

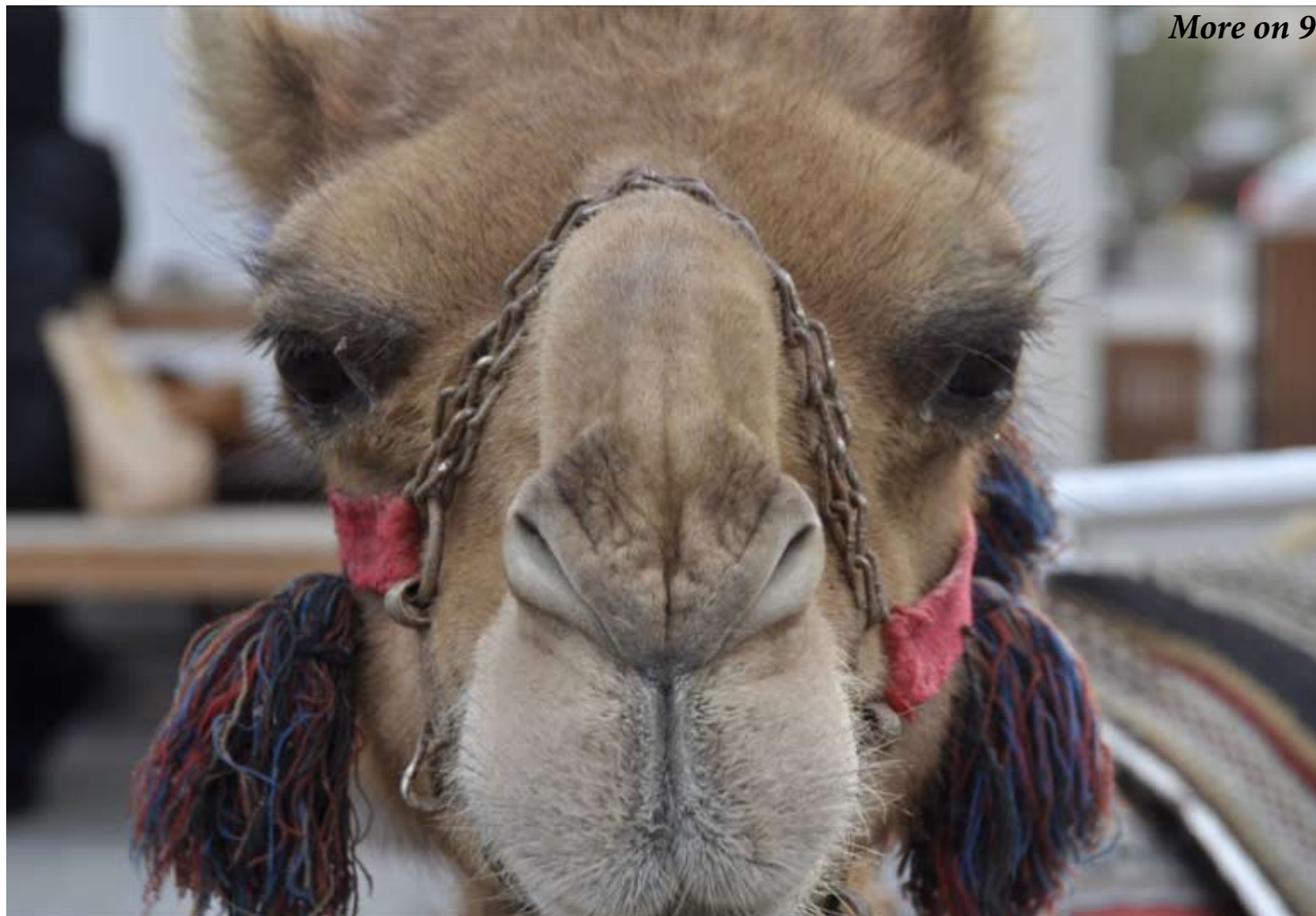
New and Familiar Faces: the Ari Roland Jazz at AUK

BY NUR SOLIMAN, AUK ALUM 10'

One minute it sounds like we're listening to bebop straight from Minton's Playhouse, the next minute it's sweet and playful cool West Coast sounds like the sound of Chet Baker or Warne Marsh, the minute after that, it's everything together and more.

They had arrived to Kuwait from Indonesia and now they were here again, and no-one could have been happier to receive them. In 2009 we were introduced to the Chris Byars Jazz Quartet (including Byars, Ari Roland, John Mosca, and Stefan Schatz) when they visited as part of the 2009 Rhythm Road Program, sponsored by the US

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More on 9



If there's anything you'd like to let us know, please send an email to voice@auk.edu.kw.

The Art of Persia: The Meshkinfam Museum of Art

BY ISHA HAIDER

As part of Persian Art Week, hosted from 20th to 23rd February at AUK, Mr. Hassan Meshkinfam, a prominent Persian artist, spread awareness about Persian art and design, by displaying his work in exhibition format, attending various art classes and critiquing student work, holding a watercolor workshop, and finally presenting a talk-show about Persian art and design to an open audience at the AUK auditorium. The presentation was followed by lectures by faculty professors, Maryam Hosseinnia, William Andersen, and Gholamreza Vatandoust.

Students could be seen enjoying the liberated façade of the campus, tailored according to the parallel joyous national occasion. As a contributor to the fun and frolic, the Persian Art Week enhanced the cultural spirit, by spreading healthy awareness of the Persian paint culture, general art advice

and information, through the aforementioned mediums. The visit of Mr. Hassan Meshkinfam was made possible by the co-operation of Dr. Nizar Hamzeh, Dr. Gholamreza Vatandoust, Dr. Christopher Ohan, Prof. Maryam Hosseinnia, Prof. William Andersen, Dr. Craig Loomis, and the Art Factory at AUK.

The Persian Art Week started with the critique of student artwork which was scheduled on Monday, 21st of February. The second event of the week involved the aggregation of students for a Watercolor Workshop on Tuesday 22nd of February, which led to the highlight of the week, a presentation about Persian Art and design on the 23rd of February by the special guest, Mr. Hassan Meshkinfam and lectures by the aforementioned renowned AUK professors. Throughout the week,

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The Act of Volunteering: Anyone Can Do It

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI



Mr. Ayman Shouman, Hope Club members, and Ms. Fatema Al-Boloushi.

Continued on 3

The Sand Sculpting Workshop

BY MAY OMRAN



AUK students sand-sculpting.

Continued on 3

Evolution - Myth or Fact?

BY NADA EL-BADRY

On Wednesday 9th March, 2011, Dr. Faisal Al-Sayegh came to the American University of Kuwait to speak about a subject that the majority of our society are skeptical about, if not completely against: evolution. He starts off by saying how he realizes that the concept of evolution is, indeed, rejected here, proven by the fact that, in many – if not all – institutions, the subject of evolution is either briefly mentioned or completely

Continued on 2

Role of Education in Economic Prosperity

BY AHMAD YOUSSEF

Ever since the existence of mankind on earth, education has been the key to success and prosperity. Whether we are aware of it or not, education in every sense played a crucial role in evolution and development of human kind. Education roots run back through time till the Stone Age, where mankind started learning usage and manipulation of stone to ease the burden of life, which in itself considered one of the different aspects of education. "Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils" (Louis Hector Berlioz). Education can take many different forms such as but not confined to gaining knowledge, obtaining skills, or development of new ideas, which altogether result from learning processes and trial and errors.

Using deep thinking and analysis, we can find that economic

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Women's Badminton Intramurals

BY MAY OMRAN

AUK held its first Women's Badminton Intramurals tournament from

as the venue held to facilitate four teams to play simultaneously. The tournament was constructed to meet the requirements of a "mini" badminton tournament. Each team played as an individual in ratio with the single-elimination match criteria.

The females showed a lot of interest in badminton. Badminton, being respectfully new to the university, was an attention-grabber for avid students to show off their interest in the sport. Several of them had prior experience in badminton while others were passionate about playing but had not played it before. When asked what the students liked best about the tournaments they replied, "It was organized and fun," "the challenge of the matches," and the simple fact that they "got the chance to practice and play badminton at the university." A high level of satisfaction was revealed. After the tournament was over, the participants showed great interest in future badminton events and suggested there should be an official team for the university.

The winners of the women's badminton intramurals are as follows:

- 1st Place – Nawal Al-Adasani
- 2nd Place – Dina Naser
- 3rd Place – Jumanah Al-Refai
- 4th Place – Amal Behbehani



Club Profile

The Finance Club

BY RAMA SABANO

Your Club Name: The Finance Club.

Your Club Email: thefinanceclub@auk.edu.kw

Your Club Mission: Our club mission is to promote understanding of the Finance major and to increase awareness about the financial world. We want to develop long-lasting relationships by working together as a family. We strive to give incentives to students to become more active in their academic lives while also promoting the youth of our society to make a change.

Your Club Description: A group of 36 students functioning efficiently as a close-knit family to successfully achieve their goals.

Upcoming events planned for the Spring Semester: Finance Week from April 17-21.

"The females showed a lot of interest in badminton. Badminton, being respectfully new to the university, was an attention-grabber for avid students to show off their interest in the sport."

News from the Embassy of Japan in Kuwait

The Embassy of Japan would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the government and people of Kuwait for their sympathy and support for the people of Japan on the destruction and humanitarian suffering caused by the devastating earthquake and tsunami which hit Japan.

The Embassy would like to further express its gratitude for all the offers of donation and, in this regard, has the honor to inform everyone that, for ensuring smooth and secured transaction, the donations will be received through the following organizations:

- 1- The Kuwait Red Crescent Society
Tel: 24818084/5 Fax: 24835266

- 2- The Japanese Red Cross Society
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation,
(Ginza Branch)
Account No.: 8047670 (Ordinary Account)
SWIFT Code: SMBC JP JT
Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society
Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN

Kindly provide the Embassy, if donors so wish, with a copy of their donation so that it can thankfully acknowledge and also inform the relevant authorities in Japan of the donation.

The Embassy also has the honor to inform everyone, if donors so wish, that the Embassy can receive cash donations to transfer in a form of currency receivable in Japan by way of bank transfers to the Japanese Red Cross Society mentioned above.

Evolution - Myth or Fact?

BY NADA EL-BADRY

skipped over and claimed to be "unimportant." In some cases, people even get violent in their belief against "the believers."

According to Dr. Faisal, people often have a skewed idea of what evolution really is. The official definition is the following: "biological evolution is descent with modification." It does not happen overnight, over a few months, or even over hundreds of years – no, evolution needs a 'time space continuum.' In other words, it takes *millions* of years for evolution to occur, and it happens in populations and not individuals. Another point he made was that people often disprove evolution because they claim it is not a fact, nor is it a law, it is only a theory – but, in reality, a theory incorporates hypotheses, facts and laws. Theories are the explanations for facts and laws. When theories are established, they cannot

be changed (unless something stronger comes afterwards to overpower it).

Now that you know the difference between fact and theory, let's go back to evolution. The *fact* is that species change over time – if not, life would have never evolved. There would only be a stationary form of life, and that is not so. The *theory* is that species arise from common descent through natural selection. Random mutations lead to changes in genes, which are then passed down through offspring. Then, the physical form that is most adapted to the environment is the one that flourishes and, thus, evolution occurs – as aforementioned, however, this process does not happen overnight.

Dr. Faisal also describes the evidence of evolution, such as identical biochemical building blocks, the anatomical evidence,

the fossils found, the existence of artificial selection and genetic evidence, all of which are too evident to ignore.

There is also a form of evolution which is created by humans, and that is by domesticating animals. For example, there was never the variety of dogs available as there are today; in fact, at some point in the past, only one type of dog existed, but through domestication, we have managed to "create" the many types of dogs you see today. Even cows have altered over time to give us more milk and meat! This is called artificial selection.

Finally, Dr. Faisal ended the lecture with the statement: "Dogma, not faith, is the barrier to scientific enquiry." If people could separate between religion and science, they would be able to see the unquestionable proof of the existence of evolution.

"The fact is that species change over time – if not, life would have never evolved. There would only be a stationary form of life, and that is not so."

THE VOICE OF AUK

Our Mission

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

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The Voice of AUK welcomes contributions from all registered students, faculty and staff members of the American University of Kuwait. Submissions should be emailed to voice@auk.edu.kw.

All submissions must be approved by the Editorial Board, in accordance with the Editorial Policy. **The Voice of AUK** offers no guarantee that any submission will be published. To be considered for publication in the Voice, submissions for a given issue must be received on or before the published deadline for that issue. The views expressed in opinion columns represent strictly the views of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the **Voice of AUK**, nor those of the American University of Kuwait. All submissions become property of the **Voice of AUK**. The Editorial Board reserves the

right to edit all submissions, including for grammar, spelling, style, and clarity. Writers have the right to withdraw submissions at any time prior to publication. The Voice of AUK is published in ten monthly issues from September through October, and in a single issue for the months of July and August. Special non-news supplements may be published from time to time. For advertising information, send email to voice@auk.edu.kw. Advertisements for a given issue must be received on or before the published deadline for that issue. The Editorial Board reserves the right to accept or reject any advertisement. Opinions and/or attitudes expressed in advertisements do not necessarily reflect those of the Voice of AUK nor those of the American University of Kuwait.

