of innovative insurance products from leading and competitive insurance companies, including:

- Medicare Supplement Insurance
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- International Travel Insurance
- Medicare Part D (Rx Plans)
- Final Expense Life Insurance
- Long Term Care
- Life Insurance (Term, Whole Life & Universal) Plans & Annuities
- Dental Insurance
- Individual or Group Health Coverage

ISM TODAY
FOR SALE
ISM SELLING EAST SIDE PROPERTIES

Following its purchase of a new facility on Kenwood Ave, the Islamic Society of Milwaukee is placing the two duplexes it owns on Maryland Ave for sale. The property addresses are 3028-3033 North Maryland and 3034-3036 North Maryland.

The 3028 building has 4,146 square feet of finished living space. It has a fully renovated basement (1,496 square feet) and attic area (630 square feet). It also has ten bedrooms and four and one half bathrooms (Five bedrooms and two full bathrooms on the first and second floors and 1/2 bathroom in the basement). This building has newer forced air furnaces, a laundry room in the basement, newer electrical service, newer concrete parking slab and a newer roof.

The 3034 building has 3,915 square feet of finished living space. It has a fully renovated attic (738 square feet) and a full basement (1,535 square feet). It also has eight bedrooms and two bathrooms.

The ISM is seeking to sell the properties for not less than $350,000 each. The properties will be sold in (“as is, where is” condition)

Please contact the ISM Office (414-282-1812 or ismoffice@ismonline.org) for more information.

3028-3030 N. Maryland
3028-3030 N. Maryland (BACK)

3034-3036 N. Maryland (FRONT)
3034-3036 N. Maryland (BACK)
Remembering Palestine: 67 years of Occupation and Oppression

On Friday May 8, 2015, the Milwaukee Chapter of American Muslims for Palestine held an event titled “67 Years of Nakba – Palestine: Our Faith, Our Identity, Our Dream.”

Guest speakers included Gada Owais, a highly respected correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic Channel and Dr. Osama Abu Irshaid, a recognized advocate of Palestinian rights.

An audience of several hundred individuals listened to presentations about how extremist Jews have, since prior to the creation of Israel, utilized all forms of terrorism and human rights violations to destroy Palestinian society. Speakers compared the violence which we witnessed in Gaza last summer, in which 80% of those murdered were civilians, including over 500 children, to the premeditated and ruthless violence which was intentionally perpetrated by pre-Israeli Jewish forces against innocent civilians in Palestinian towns and villages. Terrorism was the primary means by which extremist Jewish forces sought to ethnically cleanse Palestine of its Muslim and Christian inhabitants.

The following article published by the The Institute for Middle East Understanding on 13 May 2015 (http://imeu.org/article/quick-facts-the-palestinian-nakba) provides basic information about the Nakba, or “catastrophe”, the term used to describe the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by Jewish forces.

"Quick Facts: The Palestinian Nakba"

**General Facts & Figures**

The Palestinian “Nakba” (“catastrophe” in Arabic) refers to the mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from British Mandate Palestine during Israel’s creation (1947-49).

