

AMERICAN BAHRAINI
FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



WHO WE ARE

The American Bahraini Friendship Society was formed in 1990 by a group of American friends who held Bahrain close to their hearts. They dedicated the ABFS to furthering the special relationship that has developed between the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain over the past years. The society intends to strengthen this bond through not only promoting friendship and understanding between the two countries but also by increasing the level of awareness of Bahrain in the United States of America. As a society, we are committed to enhancing historical, commercial, and social programs of mutual benefit while fostering closer ties between the two countries.

EVENTS IN THE USA

Recently, the society has been working diligently to revamp the society with a new website, social media pages, and by hosting vast array of events.

The last event which the society held at His Excellency's residency, "Friends of Bahrain Iftar and Gergaon," was held in commemoration of 28 years of friendship and solidarity between the people of the United States and the people of Bahrain. During this event His Excellency **Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa** acknowledged the achievements of VADM Anthony Less and VADM Douglas J. Katz and also congratulated VADM Miller and VADM Mark I. Fox for accepting their new positions as President and Vice President.

Following Gergaon, the ABFS met at the Army and Navy Club in Washington D.C. to discuss the launching of their new website, logo, and plans for upcoming events. On behalf of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Ambassador **Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa** also thanked the Board of Directors under President VADM John W. Miller for their dedication to further strengthening the unique bond between the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Many ABFS members also received the opportunity to attend the U.S. premiere of the film "Grain of Sand," a documentary on the music and heritage of the Bahrain pearl divers that demonstrates the power of music within intercultural dialogue. This film screening was accompanied by an incredible guitar performance by film director and world musician, Jason Cartier, followed by a Q&A on his unique experiences in Bahrain!

The American Bahraini Friendship Society works alongside the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain for a multitude of events to provide our members with countless opportunities to embrace Bahrain and its distinctive culture while making lifelong friendships.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

The American Bahraini Friendship Society continues to hold various events in collaboration with cultural organizations in the Washington, D.C area. These upcoming, exclusive events for our members will include food, music, and lots of opportunities to meet other individuals who hold the Kingdom of Bahrain close to their hearts.

Most events which the ABFS holds take place at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Ambassador's residency, and different venues throughout the DMV area.

Learn more & apply for membership at: <https://www.abfsc.org/>

EVENTS IN BAHRAIN

The American Bahraini Friendship Society wishes to **congratulate His Highness Shaikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa** on winning his division and qualifying for the Ironman World Championship in Kona!

On November 28th, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities held a closing event for their program of 2018. The program was titled "Muharraq, Capital of Islamic Culture" and was held at the Bahrain National Theatre. This took place following its designation by the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (ISESCO) Al Muharraq was awarded this title as a result of the history of the city, its heritage, and its distinctive features of Bahrain. There were many notable guests in attendance including Her Excellency, Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa.

The **UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education** continues to accept applications for the use of ICTs in education. The year's award will recognize projects and programs which will leverage innovation technologies to ensure education for excluded, venerable groups. The two awards that will be granted will be accompanied by a reward of \$25,000.



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His Excellency
Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain in
Washington D.C



Q: How did Bahrain and the United States' relationship start?

A: More than 100 years ago, American missionaries began coming to the Gulf region. A missionary by the name of Samuel Zwemer ended up staying in Bahrain a while and ended up co-founding the American Mission Hospital. With a single step, he heightened the vision of a health service for Bahrain. Bahrainis noticed and will never forget the care American missionaries have shown our country.

Q: How did ABFS start?

A: In some ways, ABFS reflects that first encounter with American missionaries. Bahrain and the United States both welcome each other with open arms and we hope to make each a better country for its citizens. ABFS is a meeting place for friends that have been touched by Bahrain in some way. The ABFS provides the connection between American and Bahraini culture that so many enjoy.

Q: Why is ABFS important?

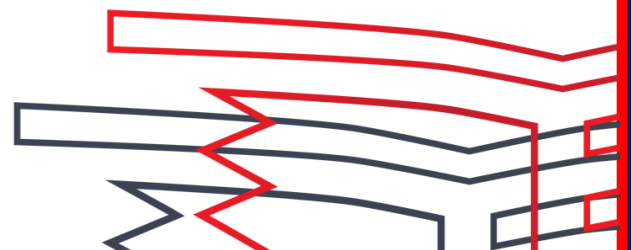
A: His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa has always showed an keen interest in further developing the long lasting relationship between our peoples. One of the core duties I was requested by His Majesty to carry out was the revitalization of the ABFS, and I see many opportunities to do so. Due to the booming business investments in Bahrain, the number of Americans that live there is only going to increase. Amazon Web Services is opening their Middle East hub in Manama for example. This is bringing a large amount of jobs to Bahrain and those jobs draw on the expertise of some Americans to fill those roles. Thus, as Bahrain and United States relations further overlap, it is key that we continue to foster the affinity both countries have for the other.