The Act of Volunteering: Anyone Can Do It

BY AMAL BEHBEHANI

As part of the 6th Annual International Week and in collaboration with the Hope Club, the AUK Chat Series invited Ms. Fatema Al-Boloushi, a Kuwaiti humanitarian activist to discuss her experience in volunteering in Kuwait society and internationally. The panel took place in the auditorium from 2.00 to 3.00 p.m. and had several students and faculty members attend.

Ms. Fatema tells of how she was inspired to start volunteer work. She retold of her experience during the Iraqi invasion, how she and two other women cleaned up the space out of their own time. She recounts how different it felt to do something that she was not expected to do.

She volunteered in Canada four teen years at several centers and facilities; one of them is the San Jose Women Center. Unlike other facilities where they ask for your religion and nationality, the Women Center in Canada only asks for your name, provides you with what you need, and sends you on your way. The Center also provides a place for homeless people, giving them shelter and safety. There is no class distinction, only the will to help and volunteer those who need and ask for it.

A discussion was led on how the audience would define the act of volunteering. Ms. Fatema believes that even one hour of volunteering at home could

change a kid's life. The volunteering system in Kuwait needs to be redefined; people need to see that volunteering does not only occur by helping strangers but also helping those who are around you. In Canada, the centers help people without asking who they are or where they are from. The same should be applied in Kuwait, in which people should help others without judging who they are.

One piece of advice Ms. Fatema gave to the audience is to volunteer at different places, for there is nothing like it and we will learn plenty just by volunteering at several centers. A center that is the hardest place, personally, for Ms. Fatema is volunteering at foster care centers. She explained the hardship foster kids go through in trying to adapt to Kuwaiti society. She points out that the TV series are not the same as reality. The kids at the foster care are treated nicely and go on to study and have allowances.

Ms. Fatema is hoping to open a center of giving in the near future. One of her goals is to break down the barrier between foster care kids and society.

If you are interested in working with the Red Crescent, please contact AUK's Hope Club (hope@auk.edu.kw) to volunteer.

The Sand Sculpting Workshop

BY MAY OMRAN



Raymond Wirick at work.

The American University of Kuwait was transformed into a remarkable sand architecture on February 21st- 23rd. The Sand Sculpting event held its grounds behind the Administration building where dunes of sand were deposited for sculpting. Team Sandtastic USA, Raymond Wirick was there giving students tutorials and providing them with techniques on how to create sand art of their own. The students were taught the different types of sand pertinent for sculpting, the different sculpting instruments needed to detail the artwork and the tactics for drying out and hardening the finished art. After acquiring the preliminary skills needed, each individual worked on various creations which resulted in a display of a variety of sand sculptures. Sand sculptures such as sea turtles, monuments and buildings, and symbolic Kuwait representations were created.

"Listening to Raymond teaching us how to sculpt

student's involved and were interested in the idea of sand sculpting. Bringing in ideas like this into the university definitely brings together a different range of interest from the students."

Aside from the tutorials provided, Wirick was also taking requests from the community. The ideas given to him were brought to life as he implemented them into sand sculptures. Wiricks' final sculptures included the Kuwait towers with a message for Kuwait's 50 year independence, the Taj Mahal and several other different sculptures that were made in practice as tutorials for the students to see. Wiricks' The Kuwait sculpture is still on display behind the Administration building for the community to come see until further notice.

As he left Kuwait, Wirick left behind not only his artwork but, some words on his time spent at AUK, "It has been quite a while since I came to Kuwait, approximately 10 years. However, I

Accounting Major – Why Not!

BY NOURIN TAJANI



On March 9, 2011, the Student Success Center conducted its 2011 Majors Fair for AUK's student body. No one could possibly miss out the arrays of tables representing various majors at AUK with the assistance of innovative decor, enticing PowerPoint and video presentations, and well-informed students and staff manning the tables to respond to any queries or remarks posed by the crowd.

The booth for the "Accounting Major" stood in the midst of it all. Initiated by Professor John Russell and supervised by Dr. James Goodpasture who was diligently and enthusiastically assisted by some members of the Accounting Club (Accounting Club faculty advisor: Dr. Ayman Haddad; Nourin Tajani, Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa and Balqees Salem) and, at various times, by senior Accounting major students at AUK (Hala Ahmad and Sahar Tanweer). Many students dropped by to learn more about the Accounting major, collected

a special brochure created by the Business and Economics division especially for the event highlighting functions of the division, and enjoyed the resourceful PowerPoint presentation, prepared by Nourin Tajani, projected on a large screen placed nearby.

The presentation featured general information about Accounting: What is Accounting and what does it constitute? What career and further study opportunities can one enjoy from having an Accounting degree? Requirements to complete 120 credits to secure a Bachelor in Business Administration at AUK, and the definite attention-grabber – responses from various professors and students to the question "Why did you choose Accounting?"

The general consensus of responses from students for choosing Accounting was their love for numbers, great career prospects, and opportunities to learn and work in various accounting related fields. The

responses from professors were along the same lines. They highlighted the need for accountants no matter the economic climate, rising global demand for accounting and finance professionals, and a great compensation. Dr. James Goodpasture tackled the question about the demand for accounting professionals spot on by pointing out that even though accounting and finance are similar in nature, accounting comes first providing key information used by those in Finance.

The Majors Fair laid a great foundation for undeclared students to choose the right major that suits their talents, and for declared majors to stay on track. The Business and Economics Division is highly motivated to assist students in any way possible, and we welcome you to contact the Accounting Club at accountingclub@auk.edu.kw if you have any queries or want to know more about anything Accounting-related.



The completed sculpture of the Kuwait Towers fused with markers of AUK.

and then creating our own was pleasant; it was a creative learning experience," one of AUK students' shares. Laveena Lobo, Event Coordinator at AUK says, "It was a successful event. We had a lot of

had a wonderful experience here at AUK. The community was very friendly and seemed very interested in what I had to teach them."

The Film Club: Lights, Camera, Action!

BY SARAH KHALAF

The Film Club was created in the beginning of the Fall semester 2010. It has been created to motivate the students of AUK to learn and experience the skills of filming as well as having the chance to discover a talent that they never knew they had.

Abdulrahman Bastaki, a sophomore at AUK and the President of the Film Club, began thinking of having a Film Club after being Vice President of the Drama Club. After failing to stage "The Shattered Soul," he realized that he is not a theater kind of person but more of a film person, since he watches a lot of movies; and so he started his own club.

Not only does the Film Club teach students how to become filmmakers, it also hosts movie nights in which potential filmmakers can view well-directed films.

Some people may find the Film Club to be very similar to the Drama Club and ask, "Why do we need a Film Club when we already have a Drama

Club?" Well, here's your answer: the Drama club always has to be performed on stage, whereas the Film club can be done in any location, anywhere, and at any time. Also, in view of the fact that the Film Club presents events such as movie nights, where the Drama Club has no involvement in doing them what so ever.

Bastaki hopes for him and his members leaving the Film Club to do so with a better understanding and practice of what it is all about.

To end off the interview, Bastaki had this to convey to students about the Film Club and his hopes for the future, "I wish for more people to join the club, any kind of occupation can sign up. They do not have to be actors; furthermore, to attend their new movie, "The Shattered Soul," co-directed by Vice President Hisham Najem, coming out on May 4."



April 4, 1949

Twelve nations signed the treaty creating NATO the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The nations united for common military defense against the threat of expansion by Soviet Russia into Western Europe.



April 4, 1968

Civil Rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed by a sniper in Memphis, Tennessee. As head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he had championed non-violent resistance to end racial oppression and had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.



April 6, 1896

After a break of 1500 years, the first Olympics of the modern era was held in Athens, Greece



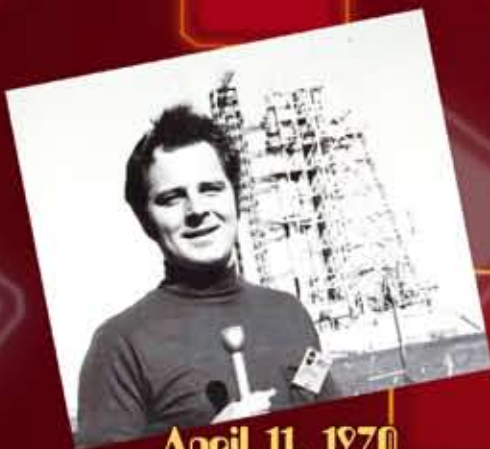
April 6, 1917

Following a vote by Congress approving a declaration of war, the U.S. entered World War I in Europe.



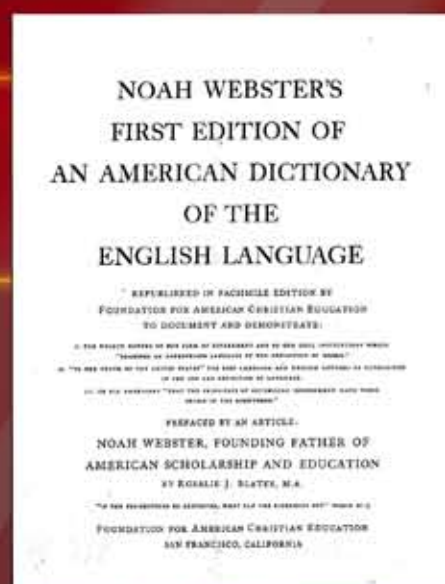
April 6, 1994

The beginning of genocide in Rwanda as a plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down. They had been meeting to discuss ways of ending ethnic rivalries between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. After their deaths, Rwanda descended into chaos, resulting in genocidal conflict between the tribes. Over 500,000 persons were killed with two million fleeing the country.



April 11, 1970

Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy at 2:13 p.m. Fifty-six hours into the flight an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Astronaut John L. Swigert saw a warning light that accompanied the bang and said, "Houston, we've had a problem here." Swigert, James A. Lovell and Fred W. Haise then transferred into the lunar module, using it as a "lifeboat" and began a perilous return trip to Earth, splashing down safely on April 17th.



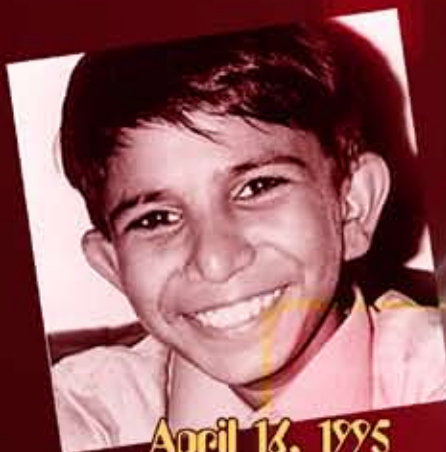
April 14, 1828

The first dictionary of American-style English was published by Noah Webster as the American Dictionary of the English Language



April 15, 1912

In the icy waters off Newfoundland, the luxury liner Titanic with 2,224 persons on board sank at 2:27 a.m. after striking an iceberg just before midnight. Over 1,500 persons drowned while 700 were rescued by the liner Carpathia which arrived about two hours after Titanic went down.



April 18, 1995

Iqbal Masih, a young boy from Pakistan who spoke out against child labor, was shot to death. At age four, he had been sold into servitude as a carpet weaver and spent the next six years shackled to a loom. At age ten, he escaped and began speaking out, attracting worldwide attention as a featured speaker during an international labor conference in Sweden.



April 28, 1945

Twenty-three years of Fascist rule in Italy ended abruptly as Italian partisans shot former Dictator Benito Mussolini. Other leaders of the Fascist Party and friends of Mussolini were also killed along with his mistress, Clara Petacci. Their bodies were then hung upside down and pelted with stones by jeering crowds in Milan.



April 30, 1987

Boxer Muhammad Ali was stripped of his world heavyweight boxing championship after refusing to be inducted into the American military. He had claimed religious exemption.

QUESTION

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE CURRENT UPRISINGS AND REVOLUTIONS
TAKING PLACE IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN REGION?

GHOLAM REZA VATANDOUST, PhD



The current uprisings in the Middle East caught the world by surprise, not least the Arabs. Old myths crumbled, the myth that Arabs are immune to change, that they cherish despots and that they have little appreciation for democracy or human rights. After all Hafez Assad and his son Bashar Assad Saddam Hussain, Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak, Ali Abdullah Saleh and Muammar Gaddafi were ordained to rule for life presumably by their people and eternally for their people.

For the past two decades Muslims have been oblivion to the wave of color revolutions around them. These civil conflicts first emerged in the former Soviet Union and the Balkan states and were embedded in acts of civil disobedience and non-violence, adopted en masse by the people. While globalization, mass communication, social networking and the media became pre-requisite for initiating a new tide of events in Eastern Europe and central Asia, Muslims of the Middle East have been silent observers. The Velvet Czechoslovakia), Rose (Georgia), Orange (Ukraine), Tulip (Kyrgyzstan), Green (Iran) revolutions were closely watched and perhaps silently mimicked. Without exception, all these movements were initially peaceful. The gravitation towards a philosophy of passive resistance, in this modern age of global networking and its adoption as instruments for change, is a study all of its own. However, Gene Sharpe, the godfather of the movement, is a withdrawn academic who has given credence to Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela by advocating non-violence and civil disobedience and by tailoring a peaceful strategy of resistance to suit the modern technological age.

