Meeting or Misunderstanding the Month of Muslims’ Mourning - ‘Muharram’?

BY FATIMA IBRAHEEM

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is definitely not your average novel. Not only is the writing style unique in the form of the main character who goes by the alias of Charlie narrating events in his life through letters written to an anonymous pen pal, but the novel itself is not one you’d typically find in any bookshelf. It tells the story of Charlie, who isn’t exactly your typical teenager; he’s the wallflower of the school, roaming the halls pretty much unnoticed for the first part of the novel. Not only that, but his mind works in quite an unconventional way. Through the novel, you follow his life as he makes new friends, experiences his first crush on an

Texting and Social Networking Woes

BY FARAH AL-SHAMALI

I worry about my generation, more so about the one following it. Technology has really permeated greatly into society in the last decade or so, landing in the hands of people of younger age groups who do not comprehend its true function. I myself have been struggling to be as isolated as possible but end up reactivating my Facebook account in a month’s time (my newest record). But I, at least, have the sense to realize that such things as texting and social networking are not what they are cracked up to be.

A Reminiscent Journey to the Past

BY HUDA AL - RASHID

You may have heard of the overused, cheesy phrase, “old is gold.” However, have you ever stopped to think if this phrase really applies to your own perception of the world? I’m sure you’ve all had a moment in time where you tend to want to visit your “childhood” in order to live the “good old days” even if it’s only just for a few moments. For me, this escapist journey was carried out in a series of actions: listening to old 90’s music from the Backstreet Boys and

SGA Hosts Members of Kuwait National Football Team

By FARAH AL-SHAMALI

Studying in AUK and experiencing life at it is a different experience that we all, as students, live. Looking at other universities in Kuwait and talking with its students, I always felt privileged. AUK is a special place for its students. Throughout my four academic years, I spent more than 7 hours daily on campus. Sometimes I spent 12 hours from 8 am till 8 pm. I even joked with my friends telling them I would bring my bed with me to campus. However, and here the big question comes: are we considered part of the family after

Go Wolfpack!

By FATIMA AL-FADHLI, AUK ALUM ’10

Less is More

By FATIMA IBRAHEEM

The day is not far, when all our candid and most private ‘dirty-little-secrets’ will be out there for the entire world to peruse. Many among us still believe we live in a world cushioned by so-called ‘rights.’ Waking up from that dream and facing the nightmare, I am quite unsure as to whether the prominent ‘right to privacy’ still has any foundation (leaving alone the crust).

If you’re reading this, it is quite probable that you might be among those who gasped in terror and utter shock, when Wikileaks ‘leaked’ the classified US diplomatic cables on November 28th, 2010. For me, that was truly the case (with an addition to absolute horror) for I am sure you would agree if you read the disclosures that the cables revealed, it is much more than we all could have ever anticipated or even wanted to know.

For those of you who feel alien to what I am writing about, it’s time for you to wake up! What actually happened was that a cache of a quarter million private American diplomatic cables were made available to the world by Wikileaks, the not-for-profit organization born in 2007, devoted to revealing top-secret information.

According to their website (main mirror), www.wikileaks.ch, “Wikileaks is dedicated to bringing important news and information to the public. We provide an innovative, secure and anonymous way for independent sources around the world to leak information to our journalists. We publish material of ethical, political and historical significance while keeping the identity of our sources anonymous, thus providing a universal way for the revealing of suppressed and censored injustices. We have sustained and triumphed against legal

SGA Achievements

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The Perks of Being a Wallflower

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Once again, AUK takes great strides and proves to be a worthy contender on the regional level with yet another development. After huge efforts and a good amount of time in preparation from different parties at AUK, the computer engineering laboratories were proudly unveiled and deemed ready for use on December 21st. An invitation was extended to the AUK community via mass email to attend this exciting ceremony. The laboratories are located on the first floor of the Liberal Arts building, are accessed from each other and boast state-of-the-art devices and computer engineering software. This propels the respective program at AUK as well as the university into high standards.

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, 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 Voice of AUK

Our Mission

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Meeting or Misunderstanding the Month of Muslims’ Mourning - ‘Muḥarram’?

By Fatima Ibrahim

“We’re going to be wrapping the black garment around the polls later at night for tomorrow before we go home today.”

What makes a group of youth stay all night preparing for their significant event? What makes the same group of youth resist the windiest and dustiest day of the week to practice volunteer work? What makes them smile out of contentedness, and vice versa with indescribable dedication and commitment? What makes them robust enough to encounter all sorts of criticisms? What makes them confident of not attending a day of university for the most valid reason, while they know that they will be missing work, studies and maybe even exams?

