

## Students Wax Rhetorical on Changing Kuwait



SGA president Sami Maan congratulates Haya Al-Qassar, Mahdi Al-Own and Qutaiba Al-Humood on their performances in SGA's public speaking competition.

By Farah Al-Shamali

One of the biggest fears harbored by AUK students is that of public speaking. Fear of getting tongue-tied, suffering temporary brain freeze, and being rejected by the audience are common and may subsequently lead to embarrassment, seclusion and feelings of worthlessness. However, public speaking does not have to be stressful.

Toward the end of helping students conquer this fear, Edmond Eid, Social Officer of the SGA, organized the SGA's first Public Speaking Competition. Over a period of three consecutive weeks, participants gave three kinds of speeches: informative, impromptu, and persuasive. Their performance was assessed by a panel made up of professors Kathryn Kleypas, Don Prades, James McDougall and Rawda Awwad based on believability of content and use of public speaking skills, such as eye contact and intonation.

Persuasive speeches came last and upon their conclusion

the winner of the competition was announced. Coming into the final night of the proceedings, the four finalists Qutaiba Al-Humood, Haya Al-Qassar, Mahdi Al-Own, and Sulaiman Al-Ateeqi each gave a speech on the topic: *With the upcoming elections in Kuwait, there appears to be a clear sentiment from the people that there is a need for massive developmental change in Kuwait. Pick an aspect of Kuwaiti society you believe should be the central focus of this change, and why you believe it is the most important.*

Qutaiba Al-Humood was first to present. After a vigorous stage entrance, he began his speech with a general scope and wound it down to more specific matters. Given the multitude of problems Kuwait's community suffers from, he voiced a need for development and supervised expansion that cannot be achieved without implementation, i.e. if the law is justly imposed on everyone equally.

"What is freedom?" Qutaiba rhetorically asked the audience, "It isn't the right to do whatever you want." Rules and regulations can effectively restrict immoral behavior. Qutaiba clarified his point by citing the example of Singapore, a nation that is scarce in natural resources yet by implementing laws has managed to rise as a world-class society. Qutaiba stressed that respect for the law equals respect for the country and the opposite is true. He used Africa in the 1960s as an example of the absence of law implementation, where people resorted to looting because they found no higher authority to stop them. Most importantly, they didn't possess the moral fiber to prevent them from committing this illegal act in the face of desperation. In the case of Kuwait, lack of strict law enforcement results in corruption on all fronts.

Next, Sulaiman Al-Ateeqi chose to focus on human capital and the intellectual, social, and

moral development of individuals. Diving straight into his argument, Sulaiman equated the acquisition of knowledge to the gain of value, stating that "a person with no value becomes obsolete in society." Defining intellect as the capacity to know and understand, he logically asserted that the only way it can be furthered is by schooling. To maximize the overall potential of students, society must take on the responsibility of training them efficiently in their classes. The social development component encompasses the skills that pave the way to intellect. He then gave the example of the many functioning clubs and organizations at AUK that help hone social and leadership skills. Finally, Sulaiman touched on moral integrity, defining it as the conformity to rules of virtuous and righteous conduct, adding "Once you have gained intellect, your

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## Reminiscences of a Friend

Memories of Sheikh Sa'ad, beloved Father Amir



By Nur Soliman

Tears shine momentarily in the serious, light-brown eyes, and the white eyebrows knit in a spasm of sadness. The words are simple, yet are charged with the pain of warm memories: "Sheikh Sa'ad's dead..." Though Bahy el-Din Sulaiman is not particularly inclined towards interviews, the writer of this article was able to listen to the retired Public Prosecutor General and lawyer when unhurriedly reminiscing about his times with Sheikh Sa'ad, showing him in a most kind, noble light.

Indeed, all words that had poured out over the days of mourning, from the evening of his demise up until today, the cherished memory of the Father Amir resounds deep in the hearts of young and old alike as a beacon of all that is brave, good, and refined of Kuwait. Kuwait's papers over those days, and indeed after the mourning period were rich with condolences from families, individuals, and companies, and dozens of columns by those who had known or met Sheikh Sa'ad, filling their lines with worthy praise of this "Knight of Kuwait," whose conscientious work, brave deeds, and real love for his nation and its people has fostered profuse feelings of pure love and affection in citizens and residents alike. Below are snippets of Mr. Bahy el-Din's words, translated from his conversation in clear, old-fashioned Egyptian, and evoking live memories of the great man in his day-to-day affairs as Chief Prosecutor at the Public Prosecution Department in the capital which he developed, assisted by Bahy el-Din, prosecutor at the time. They are but few lines from the flow of memories, anecdotes, feelings of one man whose heart, like hundreds with him, was

touched by the beloved Sheikh Sa'ad, son of the noble Sheikh Abdullah al-Salem:

"Oh yes, he was one of the noblemen of Kuwait, not just in lineage... no, but in behavior, too. He was always conscientious and ever-hardworking... You know, word goes around that Sheikh Sa'ad is rather slow when it comes to developing policies and passing laws in the Cabinet... well, that was true, but only because he was so meticulous, so meticulous. He'd care for the Kuwaiti people so much that he'd fear that a policy carelessly passed out would affect them negatively, and so would research and debate the matter very thoroughly so as to present the best to the people."

"I remember he'd come out of his office, facing mine, and call out, in his quick manner, 'Bahy!' As Chief of Police and Chief Prosecutor, he'd be responsible for over-seeing the beating of those who had committed minor offences. Of course, he'd have to make sure that the officer would not raise his arm higher than his shoulder which is to make sure that minimal pain was inflicted on the accused... Well, his heart was too sensitive to watch these practices day after day, so often he would ask that I would alternate with him to supervise the practice, and 'make sure they do it right.'"

"I remember, when the Iraqis came in, and Sa'ad went right to Dasman Palace to wake Jabir [d. 2005: the late emir of Kuwait, God's mercy be upon him], lifted him from bed and took him to the car where they drove away, without anyone else there; he loved Sheikh Jabir so much that he went in himself to save him, only minutes before the invading troops arrived at the palace gates. That was a man who loved his brothers and his country. Kuwait will miss him; they've lost a beloved hero."

## The Social Implications of Segregation

By Nuha Al-Fadli

The issue of gender segregation is not simply a subject of mass controversy but a matter of great contradiction. As a civil society, Kuwait's organizations, institutions and policies are intended to facilitate awareness and produce generations of informed citizens who make sound voting decisions. Unfortunately, however, some political groups are infringing on people's individual rights and imposing their views under the umbrella of religion. In an attempt to uphold Islamic values and past traditions, these parties are willing to undermine the established foundations of the nation. By opposing co-education, the Islamist party is not simply violating the basic rights of the rising generation, but is hindering its ability to function in the professional world and larger societal context where gender integration is part of daily life.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwaiti feminists regarded segregation as a pending threat to the women's suffrage movement. Many asserted that gender segregated educational institutes offered women a different and detrimental form of education that confined females to the traditional roles. As this gender based curriculum faded with the establishment of Kuwait University, women began to rise in prominence. According to studies conducted in 1991, women com-

posed sixty seven percent of Kuwait University's graduates and thirty two percent of the Kuwaiti workforce. However, women's gradual integration into the political, social and economical sphere is systematically obstructed and opposed by recent legislations imposed by Islamist MPs.

By the 1990s, the segregation controversy was opened for heated discussion. However, this time, Islamist MPs managed to overpower the liberal party by holding a greater number of seats in Parliament. Hence, they succeeded in ratifying new legislation in favor of gender segregation in higher educational facilities and private schools. In 1996, the Islamist party pushed the National Assembly to pass Law 24 which requires public educational facilities to be segregated by gender, thus annulling a government decree that legalized co-education in 1990. It allowed a period of five years for educational facilities to establish separate buildings, labs, libraries, services and activities to accommodate segregation.

To support and justify the validity of this decree, the Ministry of Al-Awqaf, the institution that regulates religious affairs, released a statement recognizing the fact that gender integration is legal in Islam but subject to certain stringent rules. For instance, for appropriate gender integration, all women should don the hijab, avoid eye contact

and shaking hands with men. Since these codes are extremely difficult to adhere to, the Islamist party claimed that gender segregation in universities is the ideal solution since it reinforces Islamic values and protects the values of the future generation.

Kuwait University executed the provisions of this decree in 2001 by designating separate sections for males and females. Unfortunately, this still did not appease the Islamist party for its ambitions transcended the public educational system. Since the demand for higher education exceeded Kuwait University's capacity, private universities were established to meet the society's growing needs. While many hailed this privatization as a movement towards liberalization, diversity, improvement of educational standards as well as a golden opportunity for financial profit, others regarded it as a pending threat to country's Islamic values. To avoid social conflict and tension between political parties, Parliament included Article 6 in the Establishment of Private Universities Law of 2000. This article requires private universities to be fully segregated and to observe "time-honored" customs.

Gender segregation required by Article 6 would appear to contradict other provisions

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# Cooperation Club Sponsors Success Workshop

By Dina El-Zohairy

The Cooperation Club's inaugural public event was held on Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> May in the Multipurpose Room. Ali Al-Ajmi, founder of *Rekaaz*, was invited to give a workshop titled *Ten Keys to Success and How to Build an Effective Media Project*, based on his studies in Marketing, his success and years of experience as an entrepreneur, and his numerous writings in the field of management.

According to Al-Ajmi, being motivated is the first key to success, and motivation stems from a burning desire to accomplish a certain task. On the road to success, maintaining a high level of energy is the second key. Indigestion, anxiety and stress are three major "robbers" of energy, which we should all try to avoid through healthy eating and time management. In contrast, deep breathing—which the students collectively practiced—, proper nutrition and regular exercise boost energy levels.

Of course, lacking the skill to perform a task will result in failure, like the employee who mistook the shredding machine for the photocopier. Reading, listening and mixing with people are examples of everyday skill builders. With their eyes closed, Al-Ajmi asked every student to envision themselves in ten years' time, thus illustrating the fourth key to success: a broad imagination. "Picturing where you want to be will help you get there quicker,"



Al-Ajmi said.

Having set a clear goal and acquired the necessary skills, it becomes time to take action. It may seem obvious, but many people have achievable dreams yet their fear of failure or even success, with which comes greater responsibility, locks their goals behind bars for life. Others, such as Frederick Smith, founder and CEO of FedEx, the first overnight express

delivery company in the world, are bold enough to stick to their dreams despite how irrational they may seem to others. In 1962, while attending Yale University, Fred wrote a paper for an economics class; his idea turned into reality nine years later.

"Usually, when people receive a call at two in the morning, 'catastrophe' is the first word that comes to mind." Always expect the best,

was Al-Ajmi's message to the audience. "Be an optimist," he stressed. Furthermore, commitment is what keeps us going, no matter how difficult circumstances get. He also encouraged flexibility on all fronts, or having a backup plan in case what you had in mind doesn't work out. "It's not the end of the world if you don't end up in your intended major," he pointed out. Patience and discipline were the last two success factors.

After a short prayer break, Al-Ajmi moved on to describe the mission, strategies and achievements of *Rekaaz*, which once upon a time was just a dream. He also revealed to the students *Rekaaz's* upcoming campaign and asked for their feedback on the slogan before ending an interactive discussion, which the students seemed to enjoy thoroughly, especially those who received a complimentary gift—Al-Ajmi's newest book (Arabic) on the market, *"181 Cards to Being an Exceptional Manager."*

The Cooperation Club, according to its mission statement, is "an independent, missionary organization that aims to raise awareness and reinforce compliance with Islamic principles, morals, acts of devotion and values among the students of the American University of Kuwait." The term *cooperation* refers to helping one another to benignancy and piety, and is inspired from Allah's directive in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an (005:002).

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SGA's Sami Maan and Edmund Eid with speaker Sulaiman Al-Ateeqi.

morality guides you to utilize these skills to aid mankind." In his conclusion, Sulaiman appealed to the audience's emotions by describing the dismal life of an Iraqi boy whose father died a few years ago. Despite the gap this created, he continued to go to school and worked in the afternoons to support his ill mother and provide for his family—at only nine years of age.

The next speaker, Haya Al-Qassar, presented herself with enthusiasm and spoke with a palpable sense of patriotism towards her country. She approached the question by digging deep into the mental constructs and psychological misfortunes of Kuwaiti youth. She argued that Kuwaiti adolescents wait for opportunities to come their way—a form of nepotism. Furthermore, restrictions are often placed on them that suppress their ability to express. "Repression," Haya explained, "is a mental process—taking thoughts and forgetting them." Consequently, they find their way to the surface by

means of dreams and Freudian slips. Parents in Kuwait do not take a significant amount of time to listen to their sons and daughters. As a result, they find other ways to vent their frustration that culminate in eating disorders, self-injury, and overachievement. Haya briefly explained how her friend had been bulimic for four years "because she did not know how to express a feeling." Eventually, her blood potassium levels rose to dangerous levels and she died. Self-injury is also quite regular in Kuwaiti society but goes by unnoticed. Lastly, Haya spoke of overachievers like herself, who constantly feel the need to perfect themselves to fit into Kuwaiti society and gain social acceptance. Striving for perfection often leads to poor mental and physical health and fear of failure.

The final speaker was Mahdi Al-Own, who articulated his points with dynamism and vitality. Having lived in the United States for most of his educational career, he saw that education had taken

a downturn when he returned to Kuwait. "Before the Gulf war," Mahdi pronounced, "Kuwait was a collective society." The pre-war period had also been glorious in terms of educational facilities. Afterwards, "We became more individualistic as families were fragmented—we lost a connection that needs to be swiftly reestablished." The 1970s and 80s witnessed an upsurge in the number of Kuwaiti students going to study abroad. Presently, there is a shortage of qualified teachers and many lack the proper ethics to teach because they were never trained. Public schools are known to employ authoritarian teachers who do not promote a free-thinking environment and do not respect students as individuals. Having adopted a hands-off policy, the government has not intervened. Elementary instructors firmly believe that nothing should hold the child back, not even learning disabilities. At high school, students undergo changes in their mentality and

require an atmosphere that is conducive to their intellectual growth. However, the exact opposite is taking place in some schools in Kuwait. Even at the most prestigious institutions of higher education, there are limitations that hinder any expansion when students are "supposed to be learning everything out there." Next, Mahdi raised a critical point concerning the

future of AUK: accreditation. AUK is locally accredited but failed to gain recognition by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Moreover, Mahdi brought the shortage of scientific research to the forefront. "Without qualifications, people cannot run this country." In a nutshell, we do not have a sound foundation for education in Kuwait. If the expats,

who are virtually running this country, leave, Kuwait will shut down. There is no innovation and Kuwait's future looks bleak at this point.

The winner of the competition was Qutaiba Al-Humood, who will receive a free class or lap-top from the SGA. Congratulations, Qutaiba. It's indeed reassuring to see student initiatives culminate in events such as this Public Speaking competition.

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of the law. Declaring that a private university "aims at contributing to the promotion of the goals of higher education; in a manner optimally meeting all envisaged society's developing needs," the law attempts to harvest a healthy and productive learning environment. The inclusion of Article 6 does violence to the sanctity of the educational experience. Through limiting diversity, segregation hinders competition, obstructs freedom of expression and deprives students of a stimulating learning experience that promotes personal growth. In addition, sustaining a pluralistic classroom environment prepares students to thrive in multicultural working settings. Hence, in implementing this deleterious decree, educational institutes will no longer play a prominent and dynamic role in the socialization of young citizens.