Meanwhile Gaddafi continues to lash at his own people, his "raeya," (serfs) with a vengeance. UN Security "Council Resolution 1973 took him totally by surprise. He described the coalition forces as "colonial crusaders and promised to fight "inch by inch" to defend the mother land. He continues to insist that "he is loved by his people," and will fight to death to protect them.

When his son, Saif al-Islam, a gratuitous student at the London School of Economics, generously doled out a million pounds out of Libyan coffers, to the Institute, he did not hesitate to pompously declare that Libya is the "most democratic country in the Middle East," and perhaps for his generosity rather than his words, he received a standing ovation from the British academic community. A similar remark was also made by Ahmadinejad who arrogantly ranked Iran among the most free and democratic states in the world. Perhaps the Middle East, at once alluring yet entrenched, needs to coin a new definition of democracy for all its dysfunctional despots.

Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, and David Cameron have all admitted that a reversal in western policy is urgently required, that the west should no longer tolerate despots simply for the sake of expediency and regional and economic benefits. However, in reality, autocrats discovered that as long as they remain defiant and cruel, no one would step forward to challenge their authority. The Libyan case however, has disproven that theory. Perhaps, now, despots for life will be held accountable for their actions, not only by their own citizens, but by the United Nation and the International Criminal Court. Thanks to globalization, multilateralism is upon us. This is cause for regional despots to shudder. Change is in the air.

MOURAD DAKHLI, PH.D



The uprising in Tunisia started with a single act of bravery by a fruit vendor named Bouazizi. No one expected that one poor man setting himself on fire would start a whole chain of events across the Arab World and beyond. The Tunisian revolution that followed and that successfully toppled the regime of Ben Ali inspired many and showed that change is possible. For the first time, people in an Arab country can take to the street and bring down a dictatorship. Egyptians, Libyans, Yemenis and many others took notice For decades Ben Ali, like many other dictators, hang to power using brutal force, intimidation and scare tactics. He managed to convince many inside and outside that there were no other options for Tunisia but his regime or an Iran-style Islamic fundamentalist state. And, of course, he received all the support needed including from Western Nations that helped keep him in power for over 20 years. Just like their counterparts in the West, people of the Arab World deserve freedom, respect and life free of intimidation. They also deserve better than the corrupt leaders and their mafia-like clans that have become so common. The Tunisian revolution showed that if people really want change and are willing to sacrifice for it, then they will get what they long for sooner or later.

DEAN CAROL ROSS



I have always believed that people have the right to speak their mind and express their concerns in a civil and peaceful manner. As I watch what is happening around us, what seems so clear in my mind, is that persons are fighting for their basic lower level needs...food, clothing and shelter as well as the right to work. If you are a business major, you should know this as part of Maslow's hierarchy. The honest fight is for basic human rights. (Regardless of the side of the fence; the fight is about those who have are not sharing enough with those who have not.) And the honest people who don't have are not saying, "give it to me while I sit on my tush"; they are more than willing to work for it. You cannot suppress humans, keeping knees to their necks for so long and not expect them to try to rise.

The honest people have risen because they had gotten tired of seeing some that amassed by corrupt means have so much, while they seem to have no opportunity to do better. I loved the fact that Egypt was as peaceful as it was; that Christians and Muslims stood hand in hand. It breaks my heart that others have not been able to stand on principle without violence. It breaks my heart that groups have tried to use religion as a means to coerce for ill deserved gains. It breaks my heart that there are some that are intentionally trying to confuse the issues and play to the honest man's vulnerability for personal gain. The world has been blessed with bountiful resources. People must open their hearts and be willing to have a true dialog about the future. It should be readily apparent that tomorrow is not promised. Treat everyone with dignity today.

DINA EL ZOHAIYR



The demonstrations taking place daily across the region – starting with the revolution in Tunisia, followed by Egypt, and now Libya – were expected and way overdue. Any oppressed peoples are a ticking bomb. In the words of Wael Ghonim, people power is stronger than the people in power.

Like every Egyptian dreaming of a civil, democratic regime; social justice; and an end to widespread corruption, I was elated by the 25 January revolution and proud of the young men and women who organized it. But I experienced other feelings along the way: melancholy, anxiety, confusion, anger, distrust and disappointment to mention a few. I was particularly inspired by the resilient Egyptians who spent their days and nights in Tahrir until their demand was fulfilled. My sense of nationalism increased tenfold.

Today, I am very worried about the future of my country. There is chaos, insecurity, growing divisiveness, religious persecution, opportunistic tendencies, and concerned external forces. With mixed voices and viewpoints, it's difficult to know who is telling the truth and who is a hypocrite, or who truly loves this country and who is serving other agendas. But in accordance with Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) advice, "Be optimistic and good shall be found," I choose to believe that we will steer Egypt and every other Arab country into the right direction – insha'Allah.

NUR SOLIMAN



As a Literature major I'm always catching up with politics, but I believe the revolutions in the Middle East that struggle against blunt oppression, deprivation of freedom of speech, religious belief, political association, of systems to provide water, bread, transport, quality education, have shaken the foundations of the current landscape. Our grandfathers have always fought against injustice, and the torch has been taken up.

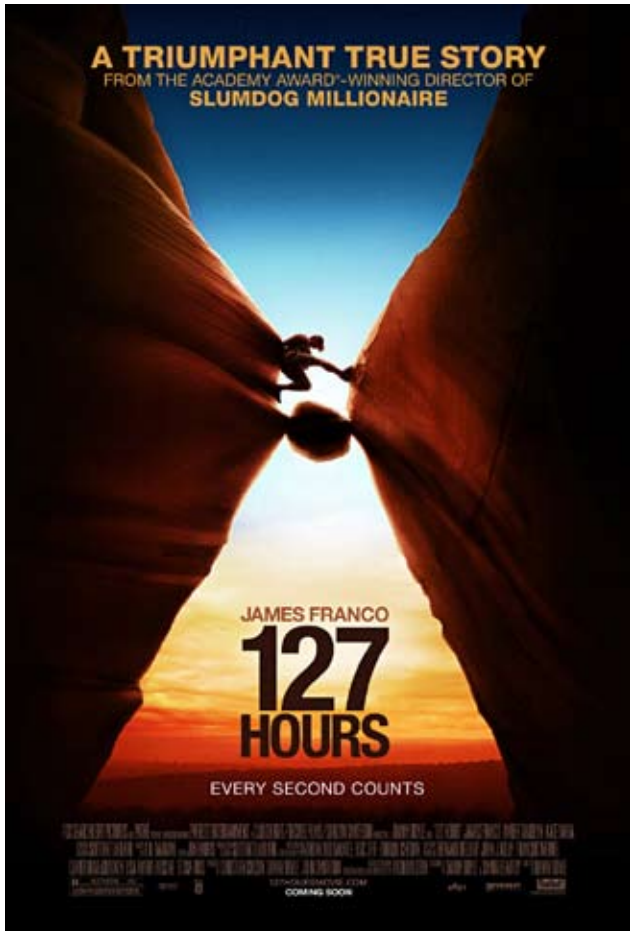
Dr. Mamoun Fandy has written that the deaths are real; the online revolutions have only lit up the already burning embers of discontent in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Palestine, Iran, Bahrain; as the descendant of the pamphlet and telegraph wire, it's set things at unprecedented speed.

Some better than others; after the bloody violence and deaths in Libya and Yemen, their dictators cannot, cannot leave soon enough; some uprisings unnecessarily ride on the charged momentum, others show aggressive sectarianism and vestiges of corruption, but surely this must be expected.

Whatever the case, the giant has awoken and cannot be put back to sleep, but now must accustom its eyes to the light to learn how to walk; it will probably be tougher than anyone can imagine, but it's an Arab Spring, the night is bright.

“The Gift of a Second Chance”

BY HUDA AL- RASHID



A few months ago, I had the pleasure of going to the movies with my best friend to celebrate the end of the Fall semester. Wanting to initially spend some quality girl time by watching a cliché chick flick, we sprinted happily to the cinema only to find a fully booked line of movies. So, as a replacement, we decided to check out James Franco's critically praised movie, “127 Hours.” Who knew a simple replacement could lead to such an enormous impact on both of us.

The movie, based on true events, tells the story of a mountain hiker, Aron Ralston, and his amazing, triumphant survival from an accident which occurred during one of his hikes. His right forearm was crushed by a boulder while hiking in the rocky mountains of Utah, trapping him in one of the small cracks of the canyon for five whole days; he

I felt was that of a calm sense of appreciation for life. If this is beginning to sound cheesy to you, just bear with me while I prove my point.

Before this hike, Aron expressed an overconfident persona, only wanting to experience an “adventurous” journey, escaping from all the “usual” events happening at home. That day, he didn't answer his mother's phone call, or bother to tell his coworker or any of his family members where he was going. During the time he was stuck in the canyon, he realized what he had done; he had shut everyone out of his life, all in an attempt to find an “adventure.” Was it worth it? He had five whole days to think about what was truly important to him; was it the adventures he would be thrilled by all alone, or the adventures he would go on with his family, and everyone who loved



eventually ran out of food and water, causing him to drop twenty pounds during the course of his journey. The movie, directed beautifully by Danny Boyle, does an incredible job of not only portraying the events of the incident in an exceptionally accurate manner, but also presents the underlying values that were introduced and obtained during the course of the journey. Together with the moving music, and the vivid presentation of the events, the end product was a work of gold, really deserving the Oscar nomination it received this year.

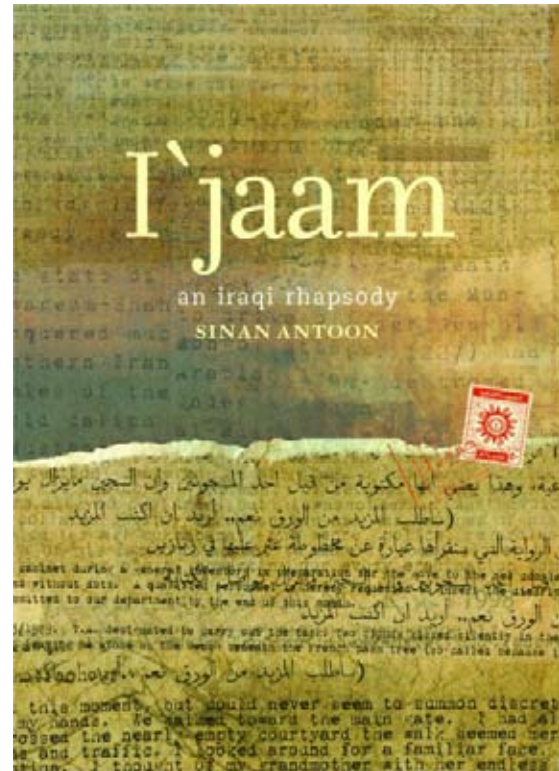
Of course, this movie was not what we girls wanted as a celebration of the end of a long semester of work, or at the time at least. Aside from the squeamish reactions to the graphic interpretations of the incident, the impact of the movie's human messages really caught deep. You may be wondering, well, how could a movie about a man stuck in a canyon carry deep-seated emotions? What kind of emotions other than sympathy can someone feel? Well, you may be surprised to hear this, but the strongest emotion

him? His journey was a difficult one, filled with physical and emotional pain, but it was the culprit that would cause him to emerge from this journey more alive than he had ever been.

Of course, directly after watching the movie, dinner was out of the question, but it was the first time a story would truly move me and continue to do so months after watching it. As shown in the movie credits, after the incident, Aron never failed to tell his family where he was going on his next hike, and was sure to answer all those valuable phone calls, that were seen as a nuisance to him before. Aron had a second chance at life where he was able to change his mind on what was truly important in life. Unfortunately, not everyone is lucky enough to have a life-changing experience accompanied by a second chance to carry out that change; so, just keep this story in mind the next time an old friend or family member is calling you while you're on an “adventure.” Answer your phone call; it's a gift anyone who didn't have a second chance would do anything to have.

I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody

BY FATMA AL-FADHLI, AUK ALUM 10'



The Ba'ath Party ruled Iraq for around 40 years. During those years, Iraq collapsed under dark and harsh days of dictatorship. In order for the Ba'athists to strengthen their rule, they intended to spread ignorance in the country through censoring all sorts of media and writing. Moreover, they imprisoned Iraq's intelligentsia, students, and all those who opposed the Ba'athist regime. Furat, the protagonist of Sinan Antoon's novel *I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody* (originally published in Arabic by Dar al-Adab in Beirut, 2004), is one of the Iraqi students who was imprisoned due to writing short stories that opposed the regime. The novel has been translated into English and was published by City Lights Books. My review is based on the English translation.

