

Interview with Dalal Al-Mutawa: Participant in Kuwait Charity Run

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI

Kuwait's first ever Half-Marathon took place on March 19th in the Kuwait Charity Run, where participants raised money for Bayt Abdullah. The Run took place from Marina Crescent to the Kuwait Towers and back again. Dalal Al Mutawa, an AUK student, was one of the many who participated in the Kuwait Charity Run. She tells us about her experience of the 21km Run.

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Upcoming Kuwaiti Author Releases First Book

BY AL-WATAN DAILY

"The message of the book is mainly for Western people because they still don't know about our culture."

Ali Al-Momen, the young Kuwaiti author of the book titled, "A Column Named The World We Live In," released his first paperback in 2010. Writing has been his interest ever since high school, when his teachers encouraged him to pursue his passion. All his life, Al-Momen has studied in English educational institutions, so although

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Starbucks AUK Art Competition

BY FARAH AL-SHAMALI



The group of painters with Dr. William Andersen.

AUK students have certainly proven to be quite the artists on several occasions and it is always a joy to attend student exhibitions held throughout the academic year to behold our rising talents. It becomes

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*If there's
anything you'd
like to let us
know, please
send an email to
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Crossing New Frontiers: The Power of the Human Brain

BY: HUDA AL- RASHID



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Kuwaiti Writers Under Occupation

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI



Dr. George Irani and Dr. James McDougall with the speakers.

Twenty one years have passed since the Iraqi invasion; though to the older generation, it seems as though it was yesterday that they heard bombs exploding throughout the city. Since then, Kuwait has been rebuilt and changed for the new generation who were only infants when the invasion took place. For this generation, the invasion was only a black period in history, something their parents went through; Liberation Day only known as the day of cruising down the Gulf Road and spraying foam. This new generation did not know how the Kuwaitis lived through those days and what it was like for them. There are just the facts and dates but not the emotion and the feel of those days.

To those who wanted to know what it was like during the invasion, the "Kuwait Writers Under Occupation" panel was the presentation to see. It was a very interesting panel that was held

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How to Deal with an 'Impossible' Group Member?

BY ISHA HAIDER

If you're reading this, you're as much as lost as I used to be last semester and several semesters earlier to that. If you're reading this, you're a soul desperate for help because one or more members of your group act, or don't act, the way your group initially outlined. If you're reading this, you're tied to a situation where one or more of your 'comrades' appear to usually nod their acceptance at every stage of the group plan, but probably black-out when the time comes for implementation. In short, if you're reading this, you are stuck with an idiot!

It would be safe to pass the assertion that each one of you reading this exquisitely

entertaining issue of the Voice, have either been a victim of this subnormal epidemic, or have been the very germs diseasing the atmosphere. OK! OK! I apologize. You don't want to put this paper down without getting the medication to your problem, do you? Getting back on track, all I meant to say was that each and every one of us has gone through this problem, right? Now, what makes our lives easier or more complicated is the way we deal with it. In this article, we'll be discussing the reasons behind this behavior, and what should our course of action be towards the respective.

According to Merriam Webster, the members who

display the aforesaid type of behavior are called passive-aggressive individuals. Passive-aggressive behavior is typically defined as a covert or subtle effort to resist, sabotage, or refuse to comply with a request or expectation, which basically represents the initial group plan outlining what needs to be done and when. It is often characterized by the appearance of initial cooperation and that the willingness to work together is acceptable and mutual.

From my personal experience last semester, I was enjoined by my professor to be in a group of four members. Fortunately, most of them were hard working;

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Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society Members Excel at Pittsburgh Conference

BY SIGMA TAU DELTA



The group with author, Lorene Carey.

Members of the American University of Kuwait's Alpha Rho Eta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society Fatima Ibraheem, Dana A Al-Failakawi, Noura Al-Ajmi, and Iman Askar, attended the organization's 2011 convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA to present their academic work that included a panel entitled "Embracing Arabic Poetry and Poetics" and an individual paper by Fatima Ibraheem entitled, "Retha'a, or Lament for the Most Worthy." The panel introduced two of the most prominent Arab poets, Al-Mutanabee and Al-Khansa'a, to the American scholars. The group from AUK discussed the legacy of Arabic poetry which makes it distinct from other poetry. Focusing

on their panegyric poems and elegies, the panelists recited some poems in Arabic, read Dr. Raymond Farrin's translations of it into English, and then gave explication of the poetry that provided lessons in structure, theme, and musicality of the verses. Members of the audience were particularly interested in the power of impromptu poems that past Arabs practiced in competitions. In her individual paper, Fatima Ibraheem applied medieval literary and rhetorical techniques to the "Battle of Karbala," a significant incident in Islamic history, to produce a creative piece that introduced the

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BY AMAL BEHBEHANI

First of all, what made you interested in entering the marathon? I wanted to accomplish a half marathon and to finish one.

How did you get ready for the marathon? I trained three times a week, running and one long run each week.

Were there any regulations for participating in the marathon? No.

Can you please give us a description as to how the marathon was? The race started at 8:00 am. It was very well organized and a lot of fun, and the atmosphere was amazing.

How long did it take you? 2 hours and 36 minutes.

Who was there with you during the marathon? My sister and my friends were supporting me.

Were there any obstacles in the Run? Yeah, there

were a lot of obstacles because I wasn't well trained, so I faced some difficulties finishing the race.

How did you feel when you reached the end of the 21km? I felt very good and very ecstatic. I was happy to finish a half marathon.

Do you think it was a success for Bayt Abdullah? Yes because there were over 600 participants registered.

All in all, how was your experience? It was enjoyable and hard at the same time but well worth it.

What is your advice to those who would like to participate? Start training now and have fun.

If you are interested in participating in Kuwait Charity Run events, you can check out their website for further events at www.kuwaitcharityrun.com



THE VOICE OF AUK

Our Mission

The Voice of AUK is a student-run, monthly newspaper that seeks to foster active communication among the entire campus community and keep it abreast of diverse and relevant issues by providing high-quality news and information in an academic context. Through this, The Voice also strives to heighten awareness of rights and responsibilities of membership in the AUK community. The Voice also espouses a commitment to philanthropy.

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Q8-Pad's Entrepreneurship Shoot-Out

BY ISHA HAIDER



On the 5th of April, as part of the Student Success Center's 4th Annual Entrepreneurship Fair, Q8-Pad, a freshly crafted business by four young entrepreneurs, participated and received third place in largest profit accumulation, within a very competitive environment, through a paintball shoot-out in the AUK corridor, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The group of young entrepreneurs received a shield for securing third place for a profit maximization of KD 56.5, which would have been inevitably higher if the costs of implementing the idea would have been relatively low.

Reflecting a mini arena, grounded close to the Multipurpose Room, a large square cardboard stood almost anchored within, hugging several large plastic cups that longed for every paint-ball shot. A team of four workers that were hired initially to set up this stage of the shoot-out and the purchase price of the paintballs had significantly sky-rocketed the respective team's cost.

Charging an almost give-away amount of KD 2 per a shooting of twenty-five paintballs, it encouraged several AUK students to test their luck. The main target behind the colorful fires was to aim the paintballs to hit within the outlay of cups and not on the parent cardboard. Anyone reaching this target at least fifteen times would automatically be eligible to enter a future draw involving luxurious prizes viz. HTC Smart phones and several other lavish gifts.

The entire team was present at the event to market their newly-found business and to participate in this thrilling fair. Two of the four entrepreneurs of the Q8-Pad team are young students at AUK, Majid A. Mahmoud, and Ali H. Atesh. Both of them, 21 and 20 years of age respectively, are not only studious academically, but also are active part-time employees at AUK. The other two participants are Mohammed Al-Sayegh and Ali Bin-Shaibah. Mohammed is a 24 years old employee at the Ministry of Oil and also is

a Freelance Photographer while Ali is a 23 years old CBA student and is a part-time employee at NBK.

Q8Pad is a promising online advertising platform that offers great deals of prices for business subscriptions. Anybody who is a "somebody," and would like people to know about it, is the target of Q8-Pad. It advertises the different subscribers in an iPad sort of outlay (thence the origin of the name, Q8-Pad, is apparent), offering maximum visibility, along with visitor convenience. The business's impressive slogan is 'Updating You,' and it surely serves that statement with the content it offers. For further information, people are also encouraged to write to them at info@q8pad.com or submit@q8pad.com.

According to Q8-Pad's website, www.q8pad.com, Q8-Pad finds the great deals in Kuwait and puts them all in one place; it is a place that has been created by four young men for the residents of the country as it is something that they want and a platform that "Kuwait Really Needs."

"Reflecting a mini arena, grounded close to the Multipurpose Room, a large square cardboard stood almost anchored within, hugging several large plastic cups that longed for every paint-ball shot."



Starbucks AUK Art Competition

BY FARAH AL-SHAMALI

even more impressive when they complete their artwork in front of a live audience for a designated amount of time. Speaking of which, a few of these students did so by participating in the Starbucks AUK Student Art Competition which took place on April 5th from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Setting up shop at the very back of Starbucks where tables and chairs would usually be placed, Anam Rasheed, Uros Lukic, Sarah Al-Faraj, Aisha Al-Jiran, and Helene El-Neaman had their blank canvases before them (and a little extra ones on the side in case they made a mistake and had to start over) and brushes in hand. Uros and Sarah constituted one team while Anam was aided by her brother, Ahmed. They each had a finished picture to refer to while painting; each of their illustrations depicted fascinating concepts such as Helene's rendition of a musical artwork that featured instruments. The finished pieces displayed astute professionalism and a frugal use of color to capture the right amount of artistic expression. Unanimously, they were gushing with life and the artists all made good use of a variety of brush strokes that gave the paintings character.

