

5th Annual Exhibition Affirms AUK's Commitment to the Arts



Untitled bust by Sperdah Behbehabi.

By Mubarak Al-Mutairi

Art exhibitions are peculiar events, and this year's was no exception. The opening ceremony was held on Monday, 13th December, in the university's auditorium, with contributing artists, interested students, artsy patrons and the media freely mingling with each other amongst the exhibited works. The auditorium was divided into seven sections each one dedicated to one of several categories: Photography; Graphic Design; 3D Art; Drawing; Painting; Special Theme: Kuwait; and Poetry. The exhibits were numerous and displayed the many diverse ways that students chose to express themselves. Such examples include Rana Emera's somber and thoughtful A Shat-

tered Revelation, Maryam Al-Morad's slightly eccentric and colorful 3D portraits and Dana Jumah's experimental Lion.

The organizers of this yearly exhibition, the Office of Student Life, hoped that such an event would help to not only promote the works and endeavors of its students, but also to solidify the university's position as an institute where artistic expression is nurtured. Ranya Al-Mastaki on the other hand hoped that the art exhibition would "enhance the artistic skills of [the university's] students" and "to have them engage more with the community".

The art exhibition, after five consecutive years, is doing a marvelous job of establishing itself as an integral part of

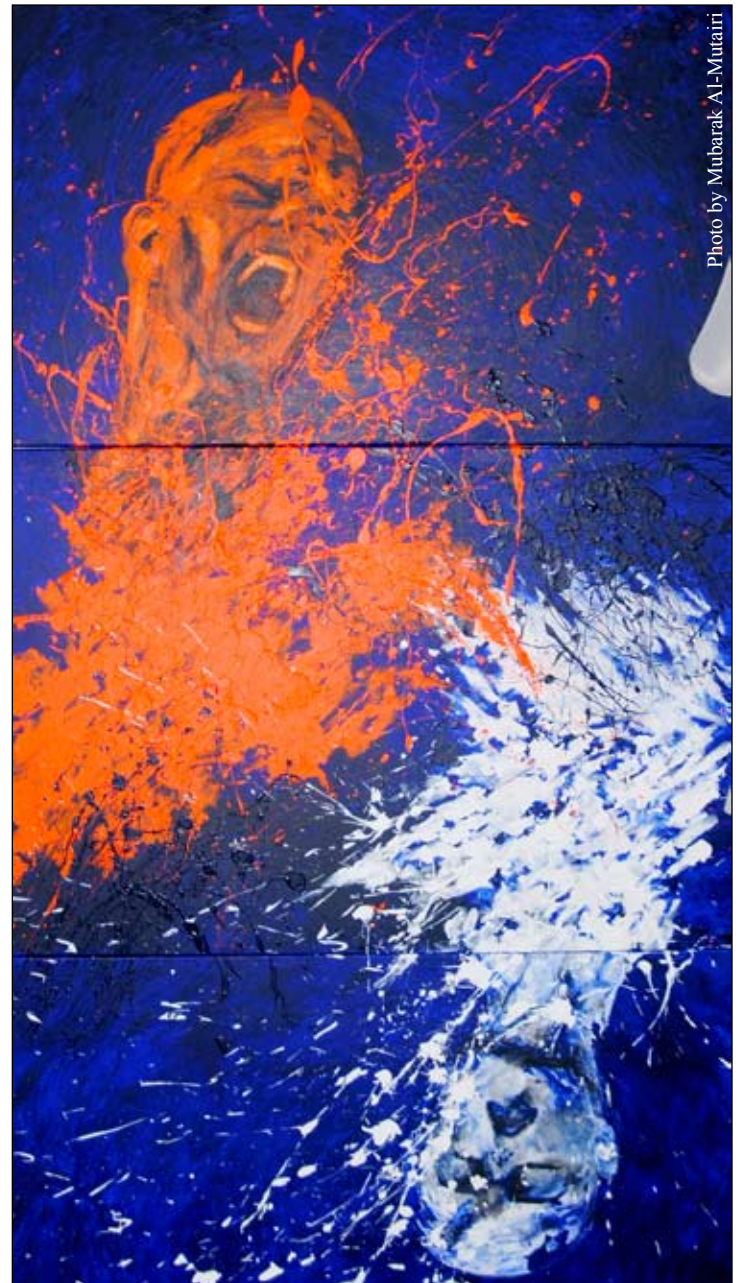


Mariam Al-Mourad's 3D Portraits.

the university's community as proven by the number of works submitted to the Office of Student Life. In fact Ranya herself states that "Around 30 students are taking part with more than one piece, and the [submissions] are more than last year" she also states that the art exhibition attracted "more submissions from freshmen."

