



**Muslim  
Public Affairs Council  
Western New York  
Buffalo – Rochester**

# MPAC-WNY News

Newsletter of the Western New York Chapter of the Muslim Public Affairs Council  
[www.mpac.org](http://www.mpac.org)

Issue No. 34, Vol. 5

April 2009


## President's Message

*Assalam-u-Alaikum (Peace be with you):*

### ***President's Annual Report:***

The 2008 Annual meeting of MPAC-WNY was held on Saturday January 24, 2009. The following is a short summary of the report presented at the meeting by the MPAC-WNY President, Khalid J. Qazi:

**2008 Elections:** MPAC took active part in the general elections in 2008. It produced a primer on primaries for both the Democratic and Republican candidates (reproduced in our last Newsletter) MPAC-WNY also joined in this historic election with several voter registration events. Many WNY members volunteered in and outside the region for the Presidential elections. "You are Voiceless if you are Voteless" was our unrelenting message.



*In Our Political System*

***You are VOICELESS if you are VOTELESS!***

**THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR VOICE!**

**KNOW your rights, PARTICIPATE in all elections**

**USE your right to VOTE! Your future in the US depends on it!**

**OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS ARE COUNTING ON YOUR VOTE!!**

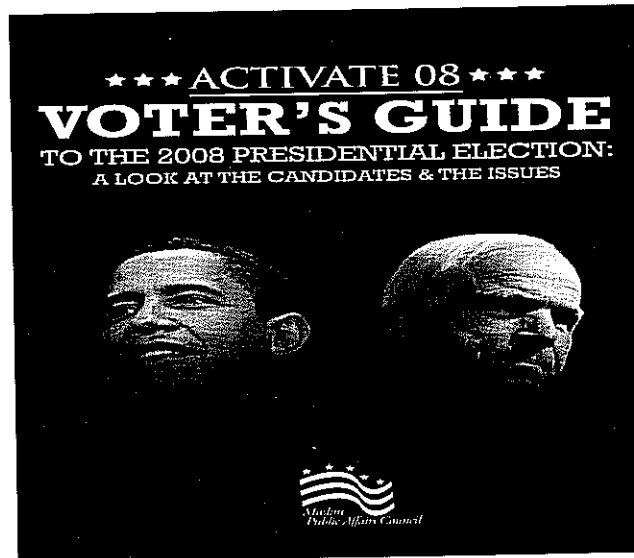
*If you have any questions, Contact:*

**Muslim Public Affairs Council, Western New York Chapter**  
**6343 Transit Rd. Depew, NY 14043**

**Phone: (716) 683-1840 Fax: (716) 683-1843**

For the general election MPAC produced a comprehensive "Voter's Guide" that delineated positions of the two major party candidates: Senator Barak Hussein Obama and Senator John McCain on all

major issues. We have received very positive feed back from our members on our efforts to provide you with timely information about the elections.



*Promoting Youth Leadership:* MPAC had its Second Youth Leadership Summit in Washington, DC over the 2008 summer to promote and develop young leadership. It was well attended and the youth leadership benefited from a myriad of programs that were presented to educate and introduce the young leadership to Washington and to encourage public service. MPAC strongly believes that developing future leadership that is well grounded in knowledge and ethics of public service is essential for Muslims to gain their rightful place in America. To that end MPAC has allocated resources to bring young budding leaders from across American to Washington for several days to provide them with an opportunity to see for themselves how government works. It also provides the young leaders with an opportunity to see up close their own future potential and provide them avenues for net working.



*Picture shows young energetic and bright Muslim leaders at MPAC's Second Annual National Muslim Young Leaders Summit in Washington in July, 2008*

Please feel free to access [www.mpac.org](http://www.mpac.org) to see for yourself comments and commentaries by these young and budding Muslims who are our future leaders.