While some painted stories and had viewers analyze their deeper meanings, others took the approach of piecing together fragments that came together rather nicely. There was some form of

unity among some of the paintings presented by way of the abundant, bright colors and some even daringly experimented by putting some alongside one another in an unorthodox fashion. All in all, they left lasting impressions on anyone watching them or those who passed by after their completion. These students definitely have a flair for the delicate art of painting for not anyone can tread upon this territory.

The winners of the Startbucks AUK Art Competition are as follows: Sarah Al-Faraj and Uros Lukic - first place, Aisha Al-Jiran - second place, Helene El-Neaman - third place, and Anam Rasheed - fourth place.

When asked about the nature of the competition and what it has helped to achieve, Dr. William Andersen, who had organized it along with Starbucks, had this to say: "The Starbucks' AUK Student Art Competition was an important 'real-world' creative opportunity for our students and I hope that it can become an annual event. This year it was groundbreaking that this was the first time Starbucks has worked with a university to hold an art competition in the Middle East. It is pretty hard to pick just one winner of the competition since each student finalist worked hard all day and created some pretty great paintings, each with its own unique style and idea."

Below: One of the paintings, Helene's completed artwork



Helene Al-Neaman



Uros Lukic and Sarah Al-Faraj.



Aisha Al-Jiran

Graffiti Panel at the 6th Annual Art Exhibition

BY ART FACTORY CLUB

The 6th Annual Art Exhibition took place on Sunday, April 24th and featured brilliant student artwork in several areas such as painting and photography. New to the event was a large black panel at the back of the Art Exhibition which was left blank to decorate. With this addition, student talents and efforts came together to create something that fully represented their combined labors in preparing for this monumental event. Helene El-Neaman, President of the Art Factory Club, volunteered to initiate and design a personalized graffiti with the words "ART EXHIBIT 2011," voluntarily coming the weekend before the event to paint it. First, she started with pencil on the black panels and drew in the street-styled words. Next she painted the outline with white paint as a base color so the added colors would appear

brighter. Noura Al-Ajmi and Alia Mustafa, President and Vice President of the Art Club respectively, were present that weekend to help post doodles that were created by their club members to go around the graffiti as planned out by Laveena Lobo, Senior Coordinator of Campus Life. They assisted Helene with painting the graffiti. It took the team a whole fun-filled Saturday to get it ready in time for the opening of the exhibition which was the following day at 5:00 pm. Although her original design had bright-colored graffiti, it was getting late so the team only managed to have the words in white. She did complete painting it live on Monday as the Art Exhibition took place. Between Saturday and Monday, students, guests, faculty and some staff stood and watched as the graffiti was being painted - it was something like a live painting

show for them. The graffiti was completed Monday evening at 7:30 pm. Every day, more and more visitors and students had stopped to take a photo or have it taken with the graffiti as well as the rest of the decoration.

At the far end of the wall, the Office of Student Life left a "Leave your mark" section for the visitors and students to draw a picture with the paper and art materials provided and post it on the wall so that everyone can be engaged with the art exhibition - the number of drawings increased by day. The whole black panel at the front surrounding the graffiti was artistically decorated by Ghaneema Al-Qudmani, Vice President of the Graphic Design Club, and other volunteers. The result was not only the largest piece of artwork in the exhibition, but a symbol of magnificent teamwork!



From left to right, Noura Al-Ajmi, Helene El-Neaman, and Alia Mustafa.
Below: The finished graffiti.



"The result was not only the largest piece of artwork in the exhibition, but a symbol of magnificent teamwork!"

My Thoughts Raining

BY MARIAM AL-RAHMAN

- h When you think different, you feel alone.
- h Sometimes we do not have a reason to say I like you.
- h Sometimes we give others gifts because we just need to feel comfortable and love ourselves.
- h The world will be fine if love is the leader.
- h Forgiveness is the best gift to people.
- h If you are alive with love, everyone loves you and without it you feel that nobody wants you.
- h Your questions show who you are.
- h You confessed, so you succeed.
- h Freedom makes a creative job.
- h Do not follow old customs but create new customs.
- h Hold your mouth in front of ignorance and use your mind with wisdom.

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI

in the Auditorium on April 7th, held by the AUK Center for Poetical Science. In the panel, the presenters gave us an idea of how it was during the invasion. Mrs. Thuraya Al Baqsami presented several of her paintings while Mr. Walid Al Rujaib discussed some of his short stories written during the invasion. Dr. Khitam Khouli, Assistant Professor of Arabic at AUK, was the moderator of the event and gave the opening remarks. Dr. George Irani was also present at the panel and was kind enough to translate Mr. Walid Al Rujiab's speech to the audience.

Mrs. Thuraya Al Baqsami is an internationally renowned Kuwaiti artist. She displayed several of her artworks painted during the invasion, mostly human figures. She used to show her first painting for the invasion to those who were against it but she destroyed it because the soldiers used to kill them. She starts her presentation by saying that art saved her; it shows from the paintings that she puts her emotions into them and draws what she sees around her. There were paintings of the stories of rape during the occupation and about daily life during the occupation like waiting for bread. It showed how basic needs were hard to get and the sorrows the

Kuwaitis went through. The paintings she displayed in the presentation were painted with dark colors that gave a sense of sadness in each picture.

Through her paintings, she wanted to show that Kuwait was strong and powerful, while the Iraqi army was weak and ugly. In total, she had made 75 paintings during the invasion and showed them around the world later on. As for writing, she did not have anything written during the invasion because she couldn't write anything at that time. It was after the invasion that she did get to write and wrote ذكريات فطوكة.

Mr. Walid Al Rujaib is a scholar and prominent Kuwaiti writer who discussed the invasion's impact on his writing. He explained how major events impact the writer and from that event, the writer forms an opinion. A major event that gave Mr. Al Rujaib the biggest shock of his life was in August 1st, 1990 with the Iraqi invasion. He states that you can't carry both a pen and a rifle at the same time; he tried to do so. He first issued a publication called "the Free Patriots" but decided to stop writing because the woman who was giving them out was arrested. He joined the armed resistance and carried their guns while he learned

how to make gas cylinders. It affected his lifestyle and he had to move his residence five times for fear of being captured; even in the last few months, he was still being searched for by the Iraqi inspectors.

Later on, he also mentions an incident in which a soldier put a gun on his two year old son's head asking for his son's paper. It is after the liberation that he wrote a series of short stories which he was awarded a prize for in 1994. The protagonist of the story is a sword with the words "for your eyes" engraved into it. In the last of the series, when the hero raised the gun to shoot in joy that the war was over, he looked north then south then east and said, "I better keep it just in case." He implies that danger in Kuwait is not over yet, which was a very powerful note to end the lecture with. Mr. Al Julaib gave a very captivating speech with the



Mrs. Al-Baqsami during her presentation.

audience enraptured by his experience during the invasion and the powerful message he had in his short story. When asked about how he was able to take on his position during the invasion, he replied, how can't he? It is his country, his nation, and if need be, he is ready to hold a gun if a war happens again.

This is the new generation after the invasion but we can still understand and relate to those who lived through it by looking at what others left behind.

A Student's Achievement

BY FATIMA IBRAHEEM



It is only in events such as these that our talented students get highlighted. Mariam Fadel, a student at the American University of Kuwait, exhibited her passion towards poetry in the Al-Kout Festival, wherein she recited a poem in Arabic that includes some of the professors who made a difference in her university life as a student. She was called to read her poem again to the large audience, which included President Winfred Thompson, Dean Nizar Hamzeh and US Ambassador Deborah Jones, after she had finished reading it. Members of the audience showed interest in listening to the recitation and the content of the unique aspects that her poem possessed.

"I mentioned some of my favourite professors such as Dr. James McDougall, Dr. Rawda Awwad and Dr. Kathryn Kleypas. And some of them were curious in regards to what I have mentioned about them in my poem!" When asked about the descriptions she ascribed to these particular professors in her poem, she said "I related Professor McDougall with his vast knowledge in the field of literature, Dr. Rawda in her excellence in the art of speech and Dr. Kathryn in her way of teaching us the art of writing."

Mariam Fadel was skilled in combining her talents of conventional poetry with a sense of humour. She usually writes in Classical, *fus-ha* Arabic; however, her creativity led her to write this poem using the Kuwaiti dialect, to fit the festival's Kuwaiti ambiance and theme.