There is no better way to end this article than with congratulations not only to the American University of Kuwait and

those who helped organize and promote this event for contributing more to the artistic fabric of Kuwait and the region, but also the winners of the exhibition: Fakheema Badri for Crimson Creek; Ghaneema Al-Qudmani for Smoke All Star Shoes; Sperdah Behbehabi for her untitled bust; Mariam Al-Enezi for Thinking; Abdulaziz Al-Mudhaf for 3; Afnan Abdullah for The Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad, and the author of these lines for Dance Tap.



Abdulaziz Al-Mudhaf's 3.

MUNAUK Makes Impressive Showing in Bahrain



Press Release

Seventeen members of the American University of Kuwait's Model United Nations team (MUNAUK) participated in the Fifth Bahrain Universities Model United Nations (BUMUN) two-day conference on 12-13 December 2009.

AUK students represented various countries in the Gen-

eral Assembly, the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and the Security Council. Tackling issues such as the current financial crisis, water scarcity, the safety of nuclear reactors in Russia, North Korea and Eastern Europe, torture and extraordinary rendition, and a mock crisis dealing with terrorist attacks

and a continued threat on UN offices worldwide, the AUK delegates stood out among other participants because of their knowledge of and insights into current global events as well as their advanced debating skills.

Time and again the AUK delegates in the General Assembly were at the forefront of the debates and discussions. In

fact, two resolutions debated by the General Assembly were submitted and/or co-submitted by AUK's delegates. Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa, President of MUNAUK and Sarah Al-Rifaa'i received diplomacy awards and three others—Uros Lukic, Adyan Qasem and Majdoline

Continued on page 3

Wonderland and the Magic of the Ballot Box

By Gholam Reza Vatandoust, Ph.D.

In its thirty years of topsy-turvy existence, Wonderland has held more elections than any other on the face of this earth. This is a sign of grandeur, civil society and democracy for Wonderland, where the Supreme Guardian, the self proclaimed savior of the world, would sublimely guide his flock towards heavenly bliss. Wonderland proclaims to be a free and democratic state with open and fair elections in which God's representative, the guardian and trusted Holy Padre, would ensure that no rights were undermined. This view was generally endorsed until the elections of June 12th. The outcome exposed another side of Wonderland, one different from what was previously assumed. The situation was brought to light by the miracle of the Ballot Box.

On June 12th there was magic in the air, the magic of the ballot box. Wonderland's Supreme

Leader had already provided an injunction some nine months earlier, asking the incumbent President to prepare for four more years of service to mankind. But the elections proved contrary to the wishes of his Eminence. Out of 475 candidates for the presidency, only four were approved by the College of Cardinals or the "Guardians." The most popular of the four presidential candidates, heading the Green movement, acquired some 20 million votes. But the miracle of the ballot box changed all that. Out of the box emerged the incumbent President, an ultra-conservative principalist, dedicated to serve the wishes of the Supreme Padre. As succinctly explained by a cartoon in the International Herald Tribune of June 24th under the title of 'Theocracy explained', it shows his Eminence telling two voters: 'You vote, God decides.' As appropriately predicted, God

Continued on page 5

Islam in Russia Exhibition at the Grand Mosque

By Nur Soliman

The Russian Federation is not one of the most typical countries one would list as a ‘Muslim’ country in the sense of the word; countries like Egypt, Indonesia, or Turkey would come to mind. That said, Muslims constitute about 11% of Russia’s population; in addition, the number of Muslims living in Russia are greater than the number of Muslims in Russia and Libya combined, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Statistics aside, much of Russia, as well as Central Asia and the Caspian region have been home to diverse Muslim communities for hundreds of years. From Kazan and Georgia to the steppes at the borders of Kazakhstan and around the great Volga River, the Muslim communities of Russia have thrived into

diverse, rich cultures that have a lot to share in arts, literature, music, costume, and tradition.