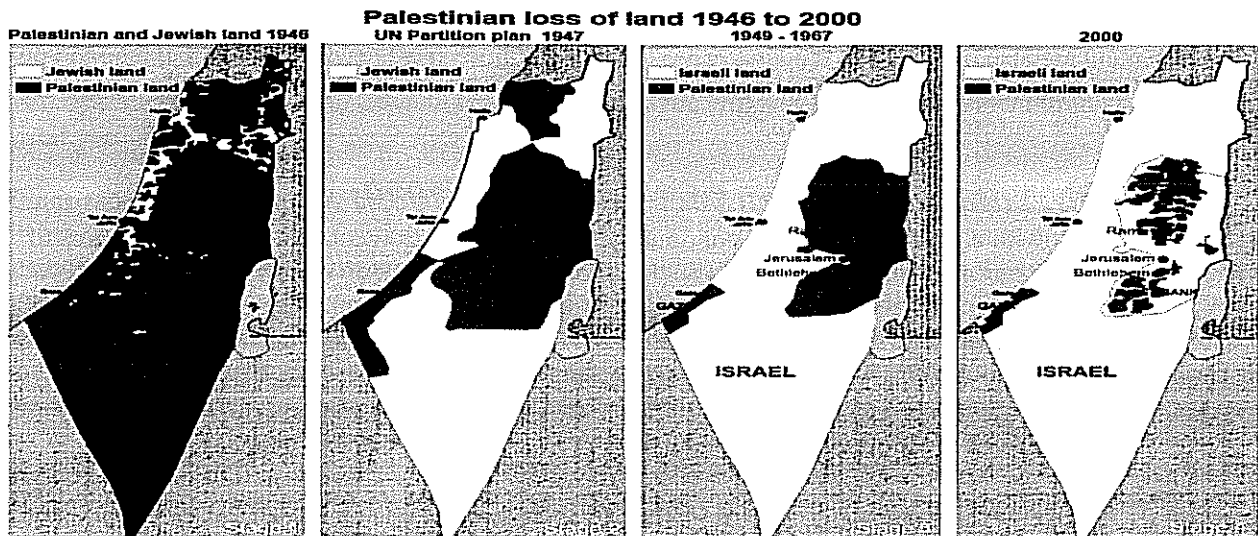
*African American and Immigrant Muslims:* A unique program to foster immigrant and native American Muslim dialogue and discourse was conducted in 2008. As you may recall this took place over two successive Saturdays in March. The program was entitled: ***“Rescuing Those***

***Magnificent Endangered Desert Edge Libraries of Timbuktu & Beyond: Bringing African American and Immigrant Muslims Together***

It was based on extensive research by two well known African American researcher A. Hakim Quick and one of our own, Buffalonian Musa Abdul Hakim. The presentations and discourse with the aid of videos, film and pictures (with virtual visit to the Timbuktu Libraries) took place on March 22 and 29, 2008 at the International Institute in Buffalo (This research had been sponsored by the Timbuktu Educational Foundation). The programs led to a welcome thaw in relations between the immigrant and Native American Muslims with a desire for an ongoing dialogue. Keeping that in view we will be revisiting this in 2009 with a panel on “Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Immigrant Muslims”

Among the number of programs arranged by MPAC-WNY was a special one entitled ***“Portraits of Peacemakers in Israel & Palestine: An Evening with Rachel Corrie’s Parents; Cindy and Craig Corrie”*** presented in September at the Woldman Theater in UB North Campus. This program was sponsored by The Western New York Peace Center and co-sponsored by MPAC-WNY as well as Jean Dickson and Professor Bruce Jackson (Capen Chair of American Culture at UB). This was a heart wrenching story of Rachel Corrie’s murder by Israeli defense forces as related by her mother. The stoic and brave parents of Rachel, buried alive by Israeli bulldozer while trying to protect a Palestinian’s house from demolition, are still waiting for justice for the cruel murder of their daughter. The Congress of the United States, as in the case of the bombing of US Liberty by the Israeli defense forces, has not pressed the Israeli government for thorough investigation and explanation for the death of this innocent American.

Before I make further comments on the Palestinian-Israeli crisis, let me first declare, on my personal and your behalf, that we condemn any violence or terrorism from either Israelis or the Palestinians. While we understand that democratically elected Hamas is a declared terrorist organization by the US, according to BBC and other press reports the State of Israel falsely accused Hamas of cease-fire violation as a pretext for unprecedented and horrifying attacks on the Palestinian life and property in Gaza from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009. One has to ask the question as to how and why the World can stand by while the State of Israel is subjecting Palestinians to a Holocaust in their own home land. You will witness vivid testimony of what happened in Gaza with a special presentation on the current crisis later tonight and hope you will participate in this discussion. Funds will also be collected for Gazans and I hope you will generously donate to this deserving cause.