She is currently a senior at AUK, majoring in English Language and Literature, and has already obtained a Diploma in Law from a previous college in Kuwait. She is a member of the Creative Youth's Gathering established by the Kuwait Writers Association. She has also contributed to the field of journalism as a former writer of a column in both *Alam Al-Yawm* and *Al-Rai* newspapers, two prominent Kuwaiti local newspapers. Some of her literary works and poetry have been published in local papers. Mariam also presented in several

poetry evenings in Kuwait, one of which was during the Al-Kout Festival. The following is her poem in Arabic:

الكلّاس له وقت و صدقيني حاضرين

ما قلنا شي نحضر للصّف و بسكات

لكن بعض المواد بدل الدرس

درسين

و جرعة ضخمة من هالاسيّهات

لو تشوفين الوجه قلتي: مساكين

نكسر الخاطر و ندعم الابواب

لكن بعد كل هالصرّاحة تصدقين

بحياتي ما شفت فيك احزاب

اختلفنا شكل و مظاهر و لونين

و ما همنّا الا نظلّ معا اصحاب

و نتمنى بدال روضة روضتين

تشرح لنا قصص و فن الخطّاب

و عرفنا معنى الأدب و اللغة زين

و كيف الدراسة يركع له الذباب

و فن الكتابة على يد كاترين

و جميس و من عرفهم ما خاب

Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society Members Excel at Pittsburgh Conference

BY SIGMA TAU DELTA

event to a largely uninformed American audience. She emphasized the revolutionary hero, Imam Hussein, whose bravery in the face of fighting injustice still serves as a model for contemporary uprisings such as the recent Egyptian Revolution. Her argument is that the universality of his vision transcends timeframe and geographic space to reject injustice and oppression. Dawn Megli-Thuna, one American student who attended both presentations commented, "I have to tell you that I enjoyed both of your presentations immensely and was very moved. I feel like your brand of academic ambassadorship is so important because there is so little awareness of Arabic culture in the West. The beauty of Arabic poetry is sure to be a vital component in bringing others to love that part of the globe. As for your [Fatima's] individual paper; it's such an epic story and dovetails beautifully with the medieval style. You seem like such a strong and intelligent woman and I wonder at the confluence of events that produced that." When asked about her conference experience, Chapter President, Fatima Ibraheem said, "I went to Pittsburgh with a specific and significant message in mind to share with the American peers we met over there. This message was my greatest motivation that drove me to leave school for almost a week and board a 14-hour flight - the longest flight so far. I have to say that the degree of interest some of the American students exhibited in wanting to learn more was very impressive." As part of the question/answer session, during her individual paper, Fatima was asked about the purpose of her individual paper. She answered, "I was aiming to produce an intellectual, yet creative original piece by intertwining Islamic history with medieval literature, attempting to imitate what most scholars do when producing original pieces. I hope I was able to satisfy, at least, a fraction of that. Part of my aim was also to expose to you the beautiful face of Islam that is unfortunately masked with thick layers." AUK's chapter earned the most prestigious chapter award offered by the International Honor Society. It was of one of three chapters, out of nearly 800 chapters in the organization to earn the Outstanding Chapter Award. In the report provided by the judges, the chapter was cited for its "amazing variety of exciting projects and special events" and that it displayed "an extraordinary enthusiasm for,

and excitement about, the discipline of English." This Outstanding Chapter Award is particularly important for the chapter because this is the first time in the Society's 87 year history that an international chapter has received this distinction. It also is a testimony to the creativity of the AUK student members who have excelled in English language and literature studies said Dr. William C. Johnson, Executive Director of Sigma Tau Delta. He added that "the Society is very proud of what Dr. Nixon and the AUK students have done to turn the Alpha Rho Eta chapter into one that is a model for English honor students everywhere." Citing all members of the organization who helped the group earn their distinction, faculty advisor Dr. Kathy Nixon said, "I am so proud of the students Nur Soliman, Nuha Al-Fadli, Fatima Ibraheem, Dana Al-Failakawi, Alia Aref, Kawther Sadeq, Noura Al-Ajmi, Amal Behbehani, Hawraa Ashour, Abdulaziz Al-Hagan, Amnah Ibraheem and Iman Askar for their attention to academics and their dedication to the study of English that it took for them to earn this award. It is an honor for me to work with such wonderful students." At the convention, the AUK students also earned the Outstanding Chapter Display award for creating a display table that depicted the life of the chapter at AUK. The students were also invited to a private reception with author Lorene Carey to present her a DVD copy of selections from the impromptu translations of her book Black Ice into Arabic. AUK students, staff, and faculty made the recording during the 2011 Common Reader Event at AUK. All members of the honor society were asked to read the book designated as the common reader before the convention.



Chapter President, Fatima Ibraheem, while discussing her paper.

May 4, 1494



During his second journey of exploration in the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica.

The British passenger ship Lusitania was torpedoed by a German submarine off the of Ireland, losing 1,198 of its 1,924 passengers, including 114 Americans. The attack hastened neutral America's entry into World War I.



May 7, 1915

May 10, 1994



Former political prisoner Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of South Africa. Mandela had won the first free election in South Africa despite attempts various political foes to deter the outcome.

George VI was crowned at Westminster Abbey in London, following the abdication of his brother, Edward VIII. King George reigned until his death in 1952. He was succeeded by his daughter Elizabeth, the current reigning monarch



May 12, 1937

May 14, 1804



Meriwether Lewis and William Clark departed St. Louis their expedition to explore the Northwest . They arrived at the Pacific coast of Oregon in November of 1805 and returned Louis in September of 1806, completing a journey of about 6,000 miles

Smallpox vaccine was developed by Dr. Edward Jenner, physician in rural England. He coined the term vaccination for new procedure of injecting a milder form of the disease into healthy persons resulting in immunity. Within 18 months, 12,000 persons in England had been vaccinated and the number of smallpox deaths dropped by two-thirds.



May 14, 1796

May 18, 1804



Napoleon Bonaparte became Emperor of France, snatching the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII VII during the actual coronation ceremony, and then crowning himself.

Mount St. Helens volcano erupted in southwestern Washington State spewing steam and ash over 11 miles into the sky. This was the first major eruption since 1857.



May 18, 1980

May 18, 1998



In one of the biggest antitrust lawsuits of the 20th century, American software giant Microsoft Corporation was sued by the U.S. Federal government and 20 state governments charging the company with using unfair tactics to crush competition and restrict choices for consumers.

Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. She departed Newfoundland, Canada, at 7 p.m. and landed near Londonderry, Ireland, completing a 2,026-mile flight in about 13 hours. Five years later, along with her navigator Fred Noonan, she disappeared while trying to fly her twin-engine plane around the equator.



May 20, 1932

May 21, 1881



The American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton. The organization today provides volunteer disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad. Community services include collecting and distributing donated blood, and teaching health and safety classes.

Telegraph inventor Samuel Morse sent the first official telegraph message, "What hath God wrought?" from the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., to Baltimore.



May 24, 1844

May 27, 1937



In San Francisco, 200,000 people celebrated the grand opening of the Golden Gate Bridge by strolling across it.

Amnesty International was founded by London lawyer Peter Berenson. He read about the arrest of a group of of a group of students in Portugal then launched a one-year campaign to free them called Appeal for Amnesty. Today Amnesty International has over a million members in 150 countries working to free prisoners of conscience, stop torture and the death penalty, and guarantee human rights for women.



May 28, 1961

May 29, 1453



The city of Constantinople was captured by the Turks, who renamed it Istanbul. This marked the end of the Byzantine Empire as Istanbul became the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

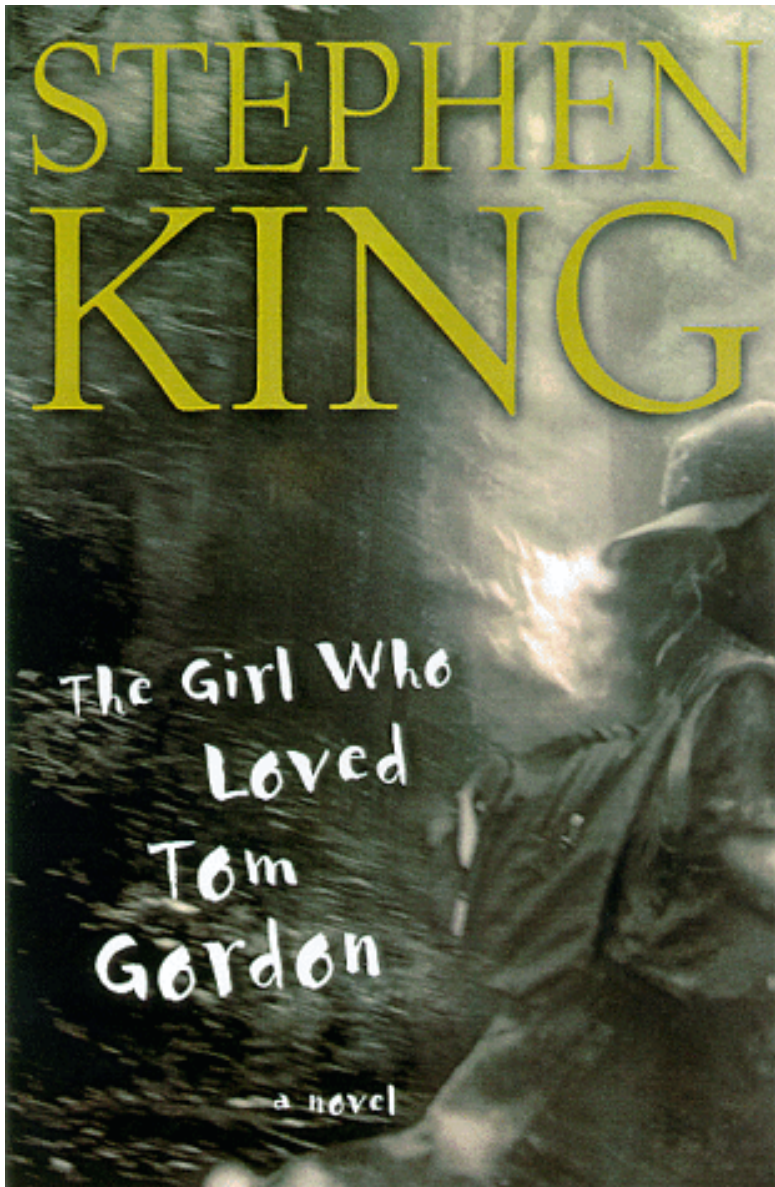
The Pennsylvania Evening Post became the first daily newspaper published in Americ.



