

# The Great Divide

By Nuha Al-Fadli

The controversial issue of gender segregation has come under fire as Islamists rally for its implementation in private schools and universities. Under the umbrella of religion, conservatives condemn co-educational facilities as a threat to the nation's Islamic traditions and hail segregation as a method of protecting the values of future generations from corrosion. "Segregation of the sexes is necessary, we must protect our daughters. Those who question this, go against Islam," stressed the Islamist party.

Outraged over the malicious accusations Islamists are raising against the private educational system, the liberal members of parliament convened a conference on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 to call for the amendment of the segregation law and protest its execution in private schools. In an atmosphere dominated by disappointment, anger and defiance, politicians, educators, parents and students assembled in the Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) to demonstrate their support for the liberals' stand against segregation as an "irrational violation of freedom."

In light of recent legislation requiring co-educational institutions to segregate their students during activities, the symposium opened with a discussion regarding



the effects of segregation on the decline of educational standards in Kuwait. In fact, Abdulrahman Al-Tawheed, chairman of

Kuwait's Association for Non-Profit Societies stated, "What have we gained from this law since its passage twelve years ago? This

law has been a strong factor in the deterioration of education and has also affected our children's confidence." A financial burden,

this law will cost the higher-education facilities millions of dinars to provide separate buildings, libraries, scientific labs and cafeterias.

According to Nora Al-Ghanim, owner of the Universal American School (UAS), staffing has become a constant obstacle not only in Kuwait but in the entire Gulf region, as recruiters struggle to hire sufficient faculty to satisfy the law's requirements.

Impediments created by the enforcement of this law are not simply a concern for the owners of these institutions, but are a source of inconvenience for the students as well. According to recent studies conducted at Kuwait University, there are ten female students for every male; thus, segregation is an obstruction for registration procedures and graduation. It is also suggested that the dynamics of the classroom will be gravely altered since segregation eliminates diversity, hinders competition, violates freedom of expression and interrupts the learning experience.

Although many Islamists address the issue of co-education as a violation of Muslim mores, Ali Al-Rashed, a parliament member who was threatened with "seven bullets" for publicly opposing segregation, challenged their view by asserting that

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## Integration in the Energy Sector

By Walah Al-Sabah

On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Kuwait's first female petroleum engineer and member of the revered and internationally acclaimed Society of Petroleum Engineers spoke to a jam-packed audience in the Liberal Arts auditorium.

Eng. Sara Akbar began her lecture by recalling how she first got interested in petroleum engineering. As a young girl, she became familiar with the oil industry by virtue of living in Fahaheel, which remains a site of oil wells. Back then, medicine and engineering were the two most desired occupations. She was more attracted to the latter because it involves machines, whereas the job of a doctor requires interacting with humans and being directly responsible for a human's life. Akbar enrolled in Kuwait University's College of Engineering, chemical major, in 1976. The college only had twelve students: seven males and five females. And because more women than men were enrolled in the College of Engineering, Kuwait University raised the standards for women who wanted to enter the field.

Akbar worked at the Kuwait Oil Company, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Scientific Research Center. At KOC, she worked as a field engineer for

two years—an experience that reinforced her desire to work in the oil fields as opposed to sitting behind a desk and attending to paperwork. However, her gender presented a hurdle and raised eyebrows among her peers. But that did not stop Sara Akbar, who made it clear to everyone that she would head to the oil field "as an engineer, not as a woman." Finally, her manager gave in to her desire and she joined the petroleum engineering workforce, where she worked daily from 7 am to 4 pm. Akbar spent two years working on Kuwait's Northern and Southern offshore oil reserves. According to her, being a woman in the petroleum engineering field requires extra work in order to be a force to be reckoned with and prove that her sex does not stop her from being competent in the job. During the course of ten years of extensive work, Akbar focused on being an excellent engineer by learning day by day and continuously educating herself to be the best she could.

Noteworthy, Mrs. Akbar played a big role during and after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. She joined the underground network and helped many expatriates that were living in Kuwait during the invasion to flee.

One of her most important tasks during that time, according to her, was to send reports to the government about what was happening in the oil fields during the invasion.

Given that up to 85% of the Kuwaiti oil infrastructure was damaged, more fieldwork was to follow Kuwait's liberation. Akbar was the head of the North Kuwait survey team three days after the liberation. Her team extinguished 42 wells in 45 days—a record-breaking statistic. Out of these 42 wells, one was the largest in Kuwait and another was the last.

Finally, Akbar offered advice to the audience. She stressed the fact that Kuwait needs all the skills of its youth to create a difference. Addressing the ladies, Akbar noted that gender actually works for them because when a woman enters a male-dominated field and succeeds, she earns her peers' respect and acquires a high position. She advised them to leverage gender to their advantage and learn as much as possible in order to contribute to society.

Today, Mrs. Akbar is an active board member of the Kuwaiti Society of Engineers. She is also owner and chief executive of Kuwait Energy, a multinational company founded just over two years ago that has 110 employees.

## Chanin on Higher Ed in the Gulf

By Nur Soliman

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Clifford Chanin returned to AUK to discuss the topic of "Goals and Challenges of Higher Education in the Gulf." On his previous visit, Chanin was the keynote speaker at the inauguration of AUK's Liberal Arts building. Building upon his previous talk, the founder of the Legacy Project discussed the many experiments, problems, and potential challenges/aims facing the GCC in its quest to develop quality higher education.

Mr. Chanin focused on the economics of high-quality higher education. He elaborated on the need to ensure that there is no divide between public policies regarding employment and higher education so as to better secure employment for more skilled university graduates. According to a World Bank Report entitled "The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa," the number of university graduates seeking work is on the rise across the Gulf region.

Chanin related the great need for society to consciously educate their youth using models

that prepare them to be integrated successfully into the local or international workforce. This requires a great deal of planning and policy development on many levels. Chanin stressed the importance of investigating current models and experimenting with new ones. As the authors of "The Road Not Traveled" mention towards the end of their report, "the road not traveled in this report refers to the rest of the journey the region needs to make. This journey is a continuation in part of past reform efforts, but it is also in part a significant departure from past practices."

Chanin continued by explaining that although a great many public policies and models from the USA are contested and not well received, it is acknowledged that the American model for higher education is greatly popular and influences pedagogical approaches in universities worldwide. He also brought up the importance of following a certain model in the Gulf that will train university students to function efficiently in any workforce across the globe. It can take the form of "satellite campuses," like Texas A &

M and Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar; and universities creating a "vibrant mix or amalgam of local experiment and American models" such as AUK itself.

Before opening the floor to questions, Mr. Chanin finally related an interesting anecdote by Isaiah Berlin, a political philosopher. Quoting Berlin, Chanin explained that usually, there are two types of "learners". One is like the hedgehog, who has firm, solid knowledge about one single thing, and digs deeper and deeper into it so that he has a rich reservoir, while the other is compared to the fox who works on a wide range of fields very capably, though he has no profound experience in any one particular thing.

The current generation of students, Chanin ended, will have to learn to become both: to be taught and to learn how to construct a working balance between breadth and depth of knowledge. It is this, Chanin believes, that AUK is striving to realize with its students, and it is this that ought to sufficiently prepare these same students to integrate and function efficiently in any workforce.



## The Underestimated Harm of Gender Segregation

By *Walah Al Sabah*

Segregation. We've been hearing this word a lot lately. Yet, what kind of segregation am I talking about? Is it race segregation or gender segregation? Well, as a member of the AUK community, I obviously mean the latter. So-called members of the parliament, whom I shall not mention by name, but who are well known to be hard-line supporters of gender segregation, want to impose this kind of barbaric and very backward strategy in the private schools and universities of Kuwait.

But why? There can be no simpler question to these MPs than why the heck do they want to impose gender segregation? Let them convince us with at least one rational reason as to why they want to segregate the students in an educational facility and we might start to agree with them, although I highly doubt they have a rational explanation for segregating us, the students, in the first place. Whenever I am chatting with friends, or acquaintances, or even strangers at the university, the word "segregation" slips into the conversation spontaneously. I see the people that I am with reacting angrily and furiously whenever this segregation thing comes up. Their reasons are because they do not want somebody to separate them

from their friends who belong to the other sex. Yes, that is one of the reasons, but it would take a lot more than this kind of excuse to prove that gender segregation is not the right solution for any educational institution that aims to build its students and prepare them for the challenging world that is subsequent to university. So let me take the floor and mention a few reasons as to why gender segregation is just wrong.

