

A few years ago, running late on my way to drop off the children at school and stuck in traffic in the middle of Ramallah, I rolled down my window and, to the embarrassment of my children, asked the policeman who was standing by (merely observing the usual chaos), if I could drive on the rather empty sidewalk.

“I would be much less of a bother to all these people,” I explained. The situation has not improved over the last few years, although the circle has been decorated with flower beds and rails have been installed in a futile attempt to reign in the masses who flood the streets. To be fair, I have an inkling that the traffic engineers never *walked* the streets... the details take up too much space for this column. There are ways to ease the crossing of Ramallah’s Manara Circle on foot – and it would serve the cars, too.

Reading the articles in this issue has made me take another look – sometimes with a raised eyebrow – at some of the things I do, such as weaving my way through traffic on the way to school. (But I will NEVER be caught leaving trash behind on our mountains!) I hope that this issue will make us think about and possibly change our ways a bit.

So thank you to professor emeritus at Birzeit University Ramzi Rihan, artist and anthropologist Dr. Ali Qleibo, executive vice president of Bethlehem University Dr. Michael Sansur, head of operations at the Municipal Development and Lending Fund Hazem Kawasmi, professor emeritus at Birzeit University Dr. Ramzi Sansur, former minister Dr. Mashhour Abudaka, World Health Organization physician Dr. Benjamin Bouquet, researcher and policy analyst Yara Asad (also a caregiver for a person with a disability), programs development manager for Sharek Youth Forum Uzma Ahmed, writer and activist Dr. Nora Lester Murad, and writer and freelance translator Muna Nassar for your thoughts, observations, and recommendations – be they direct or indirect. Our personality of the month features the late Faisal Hussein. Although this section usually focuses only on living persons, we felt we had to make an exception in order to honor this man who so generously dedicated his life to working for the common good. A valiant defender of Jerusalem, Faisal Hussein was imprisoned, banned from travel, and harassed by the Israeli authorities for his activism against the occupation; as an advocate for peace, he led the Palestinian delegation throughout the peace talks. Our artist of the month is lyric tenor Marwan Shamiyeh. Check out our two books of the month, and enjoy browsing through the events section.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish a Merry Christmas to those of you who celebrate this month, and a Happy, Peaceful New Year to all of you!

Warmly,
Tina Basem
Editor



||||| **Forthcoming Issues**

February 2017: **State of Justice**

March 2017: **Palestinian Poets and Poetry**

April 2017: **Palestinians Leaving a Mark**

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