

The Voice of AUK

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KUWAIT • March 2016 •

MARCH in HISTORY

					1 1565 The city of Rio de Janeiro is founded.
2 1904 Dr. Seuss or Theodor Geisel (Author) is born.	3 1938 Oil is discovered in Saudi Arabia.	4 1801 Thomas Jefferson becomes the first US president inaugurated in Washington, DC.	5 1960 Elvis Presley gets out of the army.	6 1869 Dmitri Mendeleev presents the first periodic table.	
7 1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.	8 1884 Susan B. Anthony asks Congress for an amendment allowing women the right to vote.	9 1959 Barbie's official Birthday (the doll).	10 1876 Alexander Graham Bell makes the first successful telephone call.	11 1993 Janet Reno becomes the first female Attorney General of the United States.	
12 1894 Coca-Cola is sold in bottles for the first time.	13 1781 The planet Uranus is discovered by William Herschel.	14 1879 Albert Einstein (Physicist) is born.	15 44 BC Julius Caesar is stabbed to death by Marcus Brutus.	16 1850 The Scarlet Letter, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is published.	
17 1845 The rubber band is invented.	18 1979 Adam Levine (Singer for Maroon 5) is born.	19 1918 Time zones are established in the US.	20 1727 Sir Isaac Newton dies.	21 1857 100,000 people die in the earthquake in Tokyo, Japan.	
22 1963 The Beatles release their first album; Please, Please, Me.	23 1933 Adolf Hitler becomes Dictator of Germany.	24 1984 Chris Bosh (NBA Basketball player) is born.	25 1655 Titan, Saturn's largest moon, is discovered.	26 1953 Jonas Salk announces the Polio vaccine.	
27 1963 Quentin Tarantino (Movie director) is born.	28 1910 First seaplane takes off from a water runway.	29 2004 Ireland becomes the first country in the world to ban smoking in all work places, including bars and restaurants.	30 1993 In the comic strip Peanuts, Charlie Brown hits his first ever game-winning home run.	31 1993 Actor Brandon Lee is accidentally killed during the filming of The Crow.	

The Voice Members

Editor-in-Chief

Paola Schietekat

I'm Paola and I was born and raised in Mexico. Now I live in Kuwait and study International Relations. I attribute my misanthropy to politics and gender inequality, but I still enjoy political, philosophical and theological debate. I have a book published and hopefully more to come. I love literature and football. I also like Lego, dinosaurs, eggplant, videogames and series like Game of Thrones and Adventure Time.

Graphic Designer

Alaa' Dashti

I'm Ala'a Dashti, a 25 year-old graduate from Box Hill College, Kuwait with a diploma Graphic Design. I enrolled in AUK to continue and get my bachelors degree in Graphic Design. One of my initial projects for The Voice of AUK was the logo, which was successfully changed. I designed it to portray that all AUK'ers have the right to express their opinions freely.

General Reporter

Huda AlKotob

My name is Huda AlKotob. I'm a rather ordinary 19 year old Palestinian girl. Currently, I'm an Accounting major who anticipates graduating later this year. I like puddles, trampolines, learning, food, and furry animals. I often get that I resemble Zoey Deschanel and Jonah Hill.

General Reporter

Sara F. Ayesh

السلام عليكم. I'm a 19 year old sophomore majoring in Management. I enjoy being a fact debunker, and taking photographs; ironic occurrences are my favorite subject, selfies are not allowed. I hope to be a writer in the near future إن شاء الله.

Reporter

Abdullah A Al-Qouz

I'm Abdullah, a 21 years old junior student. Initially an English major with a hope to be an author/spokesman. I enjoy working in groups with saltiness, which is unaccepted quite often. I do it even when I'm working by my own and people think it's not funny. I won't stop because I think it is.

General Advisor

Iqbal AlHaddad

I'm Iqbal AlHaddad, I've done all my schooling abroad starting from New York to Beirut, Islamabad and finally the undergraduate and post graduate studies in Switzerland. I only returned to Kuwait after I started working and had a formal job. This is my seventh year at AUK. I'm married with three children, a son and two daughters. I like to challenge myself to explore new things. I'm into scuba diving, painting, Zumba, reading, traveling, exercising, fishing and walking.

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From Zero to Hero: The Magic behind Mistakes

By: Farah Hamoudah

During the first day of the spring semester of 2016, I was running late. It was the first time I'd driven my car to university, and, as a result, I had greatly underestimated the amount of time it would take me to find a parking space. Eventually, however, I parked my car, hurriedly grabbed a stack of books from the backseat and rushed briskly to the Sciences Building where I entered room A103 and set up on an empty desk. A few minutes later, the professor came in and greeted us to "International Relations 101." An alarming, dreadful, skittish expression then struck my face, not because I forgot my notebook or because class was about to begin, but because I was in the wrong room. After consulting with my phone app, I found that my actual class, at room A101, was just three feet away. I walked in, explaining the absurd circumstances of my condition and my flushed appearance, then immediately hid myself in the back row. At the beginning of class, I was embarrassed, confused and bitterly annoyed with myself, much like how most people feel when they've blundered. However, towards the end of class, my colleagues came up to me and told me how I "made their day," lightened their spirits and made them less nervous for their first class. That's when I realized how we don't take nearly enough time to laugh at ourselves and our golden, quirky, faulty moments.

Fault is prevalent and universal among all of us. We all know that to be true, but we hope that it won't be particularly true to ourselves. After eighteen years of making mistakes, fearing them and trying to dodge them away as if they were live bullets, I discovered that there is a certain majestic beauty, a phenomenal essence and a meaningful connotation behind these despised errors. Not only are errors inevitable, but their vital, comical and reckless natures make them the stepping stones that carve the path to our very own success stories. New and returning college students globally know better than anyone else that making mistakes, shortcomings and errors is as imminent and inescapable as breathing. Think about the last time you crammed for a test, or that time you didn't get the required textbook to class or how about when you bumped into the person in front of you because you were too busy glaring at your phone screen. If these things are bound to happen to all of us anyway, then why don't we use these mistakes and endeavors to our advantage as tools for personal growth and future prosperity? If you think about it, that despair or that sinking feeling in your stomach or the speechlessness you experience when you err is actually more of a mechanism of hope and a thought process designed to make you, the diligent college student,

ambitious about your future actions, thoughts, prospects and roles. In some peculiar way, we have misunderstood why it is necessary for us to stumble before we rise. We stumble so that we can jump higher, so we can reach greater horizons and become better people.

We stumble and fall because we won't be able to attain our challenging goals if we just stiffly stand around. Mistakes have been put forth in our paths in order to motivate us, to defy our limits, and to trigger a chain reaction that will set up a series of events which may lead to our ultimate triumphs and glories. After all, without the catalyst of fault to help us achieve our most impossible dreams, we may never dare be close to them since, without a doubt, mistakes help us learn and master tasks at an undeniably faster rate.

In a book titled "Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error," by Kathryn Schulz, the best-selling author, former columnist for "The New York Times," and self-proclaimed wrongologist asserts that we must all embrace, examine, love and cherish our mistakes, our faults and our worst regrets instead of discarding them into the back burner year after year, convincing ourselves that they've never existed. Instead of being smug with our right choices, we must be content with their seemingly awry counterparts and take pride in the mishaps that we face, for they are opportunities that lead us to question and, therefore, reflect on ourselves, our behaviors and decisions as well as allow us to make better choices in the future. Thus, guiding us not only to advancement but humbleness, confidence, courage and fortitude to constantly move towards our goals.