First off, I want to start by saying that gender segregation will not cease the curiosity between the two sexes—as a matter of fact, it will increase it. When a girl learns how to deal with members of the opposite sex on a regular basis—and I am talking education-wise—she won't feel that nervous and shy around them. It will teach her how to deal with men in a professional way without giving her the illusion that she is doing something wrong. She will be prepared for a future job which may very well include men. A boy on the other hand, by learning to deal with females in an educational context, will likewise be able to break his shyness around members of the opposite sex and also be prepared to deal with women in future jobs and careers. Clearly, the goal of a co-educational institution, which AUK aspires to be, is to have both sexes interacting

with each other in a way that will benefit them academically and train them were they to work in a mixed job in the future.

Second, I assume that the MPs who want to implement gender segregation in the private schools and universities have reduced the relationship between a man and a woman to carnal pleasures only. They believe that a mixed education will cause trouble and nothing but trouble in that students will seize the chance to commit "sins" with each other. They also might believe that there can be no such thing as "friendship" or "work relationships" between female and male students. Well, that is not true. That is not what is happening at AUK, and if it was happening—and I say assuredly that it is not—then a co-educational institution would be the first to go against such actions without waiting for the MPs guidance to do so.

Apparently, these members of parliament have never gotten out of their own shell and experienced what co-education really means. Co-education is really rewarding. Personally, it is rewarding to me in a sense that I have had the chance to work with male students, from whom I have taken much valuable educational information, and whose advice I have added to the lessons of my academic life. Mixed education

has also offered me the chance to believe that mixing between the sexes in a pure, educational sphere in which ideas and discussions are exchanged is of benefit to both genders. They expand experience, break stereotypes between the two sexes, and can really convey the message from each side to the other. The reason I so adamantly refuse gender segregation in private educational facilities is that it has been a rich experience to me. I'm sure it has been enriching to other students too who really realize the worth of a co-educational atmosphere. And I would like to ensure that this kind of experience is available to students of future generations.

Finally, gender segregation means that we the students are not trustworthy enough to be members of a co-educational university. There is no belief in us that we can perfectly manage in a co-education without getting in trouble somehow, somewhere, on the way. Let us prove that we are trustworthy and mature enough to work ourselves through a co-education in a respectable manner.

Take a moment and ask yourselves, readers, do you really need segregation in an obviously unsegregated world? Do you really need to disallow yourselves to communicate to the other sex

academically in a world that has succeeded in breaking gender stereotypes? Do you really need a handful of MPs in the parliament to halt your dream of a more modern, developed, and co-education oriented Kuwait? And finally, do you, the students, really want to deprive yourselves and future generations from the benefits of mixed education that will add to yours and their experiences and make invisible gender distinctions that you can very much dispose of in order to move forward in this society? If your answer to all these questions is no, then both you all and I are on the same track here. We all know, deep in our hearts that segregation is not the right solution and it never will be the right solution. Believe it or not, it is we students who are the MPs of tomorrow; who are the ones who will decide our fate. If we become a united front and oppose segregation, then those Members of Parliament will not live long enough to see the day when our AUK is segregated. We can stand up, take action, and regain the trust that we have long enough been stripped of. Or, we can stay quiet, stand idle, and watch those Members of Parliament succeed in imposing their long-wanted will on our university when we had the chance, right before our eyes, to stand up and stop them.

### مستجدة في الأمريكية

بقلم جمانة الطبيخ  
لي شغف بالتعلم وأعشق ترك  
بصمة جميلة بالمكان الذي تطأ  
فيه قدمي ، لذا لم أكتفي  
بالدبلوم العالي الذي حصلت  
عليه من أحد الكليات الحكومية ،  
وسعت جاهدة لكي أكمل دراستي  
الجامعية ، ولم أتنازل أبداً عن  
حقي في الحصول على شهادتي إلا  
من الجامعة الأمريكية في الكويت  
، ولكن لماذا الأمريكية ؟  
النظام العام والسياسة المتبعة  
في التعليم التي تحبب الطالب  
بالدراسة هما ما جذبني إليها  
، ولكنني جئت بقمي العربية  
وديانتي الإسلامية وعاداتي  
وتقاليدي الخليجية لأحصل على  
شهادتي الأمريكية بكل فخر  
 واعتزاز بالبيئة التي خرجت منها ،  
 فلم آتي هنا لأضيع هويتي كما  
قال لي البعض ولم آتي لأنسلخ  
من جلدي الخليجي ، بل آتيت  
لأصقل شخصيتي المتعطشة للعلم  
والمعرفة . فالمجتمعات المفتوحة  
كالمجتمع الأمريكي المفتوح على  
دمج الحياة الأكاديمية بكل ما  
تحتوي من نشاطات مع التعليم  
تجذبني ، فحرصهم على أن يعيش  
الطالب جملة من النشاطات  
في وقت واحد ، أهمها النشاط  
الرياضي والترفيهي ، يشعرني  
بمدى حرصهم على خلق نوع من  
الاندماج الروحي بين الطالب  
والمؤسسة الأكاديمية التي ينتسب  
إليها ، وهذا بعد ذاته يعتبر نجاح  
كبير في نظام التعليم ، وهذا ما  
يشعروني بمدى حاجتي إلى الارتواء  
من معرفة هذا المجتمع ، لذا لم  
ولن أتنازل عن نظام الأمريكية....  
أقصد الجامعة الأمريكية.

## NEWS

### Harvard Model United Nations Conference 2008: A Time of Global Reconciliation

By *Farah Al-Shamali*

MUNAUK members were funded by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah to attend the Harvard National Model United Nations Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. As Middle Easterners, we were overwhelmed with the responsibility of representing our region and evoking a positive image.

Landing in Washington DC, we were all exhausted after the nonstop 14-hour flight. Upon arrival, we made our way to the office of the Cultural Attaché of Kuwait, Dr. Fatima Nizar, who was graciously received us. Most impressive about Dr. Fatima is her passion and love for her country and how she translates that affection into her work.

We were then introduced to the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States of America, Sheikh Salim Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, who has served for more than six years. Sheikh Salim gave us valuable advice for the conference, suggesting that we place heavy emphasis on "lobbying"—informal socialization between delegates to discuss potential game plans, strategies, and methods with which to reconcile world crises—and remain diplomatic in our presentations. He believed that a delegate should always be proactive in session, contributing positively to resolution formulation. Before leaving Washington DC, we made a short trip to Capitol Hill and the Russell House which accommodates the offices of US Senators.

We then arrived in Boston and stayed at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. The next day, we drove for four hours to New York City, where we took a tour of the United Nations building. We also visited the Kuwaiti Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Ambassador Abdullah Al-Murad, who was kind enough to give us a historical overview of Kuwait's admittance into the United Nations.

After driving back to Boston, we began preparing for the first of our sessions by looking over position papers and reviewing the foreign policies of



Dana Shamlawi, Fahad Al-Tukhaim, Yusuf Al-Rashed, Dr. Fatima Nizar, Fahad Mohammed, Shareefa Al-Adwani, Farha Al-Shamali, Nora Al-Hilaly

our assigned countries, Namibia and Grenada. We had to familiarize ourselves with political, social, and economic conditions in order to ensure that our representation of these countries in the discussion of resolutions was consistent and realistic. For example, a country would not be able to offer financial aid if its economy were in peril due to sporadic warfare.

As MUNAUK members, we are to embody representatives of these countries and to strive to vocalize their concerns. Although all of our six participants represented either Namibia or Grenada, each was designated in a separate committee. MUNAUK President, Fahad Mohammad, represented Namibia in the World Trade Organization while Vice President, Fahad Al-Tukhaim, represented Grenada in the same committee. The WTO outlines the rules of trade between nations and regulates their actions of import and export. At its very heart are agreements negoti-

ated by trading nations and ratified in their home parliaments. At this Model United Nations conference, the WTO was given a futuristic twist, set in the year 2018. This marked a greater challenge for delegates who had to consider the topics of free trade policy and the environment...in the future! Based on the viability of current trade agreements, conclusions had to be estimated for the year of 2018. Fahad Mohammad mentioned that he had experienced some pressure from some other states. However, his hard work and fortitude won him "The Best Delegate" award at the closing ceremony, the highest award for a committee. We are all fiercely proud of Fahad and know that this deserved recognition is the perfect seal to his time at AUK, as he is set to graduate this semester.