- The Nakba was not an unintended result of war. It was a deliberate and systematic act necessary for the creation of a Jewish majority state in historic Palestine, which was overwhelmingly Arab prior to 1948. Internally, Zionist Jewish leaders used the euphemism “transfer” when discussing plans for what today would be called ethnic cleansing.
- The Nakba’s roots lay in the emergence of political Zionism in 19th century Europe, when some Jews, influenced by the nationalism then sweeping the continent, concluded that the remedy to centuries of anti-Semitic persecution in Europe and Russia was the creation of a nation state for Jews in Palestine and began emigrating as colonists to the Holy Land, displacing indigenous Palestinians in the process.
- In November 1947, following the horrors of World War II and the Nazi genocide of European Jewry, the newly-created United Nations approved a plan to partition Mandate Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. It allocated approximately 55% of the land to the proposed Jewish state, although Zionist Jews owned only about 7% of the private land in Palestine and made up only about 33% of the population, a large percentage of whom were recent immigrants from Europe. The Palestinian Arab state was to be created on 42% of Mandate Palestine, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. (See here for map of the partition plan and subsequent 1949 armistice lines.)
- Almost immediately after the partition plan was passed, violence broke out and large-scale expulsions of Palestinians began, long before the armies of neighboring Arab states became involved. When Zionist forces finished expanding, the new state of Israel comprised 78% of historic Palestine, with the remainder, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, falling under the control of Jordan and Egypt, respectively. In the 1967 War, Israel occupied the remaining 22% and began colonizing them shortly thereafter.
- The Nakba did not end in 1948 and continues until today, in the form of Israel’s ongoing theft of Palestinian land for settlements and for Jewish communities inside Israel, its destruction of Palestinian homes and agricultural land, revocation of residency rights, deportations, periodic brutal military assaults that result in mass civilian casualties such as the one that took place in Gaza in the summer of 2014, and the denial of the internationally-recognized legal right of return of millions of stateless Palestinian refugees.

### The Nakba by the Numbers

- **Between 750,000 and one million:** The number of Palestinians expelled and made refugees by Zionist paramilitaries, and subsequently Israeli forces, during Israel’s creation in 1947-49.
- **Between 250,000 and 350,000:** The number of Palestinians expelled from their homes by Zionist paramilitaries between the passage of the UN partition plan in November 1947 and Israel’s declaration of independence on May 15, 1948 - prior to the start of the war with neighboring Arab states.
- **Approximately 7.1 million:** The number of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons as of 2009, including Nakba survivors and their descendants. They are located mostly in the occupied West Bank and neighboring Arab countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, denied their internationally-recognized legal right to return to their homeland by Israel, simply because they are not Jewish.
- **Approximately 150,000:** The number of Palestinians who remained inside what became Israel’s borders in 1948, many of them internally displaced. These Palestinians (sometimes called “Israeli Arabs”) were granted Israeli citizenship but stripped of most of their land and placed under martial law until 1966. Today, there are approximately 1.6 million Palestinian citizens of Israel, who live as second-class citizens in their own homeland, subject to more than 50 laws that discriminate against them because they are not Jewish.
- **At least two dozen:** The number of massacres of Palestinian civilians by Zionist and Israeli forces, which played a crucial role in spurring the mass flight of Palestinians from their homes.
- **Approximately 100:** The number of Palestinian civilians, including women and children, massacred in the town of Deir Yassin on April 9, 1948, by members of the Irgun and Stern Gang, pre-state Zionist terrorist organizations led by future Israeli prime ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, respectively.
- **More than 400:** The number of Palestinian cities and towns systematically destroyed by Israeli forces or repopulated with Jews between 1948 and 1950. Most Palestinian population centers, including homes, businesses, houses of worship, and vibrant urban centers, were demolished to prevent the return of their Palestinian owners, now refugees outside of Israel’s pre-1967 borders, or internally displaced inside of them. (See here for interactive map of Palestinian population centers destroyed during Israel’s creation.)
- **Approximately 4,244,776:** The number of acres of Palestinian land expropriated by Israel during and immediately following its creation in 1948.
- **Between 100 and 200 billion:** The total estimated monetary loss of Palestinians disposessed during Israel’s creation, in current US
reasonable explanation for the lack of any counteroffer by the Seller was the Seller’s unwillingness to sell the facility to the ISM. This explanation was only speculative, but there did not appear to be any other reasonable explanation.

All members of our community who learned that the ISM’s offer for the property was rejected were disappointed that the Muslim community had lost a great opportunity. Of course, humans have their plans and Allah (SWT) has His plans.