Another interesting aspect in the funny, bold world of bloopers is that, in social psychology, there exists a phenomenon called "The Pratfall Effect." This states that a casual mistake thrown around every now and then can increase people's likeability towards your endearing and down-to-earth person and can make you appear more attractive than those who seem perfect and defect-less and who are otherwise perceived socially distant and aloof. This theory was proposed and proved by Elliot Aronson, who is listed amongst the 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century. So, according to Aronson and his theory, spilling your morning cup of coffee, choosing to wear a pair of sweatpants on campus, or helplessly panting after only one flight of stairs can make you appear more charming and approachable and hence may expand your social circle of friends, acquaintances and colleagues who will tolerate you and your flaws. I would like to prompt the entire AUK community to face their decisions head-on and to embrace their consequences, no matter how dreary or unfortunate they seem to be. Failure is never an end point, but a turning point, guiding you to your ultimate summit. Instead of hesitating or delaying choices, make choices now! The more you make, the faster you'll go from being a rookie to being a master of your own craft.

Life After AUK for a CPEG/ELEG Major

By: Shahad Al-Failakawi

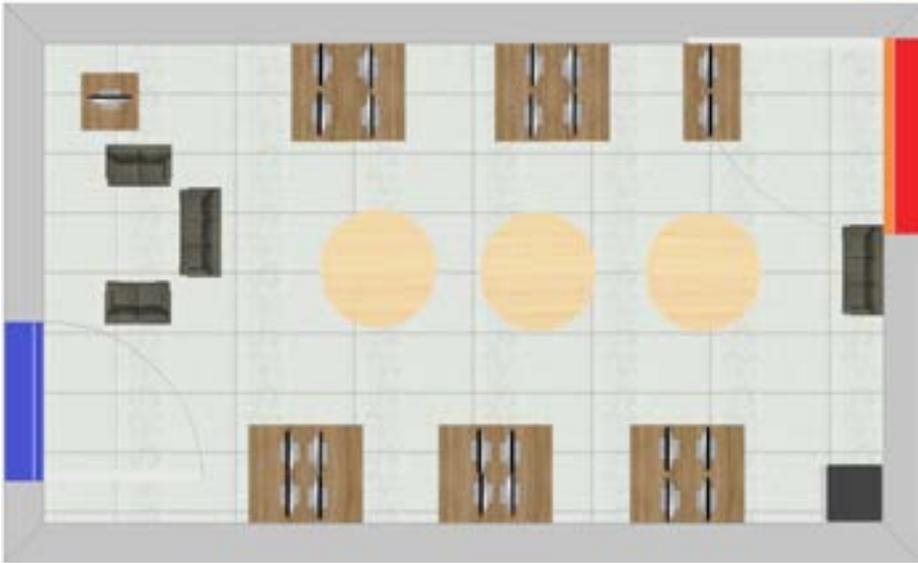
I got my bachelor's degree, what do I do now? We are introduced to many courses that help define our way of thought. This month, the major we focus on is Computer and Electrical Engineering. The use of the computer as a tool of design, synthesis, and analysis is fundamental to this major, and often we find that students are determined, creative and focused forward-looking individuals. Fortunately for them, a wide variety of interests and career goals come along with this major. Interests such as bio-engineering, mechanical systems or power system are easily adapted within the flexible curriculum. Students of this field may also be interested in areas such as digital theory, systems, and computer design.

John Hopkins University of Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering has a research-centered department that understands the industry demands for a broad skill set and innovative research and design. They offer a comprehensive and flexible Master's of Science in Engineering (MSE) degree program that includes courses from several areas of Electrical & Computer Engineering. Their main concentrations are:

- Communications
- Control Systems
- Language and Speech Processing
- Image Processing
- Microsystems and Computer Engineering
- Photonics and Optoelectronics
- Robotics

Regardless of which option you choose, an advanced degree from the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University will significantly enhance your career possibilities.





Are Authoritative Figures of AUK Mistrusting of its Students?

By: Huda Alkotob

CSIS seniors have anticipated the opening of their (cool) new lab, across the Clubs and Organizations room on the ground floor of the Liberal Arts building. This lab is one of a kind for our humble campus; it can only be opened by fingerprint scan and is equipped with impressive devices such as a state-of-the-art projector, a television, ten iMacs, fourteen desktop computers, four couches, four tables, swivel chairs, and a printer. This tech-heaven is accessed by CSIS seniors taking their capstone class, along with security of course.

This lab is a mandatory requirement to obtain ABET accreditation, which may explain as to why a supremely nifty lab can only be accessed by about ten students. Of those ten students, five are routinely found there at any given time. We shall call those five the 'dwellers of the lab.' It is fortunate that they are not just classmates, but also good friends. The dwellers of the lab took it one step further and added a refrigerator and a blanket to their new home, so now they only step outside the lab to smoke, use the water closet, or (sometimes) attend classes. Surprisingly, the dwellers have once been accused of tampering with the wires when a power outage took place once in December. A clean cut was found in one of the main wires supplying the

lab (which is connected to the open lab) with electricity, and fingers were pointed at the dwellers. The dwellers could only reciprocate a look of confusion and utter the words, "Really? You think we did this?" To which the accusers realized that it simply wasn't possible.

The lab lacks one item: an emergency exit. With the amount of wires packed into that space, one should anticipate a fire and place effective exit strategies in case of an emergency. Using the fingerprint-scan-door isn't the finest solution since it requires a push of a button from the inside to open the door, and if a fire does occur, that button may not work or would be harmful to use. There is one door on the other side of the lab; a glass door: the most advantageous fix. Unfortunately, it is locked and the key resides in the office of campus services. The dwellers could use the glass door to break it down; however, CSIS seniors are not typically in a physical condition to break through glass doors. They could wave around for the outside world to come to their rescue, but chances are no one will see or hear them.

Upon realizing this, the dwellers asked to acquire the key to the glass door. The Student Council took up the issue to department chair Dr. Rabaa'i, who then emailed Campus Services. Fouzan Al-Qahtani (Judicial Chair of the Student Council) then went to obtain the key. Although an email was sent with clear instruction, there was still some hesitation from Campus Services. Suspicion and mistrust in their eyes was finally verbalized, "But how can you trust them (dwellers) with the key?" Slightly offended

and low on patience, Al-Qahtani vouched for the dwellers and demanded the key. The dwellers now have an emergency exit in case something horribly unspeakable occurs. Every now and then the key will be moved to the front desk (quite counter-strategically) possibly caused by an innocent worker, but the dwellers always return it to the door.

What is significant here is the mistrust and paranoia of some members of AUK. This shouldn't have to be an issue reported, however, it is what it is, and so the message is two-fold:

To the authoritative figures of AUK; have a little faith. In the case of the lab, there are less ways to abuse an emergency exit than there are ways to abuse a pencil. To the students of AUK; don't give a reason for restrictions to be implemented and mistrust to plague future generations of AUK-ers.

What If the Campus Shuttle Service Got Discontinued?

By: Farah Hamoudah

Near 'Gate 3,' in our humble, cozy, urban campus, two buses (shuttles) are aligned, facing the parking exit. You may have glanced briefly at them, or noticed them from the corner of your eye, or maybe you just neglected their curious presence, deeming them as 'unimportant' and 'irrelevant' to your situation as you cruised your way to your own vehicle. We all know that finding an available parking spot around our urban campus is definitely always a very tiresome and grueling task, especially since it is a truth universally acknowledged that Salmiyah is the most congested city in Kuwait. Quite often, we find ourselves driving around the parking lot in circles, praying for the off-chance that someone somewhere is hurriedly heading to remove a car from one of the parking spaces beside you.

What's more is the 2pm rush hour --when parents, school children from the adjacent institution, drivers, neighboring residents, AUK students and the rest of the traffic makeup struggle, squabble, and hassle under the blatant, scorching Kuwait sun as they sluggishly make their way into

the parking area-- an image that has me terrified of afternoon classes.