Norah Al-Hilaly, our MUNAUK Secretary, and Yusuf Al-Rashed, our newly elected Public Relations Officer, participated together in a double delegation representing Grenada at the Organization of Ameri-

can States. It discusses social and economic development in the Western Hemisphere and pays particular attention to strengthening democratic values. Norah and Yusuf learned a lot about parliamentary procedure while also speaking on issues such as preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in Latin America and the war on terrorism in Colombia.

Dana Shamlawi represented Namibia in the African Union, which touched upon sensitive issues such as the education of women and controlling climate change. She was able to use her expertise on women's rights to pass a clause in a successful resolution.

The author represented Namibia in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which discussed the Somali and Iraqi refugee crises. Our director described the UNHCR as being the most vibrant committee and I fully agree. In all of the above-mentioned committees, our delegates contributed by providing effective clauses and amendments to drafted resolutions.

Our most important achievement in attending the 54<sup>th</sup> session of this historic congregation was the opportunity to present tolerant individuals from the Middle East to citizens of the world community. Our diplomatic nature shone through to the members of our committees and we hope to have established strong friendships and ties. Many of us hope one day to serve Kuwait in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with this experience, we have greatly trained ourselves in the dynamics of international law.

MUNAUK extends its deepest regards and gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who graciously funded our trip to this conference. As a Harvard graduate himself, he was excited about our experience at his former university.

As a final note, I would like to say that we have made Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, the American University of Kuwait, and the state of Kuwait proud. Nor would this experience have been the same without the continuous support of our advisors, Ms. Shareefa Al-Adwani and Professor Chris Ohan. On behalf of MUNAUK, we thank you and recognize your presence as an asset to our organization.



# MUNAUK Raises Funds for Children's Hospice

By Shareefa Al-Adwani,  
MUNAUK Faculty Advisor

Diabetes? Immune Deficiency? Epilepsy? For those with chronic health afflictions, the experience of the pain and the symptoms of these conditions as young children may bring back dark memories.

An asthma attack for a young child is horrific... a child of three or four years would have difficulty expressing the pain or explaining to his or her loved ones that he or she cannot breathe. Although hospitals have usually been institutions of terror for small children, one hospital in Kuwait is determined to change that image.

The Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) is a place where children with serious ailments are able to stay and receive care. It is a non-governmental charitable organization registered with the Ministry, and hosts children from the age of 10 days old to 12 years old.

The members of the Model United Nations of the American University of Kuwait visited KACCH, located in the Amiri hospital, 31 December 2007. We met Dr. Khawlah Al-Tukhaim, who took us on a tour of the children's hospital. We went to the children's playroom, where "essential [play] corners" were managed by a nurse. She described the constructive play, the domestic corner, and the computer area as areas that add to the children's mental and emotional health. The most interesting area was the "hospital corner," where the children could understand IVs, injections, and healthcare through the caretaking of their own dolls.

Walking down the hallways, we poured over the animated Disney artwork, and enjoyed the children's

works, posted on the walls and hanging from the ceilings. A small box, suspended in the air by a colored bit of yarn, had paper "hands" protruding from each side and a note down the middle: "Free hugs for everyone."

We visited the children and spoke with a few parents on our tour. We met Yousef, a small boy who seemed cheerful: he would stand bravely in front of the camera and his eyes would smile as we took pic-

camera. Our last visit was to Mutab, a two-year-old boy with Down syndrome. He had eyes that sparkled with mischievousness, but could not sit up, as his muscular dystrophy would not allow him to. It was difficult to say goodbye to all the children.

Within KACCH, a new organization is being planned—the Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice. A hospice is a place designed to accommodate patients who are terminally ill, designed to alleviate suffer-

minally ill, there is a loss of hope, a sense of powerlessness, and a deep depression that falls over the family. Bayt Abdullah hopes to bring back a sense of normalcy to parents, empowering them to be able to make choices again in their lives. Bayt Abdullah will allow families the space to stay with their children, in order to ensure that the family's journey is supported by love and care.

Bayt Abdullah is currently in the design phase of its construction. Mrs. Margaret Al-Sayer is currently heading the project. "This belongs to the community of Kuwait," mentioned Mrs. Al-Sayer, as she opened up the design book for the future Bayt Abdullah. Every detail was implemented into the design, from the walls that light up with shapes of animals to the texturized reception desk. Bayt Abdullah was going to be a haven for the children. The funding of the construction of the hospice has been through donations. The members of the Bayt Abdullah team hope to continue this so that their patients, all of them, will receive the best care – for free.

MUNAUK raised funds from a winter charity bake sale and was able to donate over 400 KD and some toys to Bayt Abdullah. Mrs. Margaret Al-Sayer, her husband Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, and Dr. Khawlah Al-Tukhaim accepted the donation on behalf of Bayt Abdullah.

You can also get involved. KACCH is looking for volunteers to help with the children, to spend time with them, playing games, listening to them, and supporting them. For students interested in positively touching a family's life forever, please go to [www.kaach.org](http://www.kaach.org), and fill out an application.



Shareefa Al-Adwani, Fahad Al-Tukhaim, Mrs. Margaret Al-Sayer, Dana Shamlawi, and Dr. Khawlah Al-Tukhaim.

tures. We met Saqar, who was a courageous young man that could only breathe with the help of a respirator. Saqar's roommate was Noor, a young girl of four or five who experienced chest convulsions. Noor, a pretty girl, was not afraid to giggle at the

ing. "Bayt Abdullah" will take care of children with life-threatening conditions. Terminally ill children, of any nationality, will be able to stay at Bayt Abdullah.

When family members find out that their child is ter-

## Spielmann: It Gets You Talking to People

By Nur Soliman

"It was hard work, and the pay was poor, what sustained us was the consciousness that we were instructing and improving our fellow men and women." Thus wrote Jerome K. Jerome, the great unsung Victorian author and humorist, of his own ideas on journalism in *Three Men on the Bummel*. Dr. Spielmann, it appears, has something a little different to say about it. Dr. Spielmann explains that journalism "gets you out talking to people that you wouldn't ordinarily meet... reaching out..." and challenges you to critically think about the world and international events around you.

During his interview with *The Voice*, Dr. Spielmann related some of his opinions about the status of AUK's journalism field within the Communications department, and the interest of students as he sees it. He also hopes to raise student interest in the subject, and made perceptive observations, comments, and expressed hope for Kuwait's English-speaking newspapers.

When asked about his first impression of students' interest in journalism in AUK, Dr. Spielmann began with the class he is currently teaching in AUK, that is COMM 369. He explained that in the ten days that he had been here, he noticed how there was a considerable abundance of good, interesting ideas that his students were working on; he began, though, with teaching them about the basic structures, essentials of journalistic writing, bringing up discussions on

fairness and ethics, and giving them skills for different writing forms like features, reporting, arts reviews, op-eds, and the like. "There is great potential for some," Dr. Spielmann commented about students who may graduate to become journalists, while others may find the same skills useful for their own fields, be it advertising or public relations.

He also observed that while he is not too involved in the planning process of courses and curricula here at AUK, the Communications department were seriously discussing incorporating Journalism, as a degree or as part of Public Relations, for the future graduate programs here at AUK. He also mentioned the importance—and the pleasure—of, when teaching journalism, to balance the practical, career-oriented aspect of journalism where one learns to work well under pressure and write up to standard, with the more liberal-arts-oriented, intellectual aspect where one discusses freedom and ethics. This balance, Dr. Spielmann elaborated, makes the work much more enjoyable, and creates a more well-rounded discipline. As a discipline, journalism "challenges your comfort zone," encourages you to "think critically, notice what's happening, [demands a] fresh imagination," Dr. Spielmann said. Indeed, these would be the perfect tools of thinking and delivery, valuable for those who aspire to simply communicate and observe optimally, more so in the reporting field.