*Welcome to  
the Third Annual  
"The Tent of Abraham"  
September 24, 2008  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Western New York Chapter*

***The Tent of Abraham:*** MPAC-WNY had its Third Annual "*The Tent of Abraham*" event on September 24, 2008. This year the theme was "*A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO POVERTY IN WNY*" and was Co-sponsored with The Islamic Society of Niagara Frontier, Catholic Charities and the Network of Religious Communities. About 200 lbs. of non-perishable food and cash donations of \$ 730.00 were collected. The cash was matched by MPAC-WNY and the resulting amount of \$ 1460.00 was split equally and donated, along with the collected food items, to Vive LaCasa and the Food Pantry operated by the Network of Religious Communities. The "Fourth Annual Tent" will be in September this year.

***Educational Programs and Interfaith Dialogues:*** MPAC-WNY continues to lead all regional Muslim organizations in building bridges of friendship and understanding. Our interfaith outreach with the Network of Religious Communities, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Buffalo, Williamsville Clergy Association and a number of other faith organizations and religious institutions continues unabated. Plus we continue to participate in lectures, seminars, panel discussions and symposia at a variety of civic, educational and religious organizations. Our training sessions for the law enforcement are also proceeding. We always are looking for more speakers and writers. I extend to you all an open invitation to join the 'volunteer force' of MPAC-WNY to lend a hand in making these programs more representative and robust.

***The Fifth Anniversary Banquet on May 9, 2009:*** As you well know our annual banquet is a hit with all sections of WNY community. It is the premier event hosted by the Muslims of WNY. However, our next Annual banquet is a special one-*The Fifth Anniversary Banquet*-of MPAC-WNY. As you may recall we launched MPAC in the Empire State at the annual banquet in May 2004. Since then we have been working hard to establish this American Institution in our region, despite several challenges. Alhamdulillah, MPAC-WNY is on firm grounds and is recognized as a representative and resourceful organization with effective leadership. I would like to invite you all to mark your calendar today for this special event. I hope to see you all there with your friends and family.

***Programs with Government Agencies:*** Some of you are familiar with our programs with agencies of the Department of Home Land Security and the Department of Justice. Previously we have given you extensive reports of these programs (in our Newsletters). Therefore I will be very brief tonight. We continue to hold such meetings, albeit at a lesser frequency. Recently, MPAC-WNY has taken membership on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the Western District of New York. You may recall, last year MPAC-WNY also received FBI Director's

Community Leadership Award. This award, presented annually since 1990, publicly recognizes the achievements of individuals and organizations working in their communities. This is in recognition of our untiring efforts and highlights the importance of such work in our community.



*From left Bayram Arman (Treasurer, MPAC-WNY), Vanita Evans (Community Relations FBI, Buffalo), Laurie J. Bennett (Special Agent I/C FBI, Buffalo), Khalid J. Qazi (President MPAC-WNY receiving the Award), Brett Hovington (Chief, Community Relations, FBI, Washington, DC), Naseem Malik (Board Member MPAC-WNY) and Zaid B. Islam (Vice-President, MPAC-WNY).*

***The Council of Imams:*** MPAC-WNY is pleased to see the Council of Imams of Greater buffalo taking a more active role in the affairs of the community. MPAC-WNY supports and attends the monthly meetings to enlarge the agenda of the Council to include issues of wider interest. We hosted the Council twice last year for its deliberations and will inshaAllah do so in the coming year as well. The Council has an important role to play and is trying its best to grasp the emerging issues of the Muslim community in WNY. We are happy to see the Council here tonight and you will hear from the President of the Council as well.

I want to remind you about the need for a full time office for MPAC-WNY. It is impossible to do the kind of work we have on our hands without an efficient office. We will be advertising for a staff position shortly and inshaAllah will have an Executive Secretary in place within few months. I have a lot more to say but I want to listen to Haris who has come from DC to update us about MPAC National. Therefore, I will stop here but I will be available for your comments or questions throughout the evening. Please remember that MPAC is your organization, working on your behalf for your issues. We always welcome your input and advice.