On one chaotic day, when the sun was at its highest and people in cars kept running into each other as if they were all playing 'bumper cars,' I thought to myself "Why do we do this to ourselves, when we have a perfectly functioning shuttle service?" It was a legitimate question that really tugged. Here's the short answer: Most students at AUK have no idea what the shuttle service is or how it functions.

The buses are a luxury that those not belonging to the Wolf Pack cannot afford, so why don't we capitalize on campus resources and rid ourselves of the stress and agony of locating a parking spot? This is the long-awaited article that will clearly demonstrate the concept behind the buses, their schedule, and their efficiency in hopes that the AUK community finds comfort and solace in those snug, under-rated seats on the shuttles.

The logic behind the bus/shuttle service is that every day, from 7:45 am to 7:45 pm, the buses run every 15 minutes from AUK's Gate 3 to the parking lot nearby where 'Hard Rock' used to be located. That parking lot is always forsaken so students and faculty should have no problem at all during parking; and the buses will meet you there, pick you up and drive you to campus. So, all in all, I'd say it's a very smooth ride. But what does the student body of AUK say? I've surveyed and interviewed fourteen people to voice their opinions through this article.

The Survey:

Do you think that the AUK shuttle service is efficient?

Do you often have a problem at finding a parking spot?

Do you like the urban campus design of AUK?

Do you think that the university should take appropriate methods to expand as the number of Wolf Pack members grow?

The Verdict:

Only 21% of the people surveyed believe that AUK bus service is efficient, while 22% stated that they didn't know about

the service and 57% thought it should be discontinued even though none of the people surveyed have ever set foot on the buses. As for the second inquiry, 100% agreed that parking is a loathsome task, and most of the student body (86%) expressed adoration of the urban-designed campus.

The fourth question is where it got complicated: 86% also answered 'yes' to expansion but most were very doubtful and pessimistic of any 'real' changes being made to ensure amenity and contentment of AUK students. Those statistics were very puzzling to process and take in, since none of the students surveyed had ever endeavored on any AUK bus at any of their time on campus.

How can an unbiased, unprejudiced opinion be made on an undervalued and condemned service that everyone refuses to try?! This is why I decided to venture out into uncharted territory and try the service for myself. During the ride, I asked the bus driver about the number of people he expects for everyday commutes.

He responded immediately, saying: "About ten to fifteen people are commuting each day." If the shuttle service got discontinued (hypothetically), those people would have to battle it out in the heat with the rest of them and those who have taken it for granted would never get a chance to see how much potential it had. His answer wasn't shocking, especially since the services have been very poorly publicized.

However, it definitely nudged me to see how beneficial it would be for not only AUK students, but the entire Salmiyah community if more students and faculty were to take advantage of the shuttle services. Who knows; maybe we could even mitigate the amount of car accidents in the area, and get medals for being civil and courteous members of the society! All speculation and humor aside, our main focus, as students, should be on the things we can control.

Instead of blaming the system, or neighboring buildings and schools in the area, we must find a way to improve upon our situations and circumstances by our own powerful forces until long-term solutions are thought out to accommodate our needs. After all, the whole point of

belonging to a prestigious liberal arts university means to learn to be 'free,' taking active part in civic life and finding creative solutions to issues by looking at the world in different perspectives. So, on your next trip to university, be the wittiest of the bunch, skip the lines and park where the cool kids do it.

Disclosure: The shuttle services were recently limited to every 30 minutes, as opposed to the previous 15 minute interval, due to lack of usage. Furthermore, it now runs 9 am to 8 pm.

The New Library Computer Lab

By: Sara F. Ayesh

If you were one of those brave and dedicated individuals who took classes last summer, you would have seen the new library wing being built. This new expansion is right next to the Admissions building and is primarily entered by using the staircase by the Saj place.

The rooms in the new expansion were divided up, so most of us thought they would be used as group study rooms for weeks as they remained empty. Once they were furnished with desks, chairs, and computers the students rejoiced! We were getting a new computer lab to fit the student's ever increasing demand for computers. The library's computers are simply not enough to satisfy the students during the library's busiest hours.

Once the students realized that these new labs were for IEP testing only, some got annoyed. Why lock a whole lab during the time when there was no testing going on? Don't the undergraduate students deserve to have more computers?

I admittedly joined in these assumptions. As someone who has experienced the stress of trying to find an unoccupied computer and not finding one, I could sympathize. Instead of merely wondering, I opted to do some light investigating. Why was the library expansion added, and why so quickly?

What was the official purpose of this new computer lab? Finally, if you were going

to build a new lab for the students, why place it so far away in the back of the Library?

The answers, as it turns out, were very simple.

Mr. Jabran Butt who is the lab specialist for the Intensive English Program explained how the new library lab was created primarily for placement tests and language lab efficiency. If you remember from your admission process in AUK, you first started by talking to one of the advisors in the Admissions building, then were required to take a placement test in the open lab in Building B. Lastly, the student workers or admissions staff helped you choose your classes and log in to your AUK email.

This was how the old system worked. It was inefficient for many reasons and this is why the new computer lab was built. The main purpose for the new lab is for any and all testing needs that are required by the university; from IEP tests to placement exams. Previously the open lab was where the testing was held 3-4 times a month, but it was also where undergraduates went to work. This made the lab inaccessible to students 3-4 times a month for hours on test days. Now, with the new library computer lab, all testing has moved to this one location away from noise and student congestion.

Building a new computer lab for testing was of high priority. Mr. Jabran says that the IEP's increasing need for more classrooms resulted in having to use the C003 and C004 labs as regular classrooms. At the same time they

needed them for reading and listening labs. This situation would result in many IEP students with no place for their lab hours and/or to take their tests. Thus, the motivation for the new lab being built quickly over the summer holidays of 2015.

The new lab has many advantages Mr. Jabran explains; it is much quieter, although not sound proof. Remember, the IEP labs are right next to the central corridor where it tends to get quite loud, which was quite annoying and distracting for IEP students when they wished to take tests or work on their reading and listening lab assignments. The new lab is also bigger and has more computers.

While both IEP labs as of now have 18 computers each, the new lab holds 41 computers. Unlike the C004 and C003 labs, there is no waiting area outside Mr. Jabran's office, and the new lab does. This makes it easier for students to wait outside quietly until Mr. Jabran is ready to see them, or for parents to wait for their children to finish testing for admissions.

There is also a small room beside the lab, where students can be met individually after testing to organize their class registration schedules, and ask questions related to their classes. This makes it quieter than having testing and advising in the same area.

I, for one, am glad to be proven wrong in my earlier assumptions if it means that AUK is helping the Wolf Pack more. Admittedly, we all enjoy criticizing AUK, so I believe it is only fair to praise it when it does something for the students as well. This just shows you what you can find out by asking a few questions.



Dr. Issam Damaj

By: Abdullah A Al-Qouz

Dr. Issam Damaj has been serving in AUK as the Chair of the Department of Engineering for seven years. His field of study focuses on the hardware/software operations and he still keeps his passion for science well-reflected in his work and in the growth of the department within the university. The Voice of AUK interviewed Dr. Damaj based upon the requests of the students of engineering.

Q1) Where are you from and what is your degree(s)?

I am from Beirut, Lebanon. My degrees are mainly in Computer Engineering and science. I'm specialized in hardware/software quo design, hardware/software interface design and computer interfacing, which also are also my main research interests.

Q2) Are there any changes in the department ever since you became the Chair?

Actually, we started with few students and now we are several hundreds. I was the first faculty member, and now we are seven, and are continuing to grow within the department. We started with no labs and now we have three large labs and a small one. So, there are a lot of developments, expansions where the student and faculty body have grown whereas the facilities, procedures and curriculum have improved. So in that case, there has been a complete body growth

Q3) Do you have any previous work experience?