In the Spring of 2015, the ISM Executive Director happened to be visiting the UWM Student Union to conduct a program there. He immediately noticed that the same facility still had a “for sale” sign posted on the front lawn. He found this to be odd and wondered if the buyer was having difficulty closing. When he checked city records to determine if there was any type of zoning or other application submitted to the City of Milwaukee, he found none. Apparently, the offer that had been accepted by the Seller in October, 2014 fell through. (Based on information we later obtained, we believe the investor’s offer fell through due to the opposition of the alderman and others to the buyer’s proposed redevelopment plans). Despite the fact that the October offer fell apart, the Broker did not contact the ISM to see if the Muslim community was still interested in the property. This failure by the broker to contact the ISM reinforced the view of the leadership of the ISM that the Seller, a religious organization that was affiliated with a very conservative Christian denomination, did not want to sell their facility to a Muslim group.

In the spring of 2015, another investor made a new offer for the church facility. The new investor had an unrelated, but ongoing business relationship with several businessmen in the Muslim community. After discussions between the various parties, the investor agreed to transfer his rights in the property to the ISM. This agreement was only speculative, but not want to sell their facility to a Muslim group.

The property includes an old church building that was built in 1967 and a duplex that was built in 1918. The first floor of the duplex was converted into commercial space (offices) for the organization that previously owned and operated the church. The purchase price for the church building and the attached duplex was $700,000.

Although the church building was well built and well maintained by the original owners, it appears that, the owners over the last decade allowed the building to deteriorate. Very few repairs were made, and those repairs that were completed were often done so in a haphazard manner.

The current focus of the ISM is to complete those renovations that are necessary for the new facility to open for prayers. A minbar (which was donated by a Masjid in St. Louis) has already been transferred to the new facility. New carpeting and padding will soon be installed to replace the existing flooring in the main prayer hall. The

RETURNING TO OUR ROOTS
The church building at 2223 E. Kenwood Boulevard which the ISM purchased last month is NOT the same church building that the Muslim community used to rent in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s (before the purchase of the Islamic Center on South 13th Street in 1982). The church that Muslims rented, the Kenwood United Methodist Church, is located immediately east of our new facility.

When informed about the purchase, Dr. Waheeduddin Ahmed, who was one of the early founders of the ISM and its predecessor organizations emailed the following: “This is delightful news. The reference to the roots of the ISM will undoubtedly be gratifying to those who were present in those days. They are now a dying breed. The announcement evokes pleasant memories. We last prayed taraweeh [special night prayers during Ramadan] in the basement of the Methodist Church in 1981. They were lead by a visiting hafiz [individual who memorized the Qur’an] from Syria, a member of the Jama’at Tableegh. We prayed the next taraweeh [in 1982] in the Islamic Center [on South 13th Street]. The ISM came into being in 1983 after reorganization.”

Dr. Ahmed continued: “If I may make a suggestion, please consider dedicating this building to Islamic scholarship, dialogue and research, where both Muslim and non-Muslims, students as well as scholars would come together to discuss both doctrinal and secular issues. It may also house a permanent museum of Islamic culture.”

(Continued on page 11)
prayer hall will accommodate more than 400 people and will be open for both, brothers and sisters. Providing suitable accommodations for our sisters was an important consideration in making the decision to purchase the property.

Over time, many repairs need to be completed on the properties. It is estimated that the cost of renovations and repairs will exceed $300,000. This includes the need for a sound system, roofing work, windows, HVAC (heating, ventilating and A/C – there is currently no A/C in the main building), plumbing and electrical work, retaining wall and landscaping work, the construction of wudu (ablution) areas, and so forth.

All those who have seen the facility are very happy with the purchase. What makes this facility especially unique is that it is practically located on the campus of the largest University in the City of Milwaukee. UWM has over 28,000 students, more than the combined total of all other universities in the Milwaukee area.

The Muslim students at UWM are especially happy. The new Masjid is in a prime location. The size of the facility is sufficient to accommodate all Muslim students for Jumuah (Friday) prayers. This includes both brothers and sisters! Additionally, the lower level of the facility includes a large hall that can accommodate many educational and social functions.