Thank you and God bless you.

Khalid J. Qazi

## MPAC-WNY WELCOMES ROCHESTER MEMBERS



The Muslim Public Affairs Council of Western New York took another giant step in March when it expanded eastward to Rochester, NY. This had been in the works for over a year. During that time key members of the Rochester Community and MPAC-WNY Board met several times to plan the expansion in a seamless fashion. The MPAC National Board approved this expansion earlier this year. With much fan fare we had the first "Rochester Extravaganza" on Saturday March 28, 2009 when 200 community members from the Greater Rochester area attended the first formal event to celebrate this achievement. The event began with an introduction to the Chapter's Organizing Members, followed by a formal dinner hosted by the Turkish Society of Rochester.

After the dinner Khalid J. Qazi, President MPAC-WNY, gave an overview of the achievements of MPAC as well as MPAC-WNY. He identified various ways MPAC-WNY has helped establish programs for the benefit of all sections of the WNY community that has been recognized by both governmental as well as non-governmental agencies. He invited the Rochester Muslim Community to lend a hand in the expanding role MPAC is playing in the advancement of American Muslims and thanked the organizers for a great function with attention to the detail. He also fielded several questions from the audience. The audience was visibly impressed with the progressive and forward-looking mission and the vision of MPAC.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Ismael Mehr who had recently led a team of ten American health care professionals and volunteers on a ten-day mission to Gaza, Palestine, to provide much-needed medical aid to civilians following Israeli invasion of Gaza late last year. Dr. Mehr shared his and other professional's contribution in the medical arena to the victims of the Israeli invasion. His presentation was supplemented by a number of photographs that brought the miseries of Gazans to the attention of those in attendance. The life-endangering effects of the embargo on Gaza were clear to all. Several other members that were part of the medical team were also on hand to supplement the presentation and answer questions. The presentation sponsored by the Rochester Chapter of Islamic Medical Association of NA.

Umaira Khan  
On behalf of MPAC-WNY

\*\*\*\*\*

**Haris Tarin**, Director Development for MPAC from Washington office was our guest and gave an excellent review of the work MPAC is doing at the national level. He gave details of the involvement of MPAC with the Obama transition team, work with staffers of different Committees at the Capitol Hill and new innovative programs MPAC has started that are meant to contribute to the policies that impact us all in our daily lives as Americans. MPAC-WNY is grateful to Haris for visiting us and providing our membership with critical information.

**Husam Ghanim**, Secretary of the Islamic Society of Niagara Frontier, gave a very lucid and clear presentation about Gaza with the aid of slides and videos. The message of Palestinians was brought to home with passion that only Husam could have done. MPAC-WNY is grateful to Husam all others who participated in this program.

\*\*\*\*\*

As a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the Western District of New York, MPAC-WNY can bring cases of **discrimination and/or harassment** to the attention of this committee. You are encouraged to write to or contact MPAC-WNY with any case(s) of bias, harassment or discrimination at any public place, your job, work place, school etc. We will work with you on such issues. However, we can not advocate for you if we do not have examples of such cases. Your information will be held in strict confidence. Do not hesitate to contact us at MPAC-WNY.

\*\*\*\*\*

Information about FJC is produced here for the benefit of those who are victims of domestic violence.



Every day at the Family Justice Center of Erie County (FJC), victims of domestic violence receive the services and information they need to improve their safety and hold their abusers accountable. Through our one-stop, free, wrap-around services, domestic violence victims can meet with a prosecutor, speak to a trained counselor, have injuries documented in our forensic medical unit, request a temporary order of protection from Family Court and arrange for placement in a safe and secure shelter – all in their native languages in a warm, comfortable environment, while their children play safely in a supervised area just down the hall.

While Erie County agencies have offered services for domestic violence victims for many years, access to the services was not always easy. A victim might have been required to visit several agencies, all in different locations. Not only did this pose a problem for victims without easy access to transportation, it also allowed for the possible “re-traumatization” of clients who had to tell their stories over and over again to various people. Fragmented services also compromised safety.