Yes, I worked for several years in Lebanon and Oman, and before that I was in the UK for my PhD, and I worked as a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Q4) Are there any plans for developing the Engineering Department?

Now we are actually moving towards the accreditation of the existing programs, and developing programs that are close to the discipline. But the main step is to obtain the accreditation to gain international recognition, and provide assurance on the quality of the program.

Q5) What would a student get from the Engineering Department after graduation?

What makes Engineering different in AUK is that it is a liberal arts institution, not an Engineering program where liberal arts is just a small component. Liberal arts come to us from two different perspectives: First, we have significantly sized general education components where the students study the courses outside their discipline. The second perspective is that they interact with other students and other faculty within a liberal arts institution. So the liberal arts institution is housing that engineering program unlike the regular practices. The regular practices are that you have an engineering program or

college of engineering with liberal arts components but the institution is not necessarily based on liberal arts.

Q6) Is there any advice that you have for the students of engineering?

I strongly advise them to work on their Math, Physics, and language skills as early as possible in their first few semesters. I believe those skills are much needed. I also strongly encourage them to get some training in time-management and to be involved with other student branches, for example, the IEEE student branch and its technical teams as early as possible. So if you look at the skills: Math, Physics, English, time-management, and the involvement in the social bodies within the department, you are actually setting the foundation you need so you can build on these skills that are much needed in 200 and 300 levels courses. Because of this, it is from day one that pre-declared Computer/Electrical Engineering students are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to the dimensions I have just mentioned.

Q7) Can you explain to us what the IEEE can do for the students?

This is an honor society at AUK, it has its own international affiliation. For younger students, it put them in touch with more senior students, and as for the whole student body, it puts them in contact with similar branches in Kuwait, the region, and all over the world. This is a very well-established network of Electrical and Computer Engineers, so they can work together on common areas of interests, social activities, and scientific technical activities.

Q8) What stands out in the Engineering department at AUK?

I believe our labs do, I think the liberal arts components I mentioned earlier make us unique in the country, and I believe the diversity among faculty members give excellent experience to students.

Q9) How would sum up your experience as a faculty here in AUK?

I would say it's enjoyable; I am so lucky to have to have seen the department grow from just a few students to hundreds of students! I got to see that major change first-hand. Another thing that I really enjoy about it is academia in general, I see those students when they come in young with no engineering skills and then I see their progress, and at the end I can see them apply their engineering skills. The process to me is very, very interesting.

Q10) Is there anything you would like to say before wrapping up?

I would like to thank The Voice for the interview. Maybe I would deliver a message to students whatever their major is: they need to focus on the achievement and their success. Because success can be achieved

in any major, so they have to work hard, build their own accomplishments and success, and then go into the market strong. Success gives confidence, and confidence gives you more success, and more success, and additional success!



Dr. Sayed Esmaili

By: Abdullah A Al-Qouz

Dr. Sayed Esmaili has recently joined AUK with a PhD in Electrical Engineering. His specialties include transistor-level circuit design, layout and verification (DRC/LVS/PLS), device characterization and parameter extraction, deep sub-micron technologies, and resonant clocking. He is currently working on many projects, some of which are coordinated with students such as smart wheelchairs and smart recycling bins. The Voice team encourages Dr. Esmaili to keep developing his work and the Voice would also like to thank Dr. Esmaili for his continuous support to students by putting his specialty into something that evolves the country.

Q1) Where are you from and what is your degree(s)?

I'm from Kuwait. I have a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from Kuwait University and a Master's in Electrical Engineering also from Kuwait University, and a PhD from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

Q2) Are there any projects or research you are working on currently?

Mostly I am working on research related to capstone projects in our department regarding the education and the assessments of learning outcomes related to the assessments of the capstone projects. We also have new software that is being installed and after running it I can proceed with my own research on microelectronic circuits.

Q3) Do you have any previous work experience?

Yes, during my Master's degree I was working at the College of Engineering and Petroleum in Kuwait University as an assistant director at the office of academic assessment.

Q4) What are students who are majoring in Engineering expected to accomplish?

In an Engineering major, students should have basic skills in programming, circuit analysis, problem solving, applying mathematical principles, presentation skills, and team management skills.

Q5) Is there more than just the typical AUK catalog description that comes with the courses?

Well, I always encourage my students to have fun. I am keen on merging the fun of the studies with the engineering principles. In most of my projects, especially ELEG 270, I ask them to design a circuit but I leave the final step open, so it's up to them. So some students aim high, some students want to make an infinity table, other students put the Kuwaiti flag with alternating lights that open, some of them had a painting, and there are many more things they can achieve when you let the spectrum of ideas open for them. So mostly I want them to learn and at the same time have fun.

Q6) Can you explain what the capstone course is and what is to be learned from it?

The capstone is a course that only senior students can register for; it is a course that goes on for two semesters. In the first capstone course, you have the forming of ideas, the literature review, buying the components, comparing between different components, and specifying why you chose one component over another. Then, there is a presentation in front of a committee (usually three faculty members, one of them is your supervisor), where you present your project. To do this, you must submit a report in advance for them to read and maybe present a simple prototype of your idea.

In the second capstone course, which is in the following semester, you develop a product from A to Z and present it in front of a committee. Here, you'll be able to show what you have established and added since your first capstone course.

Q7) Is there any advice that you have for the engineering students?

Well, mostly my advice is time management. Always study on a daily basis, because I noticed that students often perform poorly in the first exam. It's only after they've had that shock and reality check do they then begin to study. So my advice is always manage your time, study on a timely basis, don't leave the work until the day of the exam, come during office hours, ask questions, and always be optimistic.

Q8) What is the most impressive project you have seen from a student?

In our department, I mostly like the projects that would

help people. One of my students is working on the design/use of robots in the treatment of autism, because research has shown that children with autism relate more to robots than human beings. Another project that I have seen now with our capstone students is the smart wheelchair. If you have someone who is paralyzed and can't move their legs or arms, then they can still steer themselves in the direction they choose guided by the movements of their head. I mostly like these types of projects.

Q9) What are the best projects that you have accomplished?

One project that is really useful particularly to Kuwait at this time is called the "Sun Chaser Robot." We had a robot that controls the direction of the solar panels. It will direct the solar panels into the direction of the maximum light intensity based on the feedback of sensors. So this was a really exciting project, and it can be implemented on houses and a much larger scale, too.

Q10) How would you describe the Engineering department at AUK?

It is a dynamic department with really good faculty members, the atmosphere is friendly and we all collaborate with each other. It is at its infancy stage, but are maturing fast and hopefully we might become a college in the near future.

Q11) Is there anything else you would like to say?

Don't worry if plan A fails there are 25 other letters in the alphabet, so always keep on going and for my students: always manage your time and don't get depressed.





10 Uses of Rose Water

By: Sara F. Ayesh

Rose water's uses extend beyond the scope of the kitchen. Like coconut oil, it's a staple in every home for those who read the ingredients of their beauty products and worry about silicon, aluminum and parabens. As an antioxidant rose water strengthens skin cells, regenerates skin tissue, and helps with anti-aging. To help you understand just how essential rose water is to your beauty regime, here are only 10 of its numerous uses.

1. Natural Toner: If you have sensitive or dry skin, rose water is an excellent toner because of its astringent-like properties. It is gentle on the skin, cleans and shrinks pores, and doesn't dry your face!

2. Facial Wash: After cleansing your face with a mild face wash (alcohol-free because we care about our skin), mix one tablespoon of rosewater with a few drops of glycerin and wash your face with it. This mixture will nourish your face deeply, and can also be used to wipe make-up or any other product residue off your face.

3. Setting Spray/Makeup Refresher: Using a cotton pad, dab some rose water on your face to help settle your make-up, make it last longer, and give you a dewy finish. You can also apply it again to refresh your makeup when it gets cakey and dull.