May 30, 1783

The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon

BY NADA EL-BADRY



Stephen King is known as one of the best horror novelists in the world; he’s also a personal favorite author of mine. With his vivid and unique style of writing and his tendency to get graphic enough that even those with the strongest stomach get squeamish, Stephan King has definitely made his mark in the world of fiction. One of the latest novels of his that I have read, *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*, was particularly outstanding, since most of the novel revolved around only one character and, yet, King managed to capture and hold my interest throughout the novel.

In simple terms, it describes the experiences of an eleven-year-old girl, Trisha, who gets lost in the woods while hiking with her mother and brother. Tired of their constant bickering, she had wandered

away from the path, only to find herself unable to find her way back. As always, Stephen King is shameless with his descriptions, describing the obstacles that Trisha faces with his usual, explicit flare, somehow managing to keep a realistic feel to the novel in a way no one else would be able to capture. He doesn’t feel the need to tiptoe around certain subjects and keeps it accurate, down to every single mosquito bite Trisha suffers from. As time wears on, Trisha begins to hallucinate, imagining her family and, more importantly, her hero, the baseball player, Tom Gordon. She converses with them as if they’re there and doesn’t seem to believe there is anything wrong with that. It’s one of the things that keeps her going.

The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon is riddled with themes; one symbol that truly struck me was the image of death as portrayed by a little girl. Of course, Trisha herself doesn’t know that its death she’s imagining; instead, she thinks of it as an enemy, a predator that’s hunting her down through the forest. When she first sees it, it’s a gruesome, terrifying, hooded

thing. Somehow, she manages to get away. The “creature” follows her throughout her time in the forest and makes a second appearance when she’s about to make her escape. She “fights” it off – with her walkman, and it’s in that moment that she’s found by an older man. To the man, the creature is a bear and he’s prepared to shoot it when it backs down and she’s returned to safety.

I strongly recommend, if stronger-than-usual themes do not bother you and you’re not the type to get too squeamish, that you read *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*. And even if you *are* the squeamish type, try to power through it and give this novel a try because it is definitely worth it.

A New Chapter on the Supernatural: The Mercy Thompson Novels

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI

Are you fed up with werewolves and vampires? Fed up with supernatural romance popping out everywhere? How about a coyote then? Take a break from *Twilight* and *TrueBlood* and enter the world of Mercy Thompson, a mechanic and a shapeshifter with interesting friends. There is, for instance, her werewolf boyfriend, her fae boss and a vampire who is into *Scooby Doo*. Throw in a pack of wolves and some serious trouble and you get a piece of Mercy’s life. What keeps her alive is that she’s really lucky, has some common sense (most of the time), and the ability to change into a coyote. Also being a car mechanic with a Degree in History doesn’t hurt.

Mercy Thompson is a character by Patricia Briggs, the author of *The Mercy Thompson novels*. There is up to six books now in the series: *Moon Called*, *Blood Bound*, *Iron Kissed*, *Bone Crossed*, *Silver Borne* and *River Marked*. In each novel, Mercy takes on a problem that eventually leads to a full on crisis. Briggs keeps you guessing at the outcome of each fight and throws in some short, funny comments that you need to keep an eye out for to get. The way she writes makes you not want to let go of the book.

What makes Mercy a different character than the usual supernatural stories is that she is independent. Sure she has the wolf pack protecting her, but she doesn’t go running around moaning and crying about monsters. She takes care of herself and makes sure to point out if someone wronged her. She doesn’t wait for a werewolf or a vampire to come and save her. She knows her limits and knows that though her supernatural friends are friendly with her, they still have sharp teeth that would be okay with taking a bite of her.

Romance is brief in Mercy’s life. At the beginning of the series there are hints here and there about certain admirer of hers. But mostly, the stories focus on solving cases that she gets tangled in. There is enough attraction to keep the romantic entertained, but not too much as to make you feel like you are reading a supernatural soap opera.

Start reading *Moon Called* and I’m sure you’re bound to pick up the second novel as you get to know Mercy and her inner coyote.



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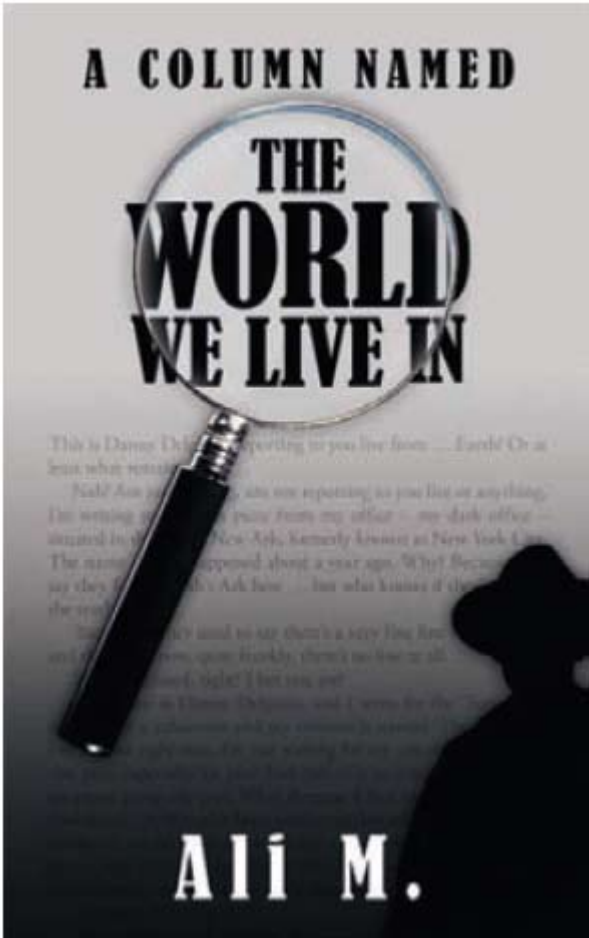
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Upcoming Kuwaiti Author Releases First Book

BY AL-WATAN DAILY



His first publication, *A Column Called the World We Live In*.

his native language is Arabic, from the year 2000 all the way

his book is published in English with hopes for Arabic translation in the future.

His book is set in the not-so-distant future and follows the lives of several different characters living in different places around the world at different times. The novel is composed of many short stories that

go back and forth

up to 2014; from Argentina to New York and to the Middle East as well.

More so, the book tackles many of the modern day issues that exist in our lives, in addition to the issues that have passed and those that are yet to come; tales of love, passion, sacrifice, betrayal and political lies. His characters include a wide range of personalities from different backgrounds, race and religion. On one hand, there’s Mohammed, a Muslim soldier, who is one of the main characters fighting in the battle of World War III; on the other, there’s Al, your average, young guy who turns into a successful entrepreneur and is in love with Faith.

Faith, coming from the Arabic word “Iman” is a seductress queen who unfortunately realizes her love for Al when it’s too late. In addition, his characters include Ambrose, a philanthropist and traveling journalist who ends up meeting Mohammed and is greatly influenced by her encounter with him. Another character is Danny Delginio, an



Kuwaiti author, Ali Al-Momen.

American writer who has been trying to make sense of life and the world we live in.

Al-Momen’s inspiration for the book not only comes from his experiences but also from historical figures and influences in his life such as Albert Einstein and Paul Coelho. When talking about the character of Mohammed,

Al-Momen states that this was his way of foreshadowing current events in our region. He says, “The message of the book is mainly for Western people because they still don’t know about our culture. I wanted to show the difference between a man defending his country and a terrorist.”

Another interesting character is Danny Delginio who, like the

author himself, is frustrated with the power of technology and enjoys the conventional way of writing; paper and pen. Ironically, in the book, trees are mined for weaponry, music and movies no longer exist, and writing with pen and paper has almost vanished. In addition Al-Momen says, “I wanted to be creative; when the reader reads my novel, I wanted them to see a movie within the story.”

Al-Momen is the first Kuwaiti author to have his novel featured at the Frankfurt Book Fair (the largest book fair in the world).

More so, he is a man of many talents besides his numerous side interests which include business, soccer, tennis and scuba diving. He is currently pursuing his MBA at the American University of the East. He is also currently working on his second novel which will hopefully be released within the next two years.

The book can be obtained at Amazon, Authorhouse USA/UK, Barnes&Nobles, and EBook.

How to Deal with an ‘Impossible’ Group Member?