The Family Justice Center puts an end to the many barriers that victims once faced as they sought help. Our center is a collaboration of 10 on-site partners, including the Buffalo Police Department, Erie County District Attorney, Neighborhood Legal Services, Crisis Services, Haven House, Hispanics United of



Buffalo, International Institute of Buffalo, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts, Child Advocacy Center and the University at Buffalo Department of Family Medicine. These professionals work together to support victims and their needs across a continuum of care with cultural sensitivity.

We also offer the spiritual support of trained Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Hindu chaplains

The FJC is a place where violence stops, where families heal and where hope is realized. To access our services, please call (716) 558-SAFE (7233) or stop by our offices at 237 Main Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor, Buffalo, at the corner of Main and Seneca Streets. We validate parking at three nearby lots, and we also offer bus tokens. For more information about the Family Justice Center, please visit our web site at [www.fjcsafe.org](http://www.fjcsafe.org).

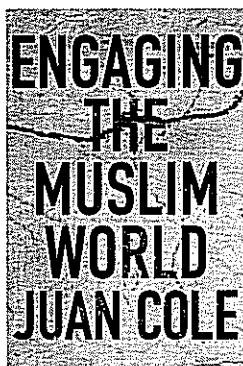
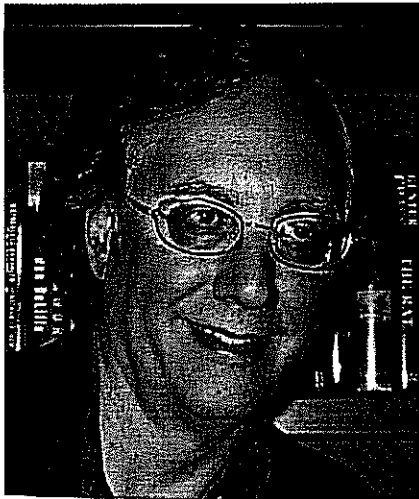
\*\*\*\*\*

## ***TRAVEL ADVISORY:***

A Cornell professor was recently detained by the Border Patrol at Syracuse Airport because of an expired H-1B I-94 Departure Record card even though her H-1B Extension petition had been filed before the expiration of her current H-1B. She was also carrying the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services Receipt Notice (Form I-797) for the H-1B Extension petition.

Please be reminded that the H-1B and H-4 Extensions can be filed as early as six months before the current period of stay expires. You should hold your unexpired I-94 card if you plan to travel, even within the U.S. If you will need to file an H-1B Extension petition (or H-4 Extension application), please do so as early as possible.

## **MPAC-WNY Banquet Keynote Speaker: JUAN R.I. COLE**



Juan R. I. Cole is Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan. For three decades, he has sought to put the relationship of the West and the Muslim world in historical context. His most recent book is *Engaging the Muslim World* (Palgrave Macmillan, March, 2009) and he also recently authored *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). He has been a regular guest on PBS's Lehrer News Hour, and has also appeared on ABC Nightly News, Nightline, the Today Show, Charlie Rose, Anderson Cooper 360, Countdown with Keith Olbermann, Democracy Now! and many others. He has also given many radio and press interviews. He has written extensively about Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and South Asia. He has commented extensively on the Iraq War, the politics of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the increasing conflict with Iran. He has a regular column at Salon.com. He continues to study and write about contemporary Islamic movements, whether mainstream or radical, whether Sunni and Salafi or Shi'ite. Cole commands Arabic, Persian and Urdu and reads some Turkish, knows both Middle Eastern and South Asian Islam. He lived in various parts of the Muslim world for nearly 10 years, and continues to travel widely there.

His newest book titled "*Engaging the Muslim World*" will be on sale at the Banquet!



## MPAC-WNY Banquet 2009 Award Recipients



### **Dr. Faruk M. Koreishi**

Dr. Koreishi is a renowned Retina specialist who has successfully treated thousands of patients including celebrities with compassion. In addition to his professional achievements, he has been a community activist in WNY last four decades.

A devout husband, son, father and now grandfather, MPAC-WNY salutes Dr. Faruk M. Koreishi for his life long commitment to professional excellence and community service.