Purifying in mind that all of their modest actions expect nothing in return, meaning that nothing of this will be of personal interest. It naturally makes any mother feel that they will be questioning their practices with optimal curiosity, that there must be a latent driving force, a spiritual matter packed with faith and is willing to overpower any materialistic capacity, whatsoever. It is because these youth have understood the fact that the service they’re offering is for someone deserving, someone who sacrificed the most valuable aspect ever - his life - to save societies on a verge of breakdown, more than 1400 years ago. This ultimate sacrifice has been described as “if the hussain is one of us, we can be Muslims, they state that “Imam Hussain’s (PBUH) sacrifice is for all groups and communities, an example of the path of righteousness.” However, we have to say that this incident hasn’t been given enough attention by everyone. It’s an incident that is aimed at unifying common humanitarian values. If we only give it a small, fair thought, we shall conclude that reviving such an incident is not to raise any sectarian differences as misunderstood, but to give a chance of equality to those who simply don’t know. After all, who are we talking about here... isn’t he the Prophet’s grandson? As a Muslim community, we shall be proud of translating a 1400-year-old unique incident into a 2010 generation if someone like Tamlus Tundu (a Hindu and former President of the Congress of the Indian National) is, as he explicitly states, “these sacrifices by Imam Hussain have elevated the level of human thinking, and an incident equivalent to this one should be preserved and remembered forever and celebrated as an anniversary forever.” It has been quoted by a Westerner, “I congratulate Muslims that from among them, Imam Hussain (PBUH), a great human being was born, who is revered and honored totally by all communities”. Besides, if we realize, some societies attempt to build sculptures and statues of their heroes in order to solidify their eternal remembrance, this incident does not need any type of sculpture or statue for revival... why? Because it is beyond materialism, and beyond what pens can write and words can describe.

“We’re going to be taking care of removing the cloth off the poles, even though we have class in a few minutes.” They confidently said this with tired, dedicated faces, brave, red pairs of eyes, but with the gentlesmiles of relief, pride, dignity and hope.

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By Fatima Ibrahim

Meeting or Misunderstanding the Month of Muslims’ Mourning - ‘Muḥarram’?

By Farah Al-ShamAlI

Once again, AUK takes great strides and proves to be a worthy contender on the regional level with yet another development. After huge efforts and a good amount of time in preparation from different parties at AUK, the computer engineering laboratories were proudly unveiled and deemed ready for use on December 21st. An invitation was extended to the AUK community via mass email to attend this exciting ceremony. The laboratories are located on the first floor of the Liberal Arts building, are accessed from each other and boast state-of-the-art devices and computer engineering software. This propels the respective program at AUK as well as the university into high standards as our young institution furthers its commitment to the approved by the Educational Services to its students. Outside of the laboratories, refreshments were made available as AUK faculty came to the inauguration ceremony. It was also attended by President Winfred Thompson and Dr. Nizar Hamzeh, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who both cut the ribbon. They each expressed their gratitude for every individual who was an integral part of, and do not materializing this advancement and recognized it as a step forward for AUK.

The laboratories themselves are professionally designed and equipped with impressive, world-class technologies that lined the periphery and corners while the middle was occupied by tables and chairs. Dr. Isam Damaj, the Computer Engineering Program Lead and designer and Project Manager of the laboratories and he took some time to explain them and how they will be widely beneficial to computer engineering students at AUK. The set-up of the laboratories was done in such a way that will facilitate teaching when classes are eventually conducted in them. My major is nowhere classes are eventually conducted in them. My major is nowhere. I take some time to visit them and marvel for themselves.

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SGA Achievements
BY DHARI AL-MONAYEA

During the month of December, the Student Government Association at the American University of Kuwait hosted an event that brought together members of the AUK community as well as provided services to students. On December 2nd and 5th, the Gulf Cup Event was underway in which the SGA secured venues on campus where Kuwait matches during the Gulf Cup were displayed from projectors for viewing pleasure. The attendance was approximately 450 students with over 50 who were either sitting on the floor or standing by the side. The SGA gave away Kuwait flags as gifts and there was also face painting available. Because some students may not have been able to watch the matches due to their classes, the SGA especially requested professors to cancel classes taking place between 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The SGA also created ‘Membership 5=1,’ a committee to help them become better leaders.

Hajj season also meant that some students would be away for as long as 10 days; the SGA accommodated to them by making amendments to due dates, assignments, and exams having them postponed. The SGA assisted students to leave for Hajj early and have their grades postponed. This was made evident in the calendar posted on the AUK website. Regarding problems with opening upper-division courses in the summer block semesters, the SGA spoke to Professor Mohsen Baghini to create 300 and 400-level courses during the summer and hire more adjunct professors should the need arise. To coincide with this request, the SGA held a booth to encourage students to sign their names for providing these courses. For the university prayer rooms, the SGA provided more Qurans, made an official time for each prayer, painted the walls, and changed the carpets. Out on the campus grounds, benches were made next to the soccer field which are available to students so that they may be able to enjoy the pleasant weather. Umbrellas will also be added to these benches when the sun is out.

SGA Hosts Members of Kuwait National Football Team
BY FARAHA AL-SHAMALI

The night of December 5th was one to remember in Kuwait; I, for one, did not intentionally step outside into the endless traffic jam because I wanted to but I ended up enjoying every second of being stuck on the streets. For twelve years, we’ve been deprived of the happiness of bringing home a trophy for winning a soccer tournament and the last few years have been fraught with consecutive failures and it never really made sense because our team were equipped with the very best of facilities, coaches, and services. But all that was forgotten and paid off really when the Kuwait national football team reached the final of the 20th Gulf Cup held in Yemen. The Kuwaiti people have always stood beside the team through thick and thin and that night was certainly no exception. Translating Arabic to English is almost always a laughing matter but as Kuwaiti sports analysts would say, bringing the trophy home was truly a soccer wedding.