The novel begins in 1989, a year post the Iran-Iraq war, when a government official uncovers a collection of un-dotted writings. The first page is a memo authorizing someone to dot the collection of un-dotted words. While in the Arabic version, the author Antoon uses the un-dotted words, Antoon uses the similarities between the letters when hand written in the English translation. For instance the letter 'd' is similar to 'f' or 't' when hand written. The protagonist, Furat is an Iraqi Christian college student and writer who opposes the Ba'athist regime. The papers

and pen that Furat uses to write were given to him by one of the prison guards. Furat then engages in writing unrelated pieces about his memories with his grandmother, girlfriend, and his nightmares in prison. Those scraps reflect the state Furat and most of the prisoners who were tortured for their opposing to the regime were in. Moreover, Furat's description of the Iraqis' daily life reminds the reader of how Iraqi lives were censored and monitored by the *One Leader*. The pieces the Furat writes do not indicate or give any date in which the reader will be able to locate the time. The only sentence that separates each part from the other is “I woke up to find myself (t)here.”

The manuscripts were hard to translate due to the condition of the hand writing. Hence, the translator even makes a mistake on translating one word which changes the whole meaning of the manuscript. In some places, the translator indicates the confusion in the footnote. In one scrap where Furat describes life in Baghdad, he says, “.. to live here means to *piss* away three quarter of your life waiting” (11). However, in the footnote, the translator suggests another word which, *pass*. In other places, the reader will find that “democracy” is replaced by “democrassy” due to the translator's confusion through the process of decoding the manuscript. Nonetheless, the

reader will never know whether it is what Furat really said or what the translator wants him to say. The translator of the manuscript has the authority to change many words and sentences that Furat might never have said.

The language in which the manuscript is written is breathtaking. Furat describes the daily and mundane life of the Iraqis with great humility. His use of the “Leader” and his sayings in the middle of his writings shows how much people were bombarded with the ideology of the regime. Yet, Furat uses them in order to show his disgust at it. In addition, the reader will realize throughout the novel that Furat uses capitalized words when referring to Saddam. This tendency from Furat reminds me of Adunis, the Lebanese-Syrian poet, who once said that tyrants believe that they are gods who are controlling people's destinies and fate. Thus, the “Leader” in the novel represents the ultimate power that our protagonist opposes.

One might conclude writing about such a great novel by quoting Etel Adnan who said, “*I'jaam* is a stunning work, as it brings to the present a world of terror we know about, we have previously read about, but which usually seems remote, unreal. It takes a great talent to make it so specific, so Iraqi in this case, and so personal.”



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New and Familiar Faces: the Ari Roland Jazz at AUK

BY NUR SOLIMAN, AUK ALUM 10'



At AUK, from left to right: Ari Roland, Zaid Nasser, Luigi Grasso, and Chris Byars. Photo taken by Nur Soliman and Sara Soliman.

Embassy of Kuwait. Playing at a university campus, at a local jazz festival and cultural center, the Quartet stole everyone's hearts with their unique sound and brilliant performances of jazz, playing some classics, some obscure gems, all wonderful.

This year Chris Byars and Ari Roland came with the Ari Roland Jazz Septet to mark the 50th anniversary of Kuwait's independence, its 20th anniversary of liberation, and its 5th anniversary of



Pasquale Grasso on guitar at AUK. Photo taken by Nur Soliman and Sara Soliman.

the ascendance of the Amir, HE Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah. The septet now included Zaid Nasser and Luigi Grasso on alto saxophone, Pasquale Grasso (Luigi's younger brother, and the youngest on stage) on the guitar, Keith Balla on drums, and vocalist Marion Cowings. Over the course of three days, the septet performed at AUK, the al-Babtain Library for Arabic Poetry, the 360 Mall, and the US Embassy grounds, drawing enthusiastic, excited audiences at every venue.

Their first stop was AUK during our week-long celebrations of National and Liberation Days, where a good crowd watched the band perform in the grassy courtyard in front of the library. The audience, made of up students, faculty, staff, families, and other visitors, seemed to hugely enjoy the performance and the repertoire.

The program consisted mostly of jazz standards and classic tunes, like "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and "What a Wonderful World," and Billie Holliday's "Summertime," where the audience learned the lines with alto saxophonist Zaid Nasser and then sung along. They also played "What a Wonderful World," "But Beautiful," "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World," "Misty," and on special request, "The Way You Look Tonight," singing with infectiously joyous gusto.

Nattily dressed with a paisley silk neck-kerchief and fedora, Cowings looked the part of what I imagine is supposed to be the typical 'jazz,' or Rat-Pack era singer. Aside, his singing had great appeal with the audience and he quickly earned scores of fans with the way his voice resounded far, with his smooth tenor tone, and his old-school vocal traditions, sometimes crooning softly or playfully or sometimes belting a tune out with catching enthusiasm; his 'Misty,' for instance, had the

flirtatious innocence of Frank Sinatra's cover but also ran along at a tripping pace more like Frank Rosolino's instrumental cover.

For several of the pieces, the Septet played with a trio of Kuwaiti drummers who performed with traditional drums such as the *duf* and the *jahlah*, or earthenware water jar, beating the skin drums in robust, resonant rhythms, in remarkable, wonderful harmony with the Septet; the steady beats remained in Arab Gulf meters, but the three musicians also adapted quickly to the rhythms and keys of the Septet, and would pause and resume at certain points, one of them even 'improvising' a little on his own drum, but the unique, cherished sound of the local drums definitely added a new angle to the jazz music, both of which are in a sense very people-oriented musical traditions.

The sense of harmonic wholeness really owed itself to both rhythm sections – that is, the Kuwaiti drummers and the Septet's rhythm section, whose experimental but insightful playing really harnessed the collective sound and maintained various dynamic tempos and beats.

Keith Balla consistently maintained a brilliant sound but also in keeping with the musicians with the Septet as well as the Kuwaiti drummers. Even if it weren't for his staggering solos, Balla impressed with his seamless shift from bursts of spontaneous, yet ordered solos to the softest brushing, reminding of the late but great Joe Morello of the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

Guitarist Pasquale Grasso impressed the crowd's Django Reinhardt fans with his sensitive, liquid sounds, his comping discerning and faultlessly timed, his solos recalling the meandering contemplative sounds of Joe Pass and Jim Hall, with the smooth and poetic fingering style of Django, always lending a unique, elegant rhythmic colour to the music.

Ari Roland, double-bassist and bandleader, impressed listeners with the vibrant energy of his 'arco' solos, like those of Doug Watkins, but also with the urgency and vigor of his strumming; Thomas Conrad of *Jazz Times* writes that his solos are 'like twisting filaments of bright song,' and they are, the deep, rich strings pulling everyone's sounds together.



Zaid Nasser and Chris Byars on saxophone with Keith Balla on drums. Photo taken by Nur Soliman and Sara Soliman.

In some places, the jazz suddenly sounded *khaleeji*, or Gulf-like; in other places, the sound of the Kuwaiti drums melted away into the background and sounded like the percussive drops of Duke Ellington's more exotic 'Caravan' which

tunes and improvisations. Chris Byars on tenor saxophone played in his characteristically sweet, round sound, steady and rich and fluid, easily moving from a gentle Parker sound to a fruitier Coltrane to yet a lighter Frank Rosolino sound,



Kuwaiti drummers performing with the Ari Roland Septet at AUK. Photo taken by Nur Soliman and Sara Soliman.

is alternately attributed Latin or Middle-Eastern influences.

Whatever the case, the unique sound generated by the musicians was warm and genuine, with none of the 'music builds bridges' approach that we have tired of hearing about, but instead it was about the most honest collaboration and experimentation between two groups of musicians. In most of the pieces, the Kuwaiti drummers added their unique

his voice definitely recognizable and much appreciated. Zaid Nasser, son of jazz double-bassist Jamil Nasser (previously George Joyner, heard on Red Garland and John Coltrane recordings) played his alto saxophone with eloquence and an elegant type of poetry, a real treat to listen to, relaxed but thoughtful, admirable throughout his performances.

Luigi Grasso wonderfully shifted from silky softness of Paul Desmond to the warmth of Zoot Sims or the fluidity of Parker, his long Art Pepper-like solos were impressive, both inspired but original like listening to a kind of story that reveals new exciting things.

Once their round of solos would come to an end, their collective sound reminded the writer of the saxophone dynamics of Al Cohn and Zoot Sims in "Stockholm-La" or better yet, like Al Cohn with Bill Perkins and Richie Kamuca in *Three Brothers!*, their

collective sound sweet and energetic and bursting with a golden lyric and a definitely jazzy swing.

The opening of "Night in Tunisia" starts with the well-known percussive intro, with its tinkling cymbals and shimmering, off-beat drum beats, from the incomparable Balla, accompanied by the rumbling of Roland's double-bass and the sympathetic, soft racing of Pasquale Grasso on the guitar. This led to the deep and rich sound of the three saxophones. Luigi Grasso's solo assumed the place of Charlie Parker's, and Zaid Nasser taking Dizzy's place, the seamless beauty of the Septet, making it the second Parker-esque piece that night with its dizzying whirlwind of joyous explosions and rushes of deliciously high, fast rushes of musical notes, ending the night all too brilliantly, all too soon.

The Septet played sensitively to each other's music and timing with a group dynamic hard to miss, combining East and West Coasts like Lee Konitz but also in their own way. One only missed parts of their 2009 program, where it was less overly popular tunes like say, "What a Wonderful World" or "Summertime," and more "Take the 'A' Train," for instance, or the relatively unheard of but memorably beautiful compositions by Gigi Gryce (later Basheer Qusim), appealing to both new jazz fans but also older ones.

Nevertheless, the Septet, and the Quartet before them, endeared themselves to their listeners more and more with every performance and every night, with the brilliance of their serious, grounded jazz music, but also the warmth of their presence on the stage and off the stage, interacting with their listeners and fans.



Marion Cowings.

beats to the pieces, but at one point, they begun the music all on their own, their sound compelling the audience to all rise up in synced traditional clapping, or *sharbukka*, the sound entirely Kuwaiti, inviting the Septet to introduce themselves back into the sound and the rhythm, resulting in yet another unpredictable but wholly delightful performance.

At the al-Babtain Library for Arabic Poetry, the repertoire was similar and the audience no less thrilled, although we saw the addition of "Billie's Blues" and a classic favourite of bebop and

Gillespie fans, "Night in Tunisia." "Billie's Blues" was a wonderful way to showcase the sounds of the performers, leaving the audience in a spirit, a state of pure musical joy, that's precisely what it is, introducing the unique jazz sound of the Septet, where it has a hotness and a coolness, a big-band sound but a small quartet bebop sound, and everything in between that creates a fluid, lyrical dynamic.

The sound of the saxophones really had enough space and time to really explore different

The Art of Persia: The Meshkinfam Museum of Art

BY ISHA HAIDER



a sample of Mr. Meshkinfam's impressive artwork was also on display, on the 5th floor of the LA Building, from 21st February to the 23rd, from 10:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

During the talk entitled 'Contemporary Persian Art and Design', Dr. Vatandoust initiated the presentation by introducing the several participants of the group and speaking about his published book, co-authored by Mr. Hassan himself, "The Meshkinfam Museum of Art: The First Private Museum of Visual Arts in Iran." Mr. Meshkinfam then spoke about the development of Persian painting, while Prof. Maryam Hosseinniathengaveinformation regarding contemporary graphic design in Iran, which included information about impressive graphic designers Morteza Momayez, Maryam Enaiti, Mehdi Saeedi, Homa Delvaray and many others. After that, Professor William Andersen took the stage for his topic of lecture, "Contemporary Persian Art in the Western World." He spoke about several Persian artists settled in the West like Shirin Neshat, Shirin Allabadi, Farhad Moshiri etc. After his lecture, he showed the black and white video by Shirin Neshat, which was from the 1990 'Rapture' series. Dr. Gholamreza then took the stage to describe the history of the Meshkinfam Museum of Art in Iran and informatively concluded the presentation. A movie showcasing the different scenes from The Meshkinfam Museum of Art was also played on mute during Dr. Gholam's lecture, behind him.

Dr. Vatandoust's book was published in the spring of 2010, when the museum began to

face pending threats of possible closure under the current administration of Iranian President A h m a d i n e j a d . According to Vatandoust, the prior funding provided by the state to this museum has now ceased, and the museum is currently under threat of shutting down due to lack of resources and local support, which doesn't seem possible under the current administration, d e s p i t e

encouragement from the Iranian government to permit the establishment of private museums through its guidance since July 2005.

At the end of the AUK auditorium, five samples of Mr. Meshkinfam's beautiful watercolor paintings were on display, near the exquisite spread of beverages and snacks, laid out to be enjoyed by those who attended throughout the duration of the gathering. An impressive crowd had gathered to view the informative session, which mainly contained professors and students.

Mr. Hassan Meshkinfam is a painter and photographer. He was educated in Iran at the School of Fine Arts in Besancon and Paris. In 1981 he had established The Gallery of Contemporary Art in Shiraz- Iran, a school of visual arts where he currently teaches painting.

Mr. Meshkinfam's art work has garlanded several exhibitions worldwide. His paintings flow from being done by watercolors, to being exquisite work of Naturalism, Pointillism, and Impressionism. His sketches also portray beautiful segments of the environment, viz. bazaars, streets, passes and old mills of Shiraz with its representation of people in the early 1980s. His oil paintings involve periods representing Realism, Impressionism, Fauvism, Surrealism, and Romanticism. He has also been successful in

imitating works of elite artists such as Correggio, Raphael, Rubens, Delacroix, Constable, Shishkin, Wyeth and many others. All his works are on display in the Meshkinfam Art Museum in Fars-Shiraz, Iran. The location of the Meshkinfam Museum is almost perfect, not only because it is the place of origin of Hassan Meshkinfam, but it also is a tribute to the artistic heritage of the city. The museum is located by Imamzadeh Bibi Dokhtare in the old quarters of Shiraz in a beautiful old 3-storey courtyard house with wooden-framed windows with painted glass and a beautiful garden in the middle of the house.