Not only does segregation communicate a profound mistrust in Kuwaiti youth, but it is a potent threat to the growing influence of women in sociopolitical affairs of the country. In reality, it is one of many various laws that could potentially lead to the gradual alienation of women from the liberal sectors of society and the business community. Before ratifying the segregation decree, Parliament passed a bill in 2007 banning women from certain vocations that are considered difficult and unsuitable for their gender such as industrial work and forbade them from working beyond 8 pm. In a society where women aspire to join the ranks of men in holding parliamentary seats, segregation presents itself as a great impediment since it enforces rigid tribal values that strongly oppose the emancipation of women.

Although this statute has not yet been fully implemented, it has awakened the public to the Islamist party's growing authority. In an attempt to protect private educational facilities and defend

the public's freedom of choice, liberal MPs submitted a draft bill on February 5, 2008 supporting co-education. This action placed the issue of segregation in the forefront of Kuwaiti politics and created a deep rift between the Islamist and liberal parties. As a matter of fact, it is one of the main factors leading to the dissolution of Parliament on March 20, 2008. According to His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah, his actions were designed to safeguard the country from internal turmoil: "There is no place in this country for fanaticism or allegiance to a sect, a tribe or a social class at the cost of the nation."

As a university of liberal arts, the segregation law undermines some of the stated goals of the American University of Kuwait. Even though AUK aspires to foster a "strong and diverse" learning atmosphere that upholds "equal opportunity," segregation will affect the quality of education students receive. In fact, it will dramatically alter classroom dynamics and create obstacles for the registration process. While a liberal arts education promotes critical thinking and self-discovery by exposing students to inter-disciplinary perspectives and a wide range of activities, segregation instills hypocritical indoctrinations, breeds passive attitudes and advocates censorship.

The aggressive debate of segregation in the educational institutions of Kuwait is but a symptom of an underlying disease that has become prevalent within Kuwaiti society; the disease being a lack of trust and tolerance. If one lives in a country or region that is as diverse as the Middle East, then compromises are a must and a middle ground should be sought. For even if a single mentality were to enforce its ideologies upon everyone else, sooner or later this will be met with resistance, or worse, retaliation.



# On the Way to the Chateau Portales

## Division of Business

Twenty American University of Kuwait Business Majors spent their Spring Break 2008 traveling to Germany and France for a 10 day exploration of finance and commercial operations in Europe. At the same time, as Liberal Arts students, they made sure to take in many cultural activities which are an integral part of the commercial lives of their European counterparts.

The trip was the result of a decision by the American University of Kuwait's Administration to approve the idea of adding practical experience of the work of multinational companies and the people who work for them, to the theoretical studies taken up in the classroom.

After an early morning flight to Frankfurt, the twenty AUK students were welcomed by Citigroup where two recent finance graduates from their Corporate Communications division explained what Citigroup were doing in corporate banking. They then led the group to the bank's trading floor to witness and have explained transactions in structured investment credits.

The group then traveled by bus to Strasbourg and had a walking tour led by guide, Catherine Mog, before arriving at the Chateau de Pourtalès (where they stayed for 5 nights) in time for a French cuisine dinner.

Led by tour coordinator, Ms. Wiltrud Rösler (Willi), the AUK students spent the next morning touring the Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle. Built in the 12th century, the Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle was the residence of members of the Habsburg dynasty and the German emperor Wilhelm II. Disneyworld's Cinderella castle could not compare with

interesting lectures by Ann Zedler, Director of Strasbourg University on "Cultural Diversity" and Dr. Gregory Owcarz on "European Business Ethics," followed by a bus-ride into Strasbourg to join Catherine Mog for a guided tour of the Historical Museum and back to the Chateau for a BBQ.

On Monday the group was

of the scrap steel to the production of steel wire coils.

The group journeyed on Tuesday to Mannheim where they toured John Deere and saw the complete assembly line of that company's second largest, but most modern, assembly plant. Lunch was eaten in Heidelberg and the afternoon spent walking in pleasant rain round the castle

Germany and visiting the first parliamentary building the Paulskirche. The group also visited the house of one of Germany's most famous men of letters, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

From there it was on to Stuttgart and the Mercedes-Benz museum with its examples of vehicles from the invention of the automobile to the latest

dia market and is the second largest software producer (after SAP) in Germany. Even more surprising is the fact that employees spend their entire first year at the company in training. The technology is so complex and mistakes so costly that only fully trained employees are allowed out into the field, and proper training takes a minimum of a year.

That afternoon, the group took part in a special lecture given by Prof. Dr. Sangmeister of the faculty of Heidelberg on "Projections for the Global Economy until 2020." The talk was followed by a class discussion with students from Heidelberg about prospects for the future in which many different perspectives were explored on what would happen over the next 12 years.

AUK's aspiring business men and women had the opportunity to study, create and explore the world of commerce and finance outside Kuwait. They got the chance to see technologies not yet deployed in Kuwait and to realize how young Kuwaitis are held back by, for example, out-of-date Internet service and underdeveloped industry. They also witnessed the benefits of discipline, environmental cleanliness, the absence of piles of rubble, magnificent architecture, and so much pride in maintaining natural country landscapes. Now back in Kuwait, these students have a better understanding of the possibilities for development in Kuwait over the next 12 years.



AUK business majors strike a pose in front of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange.

this fantastic fortification.

In the afternoon the students discovered the Ecomusée d'Alsace, the largest open air museum in Europe with its fully operational homes, barns, and workshops which provide an authentic measure of 19th century rural life in Alsace. Then in the evening they enjoyed a traditional meal as guests at the "Le Marronnier" restaurant.

Day 3 began with really

unable to visit General Motors as planned, but GM did send its Chief Engineer who showed a film describing the assembly of drive shafts for special vehicles. They moved on to Badische Stahlwerke GmbH (BSW) the most productive electric steel plant in the world where, after viewing a short film, the students donned safety shoes and protective wear to tour the complete process from the landing

and the town ending up at the Ibis hotel where the remainder of the stay in Germany was spent.

Wednesday morning saw a visit to the German Stock Exchange in Frankfurt, a modern bourse which uses the Xetra computer trading platform, the world's most efficient system for electronic securities trading. The afternoon was spent discovering the history of elections and parliament in

visions of the next generation of motor vehicles. Then a tour of the Daimler AG production facilities to see the test track, and learn all about the powertrain of Mercedes cars being assembled on the spot.

On Friday, the students visited Heidelberger Druckmaschinen and took a tour of the Print Media Academy. They discovered that Heidelberger Druckmaschinen commands 40% of the world print me-

## Al-Suwaidan's Personal History of Kuwait

By Nur Soliman

Before a good number of interested AUK students and some Social Sciences faculty sat a modest, unassuming man of about fifty-odd years, dressed neatly in a white dishdasha and flowing ghutra. Invited by Kuwait's Alpha chapter of the Pi Gamma Mu honor society to give "Advice For the Next Generation of Kuwaiti Leadership" and discuss his life within modern Kuwaiti history, he spoke calmly, with excellent, flowing English, immediately drawing ease from the audience. The man was Saber al-Suwaidan, retired Major General of the Kuwaiti Air Force, former Iraqi invasion prisoner-of-war, and currently a board member on the Advisory Council for Development and Planning.

Al-Suwaidan's career is an illustrious one, having served as a fighter pilot until 1992 in the KAF for 34 years, and as Chief Commander until 1998. From 1998-2000 he was a Special Advisor to the Minister of Defense, after which he retired from public service. He explained that he was pleased to be in an environment such as AUK that fostered real interest in the community and learning, a place from which he was proud to have his son graduate, and a place that he believed

would develop students' characters.

Al-Suwaidan proposed to discuss briefly the last 60 years of Kuwait's history, and his role in that history as "a student, a pilot, a leader, and a citizen." "Kuwait, as you know, is small," Al-Suwaidan remarked, "small in geography, population, and we're about 300 years old, like the United States." Al-Suwaidan noted that one cannot compare different generations—his and ours—since "each generation is marked with something" that distinguishes it, usually as a function of the circumstances that mark these stretches of time. Some such "markers of history," as Al-Suwaidan put it, were 1940s with Kuwait's first export of oil; the 1950s where the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem fostered a middle class in Kuwait and brought education to great levels; 1961 saw Kuwait achieve independence and greater strength; the 70s where wealth was flourishing; the 80s which were marked by the Iraq-Iran war; the 1990s which saw the Iraqi invasion and subsequent liberation of Kuwait; and finally, the current decade, wherein the world has seen the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime and the events that have ensued.

Al-Suwaidan discussed each

of these "markers" with ease and interesting detail, tying them into the development of Kuwait in all its fascinating twists and turns. For instance, Al-Suwaidan discussed with warmth Abdullah Al-Salem's excellence in spearheading expansion of Kuwait by buying the land within the First Ring Road at astonishing prices; how he helped to develop the nation's infrastructure and foster real interest in education establishing many schools, most notably the Shuweikh Secondary School, now part of KU's campus. He also encouraged parents to send their children to school by ensuring that the schools offered free meals, equipment, clothes, and books, and employed excellent expatriate teachers from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine; "the best teachers producing the best of students."

Al-Suwaidan also stressed the importance of values and work ethics "which, of course, are still good but have changed" he noted diplomatically. For instance, after returning from military training in the U.S. where he had to work for over 17 hours a day, he promised himself that he would maintain such determination and diligence in his work, and encouraged his young pilots to reach the squadron base by 6:30 am. "Yes, they were good,"

al-Suwaidan says with a gentle smile, "and this shows that a Kuwaiti can be a good example if he works hard, maintains high ethics, and helps others," thus eradicating any negative stereotypes that people may have surrounding these citizens.

This is one of the things that Al-Suwaidan believes marks today's youth as different: he explains, that they have been born and brought up with great abundance of commodities and services—air conditioning, cars, computers, different foods, facilities, books, and so on—so much so that they may have become numb to the real privilege of having these things.

Once Al-Suwaidan had concluded his eloquent talk, inquisitive students poured forth a series of intelligent, curious questions related to many things, such as Al-Suwaidan's experience in Iraq, his opinion on the importance of freedom, discipline, emphasis on education, women in the air force, and national security. Al-Suwaidan answered all these with skill and adroitness, thoroughly enlightening students and making them eager to learn more. Al-Suwaidan was also kind enough to donate copies of his book on the history of the KAF, the only one of its kind, to the AUK Library, thus further extending his generous sharing of knowledge.



Professor Raymond Farrin and his students at the Al-Babtain Poetry Library.

## Students Visit Poetry Treasure Trove

By Fay R. Al-Basheer

A group of AUK's female students made a visit to Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry with their Arabic professor, Dr. Raymond Farrin, on Saturday 26th April. They were welcomed by a female supervisor who showed them around the place.

From the outside, the library looks like an open book and is composed of four floors.

The ground floor is designed to give it a practical and dynamic character that enables both movement and reading. It includes a main hall, multi-purpose hall, audio-visual room, internet room, photocopying center, Diwaniya, café, and prayer room.

An ideal reading corner and optimal place for preparing research and studies, the first floor is characterized with wide windows that offer picturesque views of the Arabian Gulf. It includes Arabic poetry books,

reading and e-search areas, and a reference desk.

The second floor is unique in that it accommodates rare and valuable manuscripts and publications.

Finally, the third floor is where the library administration and staff offices are, which mainly work to meet the professional, technical, and administrative needs of the library.

According to its website, the library was established in 2005 as the world's first library specializing in Arabic poetry. Its founder and owner, poet Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain, wanted it to serve Arabic poetry and protect the talent involved in poetry, both classical and modern.

The library is next to The Grand Mosque and the Ministry of Planning in the heart of Kuwait City. It is open to visitors Saturdays through Wednesdays from 8:30 am-1:00 pm and 4:30-9:00 pm, as well as Thursday mornings.



# Rediscovering a Lost Literary Tradition



Scenes from Hooda Qaddumi's theatrical adaptation of tenth-century allegorical fable "Beware" at the Lothan Youth Activity Center.

By Nuha Al-Fadli

On May 3rd, the Shamiya Theater was transformed into a battle ground between animal species and the human race during a spectacular musical performance. Through a unique blend of Islamic folklore, traditional Kuwaiti music, jazz, pop and even the Lebanese debkha, the talented young cast of Lothan Youth Activity Center (LoYAC) managed to bring to life Hooda Qaddumi's theatrical adaptation of a tenth century Arabic allegorical fable, "Beware." Although the production was a visual feast and an entertaining experience for the audience, its ability to raise awareness, communicate relevant messages, and engage young audiences with a forgotten classical tale ensured the success of the performance.

This musical adaptation is inspired by the work of Ikhwan Al-Safa (The Brethren of Purity), a mysterious organization of Arab Muslim philosophers of esoterica in Basra, Iraq which was then the seat of the Abbasid Caliphate. Their theories are expounded in an epistolary style in the *Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity*, an extensive and highly influential compendium of fifty two epistles. LoYAC's production is based on a fable in the twenty second epistle of the encyclopedia titled, "The Case of the Animals vs. Man." However, to appeal to modern audiences, the writer and director of the bilingual

play masterfully interwove elements of pop and contemporary culture to revive this neglected tale.

The play is broached with an artistic and musical presentation of the animal's serene island. Even though dialogue is not utilized in the initial scene, the principal characters introduce themselves in a creative sequence of solo and collective dance performances. Unfortunately, however, the idyllic peace is tragically shattered with the arrival of humankind. Shipwrecked after a violent storm, the new settlers begin to desecrate the harmony and balance of the natural world by hunting and domesticating the animals. Enraged by humanity's hostility and oppression, the natural inhabitants revolt and plead their case to the wise King of the Jinn. After convening a council of Jinn, the King decides to hold a formal court for the disputing parties to present their positions formally and democratically. By engaging in a compelling clash of wits, the animals successfully indict humanity of arrogance and cruelty. In an effort to reconcile the two factions, the prudent King decrees that humanity should acknowledge its responsibility towards the environment and treat the animals sensibly.

While the plot is rather simple, the costumes, lighting, choreography and the joint effort of the cast attracted a myriad of audience

members. The beautifully designed costumes contributed greatly to the overwhelming sense of magical realism. For instance, rather than adhering to conventional depictions of the jinn, the artistic costume designer managed to create an abstract representation of the supernatural creatures. Through the use of masks and black gowns imprinted with eye patterns, the costumes effectively incorporated Islamic mythology to give the Jinn an omniscient presence. As for the animals, their costumes consisted of detailed head-dresses and matching attires. In addition, since the cast of six humans embody the larger family of humanity, they were dressed in an array of cultural attire to highlight the negative facets of human nature like greed, arrogance and intolerance that are untamed by cultural tradition. Not only did the costumes give each order of creature an air of artistic distinction, but it added to the elegance and fluidity of the actors' individual dances.

The visual images created on stage are an integral component of any live performance and the lighting not only illuminates, but sets the overall ambiance. When combined with the sound effects, costumes and acting, the effective lighting allowed the audience to fully immerse themselves in the fictitious and eerie magical realm.

Through their fine perfor-

mance, the cast of "Beware" demonstrated the potential of youth drama as creative outlet that builds young people's self-confidence, social skills and expands their horizons. Although it is a strong testament to the rising generation's talents and capacities, "Beware" represented something much greater for Hooda Qaddumi. Her collaboration with LoYAC's Drama Club is simply one of her many efforts to inspire youths to rediscover their neglected Islamic and Arabic literary tradition.