4. Makeup Remover: Forget commercial,

pharmaceutical makeup removers and scented micellar waters, rose water (especially when a few drops of coconut oil is added to it) is as an amazing waterproof makeup remover. It is chemical-free, alcohol-free, and natural! Plus, it helps your wallet.

5. Body Mist: Works as a light fragrance, and brings moisture and glow to your skin.

6. Helps Irritated and Inflamed Skin: Applying chilled rose water on irritated and inflamed skin will help soothe it and reduce redness.

7. Reduces Puffy Eyes: Dab some chilled rose water on a cotton pad and place it on your eye. This will help soothe the delicate skin around your eyes and reduce puffiness.

8. Bath Additive: Adding 1-2 cups of rose water to your bath will leave you calm, uplifted and with a lingering floral scent. Added bonus: it will also add softness and freshness to your skin.

9. Hair Rinse: After shampooing your hair, preferably with a sulfate-free shampoo, use rose water as a final rinse to condition your hair, and add unimaginable shine to your tresses.

10. Lighten Skin Tone: Dabbing a few drops of rose water on dark spots that originate from age or sun exposure can lessen their appearance and in time help fade them away. This can also be used on old acne scars.

Skin Perfecting Beauty Trend: Multi-Masking

By: Nazish S. Quraishi

Having beautiful skin without any makeup on is what every girl desires. Beauty isn't all about slathering on layers of makeup and hoping that no one sees your acne scars, dry patches or those bothersome large pores. Skin cleansing and nourishing your skin with vitamins, not just by intaking (but by applying), is much more important. It is common belief that the trick to having clear skin is by living a healthy lifestyle and a well-balanced diet; however, it's not all that simple! You also need to put some effort into applying something nutritious. The *multi-masking trend* has got your back.

Your face might have dry cheeks but a super oily t-zone; you may also have discolored patches on certain areas of your face and a lot of other skin problems too. Having varied facial masks on different parts of your face at the same time is what multi-masking is all about. Multi-masking meets the complex needs of your face, which is why it is so genius. Here's how it works: you may want to minimize the size of your pores but brighten up the rest of your face. In that case you can apply a clay face mask for the oily/combo skin on your t-zone and apply a chocolate and honey facial mask on the rest of your face. Here are a few face masks you can try at home:

For Dull and Tired Skin- A Chocolate and Honey Mask

Mix ½ tablespoon of cocoa powder with ½ tablespoon of honey. Then add 1 teaspoon of powdered oats and 2 teaspoon of milk. Gently apply this paste on your face and leave it for 30 minutes, then rinse it off with cold water.

For Oily or Combination Skin- A Clay Mask

Mix two tablespoons of a clay of your choice with enough rosewater to make a smooth mud mask. Apply the paste on your face and leave it for 20 minutes. Scrub the mud off gently using cold water. Repeat the mask once or twice weekly.

For Acne Prone or Sensitive Skin- A Banana and Honey Mask

Mix one mashed banana with 1 tablespoon of honey. Then add one egg white, one tablespoon yoghurt and ½ teaspoon of avocado oil. Leave the face mask for 30 minutes. Then wash it off with warm water.

For Dry and Sensitive skin- A Strawberry and Yoghurt Mask

Mash 5 small strawberries and add 1 tablespoon of yoghurt. Then add 1 teaspoon of honey and 1 tablespoon of oatmeal. Mix it all together and leave it for 30 minutes. Wash your face with warm water.

For Normal Skin

Lucky you! Play around with different face masks depending on how your skin feels on that particular day.

The Mint and Cucumber Mask

Take 1 tablespoon of powdered oats, ½ tablespoon of honey, a grated cucumber, and 10 crushed mint leaves. Apply this for not more than 5 minutes and wash it off with warm water.



Let's (NOT) Be Fair

By: Paola Schietekat Sedas

Let me begin this rant with a little story: a friend of mine found out she was pregnant last year and we were both ecstatic; we began to fantasize about all the things we would do once she popped out a little person. But then she kind of ruined it with an "I wish my baby is blond and has light eyes." Excuse me? Since when is that a priority? Instead of wishing for that fetus in your belly to be... I don't know... healthy, you wish them to be blond? When she finally spat the baby out, she wasn't disappointed to see a ball topped with black hair and brown eyes; on the contrary, she was elated, but this is yet one more example of our blind subjugation to mainstream Western beauty standards, standards that we have internalized so much that we've developed some sort of disappointment towards our own features.

First, let's just go over the process. We are toddlers and receive our first Barbie doll for our birthday. Guess what. She's blond, she's white and she has sparkling blue eyes. We go to the cinema just to see that most heroes/princesses are white, thin, and attractive, while the villains are fat, ugly and often have darker skin. From the moment we are born we begin to dichotomize the world in a good-bad binary based on our day to day experiences; good or evil and white or black, quite literary.

Now, this process is influenced and homogenized when we are bombarded with advertisements that tell us (both men and women) that perfection looks like fair skin and not even an extra gram of fat. What happens next? Teenagers dyeing their hair blond, and now that cosmetics have reached this far, using skin-whitening creams that not only do not work as advertised, but also cause users long term health problems.

Then those teenagers who grew up knowing that the world is white bring

children to the world. The cycle is repeated, over and over again.

"Down with neo-imperialism" socialist discourse aside, it is devastating to realize who is profiting from this perception. Western cosmetic companies, of course. The global beauty market is predicted to reach \$265 billion by next year as new markets such as the skin-whitening one open up in the developing world.

There is profit in making people believe they were born with the wrong body and that they'll always be a work in progress. The demand for skin-whitening products in Africa and the Middle East accounts for the \$19.8 billion worth of that market. This is something that Western corporations are completely comfortable juicing as long as more goes into their pockets.

But who loses in this equation? I mean, even though the beauty industry makes billions, consumers end up satisfied, don't they? Well, no, they do not. This phenomenon is a never ending cycle precisely because standards are so synthetically fabricated that they become unachievable. A bird won't look like a horse, even if you cut its wings off.

However, this market works like a carrot and a stick: "You can get there, all you need is our new product" and "You're closer, all you need is this other one." But you never get there, and you're never content with what you see in the mirror. It's all the consumers in the developing world who lose, it's us.

We need to snap out of our consumerism and develop media literacy. If you and your spouse are dark, it does not matter if your uncle's second cousin's eyes look greenish when backlit with sunlight, you are likely to have a dark child. But you know what? That is fine because dark is beautiful, and so is yellow, red, green and all the colors out there, but we need to stop promoting the idea that we're complete in spite of our color and start reinforcing the idea that we're complete because of it as well.



By: Shahad al-AI-Failakawi



Aquarius: January 20 – February 18 (Air sign)

They love something informational or inspirational, to broaden their horizons. They love spending time with those they love.



Taurus: April 20-May 20

Congratulations! Studies suggest that babies born in Taurus are the most attracting people on the planet. In spite of your popularity, you most enjoy being in a stable, long-term relationship.



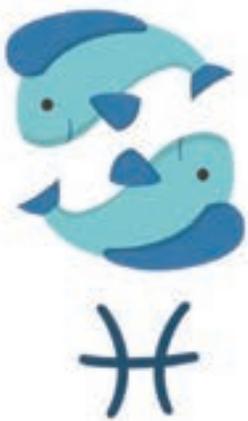
Leo: July 23- August 22 (Fire Sign)

They love a good laugh, so anything that makes us smile like a humorous book wouldn't go amiss!