VOLUNTEERS WORKING AT THE NEW MASJID BY UWM
May Allah (SWT) reward them and all the other volunteers for their efforts in improving a new House of Allah.
When the ISM broke ground on its new Masjid (Mosque) in Brookfield on the 4th day of the Blessed Month of Ramadan, 1434 (July 12, 2013), nobody knew exactly when the Masjid project would be complete and open for prayers.

After one and a half years of work, including many changes and improvements, we finally obtained the occupancy permit for the Masjid (Masjid An-Noor) in January, 2015. On February 14, there was an initial open house for members of the Muslim Community. On March 2, 2015, there was an official, “invitation only” Open House for City of Brookfield Officials, our interfaith partners, elected representatives, and other dignitaries.

On March 6, there was an Open House that was open to the general public.

The official Open House on March 2, 2015 was covered by Annysa Johnson of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. A link to the article and photos can be found here: http://www.jsonline.com/news/religion/islamic-leaders-hope-new-brookfield-mosque-nurtures-peace-b99454498z1-294754311.html. Among the guests to the Open House were members of the Haslam family. For decades, the Haslam family had owned a small home on the property on which the Masjid was constructed.

The public Open House on March 6 was attended by hundreds of guests. The guests were given tours of the facility, were able to view various displays, had the opportunity to listen to small presentations and ask questions, and were able to enjoy a wide variety of refreshments.

Members of the Haslam Family. The three siblings (front) lived in the home that was located on the property on which the Masjid was built. The small photo is a picture of their parents, who owned the home since 1943. The larger photo is of the home. The family was very supportive of the construction of the Masjid.
Brookfield Mayor Steve Ponto, U.S. Attorney James Santelle, FBI SAC Robert J. Shields and Interfaith Conference Executive Director Tom Heinen were among those present at the official open house.
ISM Brookfield Public Open House

“It is a beautiful building and I am very glad to have come and I am very glad you are a part of our community of Brookfield.”
Sandy G.

“Wonderful Mosque!”
Mitch H.

“This Open House did much more than meeting my expectations. A wonderful experience that I will ponder on for some time.”
Joanne J.

“Wonderful experience! Your warmth and openness were very appreciated.”
Lorna P.

“Thank you for doing this! We are so happy you are here. Keep up your good work communicating with the community. We need this!”
Judy R.

“Loved it - discovering how much alike we all are. All should come!”
Audrey M.

“Welcome to the neighborhood. What a lovely, serene place you have built.”
Vicki B.

“Your Mosque is beautiful. I look forward to returning some time.”
Barbara W.
JAZAKUM ALLAH KHAI'R
(May Allah Bless You All)

The Board of the ISM would like to thank all those who made the Brookfield Masjid a reality. May Allah (SWT) bless all those who donated generously, whether it was their time and expertise or their financial donation. We ask Allah (SWT) to make this Masjid a Sadaqa Jariya (Continuous Charity) for all of you and your families.

The ISM would like to express special thanks to the ISM West Task force members:

Lateef Khan, Emad Abu Tabanjeh, Masarat Allaqaband, Rafat Arain, Nabeel Beg, Musodiq Bello, Mushir Hassan, Orusa Hassan, Tahseen Hussaini, Waqar Malik, Shakaib Razzaq, Ayesha Siddiqui and Sami Sobhani.

The Board of the ISM would also like to welcome the ISM Brookfield Council which will be responsible for running the operations of Masjid An-Noor. The Brookfield Council will include the following individuals: Lateef Khan, Bushra Zaibak, Ahmed Naseef, Nuriddin Saratore, Orusa Hassan, Masarat Allaqaband, Musodiq Bello, Mohammed Kher Heder, Waqar Malik, Nabeel Beg, and Tahseen Hussaini.