BY ISHA HAIDER

however, just like how all fingers in one hand are not equal, there was one poor soul lurching uncontrollably down the wrong lane. So we all mutually agreed upon a meeting and gathered at the assigned time, but blatantly, our aggregation turned out not to find her presence. We shifted the time of the gathering and fortunately succeeded in having all members of the group present. We then discussed and prepared a timeline with a foundation of mutual acceptance and cooperation. She was there smiling her agreement at every level, and moreover forcefully declaring that our project will be great if the proposed implementation was successfully done. It was funny when the next day, during class, we found she had complained to the professor over the inhumane compulsion we were

exerting upon her. It's hard to explain this behavior, but passive-aggressive people are generally pretty angry inside. Maybe jealousy or laziness might be the correct ingredients for this concoction. They do not know how to express the anger within themselves. As a result, they attempt to exert control over a situation in a passive manner, which often appears on the surface to be cooperative, but outcomes consistently demonstrate aggressive resistance. "Oh, look at me! I'm not going to do what you say because I'm better than you. I'm just going to agree on everything you say, but then just not do it, because I'm better than you" (Ominous music goes here). Umm OK (One eyebrow raised) ... You're not better; you're just passive-aggressive. It's sad how you don't even

realize your psychological illness! Stop being a cry-baby desperate for control and attention. Make yourself deserving of it by cooperation and commitment. If you're stuck with an impossible person, you're involved! If the quality of your productivity in group assignments is being undermined by such a person, you must address and confront it. If you don't, you yourself will be a part of the problem and exponentially perpetuate this manipulative nightmare into greater deterioration. Three ways have been outlined by Amy Jen Su and Muriel Maignan Wilkins, from Harvard Business Review, as being the suggestions to deal with such a type of people. If you have a person who says something but acts otherwise, try the following:

- a) Give Feedback: Begin with

communication. The person probably did not completely understand what was required from them. Describe what is manifested by their behavior, and ask for the reasons behind their failure to comply. That being said, I am not suggesting that you all gang up on them but instead, initially establish effective rapport and a friendly atmosphere while confronting them very lightly. Describe to them the impact of their behavior on the work at hand, on the group, and on what might deem worthy for them themselves, i.e. the final grade. Provide suggestions for how they might change. Make sure you don't present yourself in a way that other takes personally. Don't be direct, but make your point.

- b) Focus on Work, not the Person: Eventually, you need to get the work done, regardless of your peer's style,

so don't waste time hoping for them to change. Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst! Wishful thinking holds importance when ample time is on hand. Prioritize the completion of work.

- c) Ask for Commitment: Sometimes it is just better if you start effectively and efficiently from the beginning itself by requiring group individuals (including the troublemaker) to separately, at the end of every group discussion, reiterate what was discussed in the meeting, what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and individual responsibilities. Sometimes these people will understand and cooperate, while some might not stop their passive-aggressiveness completely, but if they know that you're watching them, they will be far less likely to test your nerves a second time.

BY HAWRAA ASHOUR



Following the various events of the 2011 revolutions was the Japanese earthquake. I wasn't sure what it triggered in me when I heard about it on the news or when I saw the aftermaths but it was at that point that I finally took action. Correct, it was pure desire to help a country in a crisis, but what made Japan different was that there was no political agenda behind the help, no sides, and no one calling my help a sort of alliance to an ethnic group; and so it began.

I was utterly amazed by the efforts that different individuals put in to help the Japan operation. People from all over the internet managed a Google spreadsheet with lists of Japanese artists and their statuses, if alive, still missing, or dead in the aftermaths of the earthquake. Others began a Tumblr account calling for designers to design flyers, shirts, or any type of material with the message of hope for Japan, provided that proceeds go directly to the various charities or donation organizations. Others started a LiveJournal community called help_japan where people from all over the globe, offered different services, and placed them on auction. Winners of these auctions would donate on behalf of the auction they won, in exchange for the item. The categories included but were not limited to Words, Art and Artistry, Graphics, Food, Audio, Interesting Stuff, and, finally, Requests. The professional organization and following up on these auctions was, in itself, an amazing extended effort. At this point, the first auction ended with an entail number of \$45,743.10 in donations. Following the closing of this auction, another one might take place but that remains to

be seen. It is not my agenda to solely promote these groups and place Japan on a higher pedestal than any other country that needs collective help; it is just my desire to introduce the concept of providing aid to countries as something purely selfless. It has no origin, no political move towards it. I look at people offering everything and anything to contribute, if not by money, then something that can be traded for money. This makes me sad when I see responses to the need for medical help in Bahrain, how issues like Palestine, Libya and Bahrain get sidelined in the news and the seriousness gets downplayed. The concept of donations and providing help should always transcend labels, ethnicities, religious affiliation and any other dividing barrier; sometimes, even the word human becomes a label. Animals, just as much as humans, become helpless victims that require aid and help. Whilst humans can pick themselves up and shoulder the burden of starting over, animals do not get that choice, especially if we forget that our aid should extend to them.

In writing this, I'm hoping that people recognize and support any given organization they choose: local or international. With funds and offers of the use of our talents or just spreading the message around, any little effort makes us all part of the same family and that, in turn, makes our world just that much better.

Special shout out to the Voice's Annual Blood Drive.

Links: <http://designforjapan.tumblr.com/> and <http://help-japan.livejournal.com/>.

A Better Place

"The concept of donations and providing help should always transcend labels, ethnicities, religious affiliation and any other dividing barrier; sometimes, even the word human becomes a label."



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Here, members of the Voice of AUK's Editorial Board speak their minds on a range of issues.

Christians of Kuwait

BY DALAL MARAFIE



Every person in the world is different from any another. Each person has his/her own beliefs, faith, rites, doctrines, and religion. In many cases, religion has played a great role in each and every corner of the world. Religion is a system of life and a routine which people practice every day whether he/she is a Muslim, Christian or Jew. In addition, religion can be expressed through prayers, rituals and it is also considered a moral claim that can control a whole country and its politics which will ultimately affect society as a whole. For instance, Kuwait in the past had a great tolerance for all kinds of religions and doctrines wherein Sunnis, Shi'is, Christians and Jews lived together without any discrimination and judgments.

The Kuwaiti Christians remain a minority; they constitute around 200 to 250 of the population. It has been a debate that Kuwaiti Christians are not part of Kuwaiti society because they are not Muslims. As a result, they have been neglected by the citizens and the government which it is extremely sorrowful. Even though, they have the same beliefs that any Kuwaiti citizen believes in such as traditions, customs and social principles. They are still cast out of mainstream society. I have researched far too many articles about this topic but most of the information was vague. I have also interviewed Rev. Amanuel B. Ghareeb, the first and only Kuwaiti reverend in the Arabian Gulf for more clarification.

The Christian community began in the 1900s with a number of humanitarian projects conducted by the missionaries from the Reform Church of America. Despite the fact that the Kuwaiti Christians have their political rights as citizens, they are discriminated against and judged because of their religious affiliation. Though they have always shown loyalty towards the country, many people have managed to overlook that reality. For instance, they do have the right to vote but do not have the right to get elected for Parliament. According to Rev. Ghareeb, he is one of the people who were very happy that women got their political rights to vote and get elected. However, he wishes that one of the Christian citizens could be a minister in the Kuwaiti Parliament to speak on their behalf. He mentioned that Christians are eligible to becoming ministers. In spite of the fact that they have respectable

ambassadors such as Sa'eed Shamas and Sagheer Shubaiber who are happy and honored to represent Kuwait abroad, they feel prejudice directed towards them as Christian citizens. Additionally, Rev. Ghareeb said that the Christians have their religious freedom to practice their faith and also have a place of worship, the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait which is recognized by the government. They also have the freedom to import Bibles and teach Christian literature in all languages. Moreover, they maintain extreme freedom in inviting Christian preachers and reverends to visit their church in Kuwait. Yet, they cannot announce and evangelize in public because Kuwait is an Islamic country. Rev. Ghareeb states that the government has been tolerant towards churches in Kuwait. They are sponsoring all Christians, the leaders whom migrated from Egypt and Lebanon. The Christian people, Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti, fund the church with the money needed for necessary operations, events, and maintenance. The way I see it, the government must support all churches as they do mosques since it is considered as one of the historical monuments in Kuwait. Even though they represent Kuwaiti identity, people around them are ignoring the fact that they exist by discriminating against them, not giving them the right to get elected for Parliament and apply for citizenship. It is hard to omit their role in history as they are an essential branch of Kuwaiti traditions and customs. If we try to erase and neglect Kuwaiti Christians, we will be erasing and neglecting our own history. I guess that the government should support all Kuwaiti Christians and blur the lines between religions. On the other hand, Kuwait has been supporting every country, every Muslim, every tribe, and every person in need. But the people who have been loyal and never intended to shake the security of the only country they know are not supported and judged by the same country. In reality, Kuwaiti Christians are Kuwaitis; therefore, they have the right to be Kuwaitis and earn civic rights, politically and financially. I have learned in History 221, Survey of the Gulf, to look beyond what I see and see things from others' perspective. This class gave me the opportunity to walk in other peoples' shoes and never judge them based on their color, past, tribe and religion.

Slap is Mightier than the Sword

BY FATIMA IBRAHEEM



Have we ever believed that dictators in the Middle East would leave their throne in a matter of weeks? A one-second slap that sparked a humble Tunisian citizen who owns nothing more than a fruit cart was able to answer decade-old questions of intellectuals, theorists and political analysts. After a successful uprising that took place in Tunisia, Egypt came into play which linked a chain of events until today's genocides in Bahrain and Libya. It is important to realize the different aspects of some of these uprisings which made them transform into successful revolutions. However, the mission of some of these new-born countries is still not 100 percent accomplished. The aftermath of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, for instance, is only the beginning of the mission, not the end.