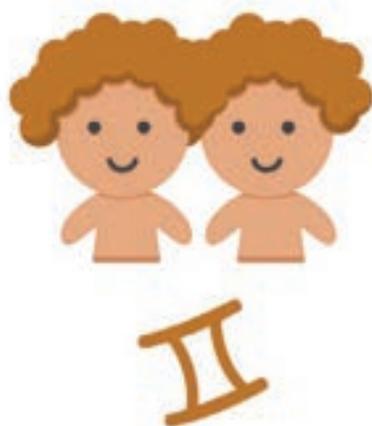
Scorpio October 24- November 22 (Water Sign)

Since they love learning new facts you could get them any quiz games or any type of games where you learn facts.



Pisces: February 19 – March 20 (Water sign)

Pisces can be very artistic and creative and are always on the hunt of a way to let their creative side flow. They like to stay alone and let their inner creativity and serenity flow.



Gemini: May 21-June 20 (Air Sign)

These people are all rounders, and can vary from incredibly communicative to really thoughtful. Geminis are known to be indecisive.



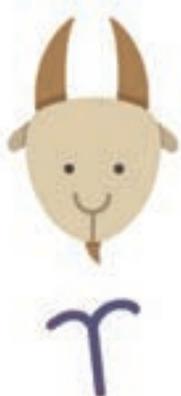
Virgo: August 23- September 22 (Earth Sign)

Virgos can be organization freaks. They love control over the situation, so items that allow that is something they would adore.



Sagittarius: November 22-December 21

Most Sags are very private people. A precious few get into the inner circle, and the rest are kept far from a Sag's heart.



Aries: March 21 – April 19 (Fire sign)

They love to focus on their comfort, to look good for themselves and no one else.



Cancer: June 21- July 22 (Water Sign)

These are very creative individuals. They are very hardworking- they enjoy being set a task and having to complete it over a period of time



Libra September 23- October 22 (Earth Sign)

Libras love harmony and can be easily inspired by good books. They also love to be surrounded by beautiful things.



Capricorn: December 22 to January 19

When a Capricorn finds an occupation that meets their core interests, they thrive. When you work on something that you're not interested in, it's a VERY different story.

By: Huda Alkotob & Sara F. Ayesh



Omar Al-Nakib

On a Thursday I was walking around campus looking to approach someone who wasn't or, at least, didn't look busy, looked interesting, and wasn't surrounded by an army of people. In the distance, on a bench, was Omar. He had earphones on and was sipping tea. I approached him. His facial expression told me he wasn't in the mood to be surveyed, interviewed, or even spoken to — which is why I did it. I think it was a combination of his politeness and a lack of anything going on that lead him to play along.

Omar Adnan Al-Nakib is a 21-year-old Kuwaiti English major; the reason why, of all majors, English: "a well-set line gets me off." He hates theory, but it's a compromise.

He's lived in Kuwait his whole life, and when asked the most interesting place he's been to: Vienna. As a kid, his favorite game was hide-and-seek; he loved that "delicious tension of almost being found out." To barely keep sane, Omar walks obsessively (rambles, it's called), reads, writes, and watches movies when he can, "but most things're poo."

After the 11th grade, out of principle (a philosophy against embarrassment), he hasn't had any guilty pleasures — I quote, "If I enjoy a Katy Perry song, I will enjoy it to the absolute maximum" He's kept the same haircut since the 12th grade (no. 1) because "hair doesn't work on me." If he lets it grow, as he did a fateful summer 2 years ago, "one side grows into a palm tree and the other into a mushroom." A beard, "I can't grow it. Just can't." He showers once a day, and hopes that I

and others do, too: "some people don't, you know?" and, unrelated, watched *The Simpsons* exclusively growing up. I asked him if he's ever stolen anything, to which he replied, "A pack of Extra, once, and the guilt's still with me, everyday, ever since." A good chunk of our conversation consisted of his views on art and writing. Omar knows the names of more dead Europeans than I do chemical compounds (and I know quite a bit). Naturally, I thought he was pompous. It turns out I was just intimidated by all the marvelous thoughts and ideas crammed in his cranium. I lost myself in his description of great writers and great work and forgot to write down notes. Fortunately, I was able to jot one down by Clive Barker, whom he doesn't really like, but likes this quote: "Great art causes indifference to the self."

Omar Al-Nakib is a breath of fresh air. He's charismatic in his oddity, and powerful in his speech. He gave an eager friend of mine the name of a French writer whose last novel was about something we can't write about here. If you're ever in the mood for a good, intense conversation, "tennis match," he calls it, be sure to find him around campus.

Sharefah Al-Mutawa

It was the bag honestly. Velvety red with a black buckle, it reminded me of the iconic red theater drapes. Who wouldn't want to talk to someone with a bag like that? It would surely have an interesting owner. So, I sat down next to the young girl, admiring her black Doc Martin boots, and waited for her to look up from her MacDonald fries-covered phone. I knew I had found a fascinating soul.

Sharefah Al-Mutawa, 19, starts off speaking about her first home, AUK. She happens to be very loyal to our dear university, calling it an "open and diverse community" where she feels comfortable, despite AUK continuously misspelling her name.

She was decidedly vocal about her opinions on Kuwait's other universities; calling AUM "overrated," KU "close-minded with lots of censorship," and my personal favorite, GUST: "The Mall of Education."

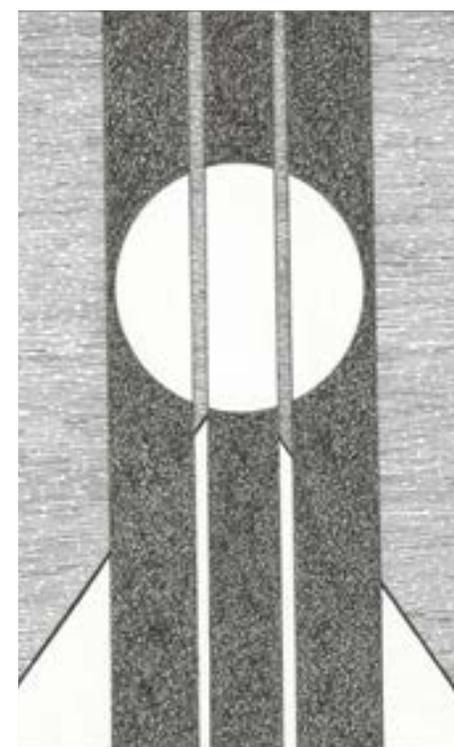
As with anyone who has watched a lot of TV, or read a lot of books growing up, I have dreamt about the possibility of homeschooling; sleeping in, no homework, and certainly no mean teachers. Plus the food is much better. Unfortunately, Sharefah destroyed my childhood fantasy when she revealed to me the less-glitzy nature of homeschooling.

Homeschooled from grade 10 to 12, Sharefah was happy to share with me her experience, "It was weird, honestly. It's like normal school, but not really." She had enrolled in a school in Egypt where they had the homeschooling option. Since it was in another continent, she needed to fly there to take her exams. I was curious, so I asked how homeschooling worked, did you simply study whatever you wanted, or did you sign up for online classes? "It was a mixture of both. They gave me a list of subjects I needed to take, but I got to choose when." It got a bit confusing, but when I asked for specifics she replied, "I didn't understand it either... my parents took care of all the paperwork."

A talented artist; most of her artwork consists of grayscale geometric drawings. As we bonded over our complete lack of understanding in all things geometry, she told me about the last geometry course she took, "The only thing I learned from it was how to incorporate it into my art!" Although she aims to get a Bachelor of Business Management, her true passion lies in graphic design. So why did she only minor in it? She answered honestly, "The same reason people minor in anything: because they couldn't get away with majoring in it!"

As we were admiring AUK's lack of floral diversity, (are we the only ones to notice that AUK is literally waiting for the grass to grow?) we heard the Wolf pack collectively singing the Kuwait's national anthem with pride. "Are you patriotic?" I asked, expecting a hearty affirmative. "... Sure.... go Kuwait," she replied unsure with a fist in the air. The surprise must have been evident in my face. Have I really found an unpatriotic Kuwaiti? She quickly added that although she finds the culture and traditions, using -in her opinion- an overused word, "beautiful," it's "not really her."