Dr. Spielmann was also quite

impressed with the level of international coverage in the English-language newspapers in Kuwait, compared to the more local, isolated news coverage within the US. This, he feels, encourages a "feeling of community and involvement" amongst readers. Some of it was written by local writers or cabled in from international services like AP or Reuters. This great interest in international news, among Kuwait's journalists and his COMM 369 students alike, encourages the broadening of horizons, explained Dr. Spielmann, especially when one notes that Kuwait is "a small country with large neighbors," as well as being long involved and linked with faraway nations such as the US and international institutions such as the UN. He also noticed that readership is very much alive and thriving, whereas in the U.S., the popularity of the newspaper pales by comparison with, say, online news coverage or television news.

There are, of course, things that are wanting in Kuwait's journalism, such as incorporation of greater boldness in interpretation of local events, the lack of which sometimes leaves more carefully written, tactful articles stilted. Perhaps in years to come, Spielmann speculated, the idea of more liberal criticism would be better fostered amongst writers, as the status quo and paradigms change. Also, the incorporation of ideas through contemporary literatures and books to bring up issues in need of discussion needs to be encouraged more in Kuwait's news-writers. Ac-

cording to Dr. Spielmann, increased literacy leads to greater intellectual debate and draws from literature to raise and perhaps tackle important ideas that would not otherwise crop up.

Good, well-rounded, well-written, and well-thought out news writing, Dr. Spielmann mentioned, all account for skills that are useful to any student or any writer.

In addition to that, Dr. Spielmann argued, writers—and prospective student writers—are given the opportunity to think quickly, work under tension, and adapt to whatever situation they are put in, which "I have yet to see from my students" when they submit their assigned writing.

Thus, according to Dr. Spielmann's view, interest in journalism in Kuwait is very much alive and growing: it is "definitely an expanding field," and Kuwait has "good resources, enough to bring up greater projects," thus communicating at optimum clarity of language and thought to an ever-expanding readership nationwide.

Dr. Peter J Spielmann is one of the several editors and supervisors on AP's (Associated Press's) North America Desk of the International Desk operation. He has also been an adjunct faculty member of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism since 1989. Dr. Spielmann is currently teaching "International Reporting," or COMM 369 at AUK, and is here as a 2007-2008 Fulbright Senior Specialist. Any opinions stated are of Dr. Spielmann's alone, not of Associated Press or Columbia University.

## Segregation, continued from pg. 1

Kuwait's customs do not forbid gender integration. In fact, Kuwait University was a co-educational institution prior to the 1996 passage of the law.

Thus, opponents of the law feel that it is important to correct the notion that Islam opposes gender integration. They argue that Islamic history contradicts the contemporary notion of segregation, pointing out that in seventh century Arabia, women worshiped in mosques, engaged in warfare and joined in religious and social debates alongside men.

Citing a former Dean of Shari'ah College at Qatar University, Luluwa Al-Qatami, a prominent social activist, emphasized the fact that Islam regulates gender integration but does not forbid it since it "is a religion that gives way to modernization." To underscore further the "absurdity and irrationality" of forced segregation, Al-Qatami asks, "Other Muslim countries permit co-education. Does this mean these countries base their discussions on Islamic laws that differ from what we follow in Kuwait?" She also detects hypocrisy and contradiction in the fact that Islamists do not seek to forbid Kuwaitis from

studying abroad, where co-education is the norm. Yet they deny them co-educational institutions in Kuwait where they can be monitored by their parents.

Participants at the meeting also discussed the fact that although Kuwait is a Muslim country, its laws are not based on Shari'ah. Rather it is a civil country based on democratic principles. Imposed segregation could be interpreted as a violation people's basic rights of freedom of choice. Hence, not only is segregation an impractical policy, it is also an unconstitutional form of coercion.

Conference attendees concluded that by stripping families of their right to choose, Islamists display mistrust in the Kuwaiti public. By imposing segregation, they foster both resentment and "forbidden fruit syndrome," desecrate the sanctity of education, promote passive attitudes, and instill hypocritical indoctrinations. For students to immerse themselves fully in the learning experience and become productive members of the workforce, they must be given equality and an opportunity to express their views without arbitrary restraint.



Segregation opponents Abdulrahman Al-Taweed and Ali Al-Rashed.



## Making Sense of Diabetes

By *Dina El-Zohairy*

The etymology of a medical term is generally a good indicator of the condition it describes. This is especially true for diabetes mellitus (hereafter DM), or simply diabetes. The word diabetes, meaning “siphon,” was first used by the Greek physician Aretaeus in the 2nd century to describe patients with great thirst and excessive urination. In the 17th century, it was noticed that the urine of many of these patients had a sweet smell, so the word mellitus, meaning “like honey,” was added to the name of the disease (Britannica Student Encyclopedia).

According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), 14.4% of Kuwait’s adult population is diabetic (2007), placing it among the five top countries in diabetes prevalence. In fact, this realization is what led HH the late Amir to call for the establishment of Dasman Center for Research and Treatment of Diabetes, a multi-storey, state-of-the-art building seen on the Gulf Road. While 14% may seem a low figure, consider how many more adults are at risk for developing diabetes or are undiagnosed.

The IDF also expects numbers to go up in the coming decades as more people follow an unhealthy diet and lead a sedentary lifestyle; technology is a culprit here. The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) foresaw the negative effects of technological innovations; he wrote that “progress on one side is always paid back by retrogression on the other side of human life.” He also criticized “the production of the most unnecessary, stupid, depraving products”. In fact, diabetes is more prevalent in economically developed countries. Since you live in one, it is essential that you have a general

understanding of the two categories of diabetes.

To begin with, both types involve a production and/or usage problem with the hormone insulin. Insulin “unlocks” body cells, allowing glucose to enter and fuel them. In type 1, the beta islet cells of Langerhans of the pancreas are destroyed by the body’s own immune system. As a result, no insulin is produced and glucose accumulates in the blood, leading to hyperglycemia (raised sugar level). Type 2 DM, which accounts for the majority of diabetics, is characterized by insulin resistance—cells ignore it—and relative lack of insulin secretion, also causing hyperglycemia.

Type 1 DM is likely initiated by exposure of a genetically predisposed individual to an environmental agent, triggering faulty genes to start destruction. Age of onset for type 1 DM is generally <20 years of age. It requires daily insulin shots for life, which are typically injected under the skin; insulin is a protein that would be digested in the stomach if taken orally. Research on alternative delivery of insulin through inhalation or oral routes is continuing.

Type 2 diabetics may never need insulin shots. The first line of treatment is weight reduction if needed, moderate exercise, and meal planning for blood glucose control. If these measures are not enough to bring glucose levels down, glucose-lowering pills are added to the treatment regimen. Generally, it is only during stressful times, when glucose levels are expected to shoot up, that insulin is introduced.

Research has proved type 2 DM to be largely preventable if and only if you adopt a healthy lifestyle. Don’t wait for 2009 to

make a resolution. While the prevalence of type 2 DM increases with age, more children and adolescents are developing the disease, which has life-threatening complications.

So, are you at risk? Check which of the following risk factors apply to you: parents or siblings with diabetes; obesity; habitual physical inactivity; hypertension (high blood pressure). Even if some do, note that lifestyle changes, dietary restriction of fat, aerobic exercise for 30 minutes five times a week, and weight loss, form the backbone of successful prevention.

On another note, a diabetes diagnosis should be taken seriously but not to the point of constant panic. It is also not a source of shame. Appropriate care requires goal setting for glycemia, blood pressure, and lipid levels; regular monitoring for complications; dietary and exercise modifications; self-monitoring of blood glucose, and laboratory assessment of the aforementioned parameters. Taking extra care of the eyes, skin and feet is also important. Diabetics must also have hard candy, glucose tablets or fruit juice with them at all times in case of hypoglycemia.

Generally, a big problem with diabetes and other chronic disease patients is ignorance. A doctor can only do so much; the patient is responsible for listening to his or her body. In Kuwait, it’s hard to keep count of the number of patients, especially elderly, that have no clue what the drugs they’ve been prescribed are for, how often they should be taken, or what side effects should be reported. It’s sad but true. Thinking positively, better patient education in Kuwait is likely to reduce the number of ER cases as well as public hospital fights over beds!