Hooda is an award winning writer and a distinguished member of the AUK community. She is currently teaching English as a Second Language at Kuwait University and is studying English literature in AUK. It is through her experience as an educator that Hooda awakened to the flaws of Arabic teaching methods. Unlike English which engages students' creativity through interactive projects, discussions, analysis and presentations, the Arabic authoritarian classroom promotes memorization rather than critical thinking. This rigid and traditional method of teaching grammar, dictation, calligraphy and reading as isolated entities kills the value of Arabic literature and deters students from appreciating and enjoying the language. This sparked Hooda's interest in reviving Arabic literature and in restoring an appeal and understanding of *fusha*, classical Arabic. "We don't invest enough in our tradition and heritage. It's just as exciting as anything you'd read in the west."

By utilizing storytelling as a teaching tool, Hooda manages to introduce the young generation to prominent Arab figures and literary works through integrating them into children's stories. In fact, she states, "There's very little Arabic literature for children: nothing like Philip Pullman, Jacqueline Wilson or J K Rowling." The first book she wrote was dedicated to her daughter, "a horse enthusiast." To familiarize her daughter with the literature and cultural contribution of Arab and Islamic civilization, Hooda weaved an enchanting tale about horses with the historical legacy of 'Antara Ibn Shaddad al-'Absi, a pre-Islamic Arab hero and poet famous

for his poetry and adventurous life. In fact, Antara's poetry is well preserved in the *Mu'allaqat* or *The Suspended Odes* which is a collection of the greatest poems produced during the pre-Islamic era, as a testament to his genius. "The life of Antara combines all the elements of a great story," asserted Hooda. "It introduces children to important themes such as chivalry, bravery and racial discrimination." Hence, not only does this story engage children's imagination, but it acquaints youths to their culture's artistic achievements and influence in a direct and creative manner.

While her first attempt at writing for children might have inspired her daughter, Hooda's second book caught the attention children of diverse backgrounds. In fact, she received the Sheikh Zayed Book Award for "The Bird's Journey to Mount Qaf." Following the Medieval tradition of *Kalilah wa Dimnah* or *Panchatantra*, Hooda allows a contemporary audience to relive a tale of self-discovery that is narrated in the tongue of birds. Based on the twelfth century Persian allegorical tale, "The Conference of the Birds" by the Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar, "The Bird's Journey to Mount Qaf" chronicles the arduous journey of thirty birds as they cross seven valleys to find the secret land of Simorgh. Lead by a hoopoe, the birds' philosophical quest serves as an allegory for a Sufi master leading his disciples to the path of enlightenment. To accentuate the profundity of her rhyming stanzas, Hooda

collaborated with Vanessa Hodgkinson, a British artist, to illustrate the book with a series of color plates of original Persian ceramic tiles. By merging a simple, yet powerful collection of verses with striking photographs, Hooda successfully creates an appealing work that resonates with readers of various ages.

After experiencing the success of "Beware," Hooda wishes to publish another book for children based on "The Case of the Animals vs. Man." She is planning to weave a collection of zoomorphic calligraphy, a form of script used to create animal shapes, into her new book. In her next endeavor, the aspiring writer wishes to "merge the visual aspect of something that is cultural and combine it with a medieval piece of literature in order to appeal to readers today."

Even though her children's books are gradually being recognized for wide appeal, Hooda does not simply rely on her writing to reach the young generation. During her collaboration with LoYAC, Hooda wrote three plays for the organization's Drama Club. As a matter of fact, she would like to see AUK heeding LoYAC's example by offering various workshops that link Arab youths with their heritage outside the sphere of religious dogma. In working directly with young people, Hooda wishes to send the message that learning the Arabic language is not as difficult as it seems, and it can in fact be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.



The news by students, for students.

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## The Birds' Journey to Mount Qaf



Hooda Shawa Qaddumi



# Dutch Demagogue Leads New Wave of Islamophobia

By Dina El-Zohairy

It's been over 1400 years, yet until the right-wing Dutch politician Geert Wilders (pronounced Kheert) came along no religious scholar had been able to enlighten Muslims about the "real face of Islam." Or so he believes.

According to *The Observer*, Wilders' 15-minute movie *Fitna* (Arabic word meaning "sedition" or "trials and tribulations that test one's faith") is the outcome of a crash course in Qur'anic study—a futile attempt to establish credibility. It was published on the Internet towards the end of March 2008 after no Dutch TV stations would agree to broadcast it.

In brief, the movie highlights five deliberate, out-of-context verses from the Ever-Glorious Qur'an that are recited in Arabic. Four of them actually relate to

wartime, not daily life. Between the verses are images from terrorist attacks and statements made by frustrated *imams*, as if putting the verse in practice.

It is clear that Wilders made no reference to an interpretative source of the Qur'an in making the claim that certain verses of the Qur'an incite Muslims to be terrorists, by today's definition. He is merely repeating what others have said in a more offensive, attention-grabbing manner.

Statistically speaking, can five verses possibly offer an accurate picture of Islam, when the Qur'an consists of 6236 verses, supplemented by the Prophet's substantial collection of sayings and tradition?

The *imams*, as far as I'm concerned, are incorrectly portraying Islam and generating hate on all fronts, when a call for coexistence is what's really needed.

Does every *imam* necessarily think or speak correctly? If they did, we wouldn't be consulting the Qur'an and *sunnah* regularly and would've simply copied present-day *imams*. Islam calls for a moderate lifestyle, but people are made to forget that extremists exist in every religion, not just Islam.

Furthermore, the movie displays gruesome pictures of female genital mutilation as well as Shiites, who beat themselves during the annual *Ashura* festival that commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein, Prophet Muhammad's grandson.

Clearly, Wilders has not done his homework. There is no mention of those practices in the two pillars which form the basis of Islam. There is a clear distinction between *tradition* and religion. To hold Islam responsible for the traditions of certain Muslim

communities or sects is wrong, as is the assumption that every follower of Islam is a living example of the religion. Prophet Muhammad is the primary reference on how a Muslim should conduct his life because he was guided by Allah.

I sensed feelings of jealousy, alarm, and unrest on Wilders' part towards the growing number of Muslims worldwide, but especially in Europe and Holland, where more mosques are being built and Muslim immigrants welcomed. He ultimately wants to outlaw the Qur'an, halt immigration from Muslim countries, and deport Dutch Muslims after stripping them of their citizenship—as if doing so would stop Islam from spreading or make Muslims reject their faith.

Despite his strong anti-Muslim sentiments, Wilders claims to "hate Islam, not Muslims," ignor-

ing the well-known fact that Islam is an integral part of a Muslim's identity. What a hypocrite.

The media should have purely ignored him, at least until the movie had materialized. However, his movie was given intensive media coverage long before it was launched. His popularity will encourage other desperate attention-seekers to do the same and *fitna* will then prevail. I'm sure Muslims can think for themselves and should have the full "freedom" to pick their religion and stick to it whether others like it or not.

I actually feel sorry for Wilders, who made it onto the black list of extremists in vain. All the movie will do is widen the cultural gap further; but it will also push Muslims to learn more about their religion to be able to respond to people like Wilders based on a sound knowledge—a reverse effect Wilders and

his like tend to underestimate.

Ignoring Wilders and his government's policies, the only concern is that many non-Muslims will continue to be brainwashed into thinking that Islam is an evil religion and that Muslims spend their free time scheming bomb attacks on trains, not because Wilders is smart or right, but simply because they allow the media to shoot Islamophobic bullets into their brain.

The contradictions surrounding the movie and its maker are too many to cover here and too trivial to discuss anywhere; I am merely exercising my critical thinking skills while attempting to shed light on more important questions: How long will Islam continue to be attacked by the worthy and not? And what will it take for Muslims to become constructive doers as opposed to offended watchers?

## An Open Message to Sally Kern

By Walah Al-Sabah

In the March of this year, a woman by the name of Sally Kern appeared in the media out of nowhere. A Republican in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, this woman made headlines by condemning homosexuality, which she believes is a factor in making societies disappear. She considers it as more dangerous than Islam, which by the way, she also sees as a "big threat". The purpose of this article is not to defend either. Rather, my aim is to stress how a person such as Sally Kern, who is a chair of Social Services, Education, Common Education, and Human Services committees, could say such a thing. Moreover, the woman is the wife of Steve Kern, a pastor of the Oliver Baptist Church, a person is licensed to conduct religious worship, and one of whose duties is to respect other religions. It is also noteworthy that Mrs. Kern has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Texas.

Wait a minute. The woman is a member in the House of Representatives of the state of Oklahoma; she is married to a pastor; and she has a B.A in Sociology, a field which is founded on the idea of adopting a professional neutrality towards religions, traditions, and lifestyles of all societies. She is a politician, which is an occupation that should

have taught her to be politically correct, to respect people of other beliefs and sexual orientations. And finally, she is the spouse of a pastor. Senator Kern, where is your common sense? Where is your political correctness and tolerance? Or did that B.A in Sociology teach you nothing about respecting people of other lifestyles and beliefs?

Sally Kern's statement appears to be nothing more than a profit-oriented attempt to further her career in politics by condemning certain people. Nor should idiotic, narrow-minded, and ethnocentric statements be dignified with a response. However, I just wanted to take a moment and acknowledge who this person is and what her mere four sentence statement says about her intolerant personality. Generalizations, political incorrectness and intolerance should not be the attributes of a person with her occupation in life. She should have been the pinnacle of those three attributes: a politician, a pastor's wife, and finally, a degree-holder in the field of Sociology.

If those three facts did not help her in becoming an open-minded person, I'm not sure if this article will. Nevertheless, a copy shall be sent to Mrs. Kern's email and any response will appear in a subsequent issue.

## Kuwaiti Elections: What's in Store?

By Farah Al-Shamali

With the dissolving of the Kuwaiti parliament comes an arduous electoral process that is both time-consuming and dynamic. Although the majority of the Kuwaiti population look upon it with optimism, I frankly do not. What with the frequent political blunders committed by the Kuwaiti parliament, I have long since lost faith in our government. Kuwaiti parliamentary candidates all share an innate characteristic: they speak eloquently and vocalize anxieties felt by the Kuwaiti public but are of no use when it comes to implementation. They all claim to know what is best for our country and would sooner stand against someone else's viewpoint than find common ground from which to initiate groundbreaking movements for the betterment of Kuwaiti society. Regrettably, avarice often prevails and steers the ship into raging waters. Voters themselves are also to blame for the governmental corruption in Kuwait. Instead of voting for candidates based on their merits and competence, they chose members of their own tribes whether they are fit for the job or not. I do not want to appear redundant for I am sure that we are all familiar with this unfortunate state of affairs.

Yet again, the parliament has been dissolved beckoning the arrival of another wave of elections. It is incredible the amount of money put into the campaign funds of these candidates. I am certain that every Kuwaiti citizen receives an

average of seven messages a day about candidate speeches. It gets frustrating. Sadly, I can no longer fully trust any candidate. I may come close, but I always retain a sense of doubt. In this day and age, it is hard to find unselfish people who will work for their countries without expecting anything in return.

We have all been pulled in by false promises and are doomed to suffer the consequences. The youth of Kuwait suffers most in this case as our liberal ideals clash with conservative ones held by these candidates. No matter how we exemplify our viewpoint, it will always be categorized as insufficient and damaging. We cannot allow them to feed these ideas into our minds, making us feel worthless. We are the future of this nation and we must take charge of it before it falls in the hands of those that will lead to its demise.

I also predict that Kuwaiti women will not receive ample representation. Even when they do make it to parliament, there is some sort of conspiracy that seeks to strip them of their rightfully deserved status. Kuwaiti women need to be empowered if this country is to enjoy human development.

I speak with the voice of every Kuwaiti when I demand change from the core. I don't know where these elections are taking us but all we can do for the time being is wait and see. For now, I will remain an observer of Kuwaiti politicians, watching them from a distance, and noting down their many flaws.

# Flirts, Gossips, and Divorcées: Arabic Women on TV

By Walah Al-Sabah

Seldom do I watch the television. I might be branded as the "book" person or "documentary" person. And to be frank, I am happy that I do not watch some of the series that have become so prevalent in the Arab World, and in particular, series that portray daughters, and women generally, as weak, second-class humans who are either beaten or married off.

During Ramadan, there was one program only that I used to watch regularly, to the point that I used to rush home from university in order to see it. That program, shall I say, was and still is in my opinion the best of the best. However, its portrayal of daughters was what sickened me. I understand the fact that this series was somewhat historical fiction, which portrayed how a certain Arabic country used to be during the days of colonization. The program mostly centered on the stories of different people in the

villages, and in particular, those of women and their daughters. One woman was divorced from her husband and went to live with her brothers. The brothers don't want their sister to go back to her husband unless he does so and so. Her daughter is in love with a man, but cannot marry him, because the father of her potential suitor does not want his son to marry a girl whose mother is divorced. The woman's other daughter did nothing but peak in a window, and was beaten by her father and dragged by her hair. There are many such incidents.

I am a notorious feminist in this university—at least that is what I've heard people say—but at the same time I am not so obsessed with feminism that I cannot enjoy a movie or a program which portrays daughters and women as objects whose bodies are transgressed by their fathers, husbands or brothers. To tell the truth, my soul was torn between acknowledging this program as

brilliant and worth being seen, and denouncing it for its portrayal of daughters and mothers and women in general as either flirtatious, divorced, gossipers, or dissenters of society.

To add fuel to the fire, all I have to do is switch the channel to another Gulf program where a mother is pushing and beating her daughter because a man broke into the house while the daughter was by herself. The mother, instead of being kind and compassionate with her terrified daughter who is shaking from tears, screams at her daughter "Did he touch you?!" So much for motherhood; so much for soothing your shaken daughter, hugging her or even kissing her while she's in shock. I can understand the father pushing his daughter around in the house and grabbing her by her arms when he learned that a man had broken into the house—although the father's action is not right either—but the mother? Frankly, some of the Ar-

abic Gulf programs make me feel personally insulted as a daughter and a woman. I have to change the channel or switch the television off altogether, as exaggerated as it seems, to take a moment to absorb the media madness that is going on. Not only are women portrayed in such a negative way in Arabic programs, but also in books.

Some might argue that the condescending portrayal in some—and I stress the word *some*—Arabic programs actually serves women. The rationale of this argument is these programs are using reverse psychology: that viewers will realize that it is wrong to treat their wives, daughters, and sisters in such a manner and stop doing it. I shall admit that there may be some validity to this argument, yet there will always be those who "just don't get it". In other words, a person who believes in beating up his wife, daughter, or sister to "keep her in her place", might have his

opinion reinforced by watching these intrinsically misogynistic programs. Of course, not all Arabs are like that. Actually, I personally believe that it is rare that both genders think that women ought to be treated this way. I commend most of my Arabic brothers and sisters for believing that women ought not to be treated this way. In fact, it is one of many chivalrous attitudes of the Arabic man that he not lay a hand on a woman. Why this is so is open to debate, but not in this article. I simply deem it shameful that people around the world might turn on an Arabic channel, and by chance, see a scene where a female is treated in such a manner. The media should aim to rectify the image, not worsen it. Sorry to say, but some of the Arabic programs do just the latter.

I strongly disapprove of the way women are treated in some Arabic programs. It is as if I am being made to feel that I ought to be treated that way if I ever

did something wrong. As my father's daughter, I feel offended. As my brother's sister, I feel offended. As a possible mother in the future, I feel offended. In reality, I have the respect of my male relatives, and I walk with my father, brother or cousin in the same row, never behind them. I am not less human than my male counterparts, and I am blessed with an understanding father who loves and respects his daughter and a brother who reveres and appreciates his elder sister. But when I see how daughters, sisters, and mothers are portrayed in some programs, I feel threatened—not because I am subjected to such treatment, but because as an Arabic woman—not matter how westernized—I fall into a category that some programs characterize as nothing more than a tool or an object of men, worthy only of being beaten up. To conclude, let us be careful in this case that life not imitate art.