There was definitely an urge to want to see, meet, and congratulate the players and the SGA went to work to bring them to AUK and give students that opportunity. The event was held at the Auditorium and was attended by a countless number of students all hoping to meet with the players and listen to their individual experiences as they shared them to the crowd. The players in attendance were Bader Al-Mutawa, Jarah Al-Ateeqi, Hussein Fadhil, Yousef Nasser and AUK student, Abdulaziz Al-Mashaan and they all guaranteed the fact that such a big win is definitely a source of motivation to achieve even bigger things and secure even more prominent trophies. Once the formal part of the event was over, students made their way to the players, congratulating and taking memorable pictures with them. The SGA awarded the players by presenting them with plaques on behalf of the AUK community. With the Asia Cup around the corner, we hope that the Kuwait national football team is prepared to go all the way and ignite the streets of Kuwait once more.
In one recording of “Minor Swing” by the Quintette du Hot Club de France, you can hear someone, maybe Charles Delaunay or Hugues Panassie, cheering at particular phrases. If Django Reinhardt or Stéphane Grappelli had been listening to Le Petit Orchestre Swing de France at a performance in AUK on the 8th of November, one could imagine they would have cheered just as loudly.

On a tour of the Gulf, from Saudi Arabia to the UAE and Bahrain, Le Petit Orchestre Swing de France performed at AUK, hosted by the Music Program in partnership with the French Embassy. President of AUK Dr. Winfred Thompson made introductory remarks, saying the event exemplified the exchange of French and American culture over the decades. Cultural Counsellor of the French Embassy M. Julien Clerc echoed these sentiments, saying it was a “great pleasure” for the French Embassy to present the Orchestre.

The Orchestre played for nearly two hours to an audience which comprised of students, faculty, staff, and their families, but also members of Kuwait’s francophone population as well as jazz and music fans. With Laurent Zeller on the violin, Laurent Bajata on lead guitar, and Gilles Parodi on rhythm guitar, Le Petit Orchestre delighted their audience with what was surely a brilliant end to their Gulf tour.

Le Petit Orchestre played a wide range of songs, from Trénet classics to American jazz standards and Django favourites, infusing keenness and energy to every piece. They began with “La Cigale Magnifique,” which introduced Bajata’s exceptionally fine guitar and Zeller’s virtuosic violin as he played the sweet melody. Parodi’s “pompe” holding it all together with an infectious tap. Ella Fitzgerald’s version has a cheery, syrupy tone that invites its listeners to tap along.

During the interview, Parodi explained that jazz is more popular in the West, the group was surprised to find that many of the people they met across the Middle East were also passionate fans of jazz and were “excellent” musicians. Indeed the same music that was played half a century ago in smoky underground bars in Paris, sparking dance halls and bohemian existences, still has its time but also has an aesthetic attraction to younger listeners.

There’s always something special about the way an audience interacts with a jazz group, and the relationship they form with the musicians themselves, thanks to their catchiness. The audience interacts with the musicians in a way that is all jazz, but as Parodi said in a short interview with the writer, jazz manouche has an amalgam of influences, encompassing Roman gypsy music of France and Europe, French and Italian musical heritage, American tunes, even the waltz.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: A Darker World of Magic

This is not a kids movie. Harry Potter is getting darker, scarier, and more magical than ever. The seventh part of the story, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, continues with Harry, Hermione and Ron on their journey to find the last pieces of Voldemort’s horcrux and destroy them. Their journey is filled with death and battle and testing each of their abilities to embark in a world outside of Hogwarts. It is the beginning of the final battle, to one and all, the Dark Lord.

Long gone are the days of peaceful train rides to Hogwarts and exciting Quidditch games. We don’t get to see Hogwarts much - or at all - in this movie. Most of the scenes take place in forests and natural landscapes as Harry, Hermione and Ron escape from Voldemort’s clutches. An interesting scene is when they are in the Ministry of Magic, though I wouldn’t use the same kind of entrance they used to get into the Ministry (I’d rather warp than go down the toilet).

Unlike the last two movies in which we saw how Dumbledore and Sirius Black died, this time, when one of the characters dies (not telling who), we’re not shown their death but are only told of it, which puts a chilling note on the scene. The characters have grown and matured, accepting death as part of the path they are on, except Harry, who faces some doubts of his own.

We only get a spark of the growing love interest between Ginny and Harry while Ron and Hermione’s relationship took over the film, and seemed strained most times. However, Harry and Hermione’s friendship deepens and we get to see how truly they are the best of friends.

If you’re a fan of the dark side, don’t worry, you’ll get to see Snape and Draco slithering around somewhere between the scenes. Bringing a Snape fan myself, I would rather have liked to have seen him more in the film but I know he’ll play a great deal more in the second part, coming out in July 15, 2011.

Make sure to watch the previous movies or read the books before watching the movie, or you’ll be lost in this new dark world of Harry Potter. Also, if you really don’t like big snakes, it wouldn’t be a wise plan to watch Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. P.S. The Deathly Hallows – what is this really? It’s explained in the film, and since they did such a good job in the storytelling of it, I won’t tell you since you need to hear it from them firsthand.

“P.S. The Deathly Hallows – what is this really? It’s explained in the film, and since they did such a good job in the storytelling of it, I won’t tell you since you need to hear it from them firsthand.”
The Perks of Being a Wallflower

BY NADA EL-BADRY

older girl, Sam, and finds himself thrown into a variety of difficult situations that he perceives and describes to his pen pal in various, unique ways that cause you to sympathize with him every step of the way.