## The Antibiotic Paradox

By *Dina El-Zohairy*

Early on in school, kids are taught what can be considered the most important medical advance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Alexander Fleming’s accidental discovery of penicillin in 1929. Back then, even the simplest bacterial infections were fatal.

Like penicillin, antibiotics (“against living things”) are natural substances released into the environment by bacteria and fungi—an example of resource warfare on a microscopic scale. Fleming merely discovered the antibacterial property of these extracts, which are still used to treat a wide variety of illnesses caused by dangerous and not-so-dangerous bacteria, with the difference of synthetic mass production.

Why haven’t antibiotics wiped out bacteria then? Those single-celled, metabolically inventive organisms are quick to mutate in response to the launch of new antibiotics against them—“what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” After years of us being ahead of the game, fewer and fewer antibiotics are available to fight resistant bacteria, which have gained momentum.

Drug-resistant pathogens particularly pose a threat to people in healthcare settings—just when you thought hospital was the safest place to be! So-called “superbugs” are emerging faster than antibiotics are being developed. For example, one strain of staph bacteria causes MRSA, a hospital-acquired infection that has outwitted all but the most powerful drugs.

The paradox lies in the fact that we are contributing to the emergence of the exact superbugs we wish we could exterminate. Too often, doctors give antibiotics to victims of viral infections such as the flu, in the vain hope that they may do some immediate good, and to ward off a later infection by the bacteria moving in on weakened tissues. Since viruses are non-living, antibiotics have no effect on them.

Unnecessarily prescribing antibiotics for viral infections

makes no sense; some beneficial bacteria living in our body destroy harmful viruses, so they should be given every chance, not wiped out by antibiotics, and not every viral disease carries the danger of secondary bacterial infection. As such, antibiotics should be used only where there is a clear and positive need for them.

Are doctors the only ones to blame for superbugs? No, patients are also responsible. Some believe that antibiotics are wonder drugs that treat any infection and so have come to expect them for viral infections. Heightened public education about the use of antibiotics is needed. More commonly, patients on antibiotics aren’t aware of some antibiotic dos and don’ts:

- Do take the full course prescribed for you.
- Don’t let the doctor decide you have strep throat by looking at it; a strep test is needed to confirm the use of antibiotic.
- Do take it at the times prescribed.
- Don’t share other peoples’ antibiotics or use an unfinished course for another illness.
- Do inform your GP of any side effects you experience; a change of antibiotic or dosage may be necessary.

Antibiotic overuse is a major concern worldwide, the net effect being that we are losing the war as antibiotic-resistant bacteria run ahead of production of new antibiotics. Appropriate use of antibiotics can delay the spread of resistance until new antibiotics are developed. One infectious disease physician believes that “without big change...antibiotics may be useless within 50 years.”

In the pre-antibiotic era, people got gravely ill from infections that are treated in one week today. Also today, common infections are untreatable in third-world countries, where physician shortages preclude prescriptions for antibiotics. Likewise, superbugs are winning the battle in developed countries as man and nature clash on one of several fronts.

## Eating Disorder Awareness

By *Andrea Al-Adwani*

Did you know...

- 80% of women are unhappy with their bodies?
- Models are thinner than 99% of all women, yet they are portrayed in the media as the acceptable size?
- Genetics strongly influence our body shape?

Weight gain is normal and should be expected from the beginning of puberty through the mid 20’s. Some people grow taller first, then gain weight. Some gain weight first, then grow taller.

Young people in puberty and late teen/early adult years are most likely to gain weight and most likely to develop eating disorders. When our bodies change and we do not like the new shape, or when we watch TV, movies, look at magazines, and begin to believe that we should look like the “perfect person” portrayed, then we are at risk. This is a dangerous point when people begin to follow every celebrity fad diet or cousin’s advice just so they can look perfect, BE perfect. Be very careful. Dieting can have serious, even deadly, consequences.

Orderly, balanced, healthy eating includes all the basic food groups along with sensible, healthy lifestyle choices. (Remember that all food groups are important.) Unrealistic, imbalanced dieting rules and too few calories lead to hunger and “failure.” Disordered, unbalanced, unhealthy eating patterns become harmful to the body and the mind, developing into Eating Disorders.

Many people who develop eating disorders do not know how to handle feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, stress, or boredom. Eating disorders are found more often in teen girls or young women. Inside she may feel insecure, self-critical, have low self-esteem, and believes that others are constantly judging her.

While most people with eating disorders are female, about 10% are male. They have the same symptoms and behavior as

females, but the man concern for males is normally body shape rather than weight. Many were teased or bullied when they were younger because they were seen as overweight. Others do not conform to the cultural expectations of masculine behaviors or body shapes. For instance, if a male has a thin body or makes better grades than his friends, he may not be seen as “manly” enough. These boys and young men frequently develop isolated behaviors, a negative body image, and dependant or passive aggressive personalities.

Anorexia is an eating disorder characterized by persistent concern with body image and self-imposed starvation and extreme fear of fatness. People who have anorexia firmly refuse to eat even though they may be thin, weak, hungry, or even fainting from hunger. Rigid and bizarre food rules and rituals often develop. (For example, only eat white foods, or fat free foods. Cut sandwiches into 4 pieces and only eat the left corner piece.) They may claim to be “fasting” even if they are not religious, or they become vegan or vegetarian to avoid certain foods that seem to be “fattening.” They form an obsession with food and calories, and may even buy or cook food for others, but not eating anything themselves. They frequently make excuses to avoid eating (e.g. “I already ate,” “I’m not feeling well”), smoke instead of eat, or exercise excessively.

On the outside, a person with anorexia appears to be the “best little girl in the world.” She is often a great student, responsible, helpful, conscientious, and eager to please. On the inside she feels a severe lack of self esteem, depression, irritability, mood swings, or demands perfection from herself. She feels fat, even when she is dangerously thin. She thinks about food so much that it gets in the way of daily life, and often withdraws from friends and family.

Anorexia is a serious disease that eventually leads to cramps & digestion problems, infertility, damaged to muscles, nerves, bones, organs, and 25% end in death.

People who struggle with Bulimia are of normal or slightly heavy weight, so the problem is often difficult to detect. Bulimia is characterized by uncontrolled binge-eating (example- entire cakes in one sitting) followed by purging (vomiting, excessive exercise, use of laxatives, diuretics or other medications.) Research shows that dieting is the main cause of bulimia! The phases of bingeing and purging are marked by feelings of guilt and shame. While the Bulimic fantasy is to loose weight, unfortunately the cycle actually slows their metabolism so that any nutrients that the body is allowed to keep are turned into fat. In addition, purging food sets off a chemical (Neuropeptide Y) in the brain that produces cravings for food, chemically encouraging another binge session.

Like anorexia, bulimia can impose harmful and dangerous health risks on its victims. No method of purging is safe! Chronic use of laxatives can cause serious health problems. Diuretics produce virtually no loss of calories, only dehydration of vital body fluids. Vomiting can result in permanent tooth decay and rupture of the esophagus. Some medicines used to induce vomiting can cause heart attacks. Extreme daily exercise can cause muscle and ligament damage, and the bingeing/purging cycle frequently results in malnutrition.

When someone frequently eats for emotional reasons ranging from happiness to depression, they may suffer from compulsive eating behaviors, known as Non-purging Bulimia. They frequently have low self-esteem and depression, and hope food will fill the empty feelings or help them escape from feelings.

They may develop emotional eating habits from friends and family members who only offer comfort in the form of food, thus children don’t learn to develop more effective skills to cope with difficult emotions.

Learning to associate food with emotion initiates a cycle in which the person turns to food for comfort, but then feels ashamed for gaining weight. The more weight that’s gained, the more the person will try to diet. Dieting causes hunger that

leads to another bingeing episode. This cycle of dieting and bingeing can go on forever unless the emotional attachment to food is broken.

Individuals with a binge eating disorder feel out of control as they consume large quantities of food without regard to hunger or fullness. Like bulimia (purging type), they feel ashamed, disgusted, and guilty after bingeing. Binge eaters become overweight, suffering health problems. About 25% of obese people have an eating disorder, and are at high risk for diabetes, heart attacks, and other medical conditions.