## Desert Cats Jazz Band of Kuwait – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Concert

By Nur Soliman

Though Jazz Appreciation Month, highlighted by the Gulf Jazz Festival, was over by the end of April, Kuwait's jazz scene continued into May with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual concert of Kuwait's own big band, the now 2-year-old, 14-member Desert Cats Jazz Band. Initially led by bassist Mike Khayat and clarinetist Donald Lee, the talented band is now headed by alto saxophonist Bob "Cannonball" Powers, and delivered a brilliant performance on the evening of May 5<sup>th</sup> at the American International School. Though the audience was a good deal smaller than last year's, they were a dedicated one, and their enjoyment was evident from their wholeheartedly positive response to each piece played. This year's concert was as varied in its selection as last year's, from Swing classics, to avant-garde jazz, from favorite tunes to well-known 60s melodies.

Among the pieces played were some eternal favorites like "Stomping at the Savoy" made famous by Benny Goodman and Chick Webb. The piece was played with robust cheeriness and a sort of bright, swelling brass perhaps more familiar to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Jazz than Goodman and Chick Webb's time, though still memorable. The next one was "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy", made famous by the Andrew Sisters, replaced by easy smooth notes by the trumpets and tenor saxophones. This soft 30s classic had a catchy rhythm, punctuated with happily lilting trombones Kempster, Scribbins, and Berresford, and highlighted by young Eliot Miller's short, brilliant trumpet solo reminiscent of the silky style of Harry James. Other favorites were "In the Mood" with the famous call-and-re-

sponse sequence between Powers and young Nick Kenrick; and "American Patrol" which would have done credit to any Glenn Miller tribute with their faithfully 1939 Swing spirit, as well as the swift, rumbly, jungle-Swing of Ellington's flawless "Caravan." Another "favorite of our Desert Cats library" was the ever thrilling "It Don't Mean a Thing [If It Ain't Got that Swing]"

sped up to an energetic pace which was altogether unusual and perfectly delightful. Another was the incomparable "Blue Skies" played with rightfully passionate bursts of brass, and not accompanied by Sinatra, of course, but spelled out by the saxophonists.

What marked these pieces with a sort of Desert Cats brand, perhaps, was the fact that their codas were remarkably be-bop, or Dizzy Gillespie-esque, maybe even like Miles Davis'. This did not detract from the nature of their performance; in fact, it made it more individual to their style and thus more memorable, as did their curious instrumental arrangement, considering there were no clarinets or double-basses. For instance, a Williams and

Thelonius Monk composition, "Round Midnight," was played with sensitivity towards the avant-garde era, with the slow balanced, almost Ellingtonian chords highlighted with a beautiful, evocative solo by trombonist Mike Kempster, and a fast, cheery be-bop ending swelling out with near cacophonous chords.

Other pieces were more of the bossa nova inclination, such as a Desert Cats favorite, energetic "Salsa Amigo" or "One Note Samba" with its soft, Latin piano chords and elegant drum beat keeping the easy trumpets in frame, almost like a big-band rendition of a Herb Alpert Tijuana brass piece. Others still were more modern, such as a rendition of Boney M's "Sunny" or the nostalgic, pretty tunes of "Yesterday" and "Can't Buy Me Love," studded with terrific solos by trumpeter Ra'fat Jamal and tenor saxophonist Kenrick who also had a Swing-golden solo in the Harry James-like "All of Me." The night ended—with clearly audible wistful sighs from the audience and tired, pleased smile of Powers—with the smooth, cool, and alternately robust, vivid "Chameleon," then with the

much-clapped for encore of Count Basie's "April in Paris." Powers was true to his word when he said that they would play it "à la Basie" as the sparkling yet soft trumpets and lovely muted trombones contrasted against the loud saxophones was perfectly Basie, as was Don Graybiel's spare, almost rag-like piano chords, high, cheerful, and perfectly measured. Indeed, so delighted were both audience and band, both viewer and performer, that the encore was repeated 3 times with such passionate fervor, each ending more breathtaking than the previous.

It was pleasing to note that for a (small) big band in a small country, the Desert Cats Jazz Band had already developed their own pleasing distinctive style, which survived strongly up until tonight and which would surely have been on par with older bands. At any rate, it thoroughly pleased the audience with that originality, which one may say is the essence of Jazz in its unpredictability and sparkling innovation. Indeed, most audience members were vocal in their hopes of attending perhaps a third annual concert for Kuwait's promising big band. Many may think that the arts and music scene of Kuwait is relatively behind the scenes. Dwindling marketing, advertisement coverage and "little" awareness aside, the arts scene of Kuwait is persistently alive and flourishing for those who will diligently search the newspapers, websites, and magazines of Kuwait as well as pass on the news to others. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Desert Cats Jazz Band concert is an excellent, praiseworthy addition to that robust, vivacious movement of music, theatre, and art across the country as well as the steadily growing Jazz scene and society.



Kuwait's Desert Cats jazz band performs at AIS.

## Al-Sabah Collection, an Important Custodian of Mankind's Art Heritage

By Nur Soliman

Mr. Manuel Keene had no trouble in relating the importance of a collection such as the Al-Sabah Islamic Art Collection, as his audience filled the whole of AUK's Auditorium, ranging from attentive students, faculty, and staff to Mr. Keene's colleagues from the office and many dedicated members of Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah's Circle, all drawn into the world of Islamic art through the unhurried, gentle eloquence of the speaker and his clear enthusiasm and love for the discipline.

Invited and introduced by Dr. Marjorie Kelly of AUK's Gulf Studies Center, Keene has been curator of the Al-Sabah Collection since 1982, having studied in depth the history of

geometric patterns and the art of jewelry, particularly that of jade and other hardstones. A recent publication is the documentation of the touring exhibition "Treasury of the World: Jeweled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals" displayed first in 2001 in the UK, showcasing gold and jade masterpieces, studded with rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and enamels.

Mr. Keene began his talk by introducing four major categories of objects that are known to have been made with fine, singular skill by Muslim artists: calligraphy in the Arabic script, geometric art, particularly in two-dimensional patterns and developed to unparalleled levels, composition of formalized vegetal patterns, known as "arabesque," and the uniqueness of lesser-known but existing representation of humans, animals, etc. in architecture, ceramics, metalwork, and so on.

The first was calligraphy. Keene described this as a "most noble art" in the eyes of many, "especially because it is used when recording the Qur'an as it was related to the Prophet Muhammad in the 7<sup>th</sup> century." This admirable discipline inspired and encouraged hundreds of styles, Keene remarked as he displayed his first slide, showing a double-page of a Qur'anic manuscript on parchment, said to have been done in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the script used being described as "Kufic" because of the elegant angular style, and in this case also called "ma'il" or slanting due to the sloping angle. Also, the Kufic script is earliest, and usually omitted any diacritical marks as the text was usually for mnemonic purposes instead of deliberate study.

Keene also took the opportunity to remark that the majesty of proportion and beauty of the shapes of the letters is often sufficient to awe any beholder, whether or not they can in

fact read or recognize any Arabic, but moreso should they be able to. Among other examples of beautiful calligraphy was another lovely Kufic Qur'anic manuscript done in Eastern Iran in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Here, the script was slightly more ornamental, more cursive, but retained the now-old script framework. The striking highlight of the pages shown were, as Keene pointed out, the sura headings, or sarlawh, illuminated in gold and color and written legibly in



beautiful flowing script.

The second category Keene discussed was one apparently most dear to his heart as he spoke of it with such fervor and warmth beneath his fine, calm delivery. Keene explained that it is in the field of geometrical designs that Muslim artists were most innovative and reached a caliber of unrivalled sophistication and uniqueness. Their main source from which their vast knowledge of geometric capabilities stemmed from the Greek tradition, where Euclid had studied all numeric possibilities of form in three-dimensional space. Picking up from the Greeks, the Romans further refined the technique in their own art repertoire, especially in

mosaic patterns. Muslim artists were able to transform that knowledge into something spectacular, rendering it in many media, from wood to ceramic to cloth. One such example is a fine facet of furniture with applied woodwork, or marquetry, inlaid with ivory, ebony, and other woods. Another example was 16<sup>th</sup> century Indian marquetry, known in the region as well as in Persia as khatamkari, this particular example with exceptional inlay in dyed and pure ivory, as well

as elegantly dark wood.

Also, that innate creativity in Muslim craftsmen, Keene explained, showed itself in the way they worked around spatial obstacles when trying to tessellate different forms or repeat certain patterns, one being the pentagon as the finial shape, facilitating any form of repetition on any side of the initial shape. It is also worthy to note, when observing Islamic geometry, that often the preliminary frame is a circle, triangle, or other regular polygon.

The third category cherished and refined in Islamic art, and one also inherited from the Iranian world is vegetal ornament, or the "arabesque." An early example that Keene used to demonstrate the craftsmen's skill

was the well-known carved marble column capital from Cordoba of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, placed near one famous Ummayyad palace, Madinat Al-Zahra. There is increasingly ornamental vegetal tracery, as it were, showing marks of Byzantine blending through the deep piercing of the marble for the carvings.

An especially fine model of the arabesque at its most refined was LNS 249, a 12<sup>th</sup> century jade object of the East Iranian world, the earliest to be inlaid with gold in history and indeed the earliest form of arabesque on the said substance. The palmettes and flower buds that were lightly incised into the whitish-grey jade were simplified nearly to abstraction, where the palmettes only bore a suggestion of their furling fronds, and some of the buds were reduced to simple dots in alternate compartments, a charmingly spare rendition on the arabesque.

The fourth and final category of Keene's talk was art "representative of our world," best exemplified by several items in the Al-Sabah Collection such as the bronze incense burner of Iran, the form well-known to many, with intricate openwork on the body to release the incense and fragrance, the head and legs taking the form of a fierce quadruped. Another item which depicted life-forms was the large wooden panel from Fatimid Egypt of the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century, with graceful antelopes carved in high relief amid abundant flowers and foliage. Indeed, human representation was not regarded as forbidden except on sacred items or places, such as mosques, madrasas (religious schools), and tombs. One exquisite depiction of the human form is found on the ceramic body of a wine-flask with blue glaze, taking the form of a gentle wine-bearer. Other human representations are



more popular on paper or—unusually—on silk, as LNS77, the silk painting of 15<sup>th</sup> century Samarkand shows, depicting two exquisitely dressed lovers blushing delicately in surprise at their encounter in a fantastic landscape, accompanied by elegant servants. Although the real story of this is lost, Keene mentioned that it was surely some illustration to a Persian love poem which, Keene remarked, were often addressed—desired lady aside—to God Almighty.

"In light of all of this," Keene concluded, "it is important to see that this is not just to highlight possessions [of the Al-Sabah Collection]. It is world heritage and is preserved for the future, the way in which precious treasures are cherished and connect us with our brothers and sisters of the past and their aesthetic principles. It is a way into the past," he explained, a way to reach into the reality of the past in a much more vivid way than any text can, but with real spirit, fashioning, and color.





# Dar El-Cid Showcases Dresses of the Arab World

By Nur Soliman

A striped robe catches one's attention when entering the delightfully picturesque Dar el-Cid Museum; dyed in purple, orange, green, and yellow, and bedecked with jewel-like stitches, trembling slightly under the breeze before a printed canvas showing the golden cap of the Dome of the Rock. Indeed, the cool ventilation makes all of the voluminous dresses flutter gently, swaying softly, almost rhythmically, displaying now plain, unadorned backs, now beautifully embroidered, decorated fronts. Suspended on clear wire and lined up against the walls of the generously spaced hall, the dresses were organized according to nation, from the Gulf to the Levant, from Morocco to old Ottoman provinces, from Oman to Palestine. Backing Jehan Rajab's exhaustive, admirable collection were evocative photographs or paintings—some by Tareq Rajab himself—of peaceful Egyptian courtyards, colorful Moroccan markets, and wide-eyed women of Jordan, Syria, or Bethlehem.

Also dotting the white hall were glass-topped cabinets with some coin-covered caps and hats, and samples of charming embroidery patterns common to Palestine with names made famous by the women who spent their afternoons bent over needle-work while exchanging the gossip of the day. One such example is the “palm tree,” with elaborated palm leaves splayed out in cross-stitch, while another more complicated one composed of little squares, diamonds, and triangles, was the “pasha's tent,” very different in turn to the strange yet pretty “road to Damascus” pattern. Indeed, even some of their favorite dyes had interesting names, such as their blues and deep-red for which Palestinian embroidery is famous. Also known as *hadeel*, or the cooing of doves, the embroidery covered the long robes in rich profusion of deep gold, red, green, orange, creamy blue, indigo, and purple.

Of course, the Omani, Gulf, Syrian, and other dresses are different. The flowing Omani dress is reminiscent of Indian



motifs, deep burgundy velvet studded with twinkling gold-and-blue or gold-and-red flowers like the gold blooms of Indian saris. The Syrian dresses

were altogether less adorned than their Palestinian counterparts, though some of the delightful folk-bright dresses sported flowing ribbon-like extensions of the sleeves, embroidered in almost South-American style. Another Syrian dress no doubt was discovered in the mountainous region, for the brown dress swelled with the thick white fleece lining the inside. Of course, the biting cold did not affect the design of the Kuwaiti woman's dress, or *dara'a*, whose flimsy green folds tastefully fell straight, covered in delicate strings of gold tracery and lace adorning the throat, sleeves, and body of the dress in affectionately Gulf tradition.

One of the older pieces in the hall was the Empire-elegant floral-decorated Ottoman coat, with pearly pink floral and geometric motifs entirely covering the fitted coat in delicacy typical of Imperial costumes, even in Mughal India. One of the more extraordinary dresses was the tent-like black dress of Jordan, the skirt reputedly twice the height of a woman, the second half of which she

would wrap about her waist, while the flowing sleeves were also incredibly long, so much so that, by aid of an accompanying photograph, visitors saw that they were wrapped about the head, though these were later completely cut off so that the sleeves of her first dress showed amid the heavy folds of black.

The rows upon rows of dresses with their brilliant color-schemes were testimony to the creativity and professional skill of the Arab women through the course of history, presenting the visitor with a kind of geographic tapestry, spanning such a large area and showing the fruits of the Rajabs' labor, avid collectors for over 20 years, and always ready to present their treasures to curious passers-by and visitors, most impressively so with this exhibition.

*The “Dresses of the Arab World” exhibition lasted from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April at the Dar el-Cid, and was open to all visitors. Visit [www.trm-kt.com](http://www.trm-kt.com) for information on the museums and potential exhibitions, directions, timings, etc.*

## Alphonse Mouzon Trio Concert

By Nur Soliman

“And if you can't sing it, you simply have to swing it; I said swing it; Oh-oh-oh swing it!” Truer words could not have been said of the Alphonse Mouzon Trio playing under rainbow-spotlights in the dark excitement of the Radisson SAS Hotel's Hashemi II Ballroom as the closing celebration of the three-day Gulf Jazz Festival. Feet tapped with great energy and mesmerized heads swayed rhythmically to and fro.

Hailing from North Carolina and having played with the likes of Miles Davis, Anita O'Day, and Herbie Hancock, Alphonse Mouzon, the skilled, energetic drummer and throaty singer teamed up with Joe Bagg on an excited guitar, and Steve Gregory on a cool-sounding Hammond organ. Mouzon's style was somewhat unusual, leaning towards a more avant-garde, modernized style such as that of Miles Davis, almost bordering on chill-out music. Due to the lack of any brass or wind instrument, the musicians were commendably creative in using their instruments in unprecedented ways; Steve Gregory would shift smoothly from his role as “bass” and become the soloist of the piece, his melody akin to that of say, a saxophone. Indeed, after his flawlessly wrought solo, the organist would cue in Mouzon who would repeat his notes through-and-through, striking his cymbals and snare with such vivacity the whole ballroom resounded with the sheer force of the beat.