This novel is definitely not for the light-hearted, nor the immature, and has quite a few dark themes. It is a very realistic depiction of many of the hardships that teenagers today face, and the novel is all at once humorous and heart-wrenching, with quite a few jaw-dropping scenes. There are also dozens of remarkable lines that can be deemed quotable, as well as one poem that Charlie himself wrote that touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes. I easily found myself immersed in this novel and, to be completely honest, when I first started reading, I simply could not let it go and ended up finishing it in only a few days. I strongly advise anyone and everyone to read this novel; you definitely won’t regret it. A movie adaptation of The Perks of Being a Wallflower is also in the works, starring Logan Lerman and Emma Watson. I can only hope they do the book justice.

Catching Fire

BY CHARAH RAJ

The second novel in Suzanne Collins’ The Hunger Games Trilogy, Catching Fire, is not for the faint-hearted. It is a book of betrayal, death, sadness, and endings, as well as war and suffering. It takes place in the post-apocalyptic ruins of what we know as North America, and what the future knows as the Nation of Panem. In the first installment of the series, The Hunger Games, we learn that sixteen-year-olds Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark have defied the Capitol by winning the Hunger Games, a brutal death match of 24 children. She has set off a spark and started rebellions in 12 districts, threatening to overthrow the power of the Capitol. This lands her in deep trouble, and she is number 1 on the Capitol’s hit list.

Reading the second installment of the Hunger Games trilogy made me think of how Panem is similar to – if not an exaggeration of – the way our world is run. For example, President Snow can be seen as the human form of Free Masonry: both dream of the so-called ‘new world order.’ They both control all major media outlets, companies, programming, and every other tiny aspect of our lives. The parallels of our world and Panem are uncanny, and almost Collins’ way of telling the world to think and act freely, or we will suffer extreme consequences.

On the other hand, upon re-reading the excellently written novel, I also feel that Collins is telling us that love is what holds us together: love of life, love of family, love of friends, love of joy, pure love, etc. I have seen this recurring theme in so many of today’s popular fiction series (Harry Potter, Twilight, A Series of Unfortunate Events, etc.), and I can’t help but wonder if we, as people, will ever encounter any publication that does not contain a secret message. It does make one think about, once again, how our world is similar to Panem, and we are not left to think for ourselves anymore.

Political secrets aside, I thoroughly enjoyed Catching Fire. My stomach plummeted a few times throughout the book, and I am eagerly awaiting the release of the third and final installment, Mockingjay.

The Four Agreements

BY MAY OMARAN

Based on the Mexican Toltec’s spiritual knowledge, The Four Agreements uses an idea of four “laws” to abide by in order to live life as a more positive being: 1) Be impeccable with your word, 2) Don’t take anything personally, 3) Don’t make assumptions, and 4) Always do your best.

“When you accept an opinion, it becomes an agreement.” Our mind lives in a world of its own and when we agree to the opinions of others, we tend to take what they say personally and live by it. Adjusting to opinions we hear from others can affect our lives, especially negative ones. The Four Agreements is a self-help book aimed to strengthen a person’s own thoughts and diminish vulnerability of accepting others’ negative opinions as their own. Emphasized with love, this empowers the four agreements teaching a person to live a positive life, full of love.
The Voice of AUK

Volume 7, Issue 4

**THIS MONTH IN HISTORY**

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**January 1, 1892**

England was connected to mainland Island in New York Harbor opened. Over 50 million new arrivals to America were processed until its closing in 1954.

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**January 1, 1939**

Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba after leading a revolution that drove out Dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro then established a Communist dictatorship.

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**January 1, 1999**

Eleven European nations began using a new single European currency, the Euro, for electronic financial and business transactions.

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**January 3, 1924**

British Egyptologist Howard Carter found the sarcophagus of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor after several years of searching.

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**January 8, 1918**

Amid the ongoing World War in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson proposed his Fourteen Points, calling for a reduction of arms, self-determination for governments, and the creation of a League of Nations, all intended to serve as a basis for resolving the conflict and establishing a lasting peace in Europe.

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**January 12, 1981**

Congress authorized President George Bush to use military force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait.

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**January 16, 1979**

The Shah of Iran departed his country amid mass demonstrations and the revolt of Islamic fundamentalists led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Shah had ruled Iran since 1941 and had unsuccessfully attempted to westernize its culture.

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**January 21, 1793**

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, King Louis XVI of France was guillotined on the charge of conspiring with foreign countries for the invasion of France. During the Revolution, the King had attempted to flee to Austria for assistance. Ten months later, his wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, was also guillotined.

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**January 24, 1948**

The California gold rush began with the accidental discovery of the precious metal near Coloma during construction of a Sutters Mill. An announcement by President Polk later in the year caused a national sensation and resulted in a flood of Forty-niner seeking wealth.

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**January 30, 1933**

Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg. Hitler went on to become the sole leader of Nazi Germany. He then waged a war of expansion in Europe, precipitating the deaths of an estimated 50 million people through military conflict and through the Holocaust in which the Nazis attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

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**January 30, 1948**

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in New Delhi, India, by a religious fanatic. Gandhi had ended British rule in India through nonviolent resistance. "Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being; he had stated in 1936.

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**January 30, 1972**

In Londonderry, Northern Ireland, 10 Roman Catholics were killed by British troops during a licensed civil rights march. The event became known as Bloody Sunday.

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**January 3, 1877**

Queen Victoria of England was proclaimed Empress of India.