According to Dr. Gholamreza's book about the Meshkinfam's museum, "The contents of the Meshkinfam Art Museum, includes hundreds of art pieces collected by the Meshkinfam family over a period of more than half a century. The collection



can be divided into essentially four different sections namely the art of calligraphy, painting, photography and sculpture." The entire collection is classified in two parts, first being the art work of the Meshkinfam family, while the second being the art of contemporary artists of the Fars Province.

This effort by Dr. Vatandoust, in the form of his book and Mr. Hassan, in the form of the Meshkinfam Museum of Visual Arts is an unprecedented approach towards truly loving and valuing the cultural heritage of Iran, by promoting and preserving the jewels of art in such a magnificent manner.

Painting with the Persian Palette

BY FATIMA IBRAHEEM



Mr. Hassam Meshkinfam. Photo taken by PR/Marketing.

In a humble art classroom smothered in soothing Persian melody, there you can see chairs assembled in a circular form with a focal point in the center which consists of a bowl of fruits with bright oranges and slender bananas. Each student would observe the focal point with a different perspective, applying the mission of the Workshop. Students passionate about watercolor painting would come and go from the room to partake in the Watercolor Workshop that was organized by the Art Factory Club.

The Workshop took place under the guidance of Mr. Hassan Meshkinfam, a renowned

Persian artist who kept passing by each seated student to give valuable advice and suggestions regarding watercolor painting strategies. Each student was surrounded by watercolors and sketches of drawings while Mr. Meshkinfam would sit for a moment to study the student's work and, in return, offer his recommendations to those ambitious students.

By the end of an hour or so, each participating student was confident enough to start his/her own piece of sketch. They were also confident to hold the brush and paint their drawings smoothly and elegantly. The environment was very friendly

and content, thus all students came to the Workshop while having in mind the fact that they want to practice what they essentially enjoy. Since it was open to all students, not just those talented in watercolor painting, it was not unusual to see students from various disciplines and skills attending and making the most of their time there. Mr. Meshkinfam showed sufficient support which would encourage the AUK community to host similar events in the future. The Workshop was highly successful, having a unique angle of Persian art and painting all under the supervision of a remarkable Persian artist.

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A Note from Dr. Gholam Reza Vatandoust

I am very grateful to all those who helped us make the Persian Art week a success. We had the full support of two Division Heads, Dr. Craig Loomis, Head of the Humanities and Arts Division and Dr. Chris Ohan, Head of the Social Sciences Division. We also had the help of students, particularly the Art Factory. Ms. Helene El Neaman, President and Sepideh Behbehani, Vice President of the Art Factory were incredible and very resourceful. They prepared all the posters and made most of the arrangement. Honestly, we were not sure that the program would be as

successful as it turned out to be. We were afraid that the Arabian Heritage would overshadow the Persian Art Week. However, we were wrong. Both events complimented each other. It goes to show the level of maturity and interest among our students. They do appreciate learning about neighboring arts and cultures. We also need to thank the AUK Voice and Ms. Fatima Khamis. They were present at every event giving it full coverage. Professor William and I are very pleased with the turnout. All our hard work seemed to have had results. Thank you everyone.

AUK Host 6th Annual International Week



Haban band. Photo by PR/Marketing.

The American University of Kuwait's Office of Student Life organized its 6th Annual International Week from March 6-10, 2011. International Week was a collaborative undertaking which had numerous and diverse events, such as The Diversity Fair, The Women Empowerment Workshop, the Globalization and the Changing World Forum, cultural food, traditional arts and clothing, and a Mini Football

day. The day saw a variety of country activities through the diversity fair along with embassy representation. In addition, Traditional Gulf, Egyptian, and African musical performances were enjoyed by the AUK community. The International Club of AUK organized this day's activities in collaboration with the Office of Student Life. On the same evening the AUK Film Club screened a diversity movie outside the Hangout

with volunteering in Kuwaiti society and internationally. A discussion was led on how the audience would define the act of volunteering. The third day, March 8th, celebrated International Women's Day. B.E.L.L.E Club of AUK organized a special event titled "B.E.L.L.E - of - the - Ball" which contained a number of activities for female AUK students. The day witnessed one of L.E.A.D Program workshops titled



African drums. Photo by PR/Marketing.

World Cup Championship. These events support the mission of the Office of Student Life by celebrating cultural diversity to reflect current issues in the world and by providing personal development opportunities for students.

The program was executed in association with AUK clubs and organizations such as the International Club, Hope Club, L.E.A.D Program, and MUNAUK. A number of volunteer students joined forces with the Office of Student Life on the diverse events that the week offered.

The first day, March 6th, was designated as Diversity

Tent. The first day witnessed the Mini Football World Cup Championship kickoff that went on for the whole week.

The second day, March 7th, was designated Kuwait & the World. The Hope Club of AUK in collaboration with the Office of Student Life organized this day's activities. The day focused on Kuwait's role in the region and its worldwide humanitarian activities where information booths displayed ways of giving hope for Egyptians and Tunisians. Hope Club invited Ms. Fatema Al-Boloushi, a Kuwaiti humanitarian activist as a guest speaker at the AUK Chat Series, to discuss her experience

"Empowering Women". This event's intent was to engage AUK students in leadership experience in international settings and encourage them to develop their leadership abilities and believe in their capabilities. The panel explained the achievements of the speakers, the challenges they went through, and their advice to AUK students in general, and specifically to our female students to empower them. AUK Visiting Associate Professor of International Relations & History, Dr. Gholam Vatandoust, commenced the panel discussion by sharing his published paper "Study of Globalization and Kuwaiti Women". AUK Assistant

Professor of English, Dr. Angelica DeAngelis, then spoke on "Self Empowering Women- Young Women Write the Future". Ms. Sahar Shawwa, the Programme Analyst of United Nations Development program shared with the audience her life's journey with UNDP focusing on the agency efforts in defending women's rights. The panel also saw AUK Alumni Ms. Jawaher Ali Reda speak on how to empower women to influence the future and AUK student Ms

the discussion by talking about social networking sites and their influence on society followed by Dr. Vatandoust's informative and enlightening speech on the process of Globalization titled 'Globalization & the Challenge of Democracy'. AUK's Associate Professor of Management, Dr. Mansour concluded the forum by discussing 'Arab Youth Role in Integrated Regional Projects'. The Model United Nations Club at the American University of Kuwait (MUNAUK) moderated

competition where the best three winners were awarded prizes.

The Mini Football World Cup Championship which commenced on the first day, concluded with 'Team Argentina' winning the final match. They were presented with medals and the Cup.

The 6th Annual International Week was organized by Mr. Ayman Shouman, Student Engagement Officer of the Office of Student Life and provided various opportunities for



Globalization and the Changing World" forum organizer, moderator, and panel speakers. Photo by PR/Marketing.

May Omran spoke about women in action.

Wednesday March 9th, was designated as Inter-Cultural Day, and hosted the "Globalization and the Changing World" Forum. It was led by two faculty members; Dr. Gholamreza Vatandoust and Dr. Aly Mansour and AUK student, Ms. Sarah Raji. They spoke of how innovations

this event which was organized by the Office of Student Life at AUK.

On the last day, The Global Village Day, students were encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity. Students represented their culture through traditionally rich elements, such as food, music, and art. A competition was held for the

AUK clubs, organizations and individual students to interact and engage in meaningful experiential learning activities. This allowed them to deepen their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. The week highlighted the important role these differences play in the human experience. It also cultivated a sense of



AUK student Sarah Raji representing Palestine. Photo by PR/Marketing.

and progression of technology have altered the world and how

best country representation where the best three student-run groups were awarded prizes.

social responsibility to others, fostered cultural collaboration, and communication, as well



Egypt won the Third Place Best Country Representation contest. Photo by PR/Marketing.



Egyptian folklore. Photo by PR/Marketing.

we live through a process called 'Globalization'. Ms. Raji opened

The Global Village Day activities also included a traditional dress

as offered civic, personal, and organizational leadership.

Communication Students on Reality Television

In previous years, reality TV has soared with success in the Western world. Inevitably, the trend seeped into the Middle East smoothly and with great potency. The first reality TV show that was viewed on MBC was not even remotely related to the Arab world. The show revolved around Jessica Simpson and her husband Nick Lachey. It is merely defined by showing the life of the newlyweds around their house. After that, many Arabic reality shows emerged just as the article mentioned. The shows represented nothing of our culture. They did not portray any Arab traditions, values, not even the limitations that our Arab identity has set for us. Yet a lot of us were hooked on these shows. Due to the major exposure they had, the issue of voting did not just represent the best talent but the nationality of the contestants. In Kuwait, I can still remember how our newspapers reacted when any of the Kuwaiti contestants were nominated to leave the shows. Pages and pages of pleas and calls to support the Kuwaiti contestant, because he is amazingly talented but because he represents our country. That is only a small piece of evidence of how entertainment not only turned into politics but is actually being portrayed as directly related to foreign affairs and the images of countries.

As I see it, the fact that everything in the entertainment business is about politics is sad. When we look at Hollywood, for example, it is universally known that it is controlled by Jews. Perhaps "Jews" is not a political party, but it is a sector of the community and sectarianism is irrevocably a part of politics. Anything that would come near their beliefs would be destroyed. A breathing example of this would be actor Mel Gibson. The man destroyed his career when he was caught with a DUI and then threw harsh words at the officer because he was Jewish. Even though he apologized on TV afterwards, it did him no good. When he finished with his brilliantly directed movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, it did not even get the attention it deserved.

Globalization is a major force that is consuming every part of every country, no matter how insignificant that part is. Everything is interrelated now, and unfortunately, that cannot be changed. Politics is related to everything in this country, even to business. I believe that it is a destroying force to patriotism, and the fuel to sectarianism.

May About-Taleb. As media is evolving and changing dramatically, people started changing too as they are being affected by what they see and hear in the media. In the last few years, there was a boom in reality television programs which gained a lot of popularity through fans and viewers of all ages in the Arab region. Three reality shows in particular that witnessed this phenomenon and they are Super Star, Al Ra'is, and Star Academy.

Many people went with the flow and got addicted to these shows and the television channels airing these programs as they felt it became a part of them or their daily routines to watch the contestants. Others were against the program as they felt it was threatening Arab identity and religion as it violates many Arab or Islamic views and illustrates Western values of freedom and sexual promiscuity. People not in favor of these programs felt that these shows were nothing new, just an Arabic copy or version of American Idol, Fame Academy, and Big Brother.

Star Academy and Super Star reality television shows played major roles in connecting both politics and entertainment as they were one of the most controversial programs in the history of Arabs since the day satellites were introduced. Al Ra'is was banned from television a week after airing as it caused street demonstrations in Manama. Television channels airing these programs had a huge impact on how popular they became. The shows were based on many contestants that were eliminated week by week according to votes by viewers at home. As the contestants were from different countries, most viewers at home voted for their country or the country they like the most. This meant that contestants from countries with wealth like the Gulf region will be most likely to win. These reality shows caused riots in many places such as Beirut when their contestant in Super Star got eliminated due to a rumor that Syrian political pressure caused this elimination. This caused problems between countries as people felt the contestant from their country must win and voting became like a national duty to the level that telecommunication companies made campaigns for people to vote. Even the President of Saudi Arabia gave orders for people to vote for Diana Carazon who was the Jordanian contestant.

On the other hand, these

shows helped the people feel patriotism, nationalism and a sense of loyalty as they wanted to see their country on top and they were trying their best to have their country win even if it was in a reality television show. The message is bigger than just the contestants they like, it is about the flag that the viewers want to see risen at the end of the show, the feeling of success and accomplishment as a nation hard and this may be the good side of these shows. This was the motivation for people to vote and that is the secret that made these shows popular and addictive as people felt it is represented their identity.

Media has affected us in many ways especially in the past 20 years; reality television shows can help or hinder politics as we saw in these cases. It is all up to the people and their ideologies to both support these shows and go with the positive aspects which are the enhancement of the feeling of patriotism and

entertainment or to the negative side which is hatred and jealousy of other Arab nations and forgetting our Arabic roots, traditions and culture. This, in my opinion, would be the greatest threat and risk from reality shows.

Hessa Al-Zoubi. In the last five years we noticed that reality TV shows were a huge success all over the Arab world. It was a very big and massive thing in our society. Many people became obsessed with those reality TV shows. I remember the huge chaos when these shows started and how people were crazy about them. Many people became huge fans and stayed in front of the TV to watch the 24 hours channels that broadcasted every move they made and whatever they did or said was on air. Millions of people in the Arab world waited for the "prime" each week to vote for their idol to keep him inside the house.