To celebrate Russia’s relations with the Islamic world, Kuwait’s Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs worked in conjunction with the Russian Embassy of Kuwait to present to the public an exhibition entitled *Islam in Russia* between the 22nd and 26th December, at the atmospheric location of the Grand Mosque. This occurred in tandem with a conference that took place in Kuwait entitled Russia and the Muslim World, attended by both the Ministry of Awqaf and members of the Russian Embassy, in addition to the President of the Republic of Ingushetia,

Yunus-Bek Yevkurov who made opening remarks alongside the Deputy Minister of Awqaf.

The exhibition featured such a varied, wide spectrum of Muslim Russian culture that really broadened one’s scope of understanding when it came to these unique communities. Much of the material displayed was in the form of photographs. Some of it featured the beautiful and

unique Muslim architecture in the area—primarily mosques such as the beautiful Qul Sharif Mosque in Kazan, or even secular, such as the Russian Islamic University, also in the Republic of Tatarstan. Most of the photos displayed candid, vivid portraits of the Muslim communities, from young children

studying the Qur’an or learning Arabic in a madrasa, to an elderly woman dressed in ornate jewelry working intently on brightly coloured embroidery. There were also images related to the stunning natural landscapes of Russia, as well as much coverage on Russia’s international relations efforts with Muslim communities, both within Russia itself and in other countries including Kuwait.

In addition to the photographs, there was a glass case displaying the native crafts of Russia, from intricately detailed, painted

Matryoshka dolls, displayed charmingly in a row according to size to peasant’s straw shoes, even a beautiful nickel-plated, decorated samovar. There were also brightly coloured, ornate costumes for men and women, traditional to Russian and Circassian communities as well as those of Georgia. Several booths displayed many publications, from daily Muslim Russian newspapers, to many books on Islam, even selections from the Holy Qur’an in Cyrillic.

The sheer uniqueness of Muslim life in Russia, Central Asia, and the Caspian region has such a unique richness and diversity to it, from the different ethnic traditions, to their unique cuisine and musical traditions, to the stunning geography of the region, and the apparent vigor and liveliness of the community, the exhibition, almost poetically set against the exquisite side-façade of the Grand Mosque, truly shed much light on the lives of a fellow Muslim community that was so alike, and yet so delightfully different.



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Pi Gamma Mu Revives Cold War Memories

By Fatima Ibraheem

“Where tyranny exists... that tyranny exists...not only in the barrel of the gun...not only in the cells of a prison” starts the Hungarian poem *Egy mondat a zsarnoksagrol (A Sentence of Tyranny)* by Gyula Illyes. The poem was not just a “sentence of tyranny”, but also a sentence that retrieved the memories of the Hungarian and Polish Ambassadors; Janos Hovari and Janusz Szwedo, respectively, on 8th December 2009.

Pi Gamma Mu arranged When the Wall Came Down: *Personal Memories from Two Ambassadors* in the American Corner on this day. It included a presentation of an Ambassador that recalled his painful memories of the Communist regime in his country in the past. The Ambassador explained that both Poland as well as Hungary experienced agony during the Communism era. He attributed to Communism different facets, including the fact that it is “a biased, running system that is difficult to define.” He also correlated it with the Soviet Union, making it familiar to Russian culture today, as a result. As for the world today, he stated that “China is considered a Communist society, if not officially.” However,

Communism is a system that is considered nothing but a painful past record in some societies such as Poland and Hungary.

Nevertheless, the Ambassador was precise on the idea that there is a sharp distinction between his ideological opposition to Soviet Communism and its grasp on Poland, Hungary and the rest of Central Europe, and his love of Russian culture as a whole, which includes Russian literature, art and whatnot. With a comical tone he explained his point quite vividly, “Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, not Lenin and Trotsky.”

In addition to his humour, he was persistent in continuing the recital of his memories. He explained that the Communist regime was not only a system that was politically destructive, but it was also “against any religion.” Its destruction was successful in being forceful to the extent that the regime was able to serve for several years with no direct opponents. He asked the rhetorical question: “How were they able to create it by force?” after several members of the audience brooded, which was followed by his response along the lines of “manipulation of elections.”

As he continued to evoke his

memories, he mentioned the resistance of society, which was the reason for ending such a regime. However—and as usual—, there has to be sacrifice for success. In other words, it was a double-edged sword since the resistance caused harmful consequences, which consisted of either having civilians migrating out of the country, or worse—imprisonment of those who showed patriotism and stayed in the country. These tragic incidents first started in Hungary, which sparked revolutions in the surrounding countries later, including Poland’s turning point during the beginning of 1980s with the Solidarity movement.