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Brookfield Masjid

Land, development and Construction

Purchase of two parcels of property (August 2009 and October 2010) $535,063.00
Planning and Development (Architect, Consulting, etc.) 128,744.00
Pre-Construction and Permits, Fees and Site Preparation:
   Construction Costs 2,326,000.00
   Upgrade Costs, Utilities and Additions 346,200.00
      (Sound System, Security system, domes, minbar, etc.)
Outstanding bills due 30,000.00

TOTAL COST (Unaudited) $3,474,707.00
On Saturday, March 21st, the Islamic Society of Milwaukee held a food drive for the benefit of Syrian refugees. The drive was coordinated with the International Relief Organization, Helping Hand. **We appreciate and thank all of our wonderful volunteers who helped us fill an entire shipping container.** We also thank those who donated non-perishable food items and those who made monetary donations (used to buy more products and to pay the costs of shipping). Jazakum Allah Khairan (may God bless) all volunteers and community members who helped make this food drive a great success! Insha’Allah (by the Grace of God) our donations will be used to help alleviate the suffering of some of the refugees.
Many wonderful things have happened at Salam School since the last newsletter.

In January, Salam School held the middle and elementary school Science Fairs. Students submitted over 250 projects on a wide variety of subjects. The schools invited many guest judges from scientific fields to evaluate the student projects and select winners.

Also in January, the 1st annual Seerah program was conducted at the elementary school. Students sang nasheeds, performed skits and read speeches from the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The students did a wonderful job.

In February, both schools had the Arabic Day celebrations. This year’s theme was Masjid al-Aqsa, in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Palestine. The Quran and Arabic Department teachers clearly put in a great deal of effort in preparing and coaching the students. All of the presentations were wonderful.

Columbia-St. Mary’s offered our students in grades K5 through 8th grade comprehensive dental services. The teacher’s lunchroom was converted into a dental clinic. For about 4 weeks, dental hygienists came into Salam School on a daily basis and cleaned students’ teeth and applied sealants. The services were provided free of charge. About 230 students participated in the program.

In April, Prevent Blindness, Wisconsin, provided our K4, K5 and 1st graders with vision screenings. Many volunteers from that organization, in conjunction with UW-Milwaukee, worked for two days in the elementary school to prepare and give these services. Two of our former graduates, Jameela Asmar and Mustafa Abdel Hamid were volunteers.

Salam School students have attended field trips to many venues including Legoland, Camp Minikani, Kohls Biztown through the Junior Achievement program, Bowling, Florida, Betty Brinn Children’s Museum, the Milwaukee Public Museum, Pump-It-Up, the Capitol building in Madison, Slim Good Body show, Miller Park Weather Day, The Mitchell Part Domes, First Stage Children’s Theatre, Fun Timez, Discovery World, Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, Borzynski’s Farm, Apple Holler and other venues throughout the year.

Our students participated in the Martin Luther Speech Competition, the International Women’s Day Festival, both at the Marcus Center of Performing Arts. We had the Islamic Knowledge Bowl, National Geographic Geography Bee, Scripps Howard Spelling Bee, Arabic Spelling Bee, and last but not least, the Quran Contest, which was held on May 12 and 13. These competitions keep our students engaged and challenge them to perform at their optimum.

Salam School Faculty has been working on accrediting the school next year. The staff was assigned to work on different standards as required by AdvancEd. AdvancEd is the organization that is internationally recognized as the leader in accrediting schools. The school will undergo an intensive review during the 15-16 school year.

The open enrollment period for the 2015-2016 school started in March. All families, new and returning, must register their children for the upcoming school year. Alhamdulillah, many of our classrooms are completely full. Since there is no longer any space available in some grades, some new students will have to be placed on waiting lists until it can be determined if space will become available.

Finally, Salam School held the Scholastic Book Fair in March. The Book Fair was very successful. The school will be holding its first ever Islamic Book Fair from June 1st-5th.

It has been a wonderful, active, school year and we ask Allah to bless our children, families, faculty and administration.

STUDENTS INTERVIEWED BY WUWM

In April, Milwaukee Public Radio (WUWM) interviewed a number of Salam School Students about the misunderstandings and stereotypes about Islam that often accompany news about ISIS and other terrorist groups. To hear the interviews, go to the following link:

The Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition launched the first annual Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival this year (www.mmfilmfest.com). This marked one of the first citywide Muslim film festivals in the nation. Through a generous grant from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, a smaller grant from the Cultures and Communities program at UWM, and support from the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, the film festival showcased 5 films, for a total of 10 shows. These films showed at key city sites such as the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Oriental Theatre, and the UW-Milwaukee Theatre. The purpose of the festival is to use film as a creative means of presenting topics and issues that are timely, relevant, and generate meaningful discussion about Muslims and the Muslim world. Each film included a post screening talk back session that was well attended.