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**January 3, 1959**

Alaska was admitted as the 49th U.S. state with a land mass almost one-fifth the size of the lower 48 states together.

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**January 9, 1960**

With the first blast of dynamite, construction work began on the Aswan High Dam across the Nile River in southern Egypt. One third of the project’s billion-dollar cost was undertaken by Soviet Russia. The dam created Lake Nasser, one of the world’s largest reservoirs at nearly 5,000 square miles and irrigated over 100,000 acres of surrounding desert. The dam was opened in January 1966 by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and President Nikolai Podgorny of the Soviet Union.

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**January 10, 1912**

The flying boat airplane, invented by Glenn Curtiss, made its first flight at Hammondsport, New York.

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**January 13, 1559**

Elizabeth Tudor, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, was crowned as Elizabeth I in Westminster Abbey.

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**January 19, 1966**

Indira Gandhi was elected prime minister of India in succession to Lal Bahadur Shastri who had died eight days earlier. She served until 1977 and later from 1980 to 1984, when she was assassinated by her own bodyguard as she walked to her office. Her only surviving son, Rajiv, became the next prime minister. In 1991, he was assassinated while campaigning for reelection.

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**January 20, 1945**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated to an unprecedented fourth term as president of the United States. He had served since 1933.

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**January 21, 1976**

The Concord, experimental jet began passenger service with flights from London to Bahrain and Paris to Rio de Janeiro, cruising at twice the speed of sound (Mach 2) at an altitude up to 60,000 feet.

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**January 22, 1973**

Abortion became legal in the U.S. as the Supreme Court announced its decision in the case of Roe vs. Wade striking down local state laws restricting abortions in the first six months of pregnancy. In more recent rulings (1997 and 1999) the Court upheld the power of individual states to impose some restrictions.
The Harry Potter Era

BY CHARAH RAI

Fifteen years ago, a pregnant single woman with hardly a penny to her name was sitting in a train to Edinburgh to find work as a house maid. To entertain herself on the three-hour journey, she formed a little book stories in her head featuring a modernized version of Merlin and an orphan boy in glasses. Fifteen years later, Joan Kathleen Rowling was seduced by books. I personally learned to read using a Harry Potter novel at the age of 4. It was truly a beautiful thing: the moment you open those pages, you understand it's something you will cherish forever.

One cannot deny that JK Rowling has changed the world with her series. Filled with action, adventure, romance, mystery, comedy, and many other genres, Harry Potter has appealed to generations of readers. I believe that the general youth enjoys the series because in society they have no voice or are asked for their opinions, whereas young Harry Potter possesses power greater than that of a hundred adults combined, therefore giving kids the vicarious feeling that they, in turn, have power. Adults perhaps enjoy Harry Potter because Harry is such a charming, lovable child and because adults can relate to many of the series in the wizarding world. Above all, Harry Potter is a fantastic adventure, and who doesn't want to escape their own sorrow every now and then? Ever since the first novel, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, was released to the world in 1997, books became the hot trend. Book sale records were made and broken continuously. People who had never voluntarily picked up a novel were suddenly interested and induced by books. I personally learned to read using a Harry Potter novel at the age of 4. It was truly a beautiful thing: the entire world is absorbed in literature. By 2007, the entire series had been released, and literally over 1,000,000,000 people were in love with the series. Midnight release parties and queues for movies and books, annual conventions, re-makings of movies, inventing a new genre of music called wizard rock, the infamous ‘A Very Harry Musical’- a musical rendition of all 7 books, pod-casts, shows, and the infamous invention of fan fiction (short stories about characters in a copyrighted work) all resulted from it. It even has its own theme park in Florida as an extension of the renowned Disney Land: The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

One thing I do appreciate about Harry Potter above all else is that it secretly teaches readers literary themes, conventions of good writing, and grammatical skills Readers also acquired a more extensive vocabulary thanks to Rowling’s professional writing style. Harry Potter not only changed pop culture as a whole, but it also improved language skills in millions of people, as well as broadening the horizons of many. Harry Potter can easily be linked to our own society in many ways, and deals with social issues such as prejudice, racism, discrimination, abuse of power, and injustice. Harry Potter is a well-developed story that has become a part of many people’s lives. Readers have grown with the protagonists of the series, naturally forging attachments. The series covers every imaginable thought never deviating from the most dominant, good versus evil. We have all learned acceptance, tolerance, patience, humanity, and the importance of love from the franchise; and we will not forget these lessons easily. Harry Potter has changed the attitude of the global society. The character has achieved a level of such fame and respect that it is almost indecent to speak ill of or criticize the franchise. It is original and cannot easily be topped. An online article by T. A. N. mentioned that ‘Harry Potter is shaping AUK’s community. But, have you ever stopped to think about the true meaning behind this phrase, in today’s world as bad as we categorize it to be?’