For the first session, Mouzon stayed true to his role of “Funky” musician, with rather abstract pieces of his own composition, full of hastily-flurrying scales and delightfully pseudo-cacophonic flourishes. Among the pieces in his repertoire were “Anticipation,” “What You Doing Later On,” and “Daddy's Little Girl,” all with a quirky personal story of Mouzon's to introduce it, eliciting laughter from the audience, who were so responsive that in the end, Alphonse thrust up his arms with a powerful, “Thank you, Kuwait! Hope to come again next month... or next year.”

As a matter of fact, the audience was even more responsive after the interval, when the guitar and organ played a most charming “reggae-blues” rendition of “Fly Me to the Moon” which Mouzon crooned to with a smooth bass voice, and in which Joe Bagg had a spectacular solo on the guitar. Another more traditional piece, similar to some of Miles Davis' or Chick Corea's work, was “Blues for Emma,” dedicated to Mouzon's talented daughter Emma, infused with a catchy melody running through the chords which were taken up alternately by the drums, guitar, or organ.

The night ended with “Daddy's Blues” which saw Steve Gregory perform a wildly enthusiastic, long solo on his organ while Mouzon sung with a throatier, rougher voice, so energetic and upbeat was this final piece that the whole audience took to cheering and clapping throughout. The two-hour concert ended with that brilliant flourish, guaranteeing for the audience that their evening had not been spent in vain but in great pleasure, watching the “real Jazz star” of Kuwait, as Witold Wnuk, KCP manager of the Festival, announced appreciatively.

# Sulaiman Al-Dikan's Al-Maraqey (Ascension)

By Nur Soliman

The blending of different musical styles from different cultures or the inclusion of exotic – non-native – instruments has been attempted and worked with for a good while, but perhaps not always to the extent that Kuwaiti composer Sulaiman Al-Dikan took it. To play melodies intensely evocative of one culture voiced by musical instruments of a completely different culture accompanied by folk instruments to maintain the spirit was his ambitious endeavor, and he succeeded tremendously judging by the enthusiastic response of the audience who sat enthralled for an hour of Al-Dikan's concert entitled Al-Maraqey, or “Ascension.”

“Music is the purest form of art, is most capable of expressing beauty, and is the finest nourishment for the soul.” So says Sulaiman Al-Dikan, and it appears that for him at least, his music can truly evoke most eloquent feelings and sensations related to the changing seasons of Kuwait, patriotism, the Gulf Invasion, and the voice of the Kuwaiti. Son of Ghannam Al-Dikan, a respected and much-loved composer in his own right, Sulaiman Al-Dikan was always known for his creative, brilliant compositions of Kuwaiti folk music, blended subtly with more modern melodies, instruments, or structures, but always intense with the voice of the Kuwaiti nomad, shepherd, sailor, or merchant. After earning his diploma from Kuwait's Institute of Musical Studies, he completed his higher studies at Ruh Al-Qudus University of Lebanon, earning his MA in 2001 and his PhD in 2005.

The 30-odd performers that stood before the packed audience hall hailed from a number of national and musical backgrounds, forming perhaps the largest number of performers to gather on stage since November, which saw the traditional Bin Hussein Sea Band. Most of the members were part of the Orchestra of Ukraine playing classical European instruments like the violin, trumpet, and so on. Others were more familiar local, talented artists playing similar instruments such as the flute, double bass, and harpsichord. Others were performing on traditional instruments such as the qanun, or variation on the zither, and nayy, or reed-pipe, while there were four fine Kuwaiti musicians who were performing on traditional percussion instruments, as well as singing and clapping, really keeping the sound of the band in real Gulf spirit. Also attending were two men dancing slowly and gracefully in their white dishdashas, sometimes accompanied by a third who had tied innumerable strings of quivering sea-shells to his side.

Perhaps the best explanation for Al-Dikan's insistence on creating a new form of music can be found in the words of Abdul Men'em Hasan when he describes Al-Dikan's

music. He writes that this “new” form of music is perfectly evocative of Kuwait, where outside influences enhance and alter the original style to create something better expressive of the society and geography of Kuwait, always exposed to new and different frames of thinking and culture, as well as the inherent pride in one's identity.

All the pieces played were new even to them most dedicated Al-Dikan fan who for years listened to his classic albums Al-Amal, or “Hope” of 1994; Sahra wa Sawahel, or “Deserts and Coasts” released in 1996; and his latest, Rud



Kuwaiti composer Sulaiman Al-Dikan

Al-Hayat, or “Return Life” which was released in 2001. Although still intensely reminiscent of his old style, the compositions that were performed with beautiful professionalism and real feeling during Al-Maraqey were perhaps more infused with a more international style, combining classical European instruments into the melody, leaving the voices of the traditional instruments to preserve the spirit of the music and to keep it more audibly oriental, though this way by no means a shortcoming.

One could easily compare his older, moving Faz'aa to his more recent Baledi; the latter is more infused with Western-style structure and instruments, while the former has none of this, but is only drums and chorus. However,

both are fiercely patriotic, and perhaps therein lays Al-Dikan's genius.

One of the especially beautiful pieces was the “Prelude Henda”, the Kuwaiti musician's deep, comforting beats of the drums highlighted by their lilting voices and heard alongside the powerful, moving march-like melody of the orchestra, almost like a European Romantic march though duly flavored with the Khammri rhythm of Kuwait.

Another piece that was remarkably evocative of real scenery, as it were, was Al-Wasmi, or “The Early Rain Season,” which was begun by the strangely moving playing of the high, robust-yet-fragile sounding rababa accompanied by Al-Dhufeiry's singing in a piping, nasal, curiously moving voice. Following his performance, the slow tempo reminiscent, perhaps, of the meditative tempo of a sitar composition, the orchestra swelled into polyphonic splendour. Conducted by the shy Al-Dikan himself, the orchestra played these bright, hopeful sections with the moving violins, trumpet, and nay, punctuated then by the spare pizzicato plucking of the violins with the qanun and quiet, gentle beating of the drums interspersed by the turning of a tall rain-stick. Thus flawlessly did Al-Dikan paint a musical picture of the rain season, filled with the very vividness of life and growth of little bright flowers and scrub, dotted with soft, sprinkling rain.

This was in contrast with the melancholic “More than 605” (number of POW's in occupier jails), performed solely by the piano, where the high, rippling scales of the beautiful, fluid melody were weighed down by the heavier, duller chords which accentuated the sorrow.

The final piece, Helwa Al-laban, was another brilliant orchestral masterpiece by Al-Dikan's hand, swelling with such bursts of feeling and robustness brought out by the drums and strings, very Arabian in voice and feel, yet seamlessly fused with the orchestra to create something truly unique.

Al-Dikan also paid homage to some of his great predecessors—his father and his contemporaries—in the music of the Kuwaiti heritage, from Ghannam Al-Dikan himself, to Abdullah Al-Faraj, a part of whose tune, Dhab Ruhi was played to the audience on an ancient gramophone before beginning his variation, and Ahmed Baquer, among others.

Surely the gifted, productive Sulaiman Al-Dikan deserves a title equal to his predecessors for reviving the beauty of Kuwaiti traditional music, from the rhythms of the desert, to the sea, and the town, all perfectly blended into today's world to something wonderfully different.



## What is Multiple Sclerosis?

By Dina El-Zohairy

Simply put, MS stops people from moving. It is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the Central Nervous System (CNS), which is made up of your brain and spinal cord.

The term *multiple sclerosis* refers to two characteristics of the disease: the numerous affected areas of the brain and spinal cord producing multiple neurologic symptoms that accrue over time and the plaques or sclerosed (scarred) areas that are the hallmark of the disease.

MS is thought to be an autoimmune disease—a catchall term for the group of disorders whereby the immune system mistakenly attacks “self” tissues. In MS, the victim is myelin, the fatty substance that forms a protective sheath around nerve cells and fibers, causing nerve injury and inflammation. Eventually, this damage can slow or block the nerve signals that control muscle coordination, strength, sensation and vision.

People with MS, usually diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 45 years, can experience one of four clinical courses. About 85% of patients have attacks followed by remissions at the outset of illness, the course referred

to as *relapsing-remitting* MS (RRMS). Attacks are frequently referred to as relapses or exacerbations, and the first attack is called a *clinically isolated syndrome* (CIS).

Most RRMS patients eventually enter a progressive phase in which attacks and remissions are generally indistinctive. This is referred to as *secondary-progressive* MS (SPMS), in which disability tends to accumulate more significantly.

About 15% of patients never have acute attacks and remissions but have progressive disease from the beginning—*primary-progressive* MS (PPMS). Finally, a small percentage of patients may have a mixture of progression and relapses, referred to as *progressive-relapsing* MS (PRMS).

Most patients with MS will present with nonspecific complaints, including visual and gait problems, speech difficulty, and sexual dysfunction. MS is a diagnosis of exclusion; a number of disorders can mimic MS, therefore various tests are performed to confirm the diagnosis such as MRI, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) analysis, and evoked potential (EP) tests—recordings of the nervous system’s electronic

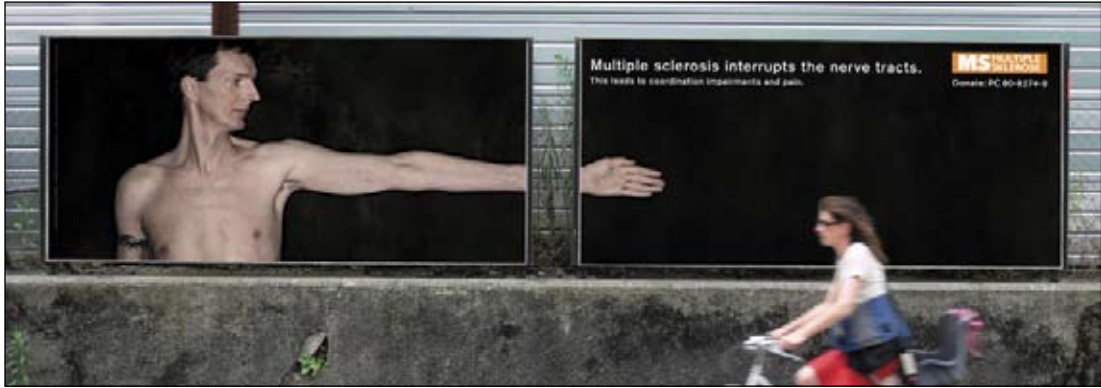
response to external stimuli.

Similar to AIDS, in which opportunistic infections defeat the HIV-weakened immune system, MS usually does not directly diminish life expectancy. The development of secondary complications such as pneumonia may lead to a shorter than expected life span.

Although MS was first described almost 130 years ago, the cause remains a mystery, and a cure is still unavailable. Effective treatment strategies are available to modify the disease course, treat exacerbations, manage symptoms, improve function and safety, and provide emotional support, since depression is common in MS and may pose the risk of suicide.

Interestingly, the greater the distance from the equator, the higher is the prevalence of the disease. And having failed to prove scientifically that MS is contagious or can be transmitted via blood, American Red Cross donation centers recently lifted the ban on accepting donations from MS patients.

Sources: Pharmacotherapy: A Physiologic Approach 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Joseph Dipiro et al); National MS Society Website.



## Prime Time Medicine Review

By Dina El-Zohairy

Ten-year olds don’t simply get heart attacks, do they?

As she jumped the rope in physical education class, Jessica started complaining from chest discomfort and pain in one arm—before falling to the ground. Her heart wasn’t getting enough blood and oxygen so it stopped pumping.

At Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital, Dr. House and his young staff come up with different hypotheses. Chase is convinced her morbid obesity—BMI above 40—explains it all. Foreman turns to genetics, suggesting Metabolic Syndrome, a cluster of risk factors—increased blood pressure, elevated insulin levels, excess body fat around the waist or abnormal cholesterol levels—that occur together, increasing a person’s risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Minutes into the insulin resistance test which Jessica undergoes to confirm Metabolic Syndrome, she starts flailing, screaming and cursing in a bout of psychosis. Had her blood glucose level dropped? Not according to the lab, it didn’t. What caused her uncontrollable rage then?

Back to the whiteboard and the Socratic method of solving tough medical cases, Chase is quick to suggest a blood clot—a possible complication of some over-the-counter diet pills. While Foreman plays Sherlock Holmes, Jessica is given two anticoagulants, warfarin and heparin, to prevent new clots from forming.

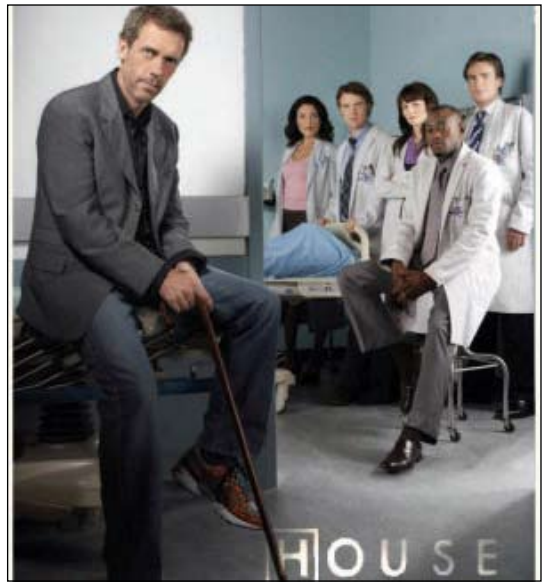
When Foreman returns from Finley Elementary, the girl is confronted and admits taking the diet pills she had picked up at the store. Now the pieces fit together. Diet pills can cause blood clots, which in turn gave her a heart attack. Jessica would be kept overnight for observation.

Peace of mind is shattered by a tuneful combination of beeping sounds in House’s office, where the team is gathered to discuss a cancer patient who refuses to have her benign tumor removed so as not to be “just skin and bones.”

“She’s bleeding!” Jessica’s mum frantically says.

Cameron lifts the neck of Jessica’s gown to reveal open, bleeding lesions on her chest—referred to as skin necrosis, or death of skin cells. If left to spread, they’ll land her in the morgue by the end of the day.

House blames her necrosis on an accidental warfarin overdose. However, she doesn’t respond



to the treatment of warfarin-induced necrosis and more and more skin cells die. Her only chance of survival is to have her breasts amputated—aka mastectomy—where fatty tissue is being attacked. Her mum reluctantly signs a consent form.

At the last minute, just before the patient is to go through major surgical repair, in one of those “but doctor, if you’re wrong the treatment will kill the patient” moments, House hits on the diagnosis. Looking at the tall, slightly heavy mother, the recorded height of the father, then back to Jessica, who’s obese, short for her age, and hypertensive, it clicks.

Jessica has Cushing’s syndrome due to overproduction of the hormone cortisol by the body. Since her tests do not support the diagnosis, House requests an MRI—an imaging technique used to take pictures of internal body structures in detail, and the enemy of claustrophobics—to check for hypercortisolism.

Surely enough, the scan reveals a tumor on the pituitary gland—a small yet vital gland attached by a stalk to the base of the brain. The tumor caused Cushing’s, which messed up the production of hormones, which control growth, weight, etc. It had to be surgically removed through an incision made under the lip and the insertion of a fiber optic microscope.

“Is that really you?” “You look fantastic!” Chase exclaims in disbelief, upon seeing a much thinner Jessica a week or so later.