The films covered a variety of topics. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel wrote "The films chosen for this first festival explore the lives and histories of Muslims around the world, offering a mix of heartbeat, hope and humor." Each show brought in between 100-200 movie goers, a huge success for a first film festival. What was particularly exciting is that the vast majority of the attendees were not members of the Muslim community and many came out of curiosity or to learn something new. The films, all true stories, included The Return to Homs, which followed a Syrian soccer star as he went from non-violent protestor to armed rebel as his city and country became devastated. Yemeniettes, the very inspiring story of a team of Yemeni girls that compete in a Pan-Arab Entrepreneurship competition, tying for first place. Abd El Kader is the history of the Algerian hero that fought against French brutal rule, holding fast to Islamic principles and becoming the inspiration to many of the rules of the Geneva convention. He received awards from around the world, including then President Abraham Lincoln and El Kader, Iowa was named after him. Giraffada is a drama, based on the true story of a Palestinian veterinarian and his son and his heroic efforts to keep a female giraffe alive in the last zoo in the West Bank. The Wanted 18 is the true and hilarious story of the Palestinian town of Beit Suhour and their boycott efforts which included hiding 18 cows from the Israeli military because the military deemed the cows a security risk to the state of Israel.

There was widespread media coverage for the festival including the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Shepherd Express and many newsletters including those of the Milwaukee Film Fest, the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Rid Racism Milwaukee, Catholics for Peace and Justice and others.

Surveys from attendees overwhelmingly rated the films as a 4 or 5, "Very good" or "Excellent." The remarks were highly favorable and attendees appreciated the opportunity to see and discuss real issues. We received so many emails and letters as well, but one letter touched us greatly, and we decided to share it with all of you. Finding creative means to help people understand Muslims and issues affecting the Muslim world requires tremendous effort, with Allah’s help, we are confident we can help transform hearts and minds.

(A Response to the Muslim Film Festival)

“Hidden” Commonalities

On Sunday, March 1st, I attended the first film of the first annual Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival, “The Return to Homs.” This particular screening was at the Milwaukee Art Museum and featured an informational talk-back session led by a local renowned Muslim doctor, Tarif Bakdash. Surrounded by a hundred people with much different cultural knowledge than myself, we watched and discussed this influential and poignant film. This experience opened my eyes to a world bigger than myself and to people much different from me. My lack of knowledge proved how ignorant I am and how easily my life allows me to ignore people and problems like the ones I encountered and discussed that Sunday night.

Originally, I had planned to attend a community think tank about race in northern Milwaukee. Unfortunately, a personal emergency occurred late the night before causing me to miss out on this great opportunity. However, in hindsight I am grateful that I attended the film festival because it was extremely influential. My Catholic faith is a large part of my life and my culture, but this allowed me to step outside a comfort zone I was not even aware of. I was moved and greatly sympathized with those who are persecuted because of their faith.

My previous knowledge of the Muslim faith and the conflict in the Middle East was very limited, something I was not aware of until I was there. When I bought my ticket to get in, the Muslim women selling tickets were regular people, which surprised me for some reason. My surprise (which I had not anticipated) proves the existence of my own subconscious racism. People do not realize how influential the media’s portrayal of people can be. I had had almost no previous interactions with the Muslim community, yet I seemed to be convinced that they would be so different from myself that we would have nothing in common. Instead, the two women and I had a very helpful conversation about the film festival and “The Return to Homs.” We were even laughing and making jokes.
by the end. Two cute little kids about my eight-year-old sister’s age handed me a program and escorted me to a seat. I had been there maybe ten minutes and already my extreme ignorance and pre-disposed prejudice was apparent to me and becoming obliterated.