Orthorexia Nervosa is a new classification for eating disorders. Someone with Orthorexia is extremely obsessed with healthy eating. Their thoughts, conversations, and time are consumed by worrying about food, food quality and purity. They are frequently Vegan, and will only eat organic food products. They develop rigid

eating styles and self punishments for “slip ups.” Food choices are so restrictive that they cannot enjoy eating food or eat in social settings. As a result of this obsession, both health and relationships suffer. This new category is not listed in DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), but could be diagnosed as Eating Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified.

Where to go for info or help?

For short term, on-campus counseling & off-campus referrals visit Student Success Center, 5th floor Liberal Arts Bldg. Websites that are helpful include: Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention, Inc. <http://www.edap.org>, National Eating Disorders Association [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org), Watch “Dying to be Thin” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/thin/>, and join Facebook Support Groups: NEDA, Eating Disorders Awareness, Fed up with ED



## Kuwait International Islamic Arts Convention

By Nur Soliman

Sponsored and organized by Kuwait Islamic Arts Center headquartered in the large and beautiful Grand Mosque of Kuwait, the Kuwait International Islamic Arts Convention thrilled and dazzled visitors again with lectures, displays, and workshops from 31<sup>st</sup> December to 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 2008.

The Exhibition was the third of its kind in Kuwait, designed to showcase the brilliant talents of contemporary craftsmen, artists, and calligraphers from around the globe. The artisans hailed from many corners of the Muslim globe—from Kuwait, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia, India, China, and the United States; all were present at the exhibition to share their spectacular work in diverse media, areas, and styles under the encompassing umbrella of “Islamic Art.”

Upon entering the hall, one was immediately greeted by the glittering, spectacular painted wood and embellished furniture, ornate glasswork, and cushions from a workshop in Syria. Some precious items from the Tareq Rajab Museum of Kuwait were displayed in cases, from interesting African Qur’anic manuscripts on palm fronds to charming metal utensils from the Iranian world.

One could amble quietly around the generously sized stalls, watching the artists at work, or simply lose oneself in the endlessly dazzling, awe-inspiring maze of walls hung with works of Arabic calligraphy from around the globe. Indeed, though the exhibition’s official timings were from 4:00 to 8:00 pm, many visitors remained behind, not having quite completed their tour, or simply wishing to linger at some of their favorite pieces. The sunset and evening prayers punctuated the exhibi-



tion, where the crowd of visitors, organizers, and artists would slowly dissolve and quickly make their way across the beautiful marble courtyard of the Grand Mosque to perform the prayer.

Hajji Noor al-Din, the famed Chinese Muslim calligrapher, displayed in his stall magnificent long scrolls of inscriptions in black, red, brown, and gold ink, with blessings in long, generous deft strokes of his brush. Some were in legible Arabic, while some were in Chinese characters symbolizing, as one Chinese Muslim visitor explained, “Peace be upon you,” “Love,” and “Long Life.” Some of his other pieces were more illustrative of images like the Ka’aba, or a one of the oldest and well-known mosques in China.

Woodwork artisans from Syria displayed breath-taking examples of the famed Moorish inlaid/crafted wooden furniture and articles. Like many other artists present at the exhibition, they worked on site to demonstrate to curious visitors the secrets behind the beautiful woodwork. They explained how they used varieties of rose, lemon, olive, oak, and other woods to be combined carefully to create the typical geometrical designs one sees often on traditional Syrian wooden furniture.

Other stalls included the highly pop-

ular marbling, or Ebru stall, with two cheery, friendly Turkish artists, Hekmet and Fusun Barutçigil, founders of and teachers at the marbling workshop and studio Ebrustan, or the “land of marbling”. They too demonstrated the ways of marbling, spattering the inks and other ingredients of the marbling paint into water, and them dropping ink in with special craft needles and manipulating them to create the famously beautiful Turkic tulips and other incredible works. They even encouraged members of their eager audience to try their hand at the marbling on paper.

The International Islamic Arts Exhibition was a tremendous success, giving people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to better acquaint themselves with the workings of different Islamic crafts, as well as see for themselves some truly beautiful, spectacular works, and engage with the spirit of the art in its sparkling finesse that binds so many people of varied backgrounds, faiths, and interests.

For more information about the Kuwait Islamic Arts center, details of the exhibition, pictures, and more extensive details, please go ahead and contact 2402710, or visit the following websites: [www.islamicarts.gov](http://www.islamicarts.gov) and [www.islam.gov.kw](http://www.islam.gov.kw).

## DAI Musical Medley

By Nur Soliman

On the sharply cold and windy evening of the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, music lovers were treated to a magnificent musical event at DAI’s Music Circle, with music ranging from Vivaldi to Debussy to Chopin. Initially, the night was meant to hold an Arabic music concert, with talented musicians from Kuwait, but due to sudden difficulties, the Musical Medley was quickly organized and gave a truly commendable performance.

Vivaldi’s *Concerto in D major arranged for harp and strings* was the first piece performed. On the harp was Lynn McDermott, Dr. Samy Ibrahim and Dalia Ibrahim on the violins, Peter Doe on the cello, and Richard Bushman on the viola. The piece is composed of 3 movements, the first with a delightful, Baroque melody and harmony, the second slightly slower, with the last the liveliest movement, returning to the initial melody. McDermott’s harp melody punctuated the intense violins’ and viola’s melodies, while the cello kept chords to add strength to the piece.

The second piece, Mozart’s *Sonata in B flat, K 454*, was performed by Dr. Samy Ibrahim on the violin and Stuart Laing on piano. As Laing, British Ambassador of Kuwait explained, it is a traditionally composed sonata, with lively first and third movements, and a slower—in this case, melancholic—second movement. The piece began with an animated “conversation” between the piano and violin, exchanging small flourishing scales or repeating the energetic melody. The second was slower and, as Laing put it, eventually “[went] into rather dark places,” as the piano echoed the wistful, plaintive violin giving it an almost “purple” tone. The last movement deftly swung into the melody of the

first movement, and returned to the playful, joyous mood of the former. Throughout, there was a clean, elegant balance of chords and melody, skillfully played by both performers to convey such energy.

The last three pieces were all played by young piano virtuoso William Dib, a senior high-school student in Kuwait, awarded as “the most promising young musician in the Gulf.” With astonishing ease and impeccable skill, Dib impressed the audience with all three pieces. First, he performed Beethoven’s rather abstract, powerful 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement, *Sonata No. 26 E flat major, Op 81a (Les Adieux / Lebewohl)*, whose pounding beginning and ending motifs are separated by a strong, lyrical melody. Dib then performed Debussy’s incredibly vivid *Estantes: No. 3, Jardins sous la pluie* (or, “Gardens in the rain”), “painting,” as it were, the tinkling raindrops falling over a French park at sunset, his fingers racing lightly over the keys. Dib ended the evening with one of his most frequently performed pieces, Chopin’s brilliant, evocative *Polonaise Op 53 in A flat major*. With a blend of pure Polish themes intertwined with expressive intervals, jumps to the other end of the board, and intense melodies, the *Polonaise* is a terrific masterpiece and a suitable finale to the evening.

Interested in attending the next concert? The next DAI series concert is scheduled for March 10, a Piano/Violin recital by renowned artist Rashed Juma.

The next scheduled DMC event is on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm, featuring the enthusiastic and promising Desert Cats Jazz Band of Kuwait. For more information, visit [www.darmusum.org.kw](http://www.darmusum.org.kw) –If you want to be included on the Music Circle’s mailing list, email DMC Secretary Harvey Pincis at [ahpincis@gmail.com](mailto:ahpincis@gmail.com).

## Stillfried Lectures on the Hapsburg Kunstkammer-Collections

By Nur Soliman

From an ostrich egg embellished with intricate gold setting and a forest of red coral, to a magnificent bowl of rosy brown chalcedony fashioned with gently spiraling scallops, set with rather Classical gold and enamel handles; from a flagon said to be the claw of a griffin decorated and set with elaborate gold, to a magnificent rock crystal ewer with an incredibly smooth fluted surface, almost flawlessly made—with all these and so much more did Dr. Agnes Stillfried, professor of Art History at AUK, dazzle her audience on the evening of 28th January as she showcased all the marvels of the Habsburg’s Kunst und Wunder Kammer (Chamber of Arts and Marvels) collections, the result of their quest to create a brilliant microcosm of the brilliant and enchanting world around them.