Even though it is just her second semester in AUK, Sharefah is in no hurry to finish, and sharing the advice from her AUK Alumni cousin; "don't leave this chapter of your life with memories that could've been that will never be, and leave something behind in AUK for all those that will come after you."



Shakshooka at The Secret Garden

By: Abdullah A Al-Qouz

By comparison, Kuwait is not the easiest place to find activities and things to do on weekends. "The Secret Garden Project," is the work of a girl named Mariam Al Nisf (Mimi). It is located on a public park in Salmiya which runs variety of activities on occasional Saturdays, and is one great example of reviving the value of public spaces in Kuwait. Long ago until recently, the importance of a public space in Kuwait has lost its value; now it is all about shopping malls, restaurants, and cinemas.

Mimi, however, came back to Kuwait after studying in the UK for a while and was not pleased with seeing the state of public spaces (especially parks) and how dead, empty and deserted they look. So she came up with an idea of reinventing the whole place by planting seeds to grow it green again. She did whatever she could to encourage more people who came by to participate in the planting process by providing more seeds or giving away vegetables and fruit peels/leftovers (which gives the rough sand of the park more freshness and sense of nature). At first, the project started illegally, and Mimi was working on developing the park without any governmental permission. As a result, sometimes policemen would come by and give glares from a distance and that was when Mimi and her fellows felt really endangered. Later on, they called on her and they informed her that what she was doing was fascinating, and it would have a valuable result to Kuwait: bringing people together and recreating a governmental place that is unnoticed by many.

So currently, the place is very neat and well-oriented for people to gather and turn their ideas into events for the public. It is a very small park but it really captures a serene image of togetherness and makes people mingle with one another. It means a lot to see a public park buzzing with life: people socializing, experimenting with planting and manual works, and simply appreciating the simplicity with what they have in front of them: a small place very well-used for the public inculturation. As seen, all the vendors in the park are mostly entrepreneurs

selling organic, healthy snacks and food ingredients or things to do with arts and crafts. This project in specific is known as "Shakshooka." People who visit that park are filled with a lot of joy, when walking through, everyone is having a blissful moment with a smile on their face. The positive vibes and welcoming attitudes fill their surroundings. The Secret Garden creates a beautiful atmosphere to attract people to come together and practice things they have not been doing recently.

The park is always prepared with surprises as usual. The new Kuwaiti formed band "The Afterthought" joined one night and brought a blast to the people gathered there with their endless energy. They are a rock band, and they have done amazing covers of some maven music like "You Do Something to Me" and "Seven Nations Army." A very eye-capturing artist in the band was Zak Al Musawi who is a guitarist, a vocalist, a musician/performer, and a songwriter with his high pitch and vocal abilities. Zak was recently interviewed on AIRai TV about his experience as a Kuwaiti making western music in the Middle East. The multitasking/multilingual artist does solo performances every Tuesday in Bustan Complex and on Thursdays in Al Hamra Tower. He is really great at focusing on the right instruments and its rhymes with his vocal varieties.

For whoever is willing to pay The Secret Garden a visit, it is on Google Maps, so they can go ahead and try out this new and exciting experience. The place is usually very quiet on weekdays, but the events usually happen on certain Saturdays. So stay posted and do not miss your chance to visit The Secret Garden in the next event(s). Zak and his band might have an appearance in AUK soon so stay tuned!



Will Virtual Reality Take over the 'Real' World?

By: Farah Hamoudah

Imagine you're sitting idly by in your living room on a bleak and uneventful day. You then take out a big, black, plastic goggle-like headset and strap it to your eyes with the help of a bulky, flexible cord. You press a button, and boom; you're in a wonderland, battling warriors, escaping demons, or cracking secret codes. Have you been teleported into another world through a time machine?

Nope. That avant-garde headset represents the cutting-edge technology of virtual reality. Orders of the much anticipated Oculus Rift DK-2 ship out to 22 countries this upcoming March to fulfill the needs of numerous tech-enthusiasts and those who want experience a new, enthralling division of three-dimensional, immersive, virtual gaming. The much-hyped machine, priced at \$599, is currently not available for shipment to Kuwait or any of the countries nearby.

However, the future looks optimistic for those in the region hoping to acquire the adept device. The buzz about innovation in the miraculous and intricate universe of virtual reality, and the many devices that adopt it--Samsung Gear VR, Google Cardboard VR, Oculus Rift, and HTC Vive--has allowed for some kind of mainstream acceptance. Because of this, developers can tinker around with the hardware and create better features and make bigger leaps of advancement. As a result, countless speculations have been made in regards to what future we can expect from virtual reality. One thing, however, is for certain: virtual reality (VR) will, in one way or another, change the world as we know it forever.

Many people believe that VR headsets are limited to the gaming community. In contrast to popular belief, many influential tech-whizzes like Philip Rosedale, designer of virtual reality online game 'Second Life,' Palmer Luckey, Oculus Founder, Mark Zuckerberg, the infamous C.E.O of Facebook and many more predict that, perhaps in the long-run, virtual reality can be incorporated

into various fields such as healthcare, communication, education, art, business and architecture, taking over the world by storm. As a matter of fact, Zuckerberg acquired Oculus in 2014 for a tremendous \$2 billion, making it clear that he wholeheartedly supports and believes that the future will inevitably be defined in terms of VR, a bold move and a hopeful bet on his part.

Even though it appears that Oculus and other VR apparatus have a long way to go before they prevail against their adversaries of intimate and compact smartphones that currently dominate our daily lives, it's not exactly inconceivable to say that one day we might solely rely on VR in our everyday lives. Potentially, we could do various things from video conferencing, to storytelling, to 'hands-on' teaching and even simulating situations for scientific purposes; the possibilities are endless!

Luckey, whom once reported that virtual reality devices will ultimately be "more ubiquitous" than the mundane smartphone, seems to completely agree with that stance. VR proves itself to be a very versatile and expedient means in

regards to its prospective potential and productive functions and operations. The advantages to this kind of adventurous automation are obvious: it connects us to our own imagination, eases the process to take in new information, transcends the traditional methods of learning and allows for more efficient long-distance communication. However, the greatest influence of VR technology is that it could act as an 'empathy machine,' as stated by Chris Milk, founder and C.E.O. of Vrse.inc, a virtual reality technology company. Ideally, VR could have a plausible impact on the way we perceive people from diverse backgrounds and can abridge misunderstandings misjudgments as well as guide us to making better decisions that will help improve and progress peoples' lives instead of tarnishing them with irresponsible authority.

If we decide to capitalize on the beneficial potentials of this device, many of the world's economic and political problems could slowly be disintegrated. Strapping powerful and influential people to these gadgets and showing a film about the troubles and misfortunes of one disbanded Syrian family taking

shelter in a refugee camp could make those in authoritative positions reflect on themselves and their ruling, an experiment that has already proved successful for Milk and his team at Vrse.inc. However, this kind of technology is not foolproof. Many users of the "experimental" versions of VR devices note experiencing mild to severe motion sickness after playing a videogame, and many psychologists believe that obsessive employment of the gadget may lead to the development of unhealthy escapism.

Any way you spin it, the future effects of virtual reality on our world is solely determined pivotal factor: how we decide to operate it. As students of the American University of Kuwait and as future inheritors of this world, we must always aim to explore, seek out, benefit and curate technology, ensuring that it is used exclusively to stimulate societies instead of corrupting them. That is why we must all think these "improvements" through, and decide for ourselves if they really are the best for the world. 2016 may not be "the year of virtual reality," but it is most definitely "the year virtual reality found its groove."