As I watched people fill in the theater, my little cocoon of white Catholic culture continued to unravel. At Marquette and at home in Appleton, Wisconsin, I do not cross paths with many Muslims – at least that is what I thought. However, people of all races and religious backgrounds sat around me. Are there really not that many Muslims in the spaces I inhabit or do I just not see them? These past few weeks after this experience, I have been more aware of the other cultures I see on the street.

There were two particular parties of people that caused me to be aware of my personal biases. The first was an elderly Muslim couple that sat down a few seats away from me. The gentleman was having a difficult time seeing the screen and the people on stage because the man in front of him was too tall, so I invited them to forget personal space in a public place and sit in the seats next to me. They were both very appreciative and the gentleman, Aamir, started talking to me. After brief introductions, he asked me if I had been to other events put on by the Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Coalition. Again humbled by my lack of knowledge and experiences, I admitted that I had not. He patted my hand and smiled, saying that learning always starts with a first step. His kindness and openness juxtaposed my ignorance, making me look like the (previously) intolerable one, which is not what popular society says. The media bombards us with images of those that are different from white culture – particularly Muslims – and claims they are hateful, violent, and against American cultures. However, after talking Aamir, it seemed to me that we, the white culture, are the hateful ones who are opposed to those different from us, even if we do not explicitly have these thoughts.

The other group of people that forced me to reflect on the habits of my culture and me was a Muslim family sitting two rows in front of me. The parents brought four children, and the oldest son brought his white girlfriend. She talked to his entire family before the movie started, and as the film rolled, the mother and girlfriend constantly whispered to each other and gestured at the movie. It looked as if they had brought her in order for her to learn about their culture, and she was determined to soak every ounce of information out of the experience. This girl is the example that everyone should strive to emulate. Instead of focusing on our assumed differences, we ought to do everything in our power to understand each other and participate.

The film itself helped me to understand the conflict in the Middle East much better and reminded me that many people do not enjoy the securities I have as a white female in the United States. The documentary was filmed illegally because the Syrian government did not want cameras capturing the events, but some brave friends decided to film everything. They followed around Abdul-Basset Saroot, the second-best goalie in Asia who gave up a promising career in soccer in order to fight for his home to be free. At first, Syrian leader, Assad, only locked down the city, and Basset led protests. However, as time went on, Homs is saturated with more and more military, and the city is demolished. The people around me were crying, and I had tears in my eyes. A woman behind me was openly sobbing, and I felt a little awkward. Some of those people probably had family or friends in the Middle East. Others may not have, but the people getting shot at and mutilated were their people. However, this thought is dangerous because even though it seems like I am being humble, I am actually distancing myself from the people and the problem. We are all one human race, and just because someone looks different from me or has different beliefs and traditions does not mean that I should be crying any less than if the person on that screen was a member of “my people.” The notion of “yours” and “mine” are maintaining barriers between people. More people need to learn about the problems of others and do what they kind to help instead of falsely claiming that they do not want to get involved because it is “not their problem.” Looking at those images on the screen, I was constantly reminded that this is everyone’s problem and no one was willing to step up and fight back except for the people who were being directly targeted. Even when the United Nations came to see the city for twenty minutes, they did not give any effort for “unity” because Assad smartly called a cease-fire during their visit. The UN basically did not do anything after their trip, perpetuating the problem by not participating at all.

After the film, a neurologist from Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Dr. Tarif Bakdash, led the talk-back session and emphasized society’s need for compassion. He said that he loves Milwaukee and thinks that this is the place to start teaching others about the conflict in the Middle East and to encourage compassion. Particularly addressing society’s false portrayal of Muslims in the media, he emphasized that all the major monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have a common core value – compassion. The entire room exploded into applause when he called for all of us to cast aside our differences and focus on our commonalities. All three religions trace roots back to Abraham, so the conflict in the Middle East is everyone’s concern.