For every revolution, there exists a catalyst that pushes society into such acts. In this case, it was the economy that acted as a force. The state—economically speaking—was not able to produce enough to meet the demands of society; thus, “factories went on strike, which cornered governments as a result after the governments decided to raise prices as a solution.” However, the revolutions were not restricted to public strikes and harsh actions only; rather, they were initiated by the growing popularity of underground revolutionaries, in which

the Ambassador himself partook. They were responsible for spreading the ideas and beliefs regarding Polish and Hungarian resistance via the constant distribution of pamphlets, leaflets and even newspapers. This, more or less, suggests that pen is indeed mightier than sword. An illustration of this form of power is the production of a poem such as *Egy mondat a zsarnoksagrol (A Sentence of Tyranny)* by Gyula Illyes. This sense of resistance and revolution caused the Soviet secret police to become helpless and have nothing more than a ‘broken wing.’ There were factors for such revolt—one was censorship. An issue we can still relate to nowadays.

Interestingly enough, he mentioned that democracy was the saviour from the Communist regime. He claimed that democracy created national independence in the countries that suffered under this rule, which constantly brainwashed its people with the slogan “we are in a perfect country; no poor people.”

“[B]ecause where tyranny obtains everything is vain...for he stands over you at your grave, and tells you who you were, your every molecule his to dispose and rule” ends the poem.



Dr. Amir Zeid (Program Lead of CSIS), Dr. William Poucher (Lecturer), and Dr. Ziad Najem (Regional Contest Director)

Games People Play

By Magdalene El-Neaman

The ACM-AUK chapter was pleased to host a lecture on 18th November 2009 for the Sciences & Engineering Division entitled 'Games People Play' by Dr. William B. Poucher. He directed his lecture towards computer science enthusiasts. His relevant message still lingers in the memory of his audience well after his talk. He explained, "When we look at creation, one of the behavioral and survival traits of mammals is to teach their young by playing. We human beings also train our young by playing games. We can train ourselves since we have a spirit and mind."

Dr. William B. Poucher is a professor of computer science at Baylor University in Texas, an ACM Fellow and IBM Faculty Partner and Executive Director of the ACM International Collegiate Programming contest, as well as a Director of the Competitive Infrastructure Initiative. Dr. Poucher's present day research and development centers around software development and application design. His research improves competitive learning. Among his collection of projects, his most current one is the global ICPC Contest Management System with co-investigator Dr. Jeff Donahoo, the ICPC Parallel challenge powered by IBM Toronto Labs, IBM Watson Research center, and Dr.

David Sturgill to name a few. Additionally, Dr. Poucher has done business consulting and product development valued at \$10,000,000. He has also been successful in influencing and directing over \$100,000,000 worth of technology for universities. Moreover, he has received awards including the ACM Outstanding contribution Award, the Upsilon Pi Epsilon Honor Society Abacus Award, the Mortar Board Circle of Achievement, Baylor Outstanding Professor, and the IBM Leadership Recognition Award.

As an executive director of ACM International Collegiate Programming contest, his job is to identify obstacles that are on the path of career success for computer science students. "This is not just a mere contest," Dr. Poucher said, "It is building an athlete in you who loves to play and learn by experience." According to Dr. Poucher, "The only way this can be achieved is by playing with other people. This is one of the objectives of ACM: collaborative learning. It can be summed up in three ways: getting together with peers, taking on a challenge, and develop each other's strength. Each individual is special and endowed with talents capable of creating opportunities. It is part of one's calling, part of what you can become. Therefore, competitive learning provides

opportunities to train, perform, and develop." Dr. Poucher said that we learn by example in the same way musicians do. Dr. Poucher compared the ACM contest to a dress rehearsal. "Dress rehearsals are performing for others without fear," he said.

This was Dr. Poucher's first visit to AUK, after which he travelled to Alexandria, Egypt to give support to the ACM Arab and North Africa Regional Programming Contest (AN-ARC). It was hosted by the Arab Academy for Science and Technology last 22nd-24th November. It was the first time a team from the CSIS Programs participated this contest. Our CSIS team was awarded the 'Steadfast Gurus' Award'. This is an award given to the team that submits the last successful run.