### **Vive, Inc.**

VIVE, Inc. is a non-profit, humanitarian organization that assists refugees seeking protection in Canada and the United States. VIVE in its La Casa Shelter provides food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and legal services to refugees as they await their appointment to enter Canada or their U.S. asylum hearing. Since its founding in 1984, VIVE has assisted over 67,000 refugees from over 106 countries.

L-R: Bill Brown  
Zachariah and Roy White,  
Photo: Jim Smith



### **International Institute of Buffalo**

The International Institute of Buffalo established in 1918 is dedicated to helping immigrants / refugees overcome language and cultural barriers so that they can become self-sufficient, productive members of our community. The Institute also promotes global education and international connections as well as providing job skills. It advocates and be a resource for the victims of domestic violence victims.

# UNITED BIOCHEMICALS

## *Solutions for Life Sciences*

**United Biochemicals** is a primary manufacturer and distributor of biochemicals, reagents and solutions for the biotechnology industry.

**We have three business segments:**

- » Biological buffer and amino acid derivatives
- » Sterile buffer and filtered cell culture solutions
- » Penicillin-containing solutions

Our penicillin solutions business is housed in a segregated facility. All products are all offered on an OEM basis. We work closely with our customers to provide value added services that allow them to compete in an ever changing marketplace.

6351 Inducon Drive East □ Sanborn, NY 14132  
(716) 731-5161 □ (716) 731-5163 (Fax)  
[www.unitedbiochemicals.com](http://www.unitedbiochemicals.com)

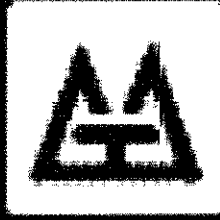
---

# UNIVERSAL FINE CHEMICALS

## *Fine Quality Chemicals & Biochemicals*

**Universal Fine Chemicals, Inc.** serves the biotechnology, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries, as well as R&D institutions. Our focus is on the production, distribution and processing of chemicals and biochemicals.

6357 Inducon Drive East □ Sanborn, NY 14132  
Tel: (716) 731-5567 □ Fax: (716) 731-5569  
[www.ufchemicals.com](http://www.ufchemicals.com)



# M&T Bank

Understanding what's important.

M&T Bank traces its origins to the founding of Manufacturers and Traders Bank in Buffalo, New York. As a result of mergers, acquisitions and name changes, M&T Bank Corporation's principal bank is now known as Manufacturers and Traders Trust Company, or M&T Bank. M&T Bank reorganized under a bank holding company in 1969 called First Empire State Corporation. The name was changed in 1998 to M&T Bank Corporation, whose common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and trades under the symbol "MTB."

M&T Bank Corporation had over \$65 billion in assets as of December 31, 2008, and is one of the 20 largest commercial bank holding companies in the U.S. M&T Bank has almost 700 branches & 1,600 ATM's across Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

One M&T Plaza  
Buffalo, NY 14203-2399  
(716) 842-5138  
(716) 842- 4306 (fax)  
*www.mandtbank.com*

## MPAC-WNY Board

Bayram Arman  
Fatih Binici  
Ghada Mohammed  
Mohammed Raheemuddin

Mohammed Azizian  
Zaid B. Islam  
Hanna Nashir-Zaid  
Mesut Vardar

Bilal Binici  
Samira Khatib  
Khalid J. Qazi  
Raqeeb Jamil



**Muslim  
Public Affairs Council  
Western New York  
Buffalo – Rochester**

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

Muslim Public Affairs Council – WNY  
6343 Transit Road  
Depew, NY 14043  
Phone: (716) 683 1840  
Fax: (716) 683 1843

---

---

## ***ISLAMIC CALENDAR:***

*The new Islamic year of 1430 started on December 29, 2008. Please note the following:*

Ramadan 1 <sup>st</sup> :	August 21, 2009	Subject to moon sighting
Eid-ul-Fitr:	September 20, 2009	Subject to moon sighting
Eid-ul-Adha:	November 27, 2009	Subject to moon sighting

*(The actual moon sighting may be a day later, but not earlier)*

---

---

***Buy your tickets today for the  
5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet***

*at*

***[www.mpac-wny.org](http://www.mpac-wny.org)***

*or mail your checks to*

***MPAC-WNY, 6343 Transit Rd. Depew, NY 14043***

***(716) 683-1840***

---

---