The Arab world was eager for

a change and such TV shows. It was all over the Arab world and people were talking about them all the time. The most famous shows were Super Star, Star Academy and AlRa'is. The shows came from American Idol and others in the States and the UK. The masterminds behind the shows are LBC and MBC. They were very successful and they made a fortune out of the messages and the voting. People of different ages were watching, even old women were excited. At some point the TV shows were so big and successful that it reached the political level. Even the presidents of some Arab countries got attached to the shows. The president of each country was cheering for the contest from his country. An example is Dian Karazon; we remember the president of Jordan was voting for her and was so excited for her, he wanted her to win first place and she did. I believe that such reality shows can be something huge

and reach people from different levels and ages and the shows definitely affect politics and even the presidents.

It was not only Super Star but also Star Academy and all the other reality shows. When a reality TV show gets so successful and reaches a huge number of people, things become political. Many religious leaders raised questions and concerns and at some point. They were spreading brochures that told people to stay away from them because it affected the mentality of children and they absorbed the different and strange values and traditions of others. It was a huge fuss all over the media about the reality shows and how they affected us and how they invaded our lives in a magical way. I believe that reality shows affect politics and sometimes start small fights between countries. The competitions got so furious that politics was high and intense between countries.



HOPE

HOPE of AUK

CARNIVAL

@ AUK

Carnival Games
Art Corner
Face painting
Bouncy Castle
Pony Ride
Free Candy & Toys
Raffle

Live show by AUK Drama Club
Movie screening by AUK Film Club
& much more.....

Come and join us by putting smiles on needy children faces. The AUK community is highly encouraged to invite friends and families to share a day of fun of festive atmosphere.

"People not in favor of these programs felt that these shows were nothing new, just an Arabic copy or version of American Idol, Fame Academy, and Big Brother."



Campus Hallway
Saturday April 23th, 2011
Time 10:00-4:00.



Treat your Professors and Group Members as Your Clients

BY ISHA HAIDER.



What is the most important aspect of your education? Why are you even studying at a university? What do you seek to accomplish from the long four years that you're spending right now earning a degree? While some of you don't even know how you've ended up here or why you even need to attend, most of you are here to gain a proper education, to have value added to yourself, and most importantly, to define your career.

Unfortunately, we are all viewed as a subset of the final grades, i.e. GPA, that we end up earning at high school or university. I am not saying that is wrong, and neither am I implying that is right. Mostly it happens that our final grades reflect our abilities to be productive in the career field we opt for after graduation, and the other qualitative factors of our ability get shadowed by the initial portrayal of our image, i.e. GPA.

Of course, the very first factor that affects our GPA is our own hard work (ominous music goes here). We all end up getting what we deserve, because we can't just choke out the grade we want from a course without ever having moved a muscle to learn (of course considering you being without 'waasta').

The second factor is what type of group members you've ended up with. You can either end up with members who know where they're going and how to get there, or with people who don't even have a clue of their very own existence. The latter serves as something that can pull your

grade down if not correctly catered to.

The third factor is the image your boss viz. professor, has of you. As the adage goes, performance meets expectations, the type of first impression your professor has of you will determine partly the final grade you receive, since your professor will consider your true or false 'excuses' and give you a bit of leeway in your output, if you initially present yourself as someone with professional and charming etiquette. Trust me, I've had several friends who do that and are quite achievers.

Apart from yourself, there are your group members and your professors you need to be concerned about if you need to ace your exams. When I think about the difference between communicating with a professor, group member or client, I often question myself: is there really a difference between them at all? I believe that whether you talk to your group member, your professor, or anyone above you, you should assume that everyone is a client, and should apply the same degree of professional etiquette to every conversation regardless of the respective audience.

Doing this will accomplish two significant things for you: i) it will show that you have a high degree of respect towards your professor and your group members- enough to treat them with the same sort of etiquette as you would a VIP; ii) it will give you some practice as to the behavior you need to show while on the work force in the future-

the real thing. You know the drill, you've done it before.

If your group members know that you respect them, they will try to give it their best and not drag your grade down. At least they will try to perform on the requested platform. Now the question arises as to how we should treat them as a client, as VIPs. Firstly, when you ask a question, or pose a suggestion, make sure it is a smart one. When you present an analysis, spend a couple of minutes evaluating your proposal and critiquing it yourself, allow an area for details supporting follow up or action items. If you operate at 110% consistently, whether you're talking to a team member or a professor, you'll show that you're smart, capable and competent, and then you'll also find your members and professors favoring you when time calls for it. If your default mode is 'client-mode,' you'll naturally perform at a higher level when the real time comes. It's like the old saying: practice makes perfect.

Your output or the way you interact with others should be consistent, so that the other is sure of your potential and is guaranteed professionalism from your work. This approach will not just make you a better student, but also prepare you for the future work-place, and hone your interpersonal skills. This is really a great way to sharpen your communication and professional skills and will also prove to others that you're 'client-ready' at a moment's notice!

Role of Education in Economic Prosperity

BY AHMAD YOUSSEF

development, economic efficiency, and social consistency are in a sense extensively correlated with education. However, along with education, a person should be aware that his own future success, development, and happiness reside within his motivation of learning. "A university professor set an examination question in which he asked what the difference between ignorance and apathy is. The professor had to give an A+ to a student who answered: I don't know and I don't care" (Richard Pratt). For that particular reason, the twentieth century is called the "Age of Human Capital," because it was considered a turnover stage, where it witnessed the rise in interest and hunt for education, skills, and acquisition of knowledge. That settled a firm ground for the idea that the country's standard of living reflects the extent of how well it achieves development, utilize skills and knowledge; in addition to health medical care.

No one can deny the fact that in order for any country to achieve economic development and productivity, a considerable amount of money should be invested on human capital. Nevertheless, educating girls and women is as crucial as educating men and could possibly be the single most valuable investment a country can make, regardless of whether women work outside of the home or not. Girls and women eventually become mothers and mothers are considered the pillars that the family is built on. So educating women creates a multitude of benefits and advantages starting from the family she raises, health care, nutrition, birth spacing, lower infant and child mortality, and most importantly enhancing her children's education, knowledge, and skills.

The world now is perceived as one market due to the theory that all countries are integrated and hugely interdependent. One

could say that for a country to succeed and compete in the worldwide market depends on the excellence of its human capital and their ability to compete and survive the aggressive competition. "The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be only sustainable competitive advantage" (Arie de Geus). However, the distribution of education is essential. Uneven education leads to negative outcome with regards to per capita income. The key in getting constructive results of average education on per capita income depends on how well a country controls its human capital distribution and the use of a rigorous asset allocation model. Furthermore, the seminal works of (Schultz, 1961) and (Denison, 1962:67) proved that education contributed to the non clarified superiority in the economic development of Western economies. In 1984, statistics proved that education had a significant correlation with economic growth that ranged from less than 1 percent in Mexico to as high as 23 percent in Ghana (Psacharopoulos).

How are education and productivity linked together? A question, people might think of. On the precise and tangible aspect, a person's earnings are supposed to reflect his marginal productivity. In a more simplistic way, the salary or compensation paid is proportionate to the number of units of labor output. Furthermore, plenty of studies pointed out that an increase in earnings is associated with additional years of education,

considering that the rate of return varies with different levels of education (Behrman, 1990). In the agricultural field, evidence showed that education had a positive impact on farmers' productivity levels, where they were able to use modern technologies rather than traditional ways. In Nepal, the completion of at least seven years of schooling increased productivity in wheat by over a quarter and in rice by 13 percent (Jamison & Moock). This shows that the quantity and quality of education really matter and do affect productivity. However, the amount and eminence of both domestic and foreign investment plus the general policy environment form other important elements in shaping the economic performance and not only education. The higher the level of education of the work force, the higher the productivity of the nation since they would tend to be more innovative and creative, and hence, affecting everyone's efficiency and outcome.

Many studies indicated that a good quality education leads to a greater income equality among the people and society, which in turn gives the probability of desired higher rates of growth. More specifically, the large variation in workers' incomes was due to the big difference in their schooling attainment, which drives us to the idea of "Clearly education is the variable with the strongest impact on income equality" (Psacharopoulos, 1992).

"No one can deny the fact that in order for any country to achieve economic development and productivity, a considerable amount of money should be invested on human capital."

Weird World, Weird Changes

BY SARA ZADAH



What would be your first thought if you saw two girls at the age of four talking about fashion?! I've been through this experience; I was in one of the most popular malls here in Kuwait hanging out with my friend. While we were shopping, I came across two girls who caught my attention. When I saw them, they were like two innocent angels. But when I heard their discussion, I totally changed my thought. One of them told the other "You

have no sense of fashion." I was really shocked because it was completely weird to hear two children arguing about their sense of fashion. I am in earnest when I say this: where on Earth would you want to see two children with minds full of nonsense? I couldn't see childlike eyes on their faces. I realized that this world grew its absurdity in children's mind too. Fashion and other meaningless stuff became our main concern. And we, as an example, transferred these ridiculous ideas to children, who imitate our behaviors. Day by day, the whole world is getting worse and our values, principles and ideals are disappearing. Writing about this crucial problem really gets me down.



Modernization = Environmental Damages

BY MAY OMRAN



Standards are ever-changing in the developing world we live in. As this earth has aged, the past eras have become archaic for our society to cope with. Keeping this aspect in ratio with our environment, it is quite evident that these developmental changes have taken their toll on

greener parts. Stations are made for trains and buses as well. These adjustments facilitate an easier lifestyle for society to live in – on behalf of what was naturally given to us. In exchange for ease, we have taken pollution, destroyed motherly lands and decreased natural resources.

only will this help the bodies of water, but organisms living in these unsanitary conditions as well. A chain reaction of benefits will come from it. Local environmentalists can also raise awareness in their local communities and help spread the word for protecting our



Mother Nature.

Renovation is paving the way to demining our environment. With these advancements taking place, Earth is faced with the consequences of acquiring a less healthy environmental state. The leading factor behind a more damaged environment is modernization. In the progressing years of time, people have learned to adapt to a more modern living style; architecture, vehicles, city structural layout have all diminished what was once given by God and replaced by man. Many cities in countries all over the world are up-scaling to metropolitan cities. These cities are replaced with surplus numbers of various buildings including shopping centers, companies and schooling facilities. In addition to buildings, roads are paved wider permanently substituting

However, these changes are inevitable; as we progress, not all things will change for the better. So as society continues to further develop in suiting people more comfortably, the world will face the consequences of the damages caused by modernization. The effects being caused by these improvements are leading to warmer weather (due to the melting icecaps), animals dying from pollution, rainforests etc. being torn down. The environment will only drain further downhill from here. Awareness must be raised throughout the world for positive eco-effects. This is a pro-solution to help retain what is lost by recycling it back into the environment. Activities such as purifying polluted water in ponds, lakes and small bays of water can be refined and placed back into the community. Not

environment by doing things as simple as recycling. Recycling containers can be placed in schools, parks and other social areas to remind people of our environment. Progression is inevitable. As years pass and technology advances, the world will continue to take on more and more progression. Therefore, the risk of environment damage will only increase with time. Action must be taken by us beings living and breathing from what nature gives us. However, the changes that can be made are minor but when many contribute and awareness is present, the network will continue to grow into a vast operation. In reality, it can only do so much for restoration of the environment but will aid it from being completely harmed.

“Awareness must be raised throughout the world for positive eco-effects. This is a pro-solution to help retain what is lost by recycling it back into the environment.”

Lack of Safety

DANA M ISMAIL

“Lack of safety may increase the risk of cancer.” U.S. researchers said that living in neighborhoods that have low safety may increase the risk of cancer. In addition, a study by researchers at the University of Michigan published in the American Journal of Public Health that elderly people living in neighborhoods where there are crimes increases the risk of cancer. Furthermore, the study showed

that the risk of cancer in elderly men living in unsafe neighborhoods is more than 31%, however, for elderly women, it is 25%. The doctor who was responsible for Vicky Freedom Studies states that the similarity in the volume of strength of this relationship between women and men was surprising with differences in types of cancers in both genders.

Health Facts: A Must-Read!

BY DANA ISMAIL

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Your heart beats 101,000 times a day. During your lifetime it will beat about 3 billion times and pump about 400 million liters (800 million pints) of blood. | 3. The human head contains 22 bones. More on the head and brains. | your body is reduced by just 1%, you'll feel thirsty. |
| 2. It is impossible to lick your elbow. Well, for almost everyone... but a few can. | 4. On average, you speak almost 5,000 words a day – although almost 80% of speaking is self-talk (talking to yourself). | 6. A person can live without food for about a month, but only about a week without water. |
| | 5. If the amount of water in | 7. Men lose about 40 hairs a day. Women lose about 70 hairs a day. |

Into the Depths of Mars: Mythology VS Facts

BY HUDA AL- RASHID



A photograph taken by a Nasa probe revealing a mysterious figure on Mars.