From natural objects such as the ostrich egg, or swirling narwhal horns, to fascinating clockwork toys, to magical drinking vessels to rotating globes of the firmament—the Kunstkammer held the widest range of art, science, superstition, religion, and magic, never distinguishing between any of them, but binding them all into the label of aspects of our world. As philosopher Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) wrote in his essay “On Experience,” “the most ordinary things, the most common and familiar, if we could see them in their true light, would turn out to be the grandest miracles of nature and the most marvelous examples, especially as regards the subject of the action of men.”

Indeed, the craftsmen of the royal courts such as Jan Vermeyen and the Milanese stone-cutting families, were gifted for truly appreciating the worth and qualities and meaning of their objects and fashioned them to enhance their beauty so that all who set their gaze upon them would be dazzled and awestruck.

The first lecture in this year’s lecture series to drift away from Arab-Islamic lands to Austro-Hungary’s Prague and Vienna, Dr. Stillfried’s lecture illuminated the large audience as to the enthralling collection of the Habsburgs, notably those of Ferdinand II of the Tyrol (1529-1595) and the Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612).

The lecturer began by explaining that in order to collect and remake a microcosm, or miniscule version of the wonders of the cosmos, the royal collectors divided their amassed curiosities and marvels into “artefacta,” or man-made wonders; “scientifica,” state-of-the-art technology, as the lecturer described it; “naturalia,” marvels fashioned by God, or natural curiosities; “exotica,” which were anything from the fascinating outside world; and “mirabilia,” or miraculous objects, thought to be ves-

sels for magical powers, or supernatural qualities, or simply strange and fantastic. Because of the nature of these beautiful or



The magnificent Emerald Unguentarium

beautified objects, they often assume more than one of these labels.

One such magnificent piece is the Emerald Unguentarium, one of the pieces shown by the lecturer. The stone itself is the largest emerald to be cut in Colom-

bia, and after falling into the hands of the Habsburg court in the early 17th Century, has remained there since. The stone is ir-

regular in shape, swelling in some areas and receding in others as is typical of such precious naturally grown stone. But Emperor Ferdinand was not usually satisfied with such untouched stones – he preferred them cut by a member of the Misseroni stone-cutting family of Milan, one of two craftsmen families working for the court in Prague. In addition to carving out basic incisions in the shape of leaves and flowers, and fashioned the top of the stone to appear as a lid to the stone—which would in this case imitate a cup of some sort (though never used—Kunstkammer objects rarely had any use whatsoever, thought frequently imitated objects that did), and had it set with enamel and gold. Thus, the piece might be labeled as both naturalia and artefacta.

Also of note is the huge amount of attention given by Emperor Ferdinand II to the court artists and the objects in general. Indeed, he spent a great many hours of the day simply observing his artists at work, or strolling about in the different antechambers holding his glorious collection. Dr. Stillfried explained

that this obsession attached to the collection reflects another idea that made the Kunstkammer so important: glory.

In addition to creating a magnificent treasure in imitation of the workings of the infinite cosmos, with God in Heaven and man on earth, the incredible glory and dazzling appearance of these objects had another advantage. Being the owner and patron of such marvels reflected upon the owner himself, the impression that royal family members, important courtiers, and foreign royalty would have of the emperor or ruler himself is just as powerful, magnificent, and grandiose. In this sense, as Dr. Stillfried herself explained in response to a question, the Kunstkammer was also invaluable as a means of propaganda, putting the ruler and patron in a much more flattering light and lending him greater importance and supremacy.

In this way, Dr. Stillfried explained, the Kunstkammer collection was important in that it represented the era’s insatiable eagerness for knowledge and worldly curiosities and marvels and projected a symbolically brilliant image of the ruler and patron, and thus shone a positive light on the Habsburg Empire.

In his introduction to the Kunstkammer, author Peter Dreyer sums up the magnificence of the collection by quoting the words of Manfred Leithe-Jasper, which indeed also sum up the message of Dr. Stillfried’s lecture: “The diversity of the Kunstkammer can rekindle the joy of looking.”



# Dean Carol's Corner

By Dr. Carol Ross-Black

Welcome to the Dean of Student Affairs Corner of the Voice! For the new members of the family, when I can remember and meet Voice deadline, I always have a little something to share!

This Spring there are 1670 members of the Wolf Pack! There are 210 students in Intensive English and 1460 students in the Undergraduate program. 187 new students joined the family this term. AMAZING! We will all squeeze into our cubby on this side of the world and co-exist. We will be segregated but we will peacefully co-exist nonetheless.

In most societies there are rules and regulations that govern behaviors. I need to share a very important one with the Pack. When some students leave the house for AUK, between home and campus something magical happens. You

become “quick change” artists. How and when and where exactly you change clothes, no one can figure that out but it happens. When I was in Catholic High School (and I will talk about the other girls because I would never!) skirts mysteriously got shorter between home and school. Then about 2:30 in the afternoon the skirts went back to normal! I only know because I witnessed the miracle! Sometimes sleeves would even disappear on the blouse; I am from southern California and before global warming it was nice and hot just about all year. And being the *wanna be fashionista* trying to keep up with the stylish Wolf Pack, I understand your dilemma.

But sometimes, your fashion sense is just over the edge!

In order to ensure we are on the same page regarding the appropriateness of fashion, a dress code has been developed:

## The Dress Code

Pursuant to Law no. 34 of 2000 on the Establishment of Private Universities in the State of Kuwait (article 6), AUK students shall observe Islamic values and traditions as they relate to dress while at AUK or an AUK sponsored event. Students are expected to respect the State of Kuwait cultural expectations for attire.

Examples of inappropriate attire may include (but are not limited to):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Midriff and halter tops exposing flesh | Clothing bearing suggestive or offensive language or graphics |
| Inappropriately low cut blouses        | Extremely tight or revealing clothes                          |
| Micro mini skirts                      | Short shorts  |
| Open back tops                         |   |

Of course you feel as a *college student* you should not be subject to something so juvenile. Many of you already abide by what is written. For the minority who have a tendency to consistently push the envelope, this code is for you. It is simply a matter of respect. The code is in effect immediately. The complete proce-

cedure is available upon request and will be noted in the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct section for next academic year. Backing out of the Dean's Corner until next time...peace! dear

P.S. No students have been hired and trained as fashion police! (hint-hint)

# Embracing Diversity

Office of Student Affairs

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” Maya Angelou

At AUK each of us is a unique thread in the tapestry of university life. We should be proud that one of AUKs values is to have a “multi-cultural and diverse environment and an active campus life.” We can see this value come to life when we look around us – we have over 40 different nationalities that are part of the AUK community and we are growing everyday.

A university is a place where students come to expand and achieve their academic goals and ambitions. At AUK each one of us has an opportunity to do much more than this. We share this campus with people from various parts of the globe – and within this diversity we are given the opportunity to explore each others cultures, ideas, opinions and much more.

And as with many things in life –the more different we are – the more we stay the same. Very often when conversing with Kuwaiti students on campus I realize that many Ara-

bic words are similar to Hindi words. And the commonalities don't stop with Kuwait and India, they extend to various other countries – after all Kuwait's history is filled with cultural ties with several nations that have enriched its culture.

Being human each of us tends to gravitate towards those we share similarities with. Sadly this sometimes means that our group of friends is limited to those who are from the same country as us. And hence while we are within this microcosm of culture, we fail to explore and learn from it. And we continue to maintain our assumptions and at times erroneous notions about others.

Kuwait as a country is home to people from across the globe and we probably encounter people from various nationalities in our day to day life. And each of us has probably formed opinions on various nationalities based on our interactions with just a few people from that country.