Special thanks go to Dr. Sher-eef Abu Al- Maati, Division Head for the Sciences & Engineering for his valuable support, Dr. Amir Zeid, Program Lead of CSIS for organizing the lecture, Dr. Ziad Najem, Regional Contest Director for his presence, and Dima Abu Rshaid, Instructor of CSIS for inviting Dr. Poucher to give a talk to the AUK students. Dima was the coach of the AUK team and she received an appreciation award from the Steering Committee of the contest for her support of the contest over the past years.

MUNAUK from pg. 1

Halawy—received honorable mention for their outstanding contributions to the committee.

On the Security Council, discussions were guided and winning arguments made by all three AUK students serving on the council. Yousef Al-Kandari and Amna Ibraheem received the two Security Council Diplomacy Awards and the third, Abdullah Al-Qatami, an honorable mention for his skills as the Russian delegate. Finally, AUK was represented in the IAEA by Muhannad Darwish who won one of the two diplomacy awards given for that committee.

In all, the AUK team garnered five out of a total of ten diplomacy awards and four honorable mentions. The university has reason to be proud of all members of the AUK delegation at the conference as, once again, the members of the AUK team stood above most delegates regarding their preparation, and rhetorical and diplomatic skills. In the words of Doris Martin, organizer of BUMUN, "Since AUK began participating in the conference four years ago, AUK students have earned a reputation as some of the best delegates at the conference

and a force to be reckoned with."

The conference was sponsored by the General Organization for Youth and Sports (GOYS) in Bahrain and attended by nearly 200 student-delegates from seventeen local and three regional universities.

The members of MUNAUK offer a special thanks to the American University of Kuwait for their continued support and to Daniya Alam who traveled to Bahrain as the female chaperone. Her encouragement and professionalism served as an inspiration to the MUNAUK team.



President Tolamacheva opens the AUK Library Fair flanked by Librarian Amna Al-Omare, and Dean Hamzeh.

Building Information Bridges

Library Press Release

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) Library celebrated on Sunday, 7th December, 2009 the opening of its 'AUK Library Fair: Building Information Bridges' at the campus auditorium. The opening ceremony was well attended by the University President, Dr Marina Tolmacheva, Dr. Nizar Hamzeh, Dean of

the College of Arts and Sciences, faculty, staff and students.

The book fair which was organized by the University Library hosted 19 exhibitors, including international publishers, vendors, local institutions and book distributors.

Dr. Marina Tolmacheva welcomed the participants and guests stressing the importance of read-

ing and the role of the library in promoting a culture of reading. She donated some of her valuable books to the library. At the end of the opening ceremony, AUK President and the Library Director Ms. Amna Al-Omare thanked the participants and sponsors by handing out appreciation certificates. The fair ended on Tuesday, 8th December.

La Francophonie at AUK



By Dareen Al-Thahab

On Thursday 14th January 2010 from 2-5 pm a significant event took place in AUK's auditorium and multipurpose room: la journée de la Francophonie—a day to celebrate the French language and the world's Francophone cultures. The enthusiasm and anxiety were felt around the AUK campus. The Liberal Arts building was under spotlights. People were walking in and out of the building, carrying tables, posters, computers, and colourful costumes. Everything was being set up very neatly, and the colourful designs were seen everywhere.

French 101 students were very anxious and excited about the Francophonie exhibition. Each group of students chose a French speaking country to represent. The countries which are members of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, varied from Switzerland, Egypt, Canada, Morocco, Lebanon and even more. Professor Joseph Fiannaca decided to give his students the chance to be more creative and artistic by planning for a project instead of doing a traditional written final exam. The project included Pow-

erPoint presentations, magazines that contained a new identity, a celebrity, ads, and 10 of the touristy places related to the country the participants chose. Also, an interview was required with a French speaker from the country they selected. All in French!

At the event itself, students didn't only enjoy the fabulous atmosphere, but they also had the chance to practice the French language and expressions that they had learned in class. Everyone was feeling particularly content for putting together all the effort.

Donations for French-speaking Haiti, which was recently hit by an earthquake, took place on that day. Professor Joseph Fiannaca made an announcement about the donations in the multipurpose room where poems, videos, and games were presented. Teachers, visitors, and students donated to help Haiti.