A dictator such as the former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, has held the throne for three decades. The effect of this is stunning, but latent. He engraved in the Egyptian population the sense of hopelessness in regards to any change to their country's miserable situation. Very similar to a bird that has been caged for a long period of time; when the bird is given a chance to leave with the cage door opened, it would most probably not fly away. That's because being jailed became more of the bird's habit, and hope becomes annihilated of its sense of freedom and so it becomes numb to the situation than hopeful. This is what Mubarak and despots like him do to their people; force them to subtly submit to the hopeless situation merging their own souls to be as hopeless and numb as the surrounding misery. We might say that Mubarak was able to do that for thirty years but his success was terminated, and this is the cycle for any dictatorship or autocracy; it doesn't require deep thinking to interpret that fact.

The different characteristics of the Egyptian revolution were appealing, and they add up like a jigsaw puzzle to make up a whole picture that reads: "How to Lead a Successful Revolution?" So, these few pieces of the jigsaw puzzle serve as a manual for us. First, the peaceful strategies that initiated such an uprising were the core of the revolution's success. If it wasn't for the peaceful strategies that the Egyptian people utilized

as an initiative, then it would remain an uprising and would not transform into a revolution. Their mature behavior made the government and Mubarak's allies look inhumane because the government's response to their protests was pure violence, which speaks for itself as being a dictatorship. This was what the world needed to see; a genuine dictatorship against people asking for their basic rights.

However, peaceful initiatives and demonstrations alone are not enough. That's why the Egyptian revolution teaches us that in addition to peace, persistence and resistance should not be forgotten. By being persistent and resistant, the Egyptian people decided that unity is the UHU 'glue' that can bind the people to one another, yet having a nasty smell that can keep predators away. The unity originated of the Egyptian average man, not connected with any factions and/or organizations, which makes their movement pure and genuine, hence successful. Interestingly enough, their unity is more figurative and literal. Their choice of "Maidan Al-Tahreer" or "Al-Tahreer Square" is symbolic as it reflects their unity which is the building block of their persistence and resistance. In its literal sense, the name of the area reflects their insights and visions before even turning their uprising into a revolution.

Elaborating on a very important aspect is that the uprising was free of political agendas and factions' motivations, which emphasizes the fact that the youth were the driving force. As pure as it becomes when it's free of any political agendas, it implies that the revolution was a shout of desperation in regards to the situation. The Egyptian people became aware that the dignity they once had was being slowly degraded. This sense was internally felt, yet at the same time, the Egyptians knew that their dignity was looked down upon by external forces too, outside their country. As much as "need is the mother of invention," this uprising is a reflection of the fact that there has been awareness in regards to dignity and how it needs to be questioned after thirty years of dictatorship; dignity that is being eaten away by external forces and their own conscience.

The fact that the Egyptian

people did not connect themselves with any factions to move also reiterates their awareness to the betrayal of some 'allies.' Big western countries who constantly claim to advocate democracy and human rights were not able to have the slightest courage to shout out loud; rather, they were only able to whisper clichéd words to the people so that Mubarak, the person responsible for recruiting their interests, would not hear them. We do not have to analyze the position of these countries; their place and voices during these recent revolutions speak for themselves. Even an immature child would realize that. We would not even bother questioning the weak position and cowardly voice of these powerful countries because we all know their deal and political agendas. It is not a bit stunning; it only needed a chain of incidents such as these uprisings to concretely prove our minds and thoughts.

This brings to our attention the fact that a country needs a constitution to run efficiently; one that is abided by, of course. A constitution is very much needed to, not just highlight the people's rights, but to organize the relationship between the leader and the people. The gap that most dictators try to create against their people can only be remedied by a constitution that will hold him/her accountable. The creation of a constitution for a country as big as Egypt should be the number-one step after the revolution. This is where the downfall of a dictator is not "mission accomplished" yet because it only serves as a wakeup call for restructuring and the reorganization of the country by returning, first and foremost, to the country's constitution, considering amendments, or create one if it doesn't already exist.

As an observer of the world stage, I can only say one thing that has served as a wake up for me at least. Simply put, governments of most countries do not represent their people. This is helpful when we think of stereotypes. Stereotypes are only sparked when governments misbehave and people try to resist ... and attack. One question to contemplate: if we, the average people, are able to understand and interpret these different facts, why can't governments?

Here, members of the Voice of AUK’s Editorial Board speak their minds on a range of issues.

Mecca: The Forgotten City

BY FARAH AL-SHAMALI



Boys playing soccer in the street with a crushed soda can.

For a Muslim, making the monumental journey to the holy cities of Medina and Mecca is an occasion of a lifetime and when it is the very first time for pilgrims to tread upon holy ground, feelings become somewhat of a cross between apprehension and unimaginable excitement. As for me, they ran a little deeper and were a lot more personal because my family’s origin happened to be from that area of the world and even though my ancestors lived eons ago, I felt a strong connection form when I went there in February and as I sat on the disfigured pavement with my family outside the airport in Medina waiting for a taxi cab.

We had gone to perform the *Umrah* – a pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time of the year save for during the *Hajj* season. I was immediately struck by the simplicity of this ancient city and, like any Kuwaiti who is deprived of scenic views, gawked at the sight of mountains in the distance. No, I did not reenact Julie Andrews’ 360 degree turns in the *Sound of Music* because they were nothing like that but were still a joy to look at. The feeling of being enclosed by this mountain range was exhilarating, so much so that I could hardly wait to go to Mecca once my father told me that the actual Ka’aba and the praying quarters than surround it, by extension, are at a lower geographical position than the rest of the city.

So this was it. We made arrangements to be driven from Medina to Mecca and as we made our way through the scorching desert, I could not help but think of how Muslims made the journey on foot centuries ago. As I mulled over these thoughts and thanked Henry Ford a million times over in my head, we had finally reached the holy city. The outskirts would have never prepared me for what I was to witness firsthand at and around the Ka’aba. I am, by nature, very inquisitive and analytical whenever I visit a country and this was certainly no exception since it is one that I relate to on so many levels.

This was my first time in Saudi Arabia, let alone Medina and Mecca, so I was, apart from religiously, quite perceptive of many of the social conventions that took place around me. The case of Saudi women was, to a certain extent, not really applicable here because any woman is expected to dress in certain attire regardless of where she comes from. So that was off the hook. What I really found disturbing was what my sisters and I encountered upon entering the Ka’aba. Islam, as a religion that has men and women on an equal footing in terms of mutual respect, was not the one I saw practiced behind the alabaster walls. Bearded sheikhs were stationed at almost every entrance/ exit into the praying quarters and, of course, at the Ka’aba. Are these learned men of Islam not educated enough to know that the religion has, in fact, branched into several factions? Do they not realize that they have absolutely no right to impose an exclusive practice onto anyone?

Muslims come from far and wide and are of several backgrounds. Why then is it that a sheikh comes up to my sisters and I an average of five times during every visit to remind us to don the burqa? What annoyed me most was the measures they executed to make sure women spent as little time as possible praying directly in front of the Ka’aba. If it was socially acceptable, I would have given them each a piece of my mind but I obviously held back and blew off some steam elsewhere. As soon as my sisters and I sat anywhere close to the Ka’aba, they would pop up and beckon us to leave. I hated their insecurity and the fact that men like this represented Islam in Mecca, its holiest city. My father would be forced to leave us at the door because segregation was fiercely imposed so we had no choice but to take in their criticism without rebutting it.

All this I withstood because I kept reminding myself of the grander purpose of my visit and did my very best to exhibit the qualities that Islam

encourages in Muslims but I was certainly not prepared for the atrocity I observed next. On the surface, Saudi Arabia is such an oil-rich country and people often go by the illusion that all of its citizens equally benefit from its wealth. Well, anyone who thinks this way has thought wrong. Some districts in Saudi Arabia are completely neglected by the government. It was truly a depressing sight: as soon as one steps outside of the Ka’aba, everything becomes desolate and lifeless. Children are dressed in rags and go around selling tissues in plastic wrappers to pedestrians and malls look like something out of a history book.

I looked into several faces and discerned that some of them wanted out of this miserable lifestyle and I could not help but wonder what brought them here in the first place. The Saudi government dumps truckloads of money to finance expanding the Ka’aba and building internationally renowned hotels because, apart from it being a religious obligation, Muslims around the world would object if they did not take proper care of it. But what about the people of Mecca? Why must they live like 18th century Londoners? Why is no one being vocal about their strife? This is a city that people from all walks of life come to. It is quite an embarrassment that it is so mismanaged. I truly

felt so much remorse for this glorious city that has been forgotten by a regime that does not seem to want to appreciate and preserve its past. If I was a Saudi, I would make my voice heard somehow, somehow.

“Muslims come from far and wide and are of several backgrounds. Why then is it that a sheikh comes up to my sisters and I an average of five times during every visit to remind us to don the burqa?”



A group of Mecca citizens having dinner on a pavement outside of the Ka’aba.