## Student Dietician Offers Nutritional Tips

By Dina El-Zohairy

Hebah Al-Duaij is a certified clinical nutritionist who works at Al-Amiri Hospital. She holds a degree in Nutrition and Food Science from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Kuwait University, and is graduating from AUK this summer with a second Bachelor’s degree in Public Relations & Advertising and a minor in Natural Science.

She has completed rotations in several public hospitals around Kuwait, including Al-Sabah, Al-Razi, and Mubarak. In addition, she is certified to train mothers on children’s nutrition. Hebah also gives seminars, lectures at schools, and is involved in the promotion of health and fitness in mass media. Hebah hopes to start her own clinic in the near future.

**Why did you decide to pursue a career in nutrition and dietetics?**

I decided to take this path because I believe there is nothing more important than a human’s body and health. My patients are not only thankful when I help them reach their ideal body weight; they also gain confidence and a completely new outlook on life through the modification, which makes me proud at the end of the day.

**What exactly do you do in your field? What are your daily**

**responsibilities?**

We, my colleagues and I, are in charge of the diets that are served in the wards on a daily basis, making sure every inpatient receives a diet that suits their health condition. In addition, we have clinic hours where we meet our patients according to their appointments. Apart from that, I write in several publications about latest diet topics, and I have given lectures at schools to promote healthy eating.

**What do you think are the causes of poor nutrition in Kuwait?**

The income in Kuwait is high and a wide food variety is available but the problem is the lack of education about healthy food selections. Unfortunately, propaganda is geared towards fast food.

What are the top reasons your clients want to go on a diet?

Most simply want to have a healthy body, gain self-confidence, and of course look good. Some want to lose weight very fast before a special occasion, others want to become body builders, and the rest are just afraid of getting obesity-related diseases.

**What are some of the latest trends in diet regimens?**

The latest trends include the 5 Factor Diet which claims to keep you lean for life like a healthy balanced diet with exercise does;

celebrities including Eva Mendes and Katherine Heigl follow this diet. Also, the Extreme Fat Smash is another diet designed for those who want to lose weight very fast. However, if you go off-track after reaching your desired weight, you can gain it back easily. The most popular diet is the Organic Diet, which is 100% natural. Lastly, the Detox Diet helps remove excess toxins from the body as well as makes you lose weight.

**Do you see a need for increased health education in Kuwait?**

Yes, Kuwait definitely needs to promote health and fitness more than ever, because statistics of diabetes and other diseases are rising rapidly, which indicates a lack of knowledge.

**What is the connection between diet and diabetes?**

Lifestyle, especially lack of exercise and poor eating habits, genetics and environmental factors all play a role in diabetes. The risk of any disease is lowered when a person maintains a healthy lifestyle which consists of exercise 3-4 times a week, sleeps 7-8 hours/day, drinks eight cups of water per/day, and follows a low-fat, low-salt diet.

**How can AUK students follow a healthy diet given the food options available on campus?**

AUK provides a mixed range of

foods; not all are healthy but you can still make healthy choices. The first step to losing weight is to never blame your extra weight on anything; instead of ordering a caramel frappuccino with whipped cream and extra caramel, go for a fresh, chilled orange juice.

**Can you give more specific examples of healthy food options available on campus?**

I know Starbucks offers a variety of salads and fresh juice. The diner also offers salad, steamed vegetables and protein-rich food (broiled chicken or fish), as well as juices and smoothies. Lastly, Le Gourmet diner in the library offers many club sandwiches and salads. You must make sure the food is fresh, because buffets tend to keep food displayed for hours, which may reduce its nutritional value and taste. Keep in mind that a tablespoon of dressing is worth 90 calories.

**What is your position towards the Red Bull craze at AUK?**

Limited consumption is advisable since it is rich in caffeine and sucrose. It should definitely not be consumed on a daily basis, since it does not have a high nutritional value.

**What is your advice when dining out?**

I never deprive myself of anything, once a week it is okay to treat yourself to a teaspoon of any

snack you crave. For instance, you can go to chocolate bar and order a salad.

Why is it important to ask about the ingredients used to make meals served in a restaurant when you eat out? (for example, what should you try to avoid or look for)

For one thing, it is important to know the type of fat that is used in cooking. For example, Hardee’s and KFC use shortening which is unhealthy and must be avoided. The healthy cooking oils are: canola oil, flax-seed oil, olive oil (not at very high cooking temperature), and corn oil. Try to choose foods that are rich in antioxidants, like green leafy vegetables. Try consuming fish three times a week and other seafood because it is rich in omega-3 fatty acids. On the other hand, try to cut down on canned foods or foods containing preservatives, additives, or any artificial coloration.

**Why is it important to read food labels when grocery shopping? (Again, what should you look out for?)**

When grocery shopping, watch out for the total fat percentage as well as the type of fat. For example, monounsaturated fat is preferred over saturated fat. Make sure the item is not high in sodium, sugar and

cholesterol—usually shown as a percentage of the total daily allowance.

**What do you encourage all your clients to include as part of a healthy diet, both while on a diet and after reaching their desired weight?**

First, I take a 48-hour recall to learn all the clients’ eating habits, and then I teach them how to follow a healthy diet. I pick their diet based on the foods they prefer and their general health condition. Most importantly, I persuade everyone to exercise at least 3-4 times a week for 30-45minutes to strengthen and tone their body, speed up weight loss and beat stress. There are so many workouts to choose from: cardio, Tae Bo, salsa, yoga, jogging, Pilates...the list never ends.

**What do you do to stay in good shape?**

I maintain my ideal body weight by following a 1,115-calorie diet based on my weight and height. I got used to keeping a diary. In fact, you’ll occasionally find me sitting in Starbucks with my notebook, salad, and sister—also very weight-conscious. We both make sure we fit our daily workout into our schedules regardless of how busy we are.



Possibly The World’s Largest Environmental Remediation Program in Small Kuwait

By Farah Al-Shamali

August 2nd 1990: the Kuwaiti landscape was in shambles following Saddam Hussein’s opportunistic military occupation. Homes were demolished, families displaced, and a great number of people killed. The mayhem existent during and after the war was detrimental to the infrastructure of Kuwait and ruled out any possibility of curing it quickly. Yet, it was only after the war had ended that the Kuwaiti public realized that the situation was much worse than they had feared. The burning of the oil wells propagated long term ailments that Kuwaiti society would suffer from for many years into the future. Many Kuwaitis now endure chronic respiratory troubles such as asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia. For almost twenty years, we have been fraught with these problems. Nearly eight hundred oil wells were set ablaze by Iraqi forces, which led to an immediate reduction in air quality—furthermore, the air we breathe is still contaminated partly as a result of this occurrence. Since most of the burning had taken place in the deserts of Kuwait, this led to the immediate death of vegetation.

The purpose of this article is not to regurgitate the problem for we are all familiar with it but to offer solutions to it. There is a current project that will substantially remediate Kuwait’s environment from the consequences of the oil burnings, controlled by PAAC—the Public Authority for Assessment of Compensation for Damages Resulting from Iraqi Occupation and specifically the Kuwait NFP – the Kuwait National Focal Point, which manages the whole project. The Kuwait



NFP project focuses on the remediation of the oil lakes and terrestrial surfaces, the repair of the desert ecosystems which directly affect flora and fauna, the cleaning of contaminated groundwater aquifers, and mitigation of the damage to the coastal and marine environment. After the occupation, the United Nations formed the UNCC—the United Nations Compensation Commission. Over many years Kuwait has won much success in a program of claims to the UNCC for aid regarding this concern. Claims submitted

include the right to conduct environmental studies and later implement technologies for rehabilitating the affected areas. The latest phase of this project is scheduled to begin sometime this year, and will include the cleaning of the soil surface and offshore and fresh water reserves. Some other significant issues are raised in public from time to time are the following: **Has Iraq offered to provide humanitarian aid or any form of assistance?** Kuwait is sparing Iraq of ordinary business

debts but to date appears not to wish to waive the environmental debts. In this sense Iraq is financially contributing to this project. Iraq appointed a Minister of Environment but their detailed position on many items it is not public knowledge at present. **What is to be said to say to those that say that the United States is in fact stealing Iraqi oil to satisfy their own economic needs?** There is no evidence for this. Press reports tell us that Iraqi is selling its own oil in the markets, but the same press also reports the frequent destruction of pipelines, which does not help the Iraqi position. **Are foreign enterprises involving themselves in the project or is it predominantly controlled by Kuwaitis?** The environmental studies to date have been mainly performed by Kuwaiti scientists working with international specialist contractors. PAAC / KNFP is a Kuwaiti organization. In summary, the commencement of this project is an unparalleled step in the care for the Kuwaiti environment. Kuwaiti students at AUK who had been present at the time of the war were too young to understand what was happening let alone to absorb the magnitude of this felony on the Kuwaiti environment. But now that we know about this effort, it is our job to celebrate it. After all, this is your country and requires your undying support at all costs. I truly hope that this endeavor will reshape the future of Kuwait for the better and secure better lives for this generation and those to come.

Dr. Osamah Al-Sayegh of KISR’s Environment and Urban Development Unit

By Farah Al-Shamali

The Arab World is plagued with a deficit in scientific research. Although we might be satisfied with the level of scientific advancements in Kuwait, they do not meet global standards. During the rise of formidable civilizations in this region, scientific discoveries were attributed to Arab scholars. However, I do not wish to dwell upon this lamentable mentality that Arabs adopt so often. There is an apparent problem within the minds of Arab individuals: we are relentlessly nostalgic of the past and wish to reclaim it by any means necessary but never take the time to lay out the foundations to successfully do so. We do a very admirable job of speaking of our desires but never set about materializing them. Even when there is an outburst that calls for rapid change, it is met by indifference and extinguishes any light of hope. Our dilemma begins with the very

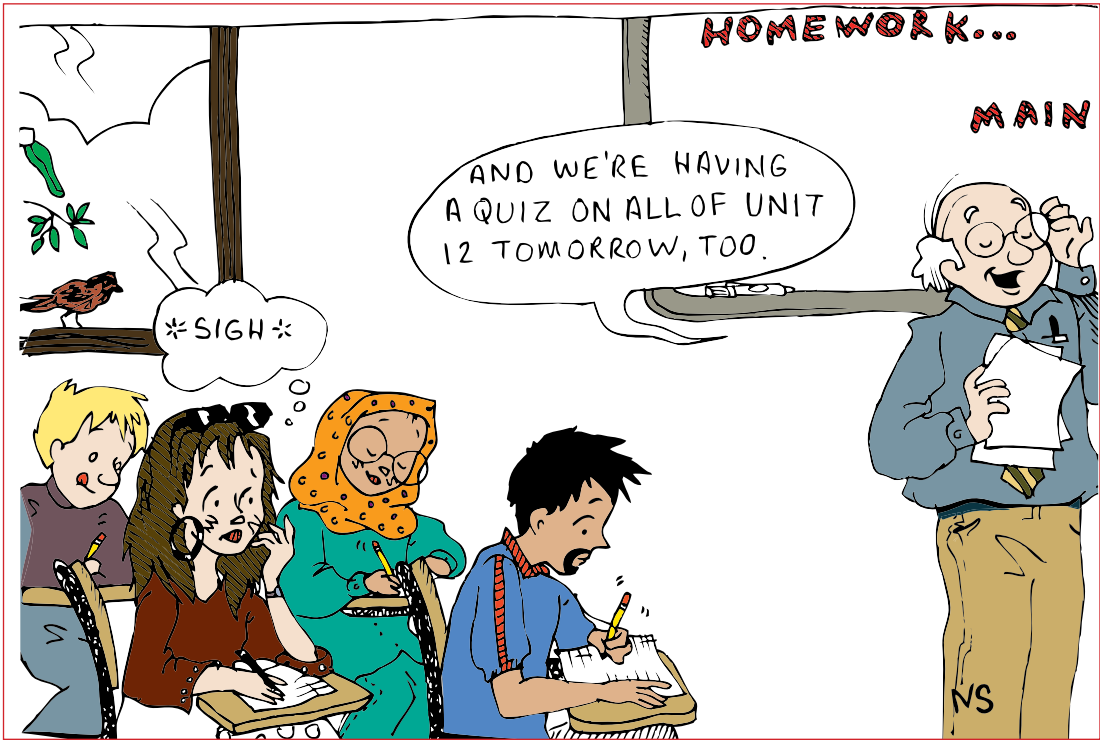
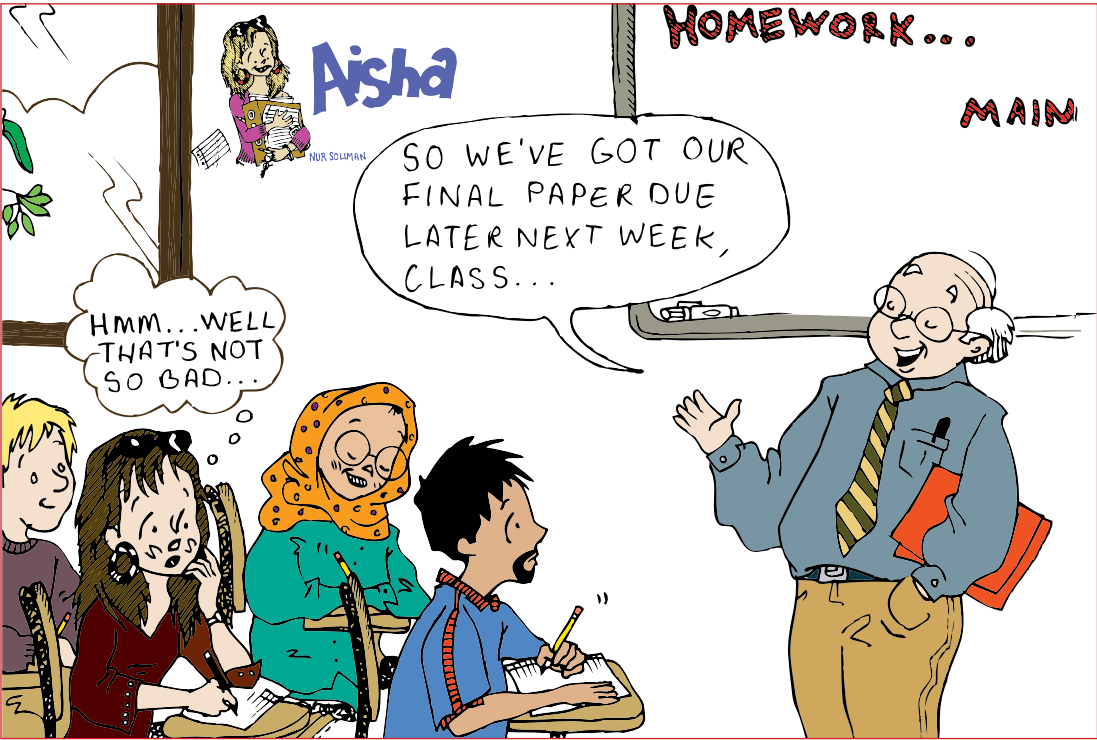
basic step of admitting that we have one – pride and resilience bars us from moving forward. Especially with the development of international politics that has not been in the Arab World’s favor, many regional governments have assumed a stance of resistance to foreign innovation and discoveries. We, the youth, must suffer this stubbornness. Shifting to the local arena, Kuwait has been an Arab country that has been to pioneer a movement for revolutionizing Arab scientific research. An organization that may be familiar to some is KISR—the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. I was surprised to come across this institution because I had formerly been told that there was no such initiative in Kuwait. When I arrived there, I was met by Dr. Osama Al-Sayegh, an adjunct faculty member at AUK. He primarily works as a research assistant at the Environment and Urban Development division in