The visitors were then invited to the Liberal Arts building. The welcoming nature of students, and the pleasant music played attracted visitors. Everyone was amazed to see all the hard work the students had done to impress the guests and Professor Fiannaca, who commented that it was an opportunity

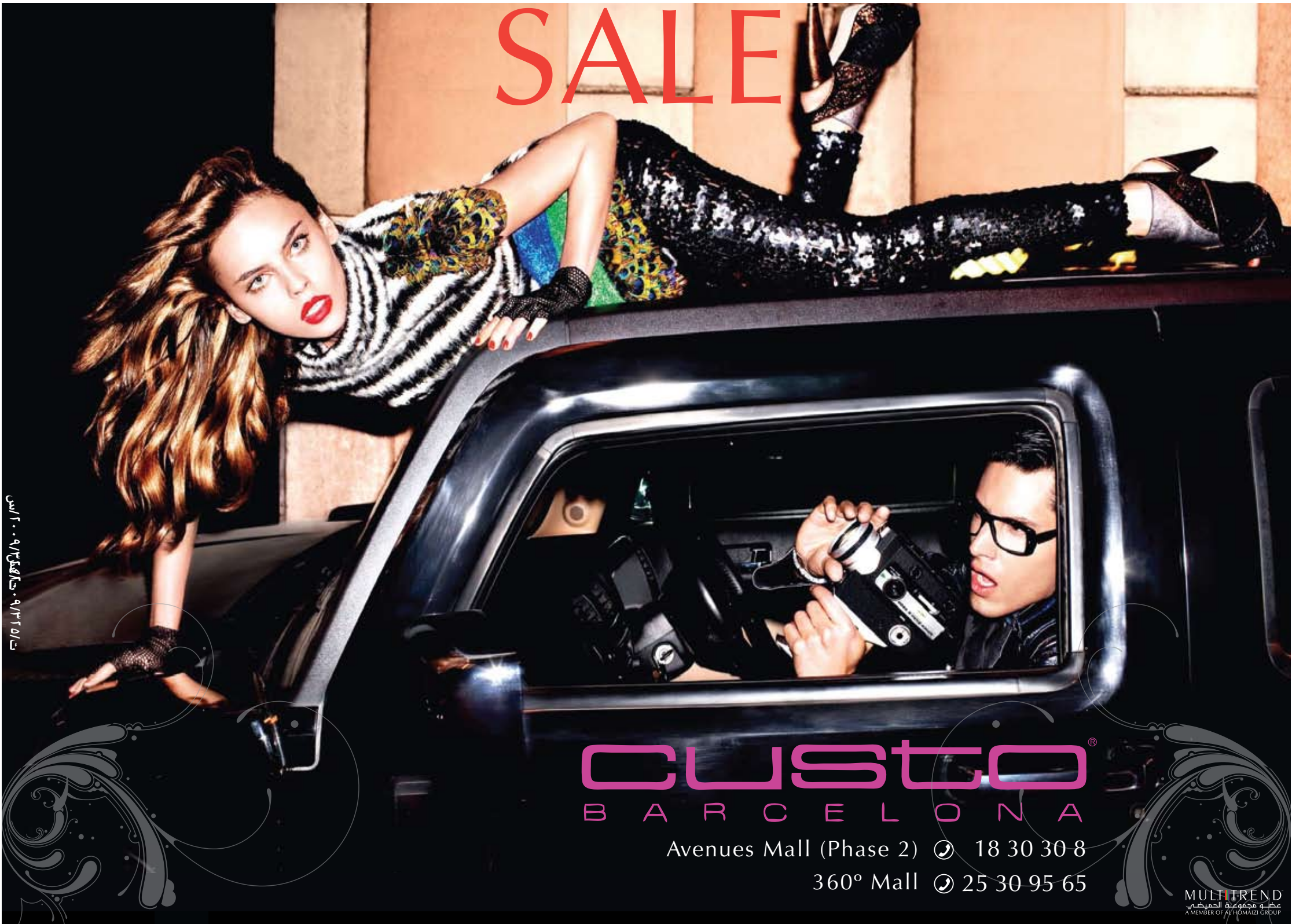
to show that the French language is not the sole property of France; it is important to pay tribute to the countries who contribute to the rayonnement de la langue française.

The way the Canadian team with their red hockey jerseys moved around the auditorium on roll skates giving out brochures was splendid. The Greek costumes were enchanting. The Moroccan booth design was breath taking, and the beautiful smell of their incense filled the air. The Switzerland red table was eye catching, and the food was delicious, filled with all different kinds of cheese, and chocolates fondues. The traditional Swiss costumes were stunning and beautifully designed. Finally, the arrival of Farida Omar and Olivier Deseez of the French embassy was an honour for all the participants.