Its funny how patriotism hit me when I got to Kuwait. Back home being Indian wasn't a big deal to me, not even on our Independence day. But it's almost surreal how patriotic I am now that I am so many thousand miles away from home. Being in a for-

eign country seems to get the best of people's patriotism, so much so that we are prepared to get into heated debates, vociferous discussions etc on our country's representation or misrepresentation as we see it. And once these discussions start, they tend to get into “us” vs. “them”. And all of this just fuels our “beliefs” on the other nationalities we encounter.

It turns out I'm not the only patriotic freak around. The International Week flyer got a whole load of attention from people who couldn't find their country represented on it. It wasn't the organizer's (The Office of Student Life) intention to offend anyone. It was just an advertisement to encourage people to participate. Perhaps all the interest it has generated will persuade people to participate –especially those who feel their country was left out.

Through the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Week (2<sup>nd</sup> March – 6<sup>th</sup> March) the Office of Student Life wants to present an opportunity to the AUK community to learn more about other nations – their culture, tradition, cuisine and much more. So let's get out there and represent our own country and learn all that we can about someone else's.



# Applying to Grad School?

Office of Admissions

Are you getting ready to graduate and contemplating furthering your education? Now is a good time to start researching your options and thinking whether you want to attend Graduate School as well as where you might want to go. There are several steps involved in applying to graduate school that you need to start working on now!

Whether you're thinking of getting your MBA or possibly attending Law School, you have many options as to where you can go. If you go abroad, there are literally thousands of options in the United States and the UK as well as options right here at home. Start by browsing websites of various schools that perk your interest; also check out websites like [www.gradschools.com](http://www.gradschools.com) and

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) for overall graduate school information such as majors offered, admission criteria, helpful links and school locations. Also, visit with your Career Counselor in the Student Success Center for additional information and researching tips.

Regardless of which graduate school you do choose, almost all schools need several fundamentals things.

## College Transcripts

All schools will need an official transcript from the university that grants your Bachelors degree and most will need transcripts from all colleges you have attended if you've attended more than one. Request an official transcript from AUK

by filling out the Transcript Request form located on the AUK website. List the schools that you are contemplating on attending on the form and the registration office will have our official transcript sent for you.

## GRE and GMAT

At AUK, we offer preparation courses for both the GRE and the GMAT through the Center for Continuing Education. The GMAT exam is the most popular business school test and is used to screen applicants to an MBA program. There are writing, math and verbal questions on the exam. It is used by most schools in the United States and by international schools, includ-

ing Kuwait University. The GRE is used as a screening tool for graduate students in the United States and Kuwait. This exam has three sections: Verbal; Quantitative (math); and Analytical (logic).

Go to the AUK website, [www.auk.edu.kw](http://www.auk.edu.kw) and click on CCE for more information. To sign up for one of these exams, go to [www.amideast.org](http://www.amideast.org).

## Letters of Recommendation

You will usually need three letters of recommendation from either a professor or AUK staff member that knows you well or from a current or former employer that can attest to your capability. Make sure to ask them if

they can provide a strong reference for you, provide them with a stamped envelope to send the letter in and make sure to follow up with a thank you letter and keep them updated on your progress.

## Personal Statement

Most schools are now requiring a personal statement or admission essay. This is your chance to let the school know why you want to

continue your education as well as your chance to brag and let them know why you would be such a good asset to their program.

Also, there are several important things you need to ask yourself if you are considering graduate or professional school because, as with most things in life, there are advantages to continuing your education, and there are also disadvantages.

Graduate school is a

wonderful option if you have chosen a specific career field that you love and that you know will require an advanced degree. It will allow you to become specialized in a particular field while also allowing you to earn 35%-50% more than a bachelor's degree alone. However, it is

a major commitment both time wise and financially so you want to be sure you are passionate about you're subject area, that you fully understand your career goals, and that you are not just making this decision to further put off other, more difficult life choices.



# MAJORS FAIR

**DON'T MISS OUT ON THE MAJORS FAIR!**

**Come and...**

1. Check out all of the **DIFFERENT Majors & Minors @ AUK!**
2. Declare your Major and/or Minor.
3. Explore the **SSC & PALs Services!**
4. **WIN PRIZES..**
5. Enjoy some **Yummy Food!**

**AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!!**

**DATE: MARCH 11, 2008**  
**TIME: 1:00-4:00PM**  
**PLACE: CENTRAL CAMPUS OUTDOORS**

Organized By The Student Success Center  
Division of Student Affairs

## Attention Seniors!

The American University of Kuwait is looking for talented individuals interested in opportunities in Admissions and Customer Service. The Office of Admissions has openings for the following positions:

Government Scholarship Coordinator  
Admissions Counselor

If you would like to learn more, feel free to stop by the Admissions Office or send an email to Maher Dabbouseh, Director of Admissions [mdabbouseh@auk.edu.kw](mailto:mdabbouseh@auk.edu.kw).

## Career Fair

We will be hosting our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Career Fair on April 15<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 to 4:00, in the Auditorium here at AUK. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet many local and international employers while also searching great employment and internship possibilities. Some of the companies that have already registered include the National Bank of Kuwait, KAMCO, Arab

Investment Company, Ernst & Young, Kuwait Finance and Investment Company, ZAIN, Leo Burnett, Gulf Bank, Maersk, Ford and many more! Remember to have your CV's ready and come to the fair professionally dressed to impress and land that job/internship you really want. Stop by the Student Success Center for more information and help in preparing for the career fair!

*Leo Burnett*

بنك الكويت الوطني  
National Bank of Kuwait

الوطني  
NBK

**ERNST & YOUNG**  
Quality In Everything We Do

بنك الخليج  
GULF BANK

  
**MAERSK**



  
**zain**

## Tuesday 15 April

## Education and Training Exhibition

The American University of Kuwait will be participating in the Education and Training Exhibition, Kuwait's largest, most visible and most established college fair, from Monday, March 10th through Thursday, March 13th. This event serves as one of AUK's largest recruitment initiatives.

Join the Office of Admissions staff at this event as we share the AUK mission and the benefits of an AUK education with prospective students and their parents. Help us promote AUK and recruit students by addressing questions from the viewpoint of our currently enrolled students, faculty and staff.

The Office of Admissions will coordinate a staffing schedule for the AUK booth. If you would like to volunteer your time, please contact Amal A. Jaber, the Admissions Administrative Assistant, at extension 206 or via email [AJaber@auk.edu.kw](mailto:AJaber@auk.edu.kw) and she will be glad to schedule you into an available time slot. The fair will be open from 9:00 a.m. through 12:30 p.m. and again from 5:00 p.m. through 8:30 p.m. and will be held at the Kuwait International Fair Grounds in Mishref.



## Spring Workshops

*Come join the Student Success Center in improving your career prospects, and your quality of life!*

| Workshop Title                             | Date     | Time         | Location     |
|--|----------|--------------|--------------|
| Self Injury                                | March 11 | 2:00 - 3:00  | Multipurpose |
| Diabetes                                   | March 18 | 3:00 - 4:00  | B310         |
| Resume Writing Skills                      | March 18 | 2:00 - 3:00  | B310         |
| Ulcers & Upset Stomach                     | March 25 | 2:00 - 3:00  | B310         |
| How to Work a Career Fair                  | April 01 | 2:00 - 3:00  | B310         |
| Positive Thinking                          | April 22 | 2:00 - 3:00  | Multipurpose |
| Art Therapy                                | April 29 | 3:00 - 4:00  | B310         |
| Visual Health                              | May 06   | 1:00 - 4:00  | B310         |
| Grief & Loss                               | May 12   | 3:00 - 4:00  | B310         |
| What Can I Do with a Social Science Major? | May 13   | 12:00 - 1:00 | B310         |
| Emotional Health                           | May 20   | 2:00 - 3:00  | Multipurpose |
| What Can I Do with a Business Major        | May 22   | 12:00 - 1:00 | B310         |
| Skin Health & Beauty                       | May 27   | 2:00 - 3:00  | B310         |

*Dates and times are subject to change.*

## Student Success Center

5th Floor, Liberal Arts Building, Phone 224-8399 ext. 224, Fax 575-7936



**you** are the inspiration  
behind our services



We have changed. Changed into a brighter way of banking. One that evolves exclusively around you, and your special financial needs. One that listens, that understands, and provides innovative services to build a partnership for life. A bond based on trust and commitment.

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