Sparks of Creativity is a space where students, faculty and staff can share anything their thoughts lead them to: a poem, a story, a sketch, or an experience that deserves a passive-aggressive rant about life and how much it can terrorize you sometimes. English and Arabic entries are welcome.

Erleichda Bookshop Eulogy

By: N. Ovistilis

Erleichda, from regular Moders Bonjardo (translated by Throc Meebles):

The Erleichda Bookstore, Bookshop, Bookshoppe, christened from personal favorite Tom Robbin's Jitterbug Perfume, had shut.

The rent hadn't been paid or with the rent skyrocketing it wasn't so realistic anymore and the taxman waits for no one, Jason Segel tells Emily Blunt in The Five-Year Engagement.

All the more tragic, that word, Erleichda, Anglo-Nordic, means "lighten up".

There's a book I ordered through Erleichda a month, I think, before its closing, My Prizes by Thomas Bernhard. There's a line from the book 73 pages in which you can use to characterize taxpeople when it isn't going your way:

"Whoever offers money has money and it should be taken away from him."

Thus, the unceremonious close to those who didn't know.

Small, minute, diminutive and delicious, the shoppe, Erleichda, hosted a delicious selection of books, from Burroughs to Bukowski to Hesse to Kafka, everyone, there's some Camus. Camus unavailable, Camus could've been ordered, delivered (record time), dissatisfied, traded-in for better Existentialists. Such was the shoppe, Erleichda, where books were propped on makeshift cardboard construction, and the small charm of it's what did it.

But we know what happens to good things; no rationalization, no theodicy, no nothing, sense, nothing'll do; it's already

happened: the store's shut and that's that. Something happened, and there'd be a book read by now of that title had they been open by Joseph Heller.

But just as you'd think nothing can ever come of any good on this forsaken rock, this, Joyce puts it, stinking dunghill of a world mother-love won't fix, Erleichda's alive, somehow, some other way: deliveries. Books are stocked and stock is being added to. It's as it was; thank God they've only lost house.

Love Affair with the Mediterranean

By: N. Ovistilis

Guys oh my God is the Mediterranean beautiful; the twinkle of sun I warp with turns.

On the littoral splash boys; vacationers an inch sunk, and looking out the window it's so sunny that when I catch a little reflection I neck an open head. Ground that if you elbow bore; I can't recommend it enough.

Enemy that Resides In Me

By: Nazish S. Quraishi

When I look at the mirror
I see imperfect me
I feel I am unworthy to exist
I feel I am nothing compared to them
I feel I am never going to make it
I feel I am a failure
Who makes me feel this way?
It's you right
You work so quietly
Crush me into pieces
Destroy my relationships
When I try so hard
You always seek my weaknesses
You forward it to me
Which is great exaggeration
Then I get paranoid
People realize and leave
But not anymore
Now I know
Who you are
And how I can fight you
Out of me
I just realize
All you do is lie
I am not going to fall

Leave me alone
I am a human
I may have flaws
But I do have strengths
Which goes unnoticed
When you trick me
Now I realize
I am perfect me
I am satisfied with me
And others will be too
You no longer rule me
Or rule my life,
Farewell my rival
I won't need you anymore,
You evil insecurity!

As Taken From a Diary I Don't Write (But Should)

By: Huda Al-Kotob

Dear Reader:
I'm pretty sure you don't exist. Of course that's not completely true; the editors and such read this, but other than that, there ain't nobody reading (based on a recent survey I conducted). So I roll up my sleeves, I throw the ol' grammar book out the window and I write.

This is my last semester at AUK. It's a bittersweet feeling. I'll miss it, all of it. I'll miss being frustrated at everything and everyone, and having that frustration reciprocated by everything and everyone. I'll miss cursing at people who take up more than one parking space, those who take the elevator to the first floor when we're all clearly late and need to get to the third, those who itfalsaf constantly, those who think they're cool because

they blast hip hop music at 9 am at the benches, those who give me dirty looks for almost no reason. I'll miss the one-in-a-lifetime friends I've made, the endless laughter, the random one-line wisdom I've picked up from some classes, those who randomly smile at me in the hallway for whatever reason, the making fun of professors, the making fun of students, the making fun of us.

I'm scared. Not of leaving, but of having left nothing behind. #deep. I'm also scared I rushed my way to graduation, maybe there was more to learn in this ridiculously small campus. I'm scared this newspaper will never get any better despite everyone's best efforts. Once in ECON 201, a friend of mine who constantly doodles in class shared with me a poem, which I will share with you now. Sometimes the words linger in my mind at random.

There once was a man who said "Damn!
It is borne in upon me I am
An engine that moves
In predestinate grooves;
I'm not even a bus, I'm a tram."
—Maurice E. Hare
I'll probably forget to show you this, friend, but if you're reading, someone wrote a nice reply:
"Young man you should stay your complaint,
For the grooves that you call a constraint
Are there to contrive
That you learn to survive
Trams arrive, buses may or they mayn't."
—Unknown
At any rate, my dear reader, I've successfully wasted your time and if you're still there, I'd like to thank you for reading some of my random thoughts.



10 Wacky Laws from Around the World

By: Bibi Al-Abdullrazzaq

The world is a bizarre place, but how strange is it? Every country has its rules everyone must comply with no matter how weird they might seem. The illegality of some activities varies deeply; from naming pigs Napoleon in France to passing gas after 6pm in Florida. The laws are endless, and so are the comments you're bound to think of when you hear about the top 10 wackiest laws in the world.

10. "Only a qualified electrician is allowed to change a light bulb in Victoria, Australia." In case a light bulb goes dark, house members have no other option but to call an outrageously-paid electrician to change it.

9. "In France, it is illegal to name a pig Napoleon." The French believed that naming a pet pig Napoleon was degrading to a once French army general who was perceived to be a 19th century Hitler.

8. "It's a crime to forget your wife's birthday in Samoa." How rude, and apparently illegal, it is to forget your wife's birthday? Well, just about as much as it is to forget taking out the trash, leaving your socks on the floor and screaming deafeningly at the TV screen as if the soccer players can hear you. But is this a crime that should truly be punishable by law? You be the judge, ladies.

7. "In England, it is illegal to die in the Houses of Parliament." If this was an episode of Supernatural, you can just negotiate with the reaper when to come "reap" your soul and guide it through the light. Alas, this is reality and no one has control over when they will pass. Crazy rule? I think it just might be.

6. "In Canada, by law, one out of every five songs on the radio must be sung by a Canadian." I believe this is not an issue since we cannot go 10 minutes without jamming to Justin Bieber's What Do You Mean hit track. Seriously though, wasn't his latest album amazing?

5. "In Switzerland, it is illegal to flush a toilet after 10pm." We all know that movie nights must be accompanied by pizza with toppings that shouldn't exist, all-you-can-eat candy and Starbucks drinks up the wazoo. If you're living in Switzerland, movie night might have to become movie

afternoon in order to avoid breaking this whacky rule!

4. "In France, it is legal to marry a dead person." I mean, doesn't that go without saying?

3. "In Florida, it is illegal to pass wind in a public place after 6pm on Thursdays." Bowel movement activities seem to be pretty strict according to Florida and Switzerland on certain days.

2. "In Chicago, it is against the law to eat in a place that's on fire." Food is as important as the air we breathe, but sometimes, you have to bear to let go of the piece of cake and run for your life.

1. "In Florida, it is illegal for a divorced or a widowed woman to skydive on a Sunday afternoon." Ladies, put the parachute down and go find yourselves a husband if it's 12pm on a Sunday. Otherwise, buckle up and enjoy your time!

The above laws are barely enough to provide an idea of what weird rules there are to follow when travelling around the world; nonetheless, it is perhaps a good idea to do your homework before visiting the US and EU next summer vacation.



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