Okay, so the majority of you have probably watched or at least heard of Steven Spielberg's “ET: Extraterrestrial.” This was just one of many science fiction movies depicting intelligent life found in the Solar System, or more specifically, on Mars. Other works include “Mars Attacks!” or “Mission to Mars” just to name a few. So, just what is it about Mars that makes it a special target for science fiction movies? Well, it all originated in astronomical, scientific research conducted in the late 1800s. Giovanni Schiaparelli, an Italian astronomer, first came up with the idea of life on Mars after a series of telescopic observations, which appeared to show a “network of linear structures” on Mars’ surface. He described these structures as “canali” which means “channels” in Italian; however, scientists later mistranslated this word into “canals” indicating water-based life on Mars. Notably, American astronomer, Percival Lowell, popularized this idea by focusing his research on this topic, to the point of sketching possible organizations of these canals on the planet. According to Lowell, the canals were built by the inhabitants of the planet in order to transfer water from areas where it was abundant to areas where it was scarce. Depicting an “organized” structure of created canals further proved the existence of intelligent life on Mars, or in other words, this led to the emergence of the almighty Martians. Although some scientific research seems to prove that the structure of “canals” was a mere optical illusion created by the reflection of light, that didn't stop the creative minds of the world of literature in creating their own imaginative pieces about space colonization. The most well-known literary piece on this topic is HG Wells' 1898 book, “War of the Worlds” of which Tom Cruise made even more famous in the Hollywood remake. The popularity of the original

novel caused media frenzy back in 1938, to the point where a radio announcement, describing the novel, was misunderstood by the public as a news broadcast causing them to actually believe the Earth was actually invaded by the alien race, the “Martians.” As trivial as this whole idea sounds, scientists are still intrigued by the possibility of life on other planets, or the idea that we aren't the only living organisms in the Solar System. In 1996, the discovery of worm-like bacteria on Mars was big news, as it was finally proof that life on Mars did exist. However, the idea was pushed aside by claims that it was a scientific error in judgment. With today's emerging technological advances, we may be able to know for sure whether this idea is a myth or fact, but for the time being, this idea is only fueled by one's pure imagination. But, remember, as Albert Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”

“In 1996, the discovery of worm-like bacteria on Mars was big news, as it was finally proof that life on Mars did exist.”

For the College of Arts and Sciences: Combining Art with Science

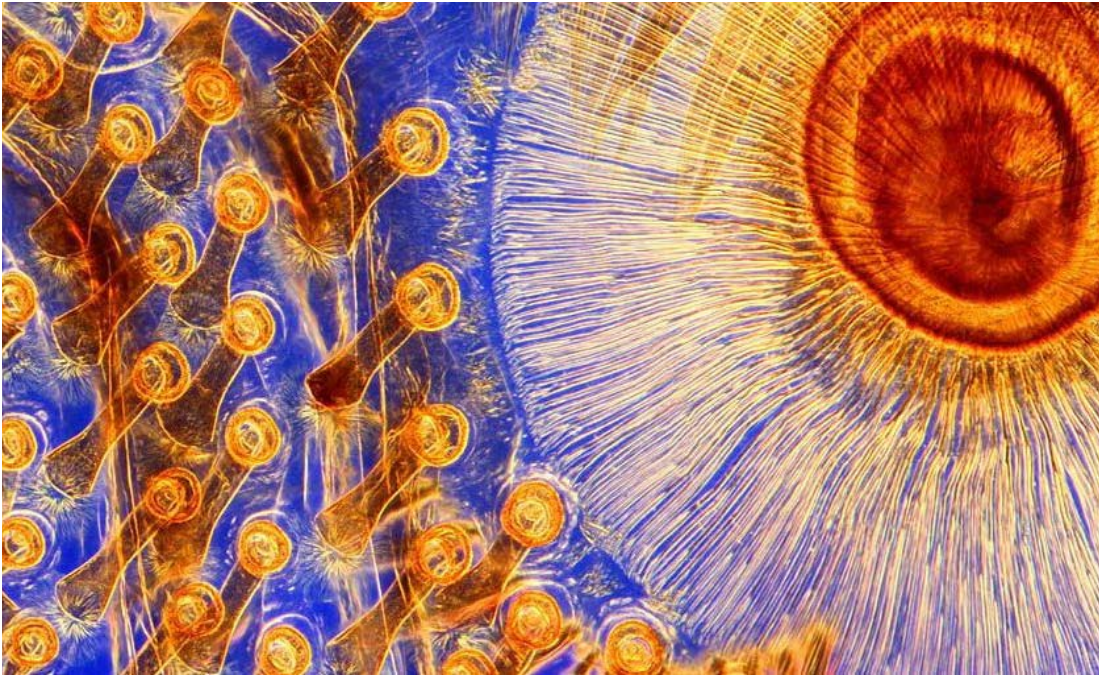
BEAUTIFUL SCIENCE (ACCORDING TO BBC):

Colorful and visually stunning but also important in our understanding of scientific advances, the winners of this year's Wellcome Image Awards range from a close up look at a bloody sticking-plaster, to the striking shades of

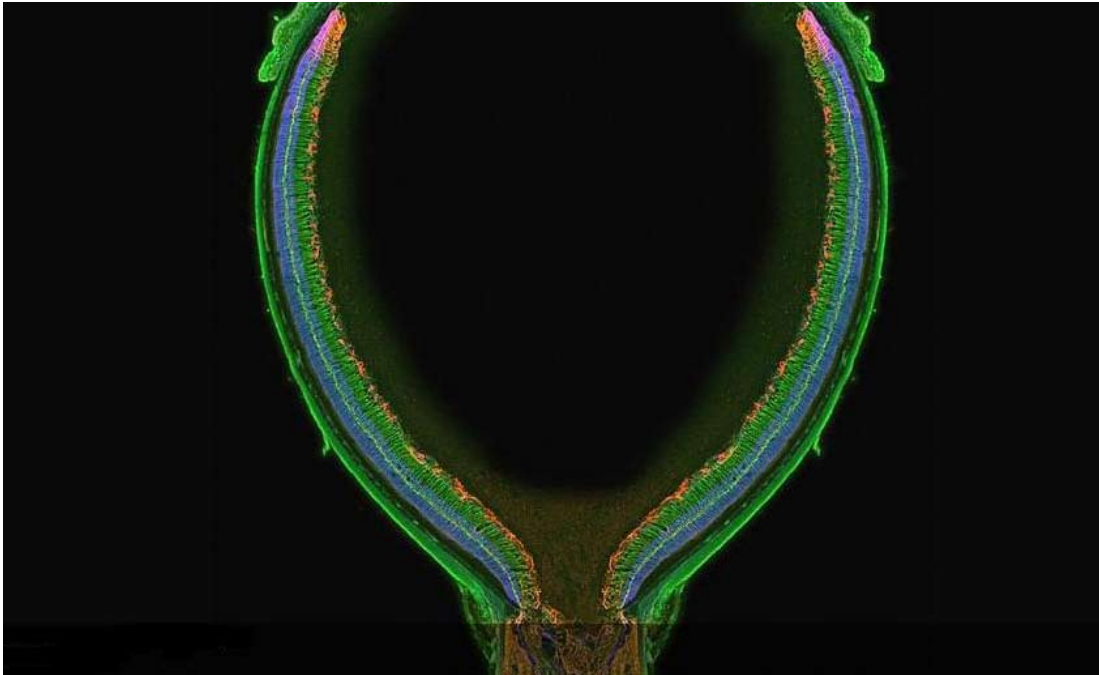
a ruby-tailed wasp viewed through a microscope. The judging panel were looking for images that did not simply convey scientific information - but also had aesthetic beauty. Take a look at some of the 21 winning entries.



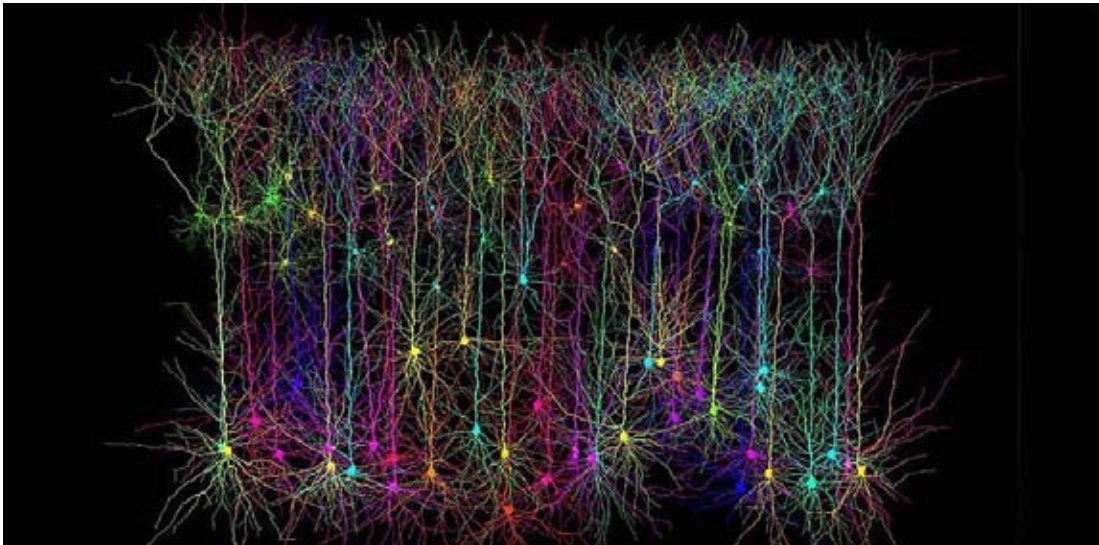
Moth wing scales (scanning electron micrograph), Kevin MacKenzie, University of Aberdeen.



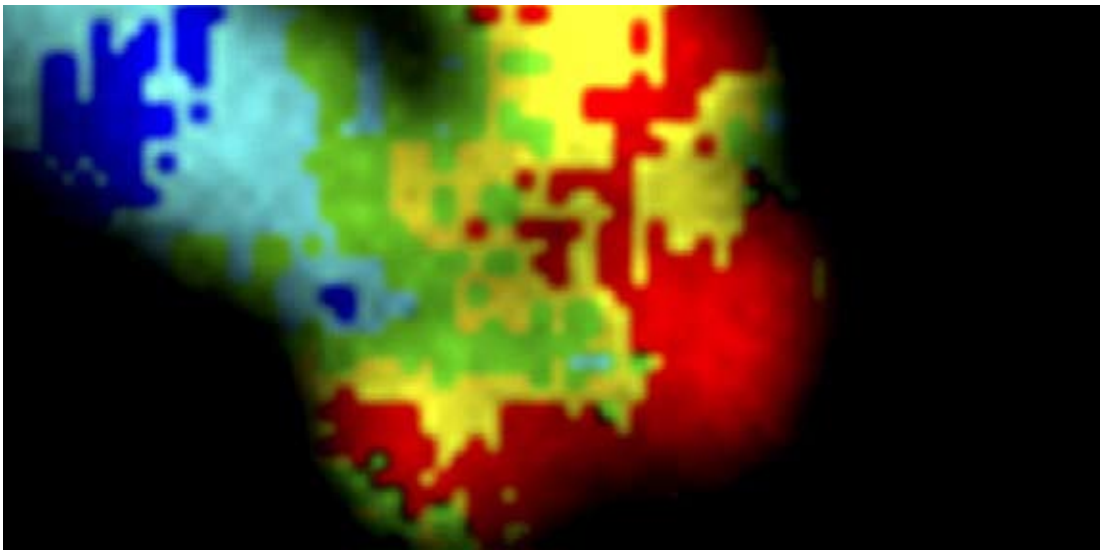
Foreleg of a male diving beetle (polarised photomicrograph), Spike Walker.



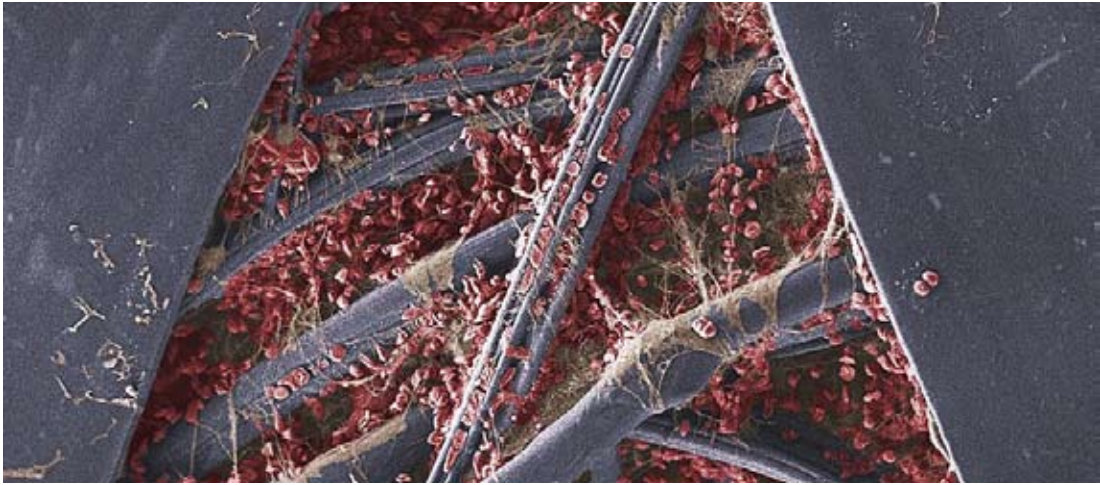
Mouse retina (confocal micrograph), Freya Mowat, UCL.