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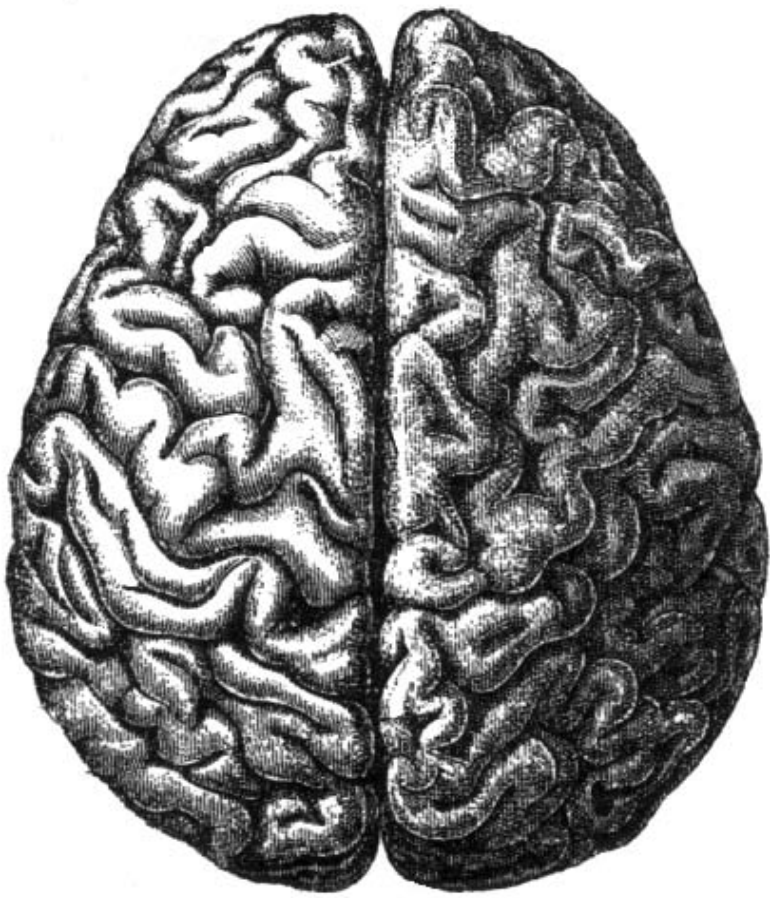
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Crossing New Frontiers: The Power of the Human Brain

BY: HUDA AL- RASHID



We are often told that the human brain's power is limitless, whether it's in terms of the ability to endlessly imagine or in relation to the ability to feel a range of different emotions. But, modern science and technology together are helping to truly unveil the true power of the brain and what it can really do without any help from its action-fulfilling counterpart, the human body. Based on certain, recent discoveries, it seems as though we have underestimated the power of the human brain.

After having my daily dose of articles from BBC news, I came across an article with an intriguing headline reading, the "World Premiere of the Brain Orchestra." Of course, having the words 'brain' and 'orchestra' simultaneously contained in a single phrase is quite peculiar. As a result, curiosity led me to further investigate just what that interesting phrase was referring to. It turns out that the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona was conducting a research project dealing with the creation of a "Synthetic, Perceptive, Emotive and Cognitive System (SPECS)," which is a system that aims to test how strong the human brain really is and how far it can go without the help of the human body.

Now, just how does this exactly work? Well, as a test drive, researchers placed caps on about two "performers" that contain electrodes that respond to the changing emotions noted in the human brain. In order for certain musical notes to appear, the performers had to watch a screen in front of them containing flashing rows and letters. This action stimulates signals from the brain which later transform this brain activity into music, with the help of several other high-tech signal transmitting devices. Furthermore, this orchestra even has its own "emotional conductor" leading the performers in the recital. The article also emphasizes that this whole idea is just one step

closer to understanding the essence of what we call the human's "consciousness." So, if you just don't have the natural talent of a world-famous violinist, this instrument can instead allow you to use your brain to deliver the magical notes of some of the famous pieces of Mozart and Beethoven.

Moving on from brain orchestras, modern-day science also presents a brain-controlled computer cursor. This new approach is based on the creation of a system called, "electrocorticography." This is an alternative to another similar system (EEG) used in the brain orchestra mentioned just now. Scientists claim that the positioning of the brain electrodes that do the "controlling" in a location closer to the brain's surface by surgically implanting it would intensify the ability to control things using your mind. You may be wondering: why would someone go to such extremes just to control a computer mouse? Well, this scientific discovery is meant for the disabled, especially with motor handicaps like those who are quadriplegic. This way, disabled humans could even go as far as controlling an electrical wheelchair by mere thoughts.

It seems that not only is our brain a gift in terms of providing us with the precious ability to think but it is also a means to open up new paths to those who never had hope for a cure in the past. The brain can now help those suffering from physical handicaps reach places that were unreachable before and can allow us to expand our imagination into how we could potentially become the next Yo-Yo Ma without having to dedicate our lives to playing the cello. So, next time you feel pressured by the expectations of a research paper or studying for a test for a class, keep in mind that the gooey, grey thing inside your skull is extremely powerful and is worth depending on if exercised properly of course!

"Well, this scientific discovery is meant for the disabled, especially with motor handicaps like those who are quadriplegic."

OMG! We're Weird!

BY ISHA HAIDER

Tickle yourself! Yes, tickle yourself. I will bet any amount of cash possible, if you succeed in that attempt. It's impossible for someone to tickle themselves by the way so don't waste your time trying, although I bet most of you have been very obedient already.

This sort of article is back on the front burner because of the shocking thumps I received a couple of days ago while browsing through a number of science books that I was tangled in when teaching my little brother for his upcoming Science exam. The chapters that were enjoined upon his preparation included matters related to the amazing facts about the human body. After reading the different facets of the chapters, I found myself awing to an extent I hadn't previously anticipated. Thence, I decided to share my jaw-dropping reading experience with my beloved and intellectual readers of the Voice!

The following selected facts shocked me right down to the bone. I know that they will do the same to you if you have a careful read over the respective. To begin with, we will talk about the wonders of our most beloved appendage, "The Nose:"

1) Smell: First, We all have a unique body odor (unless you have an identical twin)! So now we all can feel special about ourselves since our odor makes us unique. No wonder babies recognize the individual scents of their mothers.

Second, another fact is that women are better smellers than men, i.e. they can smell or recognize various scents better

than men. Just to clarify, I assure you that I am not being biased towards any orientation here, but the pure order of nature prefers women to be on top of the list (hehe).

Third, did you know that our nose can remember up to 50,000 different scents and, on top of that, identify its origin? Wow! Isn't it?

Now let's dive into the other mind-blowing facts about ourselves:

2) Saliva: Okay, forget about the diving part for now, but the amount of saliva we individually generate throughout our lives amounts to being sufficient to fill up two large swimming pools (and yes I am including the deep ends). From a scientific perspective, that might be comprehensible since saliva is a vital part of our digestion, and it might come as less of a shock that our mouth produces so much of it.

3) Bones: First of all, think twice before you crack your back and fingers next time since bones have the potential to self destruct (no countdown needed) if you do not force yourself to optimize your calcium intake.

Secondly, if you want to be a part of a beauty pageant, right after you get off the bed in the morning with your pajamas would be the right time to participate since we are taller in the morning relative to the rest of the day! Throughout the day, the cartilage between our bones is compressed, making us about 1 cm shorter by the day's end. For the short ones out there (including me), beggars can't be choosers, right?

4) Right-handedness: Do you want to live longer? Do you want to die late? Then make sure you use your right hand the next time you do a chore, or anything related to using one of your hands. Why? That is because you could live up to nine years longer than a lefty if you're right handed. One man's meat is another man's poison.

5) Brain Power: Who thinks Einstein was a mentally elevated individual? I don't. That's because he's just like us, and we don't even know our own hidden capabilities. The human brain cell can hold up to five times as much as information as the Encyclopedia Britannica. Wow, and you thought you were stupid.

Secondly, to process all that information or to do all the activities the brain is responsible for, it just needs the power of one light bulb, i.e. a 10 watt light bulb. Now you know that the cartoon image of a light bulb over our head when a great thought occurs isn't too far off the mark. Our vivacious brain generates as much as energy as a small light bulb even when we're sleeping!

I think I should bid adieu now, leaving you with the remarkable and touchy impression of how wonderful you are and the glory and magnificence of who created you. No matter how much we study, how much we examine, and how much we learn, we will never be able to unravel the reasons, let alone the basic fact of our existence and the beautiful segments of ourselves, let alone the entire creation.

Regular Fasting Gives Heart Health

BY FARAH AL-SHAMALI



Ramadan may be a few months away but fasting should not be exclusive to it. Really. We Muslims tend to confine it to just those thirty days and regard it as a purely religious obligation. Fact check: there are also health benefits involved. They are stipulated in the Islamic religion as well as by medical research centers but the act of fasting is largely attributed to spirituality. So tip-toeing our way around religion for a minute, just how beneficial is it to fast regularly? For one thing, it is good for the heart as it lessens the development of cardiovascular disease.

This is all according to a new study from doctors in Salt Lake City, Utah who looked at the

relationship between periodic fasting and cardiovascular disease. After interviewing 200 patients, the researchers arrived at this scientific deduction: people who fasted regularly had a 58 percent lower risk of getting coronary disease. Breaking it down logically, fasting will not do away with the possibility of heart failure but is definitely a preventive measure. The less time you are allocated to stuff all kinds of junk food down your throat, the less you are susceptible to a variety of diseases. A better functioning heart takes the gold since, well, you are pretty much a lifeless corpse without it.