the Advanced Systems Department and oversees the provision of advanced equipment for the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The very first issue that I confronted Dr. Sayegh with was that a very small percentage of the Kuwaiti community is knowledgeable about the work being done by KISR. He wholeheartedly agreed adding that they recently launched a new management department that has admitted to a problem in public relations. However, much of their work can be witnessed in many sectors of Kuwaiti society. Despite the enormous popularity of their accomplishments, there are still some restrictions on the information yielded from scientific research. This confidentiality is comprehensible but may exacerbate the fact that KISR is not very well known in Kuwait. Dr. Sayegh asserted KISR’s importance by stating that scientific personnel in Gaza call them at

times because of their advanced studies and findings. This is certainly something to be proud of. Furthermore, they are equipped with high-tech civil engineering and chemical-analytical labs. Most often, they are endowed with support divisions. I asked a series of questions to Dr. Sayegh that further informed me of the nature of his profession and some projects sponsored by KISR to provide solutions to the current problems of electrical power and water shortage in Kuwait. We also get a glimpse of his opinion regarding the highly debated issue of segregation. **How is it that you came to assume this vocation?** When I started, I was a programmer and created a word processing system for the blind. After that, I continued my graduate degree and invented an intelligence system—artificial neural networks—to manage and control energy and electrical power systems for the electric power

sector in Kuwait. **What had KISR done to bring about closure to the electricity problem that had grown strong during the summer of 2007?** A committee was formed with representatives from KISR and Kuwait University. Colleagues and I investigated what really happened from a technical perspective and submitted a report about it. **How do you contribute to the scientific advancement of Kuwaiti society other than by research?** Every summer, we host training programs for high school and college students and introduce them to our facilities and research programs. **What do you like about AUK?** What I find to be appealing in AUK students is that they are analytical thinkers. I also teach at Kuwait University. The students [at AUK] take their mate-

rial more seriously. I also like the environment there—it is very much alive at any part of the day. At KU, it is most often empty in the afternoon and turns into a ghost city. **Do you think that AUK will ever accommodate a major that deals with environmental sciences?** The environment is a hot issue worldwide. It is requested but we are living in Kuwait where business and finance are highly demanded much more than environmental sciences. It would not be feasible for AUK. **What is your take on the segregation law that is to be implemented in Fall 2008?** It is ridiculous. The relationship that I see between young men and women at this university is extremely healthy. I do not understand the argument made by those with segregation. They obviously do not trust our students to conduct well-mannered behavior.





## AUKer of the Month: Dr. Craig Loomis

By Farah Al-Shamali

Of the many professors here at AUK who have been present since its very first days is Dr. Craig Loomis. Over the years and as the university strives to establish itself as a contender in the competitive nature surrounding Kuwaiti society, Dr. Loomis has specifically contributed to the enhancement of the Department of English Language and Literature proving to be a crucial asset. Having been with him in two classes so far, he instructs the class in such an exemplary way that leaves much to the discretion of the student. By this, I mean that class participation is greatly encouraged. Also, his lively presence is truly enough to make any class enjoyable. During class, he is not so much a moderator but a participant in the environment of learning. When we come to discuss the thematic elements of a novel, he agrees and disagrees with our viewpoints and provides his own. It is a rarity to find a professor that is so greatly engaged with his students. We all consider him to be a sincere friend for his warmth and genuine, humble nature.

**Could you tell us about your university years?**

When I began my collegiate career, I was like a lot of students in that I had no idea about what to major in. This was bothersome because, as you know, once you're finished with high school, you're supposed to know what you want to do in life. I had no idea so as a failsafe I decided to major in Business. Then I realized that courses like economics and finance were not difficult but duller than dirt for me. I decided that I want to shop around for something a little more provocative and I switched gears to education. At that time, there was something called Oriental Studies—Middle Eastern Studies—and then, of course, last but certainly not least, English. Also, in the mean time, I was jumping around from California State University and the University of Arizona and finally doing PhD work at the University of Toledo. I went to the University of Arizona to play American football. I was your basic hero in high school...

**Quarterback?**

No, what they call a fullback. I went there to play but little did I know that the other players who were there were not only larger than I was but faster and that I might break every bone in my body. So I lasted about one or two practices. I then spent three years in the military—air force. Then finally, after doing MA work in California and then between finishing MA work and finishing PhD



work, I did some teaching in Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea.

**How did you find Japan and South Korea? Exotic?**

Yeah. You should go some time. In Japan, the mind-set was very interesting. Everything is very precise with that society. It was nice and after living there for three or four years—it must have been five years—I moved to Malaysia where I taught with the University of Maryland (1985-87) and the University of Indiana (1992-95), both of which have campuses there.

**Moving on to your PhD dissertation, what was is about?**

Let me see what it was. It was on the Hong Kong novel. I like Hong Kong and I thought why not write about something I enjoy? I decided to investigate what I meant by the Hong Kong novel, and to talk about certain formulas involved in the Hong Kong novel. Again, I apolo-

gize, it's been fifteen years; I've forgotten a lot of it. I took a look at the British influence, and the city of Hong Kong itself as a character.

**Have you considered conducting further academic research?**

I discovered also that I enjoy not so much the academic side of it. I mean I did like the research involved but I enjoyed the fiction where you can use your imagination and get away with it. Also, you don't have

**ers had to say about you in your days as a student?**

Nothing outstanding: just motivated, interesting fellow, may go far in life but we're not sure. Nothing that I can recall and say "wow, I'm all that." I do remember this: when I was getting ready to do PhD work, I asked my director in Malaysia to write me a letter of recommendation and she wrote one that was – it was a joke because she had two. She had the one that she was going to give me that said "what a creep, how dare he" and she also had the other one which was much better of course. She showed me the one, "the creepy guy, don't even think about it." She walks in with a straight face and gives it to me. She said: "I had to be honest" and finally, she started snickering but it was kind of fun.

**You didn't buy it, did you?**

Well I did because she was so straight-faced about it.

**How did you end up in Kuwait? How did you hear about AUK?**

It must have been an advertisement in the Chronicle of Higher Education and it talks about, well, higher education in all of its aspects. They have a section in the back about jobs and there was something about the American University of Kuwait starting up.

**You've been here since the beginning.**

That's true and I've seen it happen. I sent in my papers and didn't hear anything for a long time. Then, out of nowhere, the very first Dean of Academics gave me a call one day and I went to an interview in Georgetown in Washington D.C. They ended up talking about themselves and I was like: "Hi, remember me everybody!" They offered me the job eventually.

**Looking at this more generally, I've always thought that Westerners are very interested in the Middle East and that it's a really hot topic back there so would you say that this is accurate?**

Nowadays it is. It's interesting, provocative and all that. I have to say that Americans are very ignorant towards what goes on here but you know that. That's really too bad.

## The Legend Continues...

By Aukaeologist

Strangely enough, J was in the Registrar's Office during the last week of April, which, you will recall, was Advance Registration Week. Apparently every time he was there he caused Authorization to Enroll forms to get mixed up all over the place, although why is anybody's guess. J isn't spiteful. Just know if you're an Economics major or an English minor, or even an Economics minor or English major, since he still shares your low-level courses, that he might be there with you next semester.

Although J has recently been absent from the soccer field, various people have noticed some display of his piano-playing skills. If you were fortunate enough to have heard him play, you might benefit from having an interpreter with you. While his verbal communication is rather lacking, J's music relates long fanciful tales—or whining and complaining, the Aukaeologist is unable to tell—that veterans have learned to comprehend. Be that as it may, he only got there after hours and hours of endless practice, as those unfortunate enough to have heard can confirm. A life lesson if ever there was one.

If one mentions the fine arts, drawing cannot be left out. Judging by general observations it would seem that J avoids new places on campus, which is fairly understandable since he is unfamiliar with them; however, rumours have appeared that he has been visiting the fifth floor of the liberal arts building whenever new student art is displayed there... hoping to have his own work displayed alongside his peers, perhaps? You see, when J was a wide-eyed freshman with many free electives to fill out, he had taken art, as—mind you, this is the author's phrasing; J knows neither such big words nor the theoretical concept—a creative outlet for his grief. After all, his family had only recently died at that time, and he found a peculiar calm in the feel of charcoal fading, slowly, steadily, scratch, scratch, scratch until the drawing was complete. He switched to music afterwards, but perhaps he was feeling nostalgic with the mention of the art displays?

Speaking of J's family, the few people who knew them have noticed that he seemed to be keeping them alive in himself. On one hand, he was purposefully keeping busy to keep from thinking of them; on the other, he was—consciously or unconsciously—taking interest in everything that they liked. Soccer is perhaps the only passion truly his. His mother, enchanted by the status of classical music, had nagged him endlessly about taking piano lessons, or violin lessons, or flute, or *something*. Drawing? He stopped because he wasn't any good (he thought, although word has it that he managed to produce a masterpiece or two) and even with practice it wasn't something held his interest for any longer than it took to complete a drawing. He started, however, because it was something that his younger brother, whose name was Adnan, had always enjoyed, and was by contrast far better at. Even though he was only seven at the time of the accident, J would always maintain that he had a more re-

finer artistic sense that he himself could ever have.

Back home—that is, back at the house he lived in with his parents and brother, they had had a perfectly-maintained garden. J and Adnan called it Mount Everest... not so much because of its mountainous aura as the Zen their father practiced in it. The man had a temper as irritable as the next guy, but everyone in the house knew that he took it out on the plants, trimming, watering, and smothering them with care to perfection. He made a point of it, saying that he didn't want to be like his father (that is, J's grandfather), who would yell and/or beat them when angry... such were old-fashioned parents.

The point is this: J took that to university as well. The grassy area where the tent currently is was empty back then, and J, along with Tanner, an American boy who had transferred to AUK for one year, had placed some planting pots there. They managed to grow baby tomatoes, mint, thyme, and basil, and even had a mini-sale for some of the harvest, since it was too much for their respective households. Some say they were planning on starting a gardening club, though how far that got is anyone's guess. It probably helped that J's English was in the in-progress stage and having conversations with Tanner (often about gardening) helped improved his language skills. Conversation mostly. He was never that great in writing. Have you ever seen those badly-written notes lying around classes? There's a good chance some of them are J's, still insistent on practicing. You can tell it's him since he usually writes in blue or black; ballpoint or ink. Sometimes he even skips a line... this is as of yet unconfirmed, but they say that if you write between his lines, he might chat with you.

Call it a quirk, but although he had no problem leaving papers lying around, J would apparently get worked up about cigarette stubs lying on the floor. Research shows no logic behind this, though one might want to consider that while he had an obsessive personality, it seems he also had some kind of built-in resistance to addiction. He tried smoking a few times, and found it as easy to stop as it was to start; possibly because he stopped after only a few. He'd been challenged to prove it afterwards, and could still stop just as easily, insisting that it was not addictive. Considering that he spent most of his day in campus and still managed not to smoke, some people think that that just might be true. Another life lesson, perhaps? Don't litter with cigarettes but feel free to throw papers around? On a personal note, the Aukaeologist considers this a double standard, and recommends that you do not follow J's example.

Keep campus clean until the end of the semester, keep a lookout for J, and see you next issue with more information on the eternal learner!

*Dear readers, have you seen J in your classroom or around campus? Do you know something about him that we did not mention? The Aukaeologist is continuing to conduct his research; any information you have can help! Send whatever you learn to the editor at [voice@auk.edu.kw](mailto:voice@auk.edu.kw).*

## AUK Opens Doors to Community

By Farah Al-Shamali

When I first became acquainted with the American University of Kuwait, it was done the traditional way so to speak. Mr. Sean Dollman, Dean of Admissions and Registration, came to my high school frequently and gave lectures about the new university and what it had to offer. Over the course of a year, he had come to us so many times that I memorized his presentation by heart. I believe that this method of introducing students to universities is crucial in terms of understanding grading policy and rules and regulations. However, it is not very helpful when it comes to such things as student life and the many clubs and organizations affiliated with it. Needless to say, AUK has been graced with the emergence of these vibrant clubs that give it life. What's more, they are many variations including social, cultural, theatrical, national, and political organizations. If this says anything about the students of AUK, it is that they are quite fixated on applying what they learn in class to the outside world. Herein lays the satisfaction of professors who undoubtedly enjoy watching this unfold as their students make use of what they study in class. These dynamics can only be witnessed if people

come to AUK and interact with students.

This brings me to the topic of this article: the Taste of AUK held on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2008. Under the slogan of "Taste the Sweet Life at AUK", the Division of Student Affairs hoped for high school graduates in the Kuwaiti community to get a taste of collegiate life at AUK. By bringing them to us, we give them a much deeper understanding of the facilities and services we have to offer. This event was not only meant to pave the way for wandering students in search of a university; it was designed to be enjoyable for them too. Perhaps the most successful aspect of the event was the beautiful balance it struck between familiarizing guests with life at AUK while also ensuring that they had a good time. If it had been an event in which one person were tasked with the role of explaining every detail about AUK, people would not likely have stayed long or even shown up for that matter.

Many AUK students also participated in the games and activities. This too served to create a welcoming atmosphere, as visitors would probably feel more comfortable discussing AUK with students as opposed to professors. Such informal interaction was perfectly complemented by the informa-

tion booths, which covered all of the various programs and services of the university: Admissions, the Intensive English Program, the Student Success Center, and the Center for Continuing Education.

To capture the fascination of individuals, seeing often goes a long way than just hearing about something. The Division of Student Affairs had obviously taken advantage of this creating a memorable experience for all. The first annual Taste of AUK was an unprecedented event that opened everyone's eyes to what this institution has to offer. Despite rumors that find their way across to the Kuwaiti community that consistently bash at AUK's ideals and values, we remain "one family"—I still recall Dr. Carol Ross-Black saying that during my first day at AUK. Looking back after two years, I can safely say that we are a family and will remain so for quite a while.

I would like to thank the Division of Student Affairs for their effort and hard work and for elevating AUK's appearance. I, for one, am proud of what has been put in and hope that this convention is continued. I am sure every student at AUK shares my sentiments and expresses gratitude for the sensational Taste of AUK!



# فوضى العزف المنفرد لدى علوية صُبح في حكاياها

الدولة والشرع وكيفية تطبيقه كحالة مسطحة تستنزف المرأة ككيان له حاجات وحريات لا تُلبّى في مجتمع يتقن كيفية تشيبتها.

شخص الرواية تتداخل إلى أن تنمهي فتصبح رؤية للواقع. فلا تعود الذاكرة قادرة على تمييز هذا من ذاك وهذه من تلك. وذلك تكشفه (مريم الحكايا) كرواية سيرة تقف على عتبة عالم الكتابة المحكية وفعل الكتابة كوتيرة متتابعة. من ضمن الشخصيات التي يلتبس عليها الأمر إلى جانب علوية الشخصية الروائية، يكون الكاتب المسرحي رفيق علوية حاضراً. يستقي الحكايا التي سمعها من مريم مع علوية ويفنّدها ويبيّن الحياة إليها بصورة لربّما كانت أكثر انفعالية قائمة على الحركة الأدائية واحتراف المؤدي/الممثل. يدخل هذا الكاتب في حال من التشكيك ولربّما الهلوسة. فهو يشكك بصديقه علوية بأنّها وراء تخريب مشروعه المسرحي؛ كي يطفو عملها الروائي على السطح، حيث يصل به الأمر إلى اتهامها بأنّها المسؤولة عن تغيير الزمن والتفاصيل في نصّه وأنها تتعامل مع المخابرات. لعل وراء هذا التداخل بحيث تتم إضاعة انتماء الحكايا لأسماء معينة وتغيير الزمن في حكايا أخرى لدى كل من الرواية والمسرحي ضمن (مريم الحكايا) فكرة ما. يمكن أن يكون مفادها أنّ الحكايا ليست اسماً أو زمناً ما، كون هذه الحكايا خلّقت لعرض

حال المدينة/الوطن الذي وإنّ اختلافت مسميّاته يبقى حالة كتبها الوجد. فلما يضيع الوطن/المكان/الملاذ/الذاكرة، يتساوى الموت والحياة. وتطفئ السليبة. (مريم الحكايا) عرض لأناس أموات على قيد الحياة، يأملون بغد أفضل رغم الفوضى، لكنهم لا يلبثون تغمرهم النوستالجيا...لذلك، كان بدء الرواية بامضٍ معقٍ.