This question actually came from a conversation I overheard between my parents. My father pointed out some facts regarding how the present is actually much better than the past. He pointed out that in his ‘young days’, products in the supermarket were very limited, and hard to obtain. But nowadays, you can get bananas from fifteen different countries! Also, he mentioned that life in Kuwait is much more luxurious, and most importantly, safe. There isn’t any threat of wars in our region, or any other hazardous events that we have to worry about, as civilians. Now that you think about it, isn’t this very true? And yet you can come up with many other issues to add to this list. So, if this is the case, why do we tend to praise the past endlessly at the same time appreciate what gifts inshalla (if God wills it), they will win that cup again, as we saw in the last World Cup, and the Olympic Games. As a final thought, always keep in mind the famous Arabic quote, “In a world of Klaire, tajdid” (If you hope for the best, you will find it waiting at your doorstep).
Suit up and brace yourself for full-on mental coercion, very rarely are words more potent than brawn and its difficulty to think otherwise. There is much to consider such as immediacy of consequence and just how much of it there is (i.e. death tolls and damaging national resources). This line of reasoning made perfect sense that is, until consumerism accelerated around the turn of the 20th century, bad eating habits emerged, and (written with a heavy sigh) the fat diet was born. Diet companies are the most notorious, ineffective excuses for big business that have sprung on the face of our planet. Like flocks of sheep grazing on their pastures, we have been blinded into believing that they can unlock secrets to a healthier lifestyle.

The truth is that humanity isn't waiting on miracles simply because there are none. We have been hoodwinked, deceived, and put on some wild goose chase that led us right back where we started. What's even more astounding is that victims who subscribe to these diets know full well their uselessness but choose to have that realization hover somewhere on the margins of their subconscious because the overwhelming feeling of satisfaction with themselves that these programs implant is just too powerful to overcome. These organizations sell their services and products with a smile but they're much more likely to have us express every other color of emotion, darker ones especially.

'Weight loss is simple and we've only complicated it in recent decades. There is nothing wrong with what's otherwise known as the poor-man's diet: eating healthily and exercising regularly. When consumers began to catch on to fabrications, an even darker reality came into being: the scientifically-proven fat diet. Woe to humankind. At this point, making an argument is synonymous with making a death wish, really. With the seal of approval from credible health organizations, the war was over even before it began. Just when the would-be superheroes were about to soar up high, there came the kryptonian doctors were beginning to recommend these lifestyles. If you were to put together a list of these diets and skimmed over their requirements, chances are you'll begin to feel like a dunce because some of them don't even sound like they're lowering calorie intake. What kind of diet has you eat absolutely anything? 'Then, you have your imaginative diets. Are liquid diets even practical? The questions are endless. Ask them enough and there you have it; you'll deconstruct them in no time. Kudos to Societas.

In the infinite world of cyberspace, so many opinions go unnoticed, especially the least popular ones. This is why I'm choosing to select one such disregarded opinion to share with you, let alone a highly trustworthy one. Dr. Vincent Bellonzi, a personal trainer, cycling and running coach, and nutritionist, posted a video called 'The Truth About Diet and Weight Loss' on YouTube to set things straight about weight loss and he begins the 8-minute talk by saying that 'diets don't work.' He identified the problem (weight gain and, eventually, obesity), gave a bunch of related facts and statistics, and proceeded with the much-overlooked solution. In relation to fat diets, he mentions a study that put together some of the more popular ones among the masses and the staggering result that they found was a 10-pound weight loss on average for all of them. He ends by giving viewers effortless, affordable solutions. Now pay attention to how easy this is: To lose weight, have a substantial breakfast, cut out fattening foods, sleep when the moon's out, and engage in physical activity. That's it. No, really. Dieting should never make you feel deprived. Don't make you feel starving but saving yourself. Stock up on incentives, surround yourself with encouraging people, and take it slow. This isn't a race and there's no cash prize to look forward to. There is, however, health and an opportunity to prolong your existence. Don't make a list of what you've been eating, don't count your calories, don't stress too much about portion sizes, don't limit your options with an eating schedule, and don't assume you're going to die on deaf ears. Happy dieting! I greatly recommend watching Dr. Bellonzi's video. You'll be nodding your head to every word. Here's the url address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wubyw2Wq4x4 &feature=channel.
"Winter is one of those blessed times of year where the notion of family, giving and unity are re-established. Every other month, we seem to be constantly on the go and running, trying to get things done. But winter is one of those seasons (along with the months it corresponds with) with its charms of having a powerful impact of bringing everyone together! So embrace this fantastic time of year and enjoy yourself to the full excess. However, that doesn’t mean losing track of your life and important duties and events. Stay safe! LOVE LAUGH!

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The Ultimate Winter Guide

With a new year kicking in and the previous month being filled with festivities, events and endless parties that marked Christmas and New Years, it is exciting times with the beginning of a new year and the end of yet another fabulous one. However, with so much happening, we tend to lose track; so here’s a quick guide to winter.

"If you've had a rough year or you're planning to make a change in your lifestyle, the beginning of the year is the perfect time to plan ahead for the new year."

Many have called me "crazy" and my experience at the writing center "useless" claiming that I might have loose screws somewhere in my head. They often questioned why I would want to voluntarily give up my time and breaks between classes to actually do more work, but this time for the benefit of other students. They don't see that in my two semesters working with staff and students at the Writing Center, I have actually come to realize exactly what I want to do with my future. Due to the time I spend working with students at the Writing Center, I have actually come to realize exactly what I want to do with my future. I currently work as an Arabic writing consultant, helping students with any questions they might have when it comes to writing in Arabic. I sincerely love what I do, and I can't begin to express the joy I feel when I help a fellow student out.