In fact, some sort of campaign should be underway to introduce regular fasting into people's lives

which would eventually promote wellness. Of course, achieving this is near impossible since not one can really be forced to make that sort of lifestyle change. But all I ask is for, the reader, to mull over the idea and weigh the benefits. During Ramadan, we are all either at the peak of health or at the other end of the spectrum: those of you who pig out in the kitchen until the wee hours of dawn, you know yourselves. So it really constitutes a lot more than just making fasting a habit. Mentality, my friends. So become a part of your heart's healthier future and consider fasting frequently. If it was able to, it would thank you a million times over.

Thank you, Writing Center!

BY JOSE E. MANGIBIN

A few people who know me know that I have been aiming to join the United Nations (UN) ever since I arrived in Kuwait in 2007. So when I got a call last March that I was being offered a job at the UN and I needed to reply immediately if I would accept the position, I had a hard time making the decision. The news came with mixed emotions; I thought that I would be jumping for joy when I got the news but when I did, I was quite torn. On one hand, I would be fulfilling one of my life goals of joining the UN and making a career there; but on the other hand, I would be leaving a job that I really came to love and which I enjoyed going to every day (which is a rare feat for anyone who is working). However, as I have a family I need to provide for and as I have always been wishing to work at the UN, my logic needed to overtake my emotions; and so I accepted the job at the UN.

I myself was surprised at how mixed I felt at that time and how hard it was to make that decision. It just goes to show the old saying, “You don’t know what you got till it’s gone” rings true. I hadn’t even left the Writing Center, but I already started missing it and felt sad about leaving a place that I always felt at ease at and appreciated. Telling the news to my boss, Professor James McDougall, wasn’t a walk in the park either. However, being the great boss that he is, he congratulated me and said that I would be sorely missed. So now, as this is my final article for the Voice of AUK, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the Writing Center for the wonderful experiences I have had working there.

I remember I first joined the Writing Center in September 2007 as a part-time staff consultant under Dr. Mary Queen and then became a full-time employee on November 2008. So for my three and a half years at AUK, I can truly say that all I have for AUK, its students, faculty, and especially the Writing Center, is purely praise. This article may sound like I’m brown nosing and just creating hype for the Writing Center but it is totally genuine as by the time you read this piece, I won’t be in AUK anymore. For people who have worked in any part of the world (but Kuwait in particular), it is really hard to say that you have worked for a place that you didn’t feel underappreciated or underutilized. But I can say that I am one of the exceptional few who have always felt valued while I was working at the Writing Center. I always felt that I was put to good use and that all of my potential was used.

One of the greatest things that I really liked about working at the Writing Center is that the environment was always welcoming and you felt that you were a part of a supportive team. I’ve come from a few companies and organizations that had terrible and poisonous environments that made you dread coming to work where your co-workers were very selfish and where your boss was a total jerk (sorry, I can’t write the word I really want to say). At the Writing Center however, I can truly say that even though I worked mostly with university students, the student consultants at the Writing Center are much more professional and much more talented than people I have worked with who had Masters degrees or who had years of work experience under their belt. I can assuredly say that I am 100 percent sure the students who have worked and are currently working at the Writing Center have bright futures ahead of them.

One thing that I did not like about AUK was the way other department staff employees only said negative things about their student workers during a few inter-department meetings I attended. After attending those meetings, I really had no interest in joining them again. They would expect things and traits from their student workers that they themselves did not exemplify. I would hear one supervisor stating that he or she only had student workers that were bad apples, or who had failed to do their jobs properly and did not really want to do their jobs. Now, no one really applies for

a job and *wants* to fail or *wants* to do bad on purpose. Most of the time, employees get this way because they are not guided correctly or not appreciated. Let’s put it this way, if a football team is constantly losing, the management does not fire all the players; they fire the coach. So instead of supervisors just complaining about their student workers, they need to look at themselves for a while and see how they can improve and then later on, how they can improve their team of student workers.

Moreover, is that actually possible? To have only bad student workers and all your student workers are bad apples? Could it be possible that these departments never really took the time to have a strong selection process to choose their student workers? More importantly, could it be possible that they never trained them enough?

I think a lot of the supervisors fail to give these student workers the credit and respect they deserve. I really don’t think that it is sheer luck that the Writing Center has the best student workers. I believe we have the best student workers because of our strenuous recruitment process, our frequent training sessions and, most importantly, because of how we respect and support one another thus creating a united team and work-friendly environment.

Now before this article loses its focus, I would like to apologize to the other departments that hire student consultants and I’d like to emphasize that those meetings I went to were about a year ago. I haven’t gone back to these inter-department meetings due to the reasons I mentioned above so maybe things have changed. Moreover, I wrote the abovementioned things not in order to speak ill of these departments, but in the hopes that improvements can be made. I just think that kind of attitude does not help AUK or its student consultants.

Now that I have finished talking about this small aspect of AUK, I’ll get back on my main topic which is giving thanks to AUK and the Writing Center. Again, it may sound like I am repeating myself but I really cannot thank the Writing Center enough in regards to what it has done for me. Without gaining some new skills that I received at the Writing Center and which Professor McDougall helped me get and use to my full potential, I would have not gotten my new job at the UN.

I’d like to thank Professor McDougall for always giving me encouraging words and being an understanding boss who always made me feel that I was doing a good job. Feeling appreciated by your co-workers and your boss makes work not seem like “work” at all; and this is totally how Professor McDougall made me feel.

I would also like to say thank you to my former boss Professor Mary Queen, who took a chance on me and who always had encouraging words for me as well. One thing that I appreciate from both Professor McDougall and Professor Queen is that they were always concerned with my well being. Even though I would be leaving the Writing Center, they only wished me well and only had happy feelings for me.

Also, this letter of thanks would not be complete without saying thank you to my colleague and friend, Hanouf Al-Juhail. Even though she was the senior staff consultant at the Writing Center, Hanouf always treated me as her equal and made sure that students coming to the Writing Center knew this as well. Professor McDougall only recently pointed out to Hanouf and I that the way we worked together was so harmonious and that we really complimented each other’s strength but I never even noticed that as it all seemed so natural.

For three and a half years, I have worked with Hanouf; I never had any problems with our work environment given that our work ethic and styles meshed together so naturally. Another great aspect I got from Hanouf is I was able to learn so many things about Kuwait and

normal everyday life lessons from our talks. Hanouf was always a person I could ask for advice given that she knew me well and also only had good intentions for me.

The same goes for my other staff colleague, Kheiriyeh Ahmadi, who has always been a great person to talk to about history and religion. She has always been a person who sticks to her beliefs and I admire her for that. I’ve learned so many things from both Hanouf and Kheiriyeh that have made me into a broader and better person and I’m really thankful to both of them.

Finally, I would like to give a big “Thank you!” to all the student consultants, both former and current ones, who I have worked with during the past three and a half years. I would love to mention all the names of the consultants that I have worked with and individually go through their great qualities one by one, but I think this article would turn into a book. All I can say is due to the points I mentioned above, I once again stand firm on my belief that the student consultants we have here at the Writing Center are the best student workers at AUK. In regards to commitment, work ethic and all around character, the Writing Center student consultants cannot be rivaled - that is a fact!

I believe that the feeling of knowing someone has your back and the feeling that your colleagues care for you and respect you is a sentiment that has been a key to the Writing Center’s ongoing success. The moral fiber and quality of the consultants we have at the Writing Center, of both the past and present, is just simply amazing.

As a group, the Writing Center is probably the closest thing I can compare to a perfect organization that anyone would love to work for which makes it so hard to go. However, the bare fact remains that I do have to go and that life goes on. So again, I would like to say THANK YOU to each and every person at the Writing Center. The experiences, the new found knowledge, the acquaintances, and the friendships that were formed are all things that I will always remember and appreciate. Thanks again Writing Center and I pray for your continuous success!

“One thing that I did not like about AUK was the way other department staff employees only said negative things about their student workers during a few inter-department meetings I attended. After attending those meetings, I really had no interest in joining them again. They would expect things and traits from their student workers that they themselves did not exemplify.”

Dartmouth Intern at Writing Center

BY PR/MARKETING



Dartmouth intern, Travis Cramer.

Travis Michael Cramer, hailing from Portland, Oregon, is a member of the class of 2012 at Dartmouth College. He is an Anthropology major and is interested in Education Management. In the past, he has served as an executive of several extracurricular clubs, worked as a behavioral neuroscience research assistant, and participated in choir, musical theatre, and track and cross country running. On campus, he is involved in community service activities such as tutoring local elementary and middle school students and helping foreign students learn English.

He is also involved in a campus Christian group and is the Service and Philanthropy Chair of Zeta Psi Fraternity. Travis is looking forward to learning about the Middle East and meeting and working with the students, faculty, and staff of AUK. Travis will be working in the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, the Writing Center, and with the Student Success Center. Travis will be at AUK until the end of May 2011. This is the thirteenth time since 2005 an intern joins AUK from Dartmouth College.

We would like to wish Jose Mangibin a successful start at the United Nations and the very best in all his endeavors.

We will miss you!