Q: What is the United States' connection to the Bahrain School?

A: The Bahrain School is operated by the Bahrain International School Association with the help of the United States Department of Defense Education Activity. It has hundreds of students from kindergarten all the way to 12th grade. Students that graduate earn an American diploma. It is the only U.S. DOD school in the Arabian Gulf.

Q: What is a lesser-known fact that Bahrain and the United States share?

A: I have heard from many Americans that they are first surprised by the religious freedom in Bahrain. They assume the entire Middle East is not open to different ways of thinking and that is not true. Currently, a new Catholic Cathedral that seats 2,000 people is being built in Manama for example. All religions are welcome in Bahrain, just like in America.





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Vice Admiral Douglas J. Katz



Q: Tell me about your time in Bahrain?

A: During my time in Bahrain working for the 4th and 5th fleet, I became very close friends with the Amir, Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. Our friendship allowed us to comfortably share opinions on a multitude of subjects and to this day, I cherish the wonderful memories of watching his son, His Majesty, the King, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa grow into the courageous man he is today. After I retired from the Navy in 1997 and moved back to the United States, I dreamed of somehow being reconnected to the Kingdom. After learning about the American Bahraini Friendship Society, I immediately fell in love with the mission and decided it was the perfect opportunity to personally reconnect with the country as well as a place for me to share my stories.

Q: How has the ABFS evolved since you became involved?

A: When I first joined in 1998, the American Bahraini Friendship Society was going strong. We took a trip to Bahrain as a society and hosted many events within the Washington D.C. area. We were a group of individuals passionate about a place which the majority of us had called home for many years. As our original Board Members aged, it naturally became more difficult to hold as many functions, which ultimately lead to a 'slowdown' of the ABFS. Although we experienced a period of rest, 2018 has been an outstanding year for us. In August, we launched a brand-new website, our first social media pages, and created way to apply and renew memberships online! Alongside the Embassy, we have hosted a vast array of events already and I am especially looking forward to attending the Bahraini National Day celebration in Washington D.C. on December 6th at the Library of Congress.

Q: What are some events which you have seen the ABFS hold?

A: The American Bahraini Friendship Society has held countless events which have nostalgically brought me back to my years in Bahrain. Leaving Bahrain, I knew I would miss everything about it, thankfully, by hosting events with live Bahraini music and authentic food, the ABFS has given me and my wife countless opportunities to reminisce on our younger days! At many of these events, I have also been able to learn more about Bahrain through key speakers including hearing the young perspectives of Bahraini students studying in the US.

Q: How has the ABFS enhanced the relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain?

A: As my expertise on Bahrain is shaped largely by my experiences in the Navy, I have been able to see the growth of this relationship between the two countries mostly through our strong military relations. Being home to our Fifth Fleet and a major ally in international relations, the U.S. is a shoulder for the Kingdom of Bahrain to lean on and vice versa. As military entities, we have especially expressed our gratitude for one another through the care of each other's ships and military personnel. Since 1990, the American Bahraini Friendship Society has done a phenomenal job in increasing awareness of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the United States through educating citizens of both countries and thus eliminating misconceptions.

Q: How do you envision the future of the American Bahraini Friendship Society?

A: I am proud to say that throughout my twenty years as a member of the American Bahraini Friendship Society, I have yet to be as excited for the future growth of the society as I am now. We recently elected a new President, VADM "Fozzie" Miller, and Vice President VADM Mark I. Fox. These two young men have a lot in store for the future of the society and have already placed the society on the fast track for success since their election Spring, 2018!

Q: Why should individuals join the ABFS?

Q: By reading this interview, I hope you are able to recognize my passion for Bahrain. The many years my family and I lived there are some of my favorite memories and I wish to share my excitement with others who may or may not be aware of the beauty of Bahrain! I am confident that joining the society will open countless doors for you as it did for me. You'll be able to receive the quarterly newsletter, attend countless, yet phenomenal events, make lifelong friendships and so much more. The American Bahraini Friendship Society is much more than a society; we are a group of friends who resemble the beautifully unique friendship between the United States and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