Despite the six to ten hours per week, the time I spend is certainly worthwhile and I still haven't complained. I'm unable to put into words the love and appreciation I have for the Writing Center's personnel, they have now become my second family considering I have spent merely two semesters there. I regret not opening the Arabic center earlier. One of my minors at university is Arabic Language, which I hope to complete my masters in, a realization that occurred to me in the two semesters I spent. Due to the time I have spent working alongside struggling students, I have come to learn that I have a talent and passion for the Arabic language and helping peers. Working at the Writing Center did not only provide me with an opportunity to learn and help others learn about my field of passion but it also increased my confidence. It made me realize that I am surrounded with friendly and helpful students, that I feel dedicated to aid every time they come for help. At the end of each day, I go to sleep satisfied and content with the work I have done and the time and effort put into helping others.

"What they don't see is that in my two semesters working with staff and students at the Writing Center, I have actually come to realize exactly what I want to do with my future."

My Time at the Writing Center

By Abdulrahman Al-Farhan

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I need Help, this Arabic is really hard! Um... ah, you'll do alright.
From Karbala’a:
A Call to Humanity...Freedom Revived and Victory Re-defined

Who is Hussain Bin Ali (Imam Hussain PBUH)?
The grandson of the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Mohamed, and son of Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law (also author of The Peak of Eloquence), and Fatima Zain’a, the Prophet’s daughter, one of Islam’s prominent female figures. He is significant to Muslims because he is a member of the Prophet’s Household (Ahl al-bayt) as the Prophet was reported to have stated that “Hussain is from me and I am from him. God loves whomever loves Hussain...who loves him has loved me and who hates him has hated me” and “Hussain is the luminous torch of guidance and the rescue ship”

A Brief Outlook on the Incident of Karbala’a:
The incident of Karbala and the martyrdom of the Prophet’s grandson, Imam Hussain, sparks universal ideas and values, not restricted to the Islamic religion. It is the memory of a hero who rejected tyranny, blind submission and the unjust rule, and who exhibited the message of freedom to the entire universe through his words and actions. He called out not only to that army that had queued to battle him but to the entire humanity that, “it you have no faith (religion), at best, live freely,” demanding every human being in this divergent world to live a free man’s life with free choices without blind submission, casting aside all types of prejudice and bigotry. Mourning him today, as a sequel to the ceaseless mourning during the past thousand years after his martyrdom, is merely a sign indicative of the fact that his memory is as alive and thriving as the day he was gone and that his martyrdom was indeed the victory of his truth and beliefs.

Excerpts of Imam Hussain’s Sermons on his Way to the Battlefield and on the Eve of the Battle:
- “Those who could not gain guidance from 63 years of preaching will not be influenced by my words. You are blinded by the worthless rewards...”
- “This movement of mine is not on account of stubbornness, rebellion, worldly passions or intoxication by Satan...The only thing which invites me to this great movement is that I should reform the affairs of the followers of my grandfather, eradicate corruption, undertake enjoining what is good and restraining from evil...”
- “Indeed, a believer does not wish anything but to meet his Lord. Indeed, I do not see death (for freedom) as but happiness, and life with unjust people as nothing but grief”
- “People, listen to what I have to say and do not rush me, that I may admonish you your duties toward me and explain to you the reason why I came to you. If you accept my explanation, verify my truthfulness and deal with me with justice. Perhaps then you will attain prosperity rather than pursue me”
- “…I have you not noticed that the right is ignored and the evil is not forbidden? People are certainly the slaves of this world; religion is but a slave on their tongues. They turn it wherever their livelihood demands. If they are examined by misfortunes, the truly religious ones will be but a few”

Some of What Has Been Said About the Incident and Imam Hussain (PBUH)…by Non-Muslims:
- Swami Shankaracharya: “It is Hussain’s sacrifice that has kept Islam alive or else in this world there would be no one left to take Islam’s name.”
- Thomas Cadyle (Scottish historian and essayist): “The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Hussain and his companions were rigid believers in God. They illustrated that the numerical superiority does not count when it comes to the truth and the falsehood. The victory of Hussain, despite his minority, marvels me!”
- Antoine Bara (Lebanese writer): “No battle in the modern and past history of mankind has earned more sympathy and admiration as well as provoked more lessons than the martyrdom of Husayn...” (Husayn in Christian Ideology).
- Ignaz Goldziher (Hungarian Orientalist): “Weeping and lamentation over the martyrdom and persecution suffered by the [Prophet’s] family, and mourning for its martyrs, these are things from which loyal supporters of the cause cannot cease” (Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law).
- Dr. Rajendra Prasad: “The sacrifice of Imam Husain (PBUH) is not limited to one country, or nation, but it is the hereditary state of the brotherhood of all mankind.”
- Edward Gibbon (English historian and MP): “In the age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Hussein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader...” (The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

Background Designed By AUK Student, Khalid Al-Buzid
تقوم الغزاة بـ: "علي نواب

هو السيد الشهيد جوز شربل الله عز وجل وهو من بني الحسين وذوي فانفة الرحمة، ولد في الدينية، في الثالث من شعبان سنة أربعة للهجرة واستشهد في كربلاء في الخامس من شعبان سنة واحد وثلاثون للهجرة. شهد السيد كربلاء ونSEQ_2

أبو نظير لنقطة، فصلى باسمه ونewed وما من أجل إحياء كلمة الله إلا أن الله يعبر بين عينيهم وله، فرأى السيد في سبيل الوحيد بحرية الإسلام.

عاصموري بهم انطيوئط عماد الدين على السيف عاصموري: "أرسل أصلي جزاء في أصل من النور، فأرسل على خير وهداي برسالة بيضاء الطريق لتروب الأجراء..."