I was most impacted by realizing these commonalities. I am a religious person, yet I had never stopped to realize how that makes me similar to those deeply rooted in their own – “different” – faiths. We all have love and respect for the same God and a parallel message. The fact that this took me so long to realize – by having it explicitly explained to me – proves the existence of the detrimental bubble that surrounds my comfort zone. Looking at it now, it is obvious that those two women who sold me my ticket were friendly and funny, that Aamir and his wife were cute and kind, and that my values are so similar to those of Muslims and many others. My culture has trained me not to see these things, but once they are illuminated they are painstakingly obvious. I am saddened that many people from my culture will not come to these same realizations because they do not have the motivation or desire to go learn and experience a different culture. They will not realize that “different” might just be a superficial comparison. Though I still do not – and cannot – fathom exactly what it is like to be a Muslim, I have begun to understand not only their culture but also the importance of learning and conversing with all cultures.

A. Baehler, Marquette University
Interfaith Program at ISM Brookfield

On Sunday May 3rd, the ISM hosted an interfaith event of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and its Committee for Interfaith Understanding at our Brookfield Masjid. The topic of the event was “Why do we pray? An Exploration of the Purpose and Benefits of Prayer”. Because many of the attendees had never had the opportunity to visit the new Masjid, the program was preceded with tours and refreshments from 1:30 to 2:30pm. The formal program, which began at 2:30pm, involved 13 speakers of various faith traditions speaking for a few minutes on the topic of the event. Br. Ahmed Quereshi made a presentation on behalf of the Muslim community. Following the short presentations, there were multiple roundtable discussions in which the attendees were able to discuss their personal reflections on the topic. The program attracted more than 150 guests.
Green Tip of the Month: Cool Congregation Challenge

Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin Receives National Community Inspiration Recognition from Interfaith Power and Light

On Earth Day, April 22, 2015, Interfaith Power and Light announced the national Cool Congregations Challenge winners, which included the Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin [Wisconsin Green Muslims] recognized with a Community Inspiration Honorable Mention.

The Cool Congregations Challenge is an annual national contest to recognize "Cool Congregations" that are becoming energy efficient and sustainable role models within their communities. The contest is brought by Interfaith Power & Light, a national nonprofit organization with affiliates in 40 states, working to inspire and support a religious response to climate change. The Cool Congregations program is designed to support faith communities as they "walk the talk" by reducing their own carbon footprint.

The Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin [Wisconsin Green Muslims], a volunteer group formed in 2005, intends to educate its members, the Muslim community and the general public about the Islamic environmental teachings, to apply these teachings in daily life and to form coalitions with others working toward a just, healthy, peaceful and sustainable future.

ISM Today will publish a special edition of the newsletter in June. The special edition will focus on graduates—high school, college and graduate school—and the Blessed Month of Ramadan.

If you have any information on graduates you would like us to include, please contact us at ismoffice@ismonline.org
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Visit us: 803 W. Layton Avenue
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ISM Community Outreach

2:213 And mankind is naught but a single nation

Visitors to the Islamic Society of Milwaukee (March-May)

- Students from Marian Baptist University
- Students from Marquette University
- Students from Alverno College
- Students from Brookfield Academy
- Students from St. Norbert College
- Group from Bay View Church
- UW-Whitewater Group
- ECHO Home School Group

If you know of any group that would like to visit the ISM, please contact the ISM at (414) 282-1812

ECHO Home School Group

Community Education

A major function of the ISM is to provide information about Islam and Muslims to the general public. The following are examples of presentations that were made over the past few months:

- Saint Bartholomew Episcopal Churches
- Watertown High School Group
- Deans Distinguished Lecture @ UW-Extension
- Waukesha Technical College
- University of Wisconsin-Waukesha
- UWM– Lubar School of Business
- UWM Cinema (Viewing and discussion of the film: American Sniper)

Iqama Jama’ah Prayer Times at ISM

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ISM Today is a publication of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit religious organization.

All articles, news, events, pictures, and other content should be submitted to

ISMToday@ismanline.org
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