ويمثّل ذلك بزواج "النصيبة" الذي أحال حياة أم مريم إلى حياة ترانيبية ملؤها الظلم والجهل والرغبة في الانتقام من العم الذي أرغمها ولم يُود اهتماماً لصغر سنّها وبالتالي تحريم زواجها.

هذا في القرية، أمّا في المدينة فذات النظرة قائمة ولكن الصيغة تختلف. استباحة الجسد واحدة. فزميل مريم في العمل، يخترق حرمة جسدها سامحةً له بدورها. إذ تقبل أنّ تكون "رفيقة المشاوير" متى ما ضاق جسد الحبيب، كانت هي احتواءً له وهو ذلك المتزوج بامرأة لديها من الجمال الكثير إذا ما قورنت بمريم التي لا تتمتع بصفا وجه زوجته. يبيّن أنه يرى أنّها أجمل. ولكن يبدو أنّها لا تتعدي كونها جسداً. فهي تضع في جسده، هرباً إلى عالم خاص تنسى خلاله بشاعة محيط المدينة المنذورة للخراب. تتيه فيه كحالة مثالية لا رديف لها، رغم عدم تمتعه بمميزات كذلك التي كانت تراها فيه ويرها بها. وكأنّ اتحاد الرؤى في مكان ما، قادر على احتواء اعتناق جسديهما لبث الحياة في عدم الخارج. فلقد تمّ توظيف الجنس كمُعَيّب لثقوب المدينة.

فوضى مريم بحكاياتها خاصة حينما يختلف نسق الخط عن فصول الرواية ككل، تبدو كأنها إضاعة أكثر على وجع مريم. ومريم هنا حالة رمزية لإعلاء رفض الغين الواقع على المرأة في مجتمعها. هنالك إفصاح من بين ثايات الكلم بضرورة تفعيل القوانين المدنية التي بدورها ستحفظ حقّها المستباح سواء من قبل الأهل، الزوج، تبعات الزواج من أبناء وانغماس في المسؤوليات اللامتناهية،



سوى صبّ غضب و"قرف" من الواقع التعيس الذي كانت بذوره في القرية مروراً بالمدينة. بين ثنايا حكاية مريم، هنالك تعرية لواقع المرأة في الجنوب اللبناني. فأمّ مريم تمثل شريحة قد مورس عليها الظلم متمثلاً بنمط المعاملة في مجتمع سلطوي ذكوري، يعتبر المرأة جسداً خُلِقَ للاستباحة:

وكانّ الحرب ليست سوى انعكاس للتخلّف الذي يعمّ الجنوب اللبناني -ضمن السياق الروائي-.

هذا العدم الذي يغطّي المدينة، الظلمة التي تسودها، والثقوب التي شقّت الأبنية...انعكاس لحال مواطنيها: مريم، ابتسام، وعلوية كنموذج. كلّ ذلك كان سبباً في شقّ الأنا عن أناها لتصبح آخراً. فالوطن بمثابة حياة بالنسبة لشخص الرواية والذي من أجله كانت ابتسام ذات رؤى ثورية تنتفس الحب، الوطن، الحرية، والحياة. وبالتالي لاهظة لكل أشكال التغريب القسري، ومؤمنة بخصوصية حياتها. ولكن كلّ هذه القناعات تنهار بعد الزواج والغرق في مسؤولياته. فبعد النور ظلمة. وحضور مريم، كرفيقة روح، ما عاد ضوءاً يبدّد عتمة. فليس تهريبها من التواصل مع مريم بعد الانعتاق-الزواج- سوى تأكيداً على أنّ الروح ما عادت قادرة على تحمّل أوجاع الحياة وخيبتها. فخضعت للتغريب القسري في علاقة ملؤها الشك والمادّة القائمة على تسيير القيم الداخلية والتي تتنافى مع حالات الضوء والثورة، التمرد والحياة. لربّما زواج مريم وقبولها للتغريب ضمن المدينة، يعتبر صورة من صور التعويض عن أشكال الخراب جرّاء الحرب وخوفاً من البقاء بلا رجل بعد حبيب مضى والذي كان قد صرّح لها بأنّ "الشّرش" يعيقه من الارتباط بها.

يلاحظ على تقطيع الرواية، تباين الأصوات، فالبدء لمريم، ثم تأتي ابتسام، وبعد ذلك يتخلّل صوت علوية المدى. لما كانت مريم تحكي بدءاً بالماضي المعقّ مزاجة المستقبل المعلوم-كونها الروائي العليم- يحاضر عدم معرفة طريق علوية، مضت في حيرة عن ما إذا كان حريّاً بها أن تودّعها أم لا. ثمّ العودة إلى ماضي الماضي. حياة والدتها قبل أن تخلّق. وما إغراقها بالتفاصيل وإفراد مساحات بيضاء مشوّهة ليس

**رؤية بخصوص (مريم الحكايا) بقلم: اسراء الشمري**

حالة التباس وفوضى هي رواية (مريم الحكايا) لعلوية صُبح الصادرة عن دار الآداب، بيروت. حالة حكاية أكثر منها سردية؛ ذلك كون الارتكاز على الفكرة يطلّ على نبش سُرّي اللغة الجمالية. هي رواية تجسّد حيوات كثيرة، تدور كلها في فلك الخيبة والاستفاقة على انكسار الحلم.

لعلّ بدء الرواية بالماضي المعقّ المُشار إليه بـ"المسألة انتهت بالنسبة إليّ" (ص5)، يعتبر مدخلاً لصفحات طويت ولستين خلّت. هي اشتغال على نبش الذاكرة عن طريق اتباع أسلوب توالد القص المستقى من صمت شهزاد عن الكلام المُباح. تتحدث الرواية عن ثلاث شخصيات محورية: مريم، ابتسام، وعلوية.

تُكاد تكون ذاكرة علوية، الحاضرة ضمن السياق الروائي، أقرب إلى الذاكرة المثقوبة. حكاياها التي كانت قد كتبها لتضمّنها روايتها بعد الانصات لصديقتها مريم وابتسام، باتت مُلتبسة. لم تعد قادرة على معرفة صاحب/صاحبة كل حكاية. من هنا، تبدأ بوضع الرواية على مقصلة الغياب، وتأخذ مريم دور الراوي صوتاً لا كتابة. فالكتابة شأن علوية لا مريم. انقلب الأدوار هذا، تأكيد على الفوضى. بالإضافة إلى التأكيد على ضرورة نبش الذاكرة وتسجيلها رغم الألم. التساؤل هنا هو: لماذا رغم انتماء مريم على كلها من كثرة الوجد تسعى في البحث عن صفة علوية الكاتبة أكثر من الصديقة؟

تعددية أشكال حالة اللاّدنيا تتعالى كمفهوم عند السواد الأعظم من شخص الحكايا: المنام، العتبة، العتمة، والأجهاز. كلها تكثيف لمفهوم الموت والخراب الذي يعمّ المدينة-بيروت- وأرواح ساكنيها.

## وهل بعد شمّ الوريقات ورد .. يا ريم حنا؟

**بقلم: اسراء الشمري**

يأبى الوجد إلا أن يكون حاضراً في نصوص ريم حنّا، فهو عربي بامتياز تتقن فيه كيفية العزف على وتره وكتابه دمعاً، احترافاً، وألماً. في مسلسل "رسائل الحب والحرب" يتلمس المتلقي معالم خيبة في جيل شهد قيام ثورات وحروب. بحيث تشهد حالة روحانية تتعالى حلقة تلو الأخرى، تتميز بغنى على مستوى رفيع. جاءت الصورة فيها مكثفة تجمع ما بين الصفاء والغيش برمزية للواقع العربي منذ السبعينات وصولاً إلى حرب تموز. ملء الأحداث خوف لا يلبث يتنامى ندرته بتأمّل لنظرة "نيسان" تلك الفتاة التي ملء عينيها ترهبً مجهول، بعد عن الطمأنينة، وانتظار الحصول على إجابة لتساؤلتي ماذا بعد ولماذا. روح ذلك الجيل يملأ عبقها المكان.

انتقلنا لروح مغايرة بلا تكلف ما بين أروقة يشوبها الحذر، تتنامى فيها أفكار قومية عربية اشتراكية، وتتداخل مع شخص سلطوية متمثلة بـ "العقيد ناظم" والذي يكون كابوساً يخنق أصوات الناس بحكم منصبه. القلق صديق مصاحب لغالبية الشخص. يلفت انتباهي ذلك التمازج ما بين عذاباتها المستمدة من المحيط القاتلة بأنّ الذاكرة المكانية هي ذاكرة مزامتها بكل تفاصيلها، حتى تُكاد تنصت لصوت الأنفاس المحمّلة بلذة حذرة ذات سواد كما ذلك السواد المنسكب في قعر فناجين القهوة الذي يبقى لسير أغوار الـ "ماذا بعداً" مع خلفية فيروزية إلى جانب الدخان المختلط ببق المكان ككل.

العمق الإنساني حاضر بكم كبير مكثف بصمت "أم النور" جدّة "نيسان" والتي تكثفي بوضع غطاء شفيف لربّما ليدل على ذلك القلق الملازم لها كشقيق روح يرفض ممارسة الغياب. استخدام الرموز في أحلام "أم النور" كحال المطر المنسكب بغزارة على أحدهم وقنديل الزيت مع سلم خشبي وجديلة تسقط تلتهمها نار. هنا، دلالات غيابية يشير فيها السلم الخشبي لحال من الحزن والهم لربما سيطوق حال العائلة برمد بعد حال غفوان ملؤه الخضرة من

حب ما بين "جلال" و"نيسان". إضافة إلى دلالة شاحبة دافئة في آن معها مع بدء كل حلقة مكتب "جلال" وكوسيه وآلة كتابته تنهار في البحر ملثمة على كلها، كمعانقة للأرض من شدّة التعب. مرّ بي صوت جوليا بطرس الحزين الذي ملؤه شجن يسحق الروح في رائحتها "لماذا" عندما كان جلال يشتم عبق جدائل نيسان الشقراء المنسابة بكثافة على كتفيها، ذلك العاشق المانق لأناه -نيسان- بكل حنان ودفع يث سروراً بالنفس.. تقول: "وهل بعد شمّ الوريقات ورد؟" تتساءل حقاً هل بعد شمّ الوريقات ورد؟ عن نفسي، لا أعتقد فالحال موهل يحزن شفيف يلف العالم ويتخذ من الأرواح الصافية مستقراً لإقامته الدائمة. فأماني الهوى تظل باقية مع انطفاء يتخللها. لا شيء يكتمل، تماماً كما الحب الأول! يبقى حاضراً حتى مع فقد الذاكرة وإنّ أصابها غيش مع مرور الأيام، كل شيء يصير ضبابياً. ببساطة يدخل في حالة العادي الصامتة. ف "العقيد ناظم" يخطف تلك النيسانة التي تغتّب بها فيروز وعززت من تمرد روحها عليها جوليا. مُرهق هو الأدب العميق خاصة وإنّ تحلى بحروف صوفية لابن عربي، واختزال ذاكرة أمة بهذه الحرفيّة العالية التي لا تخلو من الأمل الحذر.

صديقاً: لماذا لا نملك من ريم حنّا اثنتين؟ لربّما لتكون استثنائية كما هي. أتوق لمعانقة نصّك على ورق لألتصم مواطن النبط في ليلة ما... فهناك برودة تلتفّ "جوّاي".

يُذكر أن المسلسل من بطولة سلاف فواخرجي، سلّوم حداد، وقصي خولي. وكان الإخراج للفدّ باسل الخطيب. ومن إنتاج سورية الدولية للإنتاج الفني. ومن الجدير بالذكر أنّ "رسائل الحب والحرب" قد حصل على جوائز عدّة منها الجائزة الفضية في مهرجان القاهرة للإذاعة والتلفزيون ٢٠٠٧، ومؤخراً حصل على الجائزة الذهبية كأفضل عمل درامي لعام ٢٠٠٧ في مهرجان الخليج العاشر للإنتاج الإذاعي والتلفزيوني الذي كان قد عُقد في البحرين.

## نادي التعاون ..... والانتخابات

**بقلم: جمانة الطيب**

تعجيني فكرة نادي التعاون الذي افتتح مؤخراً في الجامعة الأمريكية ، والذي يهدف إلى تعزيز الكثير من القيم الدينية في نفوس الطلبة ، والطلابات ويوحد هويتنا المسلمة ويرتقي بنا كمسلمين ويحررنا من مللنا التي ننتمي إليها سواء كنا " شيعية أو سنة " فكلنا واحد يوحدنا دين واحد عقيدة إسلامية واحدة . "وتعاونوا على البر والتقوى" وانطلاقاً من الآية الكريمة السابقة أنطلق نادي التعاون ليتعاونوا الطلبة فيما بينهم على إذابة الفروقات والحواجر فالؤمن قوي بإخوانه كما أن يد الله مع الجماعة . فمضى إلى نادي التعاون رسالة أقول فيها أعانكم الله على توصيل رسالتكم التي تلمحون إليها ، ووفقكم الله على دروب الخير ، وجعلكم

قدوة صالحة يقتدى بها بعد الرسل والصالحين . وتعجيني الأجواء التي تسود الجامعة في هذه الفترة ألا وهي أروع مشاهد الديمقراطية والتعبير عن الرأي ، فنحن الآن نمارس أروع أدوارنا لأننا من نختار الأفضل ممن يمثلنا في لجان الحكومة الطلابية التي تمثلنا نحن كطلبة ، فانا أؤيد كل من له نظرة مستقبلية عميقة فيما يتطلع إليه ، وإننا كطلبة وطلابات نمد يدنا للمرشحين جميعاً لتكون عوناً لهم ، فنحن وحكومتنا الطلابية الرشيدة يدا بيد لتحقيق الأهداف المنشودة والارتقاء بالمستوى الثقافي والاجتماعي ، ولذا فرسالة مني إلى جميع المرشحين أقول فيها " أجعلوا مصالح الطلبة نصيب أعينكم والحكومة الطلابية المتحدة هو هدفكم ، وابتعدوا عن المصالح الشخصية فهي ستهدم جميع ما بنوه مؤسسين هذه الحكومة " ، وبالتوفيق للجميع

## Congratulations!

Please join us in congratulating Spring 2008  
Peer Academic Leaders (PALs)



Dana A. Taqi, Dana Shamlawi, Heba Rashwan, Leen Taha, Oula El-Khatib, Reham Ibrahim

*PALs will offer support and advice to freshman students in the areas of educational planning, course selection, and the utilization of academic resources. They serve as mentors and leaders to the AUK student body.*



The Peer Academic Leaders program was created and implemented 2007 by the Student Success Center. The SSC is responsible for supervising the PALs program. For more information contact Bibi Al-Ghanim, PALs Supervisor at Bghanim@auk.edu.kw.







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