فهذا الدعاء عليه السلام لم يخرج أولا ولا بيتا ولا يمكن ولا من جهة، وإنما خرج في سبيل الإسلام في أمة جمعه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. فالله بعد هذا الدعاء الشفيع ما في جوهره أن يسلكا الإسلام بحسب ما تشتهى أنفسهم في محاولة أو أخذت بالضعف. فключи أبو الأسرار صارما في وجوههم. إن الله لا يعظمكم في إطعام الدنيا ولا رفع قارب العيد.

ذلك هي الكلمات التي عرفت الجعبرة والظلمين عرشاً لموه ألا وهو الرسول محمد.

أنا كريم، Headers أن تقدم فيه خطوات حكمة إنها قائلة تاريخية ترجع إلى الرموز لتكون رصيا لكون عزة من عزة بل تتبعه كل من صف، يد. يروي هذه الأثر المفتوح شرفا، فآفيتهنّن حلّة الظلم، وأتخذ لنهج الرأي، إن شاء الله، كيف ما فيه من سما وكمال ونقاء إنه من الدعاء، ذلك الدم الذي لا زال مصابا حتى خلق الله، ذلك الدم الذي لم يلبس وجه الأرض إلا حتى، ولم ينكث، إلا في سبيل رب الأبدبار...

حسن اسم يعطي له الداع، في جد كل محب في عين كل موهب كان بطلاً حاصبا في شرع الله ومن بين هؤلاء فقيرًا يمت طمأناً يحب الشرفاء. لم يضر ونلم يمكن أن يكون هو مرة على أن ودي الطفولة أمه، مهدي صاحب الله عليه في حاوية جهود، قصري وجهاه قاتر لا=len منتصب، ولا لكُرسي بل مثأ في الله، وحراسا على بجيده، وهو يصبح إله، هجوم الله متى احتفل كان ذلك الهجوم يتلألأ، ينفعه كل ذلك لينصر ولت لنغسري أو لم يستفل؟ دم أعيد تم سديد برجو كل عافيل أن يكون كتاب إله، إنه وأخذ عذره الإسلام سيدا شباب، أهل إيمان، الدكتور الغزاة.

ما عند الغزاة في أخسرين عليه السلام؟

لو كان أخسرين بما توبرنا فلنا في كل أرض مبر وألفصنا له في كل أرض مبر ودفعنا الناس إلى السبحة باسم أخسرين، (فسيس مسيحي)

وهذا دعاء قلب لا يشعشش أذهول وكلم حتى يسمع حديثا عن كربلاء، ولكن غير المسلمين لا يشيعون إنكار ظهارة الرجح الذي وقعت هذه المعركة في علم$a الاستثنائي الإنجليزي إدوارد برانج

إن كان الإمام أخسرين قد حضر من أجل احترام صوره، فإنا لا أراك لذا أصلى صبره معه النساء والنسائها والأطفال إن قالعفنا بحكم أنه صحيح أن تصل له الإمامة، (الكتب الإنجليزي يفضل بكم)

هذه التحذيرات الكبيرة من قبل شهادة الإمام أخسرين رفعت مستوى الفكر الشرقي، ولعل هذه الكلمة التي تمنى إلى الأبد، ويذكر على الدوام.

الدكتور العثماني السابق معلماً تابعًا، (نقد تاريخية قد بلغت الإمام أخسرين تشهد الإسلام الكبير، وفف النظر في دفعات كربلاء، وكلام لا أن الله إذا آتى إله في جامعة فلابة، لما من اكتشافات من أخسرين، (أنيس)

على الرغم من أن القلمة لديها دلائل على مشاريع الناس عبر ذكر مسألة المسيح، إلا أنه لا يزال لدي أبلغ السبب لذلك إجحاف واستنكار البديع الذي حدده لدى أخسرين أخسرين، لا يزال كما قد دار عن طريق، (روبس ميتشلت)
قصيدة بعنوان إلى مريم فضل

قرأت هذه القصيدة في أحد أمسياتي الشعرية في الجامعة الأميركية، و ظلت أصداءها بين الكثير فتعلقت بقلوبهم و تنشر هنا لعيونهم:

إلى من يسألني سؤالًا شديدا
عن أصلي و دانتي و كل الأحاسيس
إني إمرأة خلقها الرب
عربية هاشمية تدرس في جامعتي أميركية
تصادقت مع الأحلام و الفكره العظيمة
خرشت على وجه القصائد أعواماً طولية
إلى من يسألني سؤالًا شديدا
عن أصلي و دانتي و كل الأحاسيس
قد قلت ما قلت
و الأهم مما أسلفت
أن التواضع من سماتي
و المساواة أمر هام في حياتي
تركت عادة الجاهلية من تفاخر بحسب و أجسام جميلة
ماذا عن اشعاري؟
ما قررت أن تكون شاعرة
قرار الشعر بيد الذات والأعماق
فلا تهوِّل الامريكا قارئي
هذه الشعر لا يخرج عن الأوراق
وعدع عينك الأشعار الخريشات
إلى من يسألني سؤالًا شديدا
ما فعلوا ؟
كتبو أنظم حزنوا؟
أنهم ما حزنوا
كتبو أنظم ضحكوا؟
إلى من يسألني سؤالًا شديدا
عربية هاشمية تدرس في جامعتي أميركية
تصادقت مع الأحلام و الفكره العظيمة
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