Pyramidal neurons (computer simulation), Michael Hausser and Dr. Hermann Cuntz, UCL.



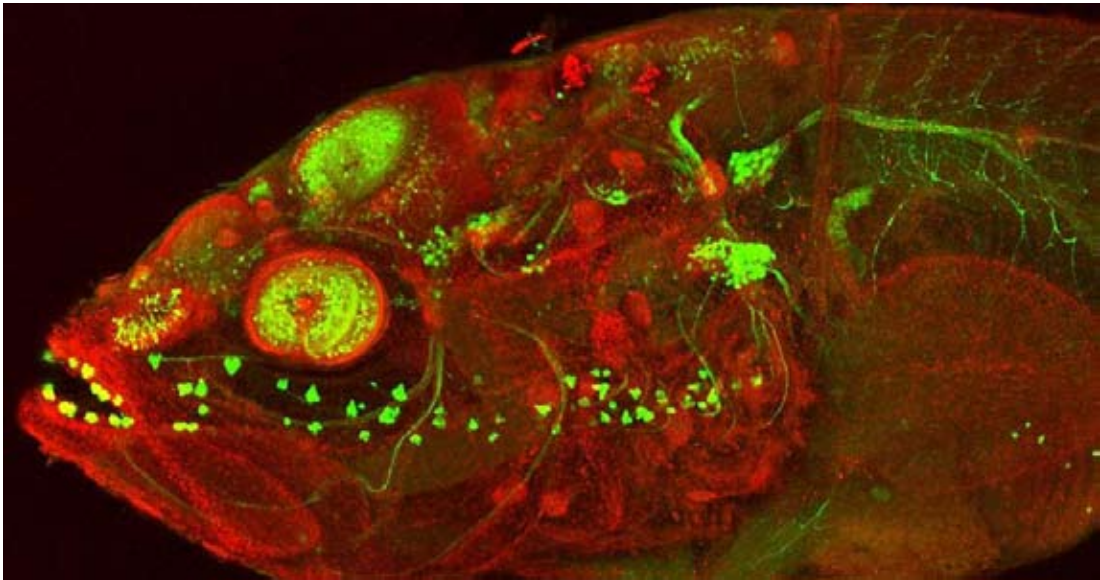
Chromosome lifetime map (fluorescence lifetime imaging microscopy), Dr. David Lieres, University of Dundee.



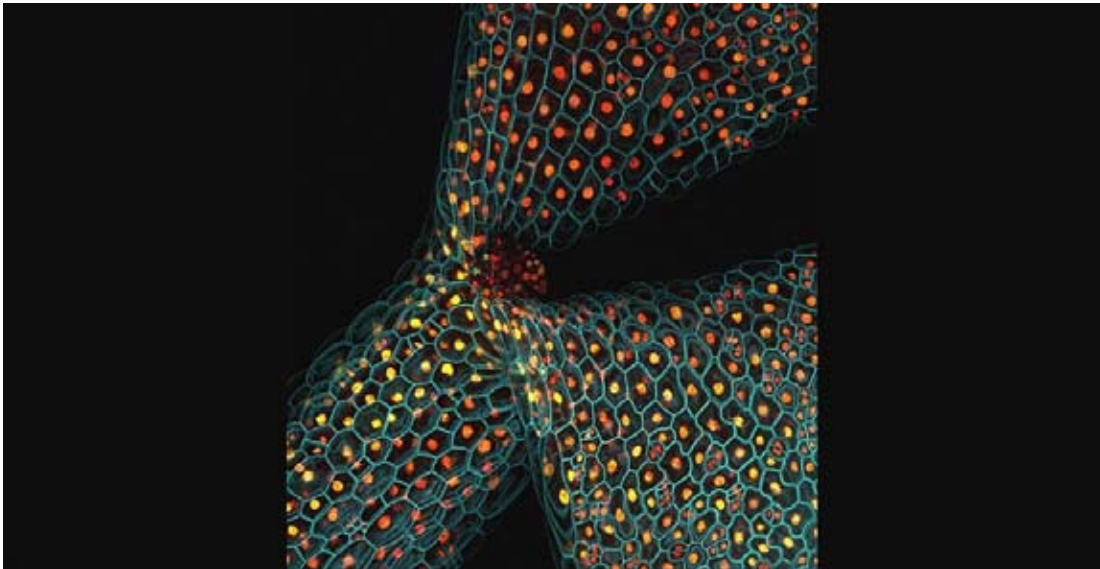
Blood clotting on a plaster (scanning electron micrograph), Anne Weston, LRI, CRUK.



Curled up ruby-tailed wasp (photomicrograph), Spike Walker.



Cavefish embryo (confocal micrograph), Monica Figueira, Steve Wilson's lab, UCL.



Cell division of a thale cress seedling (confocal micrograph), Fernan Federic and Dr. Lionel Dupuy, University of Cambridge.

Impressions of AUK

BY CHRIS ASMAR

“I met the members of the club, AUK students with a real desire to help others and make their lives better by taking a little time out of their own.”

This is my first semester at AUK. It is also, unfortunately, my last. I’m from Boston, Massachusetts in the United States, and I’m visiting AUK for the Spring semester. When I first arrived here almost two months ago, I didn’t know anything about the people, places, or culture of Kuwait. The culture at AUK was also a mystery to me, and my little experience with walking around an empty campus before the semester started did not help much to enlighten me. My first week or two here was spent almost entirely in trying to wrap my mind around the fact that I had travelled over 6,100 miles or 9,900 km from my home and my school in the northeastern United States to a place about which I knew next to nothing. The people I did meet tended to be the kinds who are paid to be friendly to me and help me adjust to life here, not that there’s anything wrong with that. I am

very grateful for all the work that various groups on campus and around Kuwait City did to help me get settled in. It was not until the semester started, however, that I really started to become comfortable here.

The wonderful staff in Student Services put me on my feet for the first time. Through them, I was introduced to the Hope Club, AUK’s community service organization. Although I was hesitant at first, I decided to attend one of their events at a local hospital for the handicapped. We spent the day playing games, singing songs, and tossing balloons around with the patients there. I met the members of the club, AUK students with a real desire to help others and make their lives better by taking a little time out of their own.

Another decision that I made with trepidation that paid off in the end was to apply to work

at the Writing Center. I live in Sabah Al-Salem and have to take a taxi to and from campus every day, so having some extra money would be a great help. What was at first only a place meant to cover some of my expenses here quickly became my favorite on campus. The other consultants and staff in the Center immediately welcomed me into their family. Between them and the students who have come in for consultation, I have made some great friends and have been introduced to the whole spectrum of the culture here at AUK. I’ve also learned some interesting things about writing in my own native language that I never would have known otherwise.

One of my biggest surprises upon arrival in Kuwait was the sheer number of people who speak fluent English. I have been studying Modern Standard Arabic for the past few years,

and I’m taking a class on the Kuwaiti dialect this semester, but it quickly became apparent that, if I wanted to, I could get by with a very minimal knowledge of Arabic. I try to practice my Arabic whenever I can, and the Writing Center has given me even more reason to want to do so. I’ve worked with students in every part of the learning process, from those who have just started the Intensive English Program to people in upper level Political Science and English courses, and seeing not only the effort that they put into mastering another language, but the enthusiasm with which they reach for that goal, has inspired me to buckle down and strive for fluency in the native language here. So if you see me (I stick out somewhat, with my light brown hair and pale skin), don’t let me get away with speaking English to you. I need my practice.

I’m extremely optimistic about the rest of my semester here in Kuwait, and I’m very excited to learn more about the history and culture of the country. But in my mind there is something that AUK can teach me that is even more important than what I can learn in the classroom: that when it comes down to it, no matter where we are from or who our families are, none of us are really that different in the end.

My Experience at the Writing Center

BY IMAN ASKAR

Ever since I started studying at AUK almost two years ago, I kept hearing about something called the Writing Center. I would constantly get e-mails telling me how to make appointments and I would see flyers all over campus, but I am ashamed to say that I would just ignore them and try to get through all of my classes. Now, I was lost in my own little world; I had just moved to Kuwait, and it was my first year at university. So naturally, I had no idea about anything, especially the Writing Center. I didn’t know what it was, or even where it was. It wasn’t until my friend started working there that I got inside information on what it was all about, that I realized how much I wanted to be a part of it.

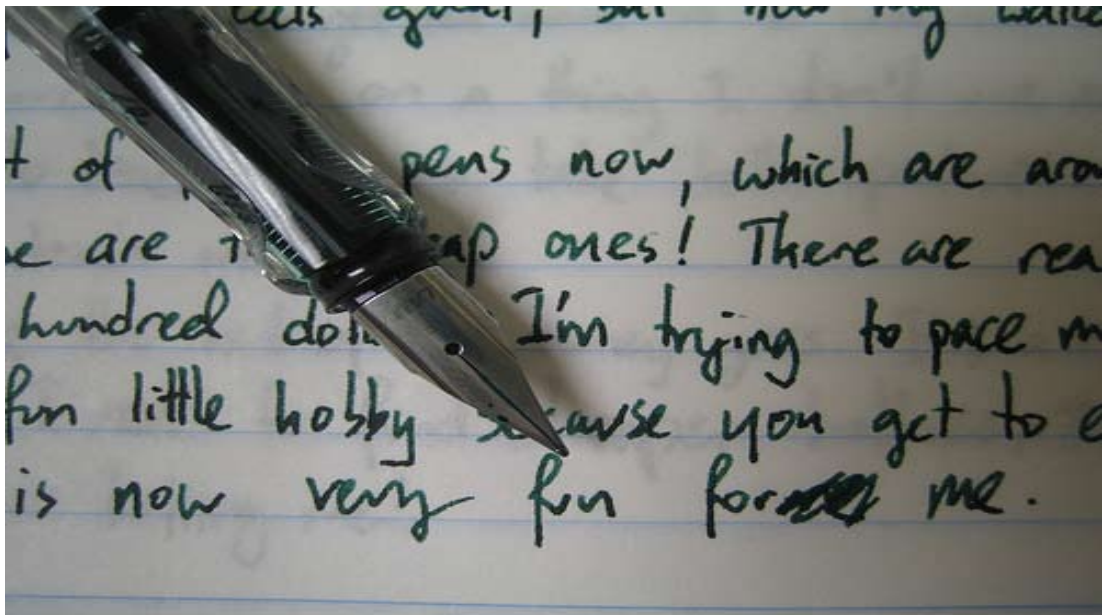
It was like a combination of all the things that I love! Call me nerdy, but I have a huge passion for writing (which is probably why I’m an English major) and I love to help people. I’ve discovered that the Writing Center is the perfect place for me; and so far, I’ve had such an amazing experience! I started working, and immediately felt at ease. All of the other consultants made me feel right at home and they have been very helpful so far in giving me all sorts of tips, and teaching me the special Writing Center terminology.

Even though I’ve only been working there for a couple of weeks, I feel so comfortable whenever I’m at the Writing Center because the atmosphere is so warm and welcoming. I hope that all of the new students, and maybe even some current ones, don’t make the same mistake I did. The Writing Center is an amazing place where you can get all sorts of help and learn new things.

“Even though I’ve only been working there for a couple of weeks, I feel so comfortable whenever I’m at the Writing Center because the atmosphere is so warm and welcoming.”

Writing Center Pride

BY ALIA AREF



My association with the Writing Center started during my first year when pushed by a certain professor to go and “let them take a look at my paper.” Being the attentive student that I am, I complied and I did just that! Even though I still harbored some doubt because frankly, I

knew my paper was good and did not need editing. I don’t mean to sound arrogant but I’m an English major, I know a good paper when I read one. Anyway, the consultant who read my paper echoed the same praise. Then what use was it going to the Writing Center? Why couldn’t

the teacher have looked over my paper? Why go to a stranger? I asked myself all those questions and so will you one day, dear reader, but I am here to explain why I and you need to visit the Center once in a while.

One of the main misconceptions students have,

especially English majors, is that they can write so why visit a Writing Center? Well, the consultant’s job isn’t to teach you how to write, but it is to teach you how to write better. To improve on what you already have, to help you reach your full potential. The Writing Center also opens your eyes and mind up to criticism of not only your own paper but of others as well. This will help you acquire a more open approach to accepting criticism as well as giving it confidently. These practices will also help you in choosing your words much more carefully to obtain the outcome you expect from not only your readers but also your fellow class mates and professors.

Believe me, visiting the Writing Center will not only improve your writing, it will also improve your spirits as the staff is one of the best at AUK. Ask around and you will know that the

Writing Center is a very warm and welcoming environment. I should know, after the first time I visited I kept going back to get second opinions on my papers. I also tried applying for a job and was deemed not ready to work there due to reasons I may or may not divulge in another article I am thinking of writing. Anyway,

I am working now and all is well in my neck of the woods. Why don’t you take an appointment and come on up to the Writing Center? We are always happy to see you and you know for sure that you will get answers for your numerous questions on how to improve your paper. See you there!



One of the many interns that the Writing Center at AUK has hosted, Nicholas Knezek, saying his goodbyes with Senior Consultant, Jose Mangibin.

“Believe me, visiting the Writing Center will not only improve your writing, it will also improve your spirits as the staff is one of the best at AUK.”