In the end, everybody—including both teachers and students—went back to their classes. Tables were cleared, and posters were put down. It was one of the exhausting days at AUK, but it was worth all the hard work and effort. Simply, it was a day to remember. *Vive La France et la Francophonie!*

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Ashoura'a: Opening Doors of Knowledge and Enlightenment

By **Fatima Ibraheem**

If the term within quotation marks seems foreign to you, then you seem to be one of the targets I am trying to address.

When one individual, one of hundreds in Kuwait, revives Ashoura'a—a historical event, yet a timeless lesson for all sorts of generations—by attending almost daily lectures of knowledge related to the event, it is not unusual to see people, questioning such practice constantly and the reasons behind it. One mere question might create a chain of questions, in return, which undoubtedly opens many doors of knowledge and enlightenment.

Forms of enlightenment might also include the re-definition and re-questioning of certain notions that are culturally informed. Victory in battles, for instance, has usually been in proportion to physical might; power of weaponry, death toll, or even the size of the army. In other words, the larger the army and the greater the weapons, the higher the death toll; thus, a higher death toll to the opposition meant the loss of that party. However, does it really work this way? An absolute answer to this skepticism is historically demonstrated...via the event of Ashoura'a (which literally means the tenth day of the Islamic month of 'Muharram')

While Malcolm X uttered the following words, "truth is on the side of the oppressed" I would personally take it deeper than it literally denotes. I mean, if he really meant that the truth is on the side of the oppressed, then what's the use of that truth if it's going to be oppressed and suppressed with no influence, regardless? And what's the use of claiming such statement other than for the sake of stating it, and nothing more? That's why, I think there are other invisible words between



AUK students celebrating Ashoura'a on campus.

the lines that indicate a deeper connotation to the statement.

Probably, "oppressed" doesn't really mean oppressed in terms of non-materialistic aspects, rather, merely the materialistic facets that include physical might. Thus, his claim appears to be more like a cautionary advice to alert its readers that truth is on the side that is "oppressed" but not oppressed...that you as humans appear to perceive as oppressed in its physical might but not in its more significant features—non-materialism. Bearing in mind that physical power on battleground (strictly speaking, since it's our

subject matter) is not considered as significant as the non-physical power, we still need to delve more to ask: why is that, though?

We acknowledge the fact that materialism expires as opposed to non-materialistic, unseen characteristics that remain alive for a longer time, if not permanently. On that note, we can easily apply it to a battle between opposing parties. Despite the massacre that made the enemy wipe out its opponent on Ashoura'a in 680CE, they were unable to wipe out their honour and value until today...more than a thousand years later. We shall ask again: why, what is the secret?

It's because Malcolm X as well as Gandhi, ("I learned from Hussein to achieve victory while being oppressed") clarified such an equation to us, in modern terms.

Fighting for righteousness and justice, and the rejection of inequity and submission to injustice—no matter how small your army nor how weak your weaponry—will always achieve victory. 'Victory' is a term that is intertwined just like 'oppressed' in the first place. Intellectually speaking, it does not necessarily mean the victory of being successful in killing the enemy entirely, conquering their land, and being successful in taking over the throne. No, victory in the long-run—victory that has successfully caused the revival and the remembrance of it for more than 1300 years. People revive it today so hardly as if it did not occur anytime before yesterday. Plus, it seems that no one is able to halt such influence, whatsoever.

If we want to be as superficial as we used to be before re-defining victory and oppressed we shall ask this devil's advocate question then: if the enemy has really achieved success, then where are they now—who remembers them and who revives their 'victory'? Absolutely nobody. And I'm saying this while I'm taking full account and responsibility of my answer, since I myself have searched a lot for at least one who considered reviving the enemy's shameful 'triumph.' There was simply no one.

"I am neither here recklessly and maliciously nor for some kind of invalid, petty reason...but I came out in the request of reform in a destructive nation on the verge of a breakdown." (Along the lines of the words of) Imam Hussein on the battle ground, Ashoura'a.

A Heroic Voice?

By **Nur Soliman**

From the voice of cartoonist Herbert Block in his criticisms of Nixon or General McCarthy to Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* criticizing contemporary Chinese society, there have emerged, over the decades, dissenting voices that have resisted waves of change (or the lack thereof). One such voice that has emerged recently and has taken many by storm is that of Mahmoud Vahidnia, the sophomore Maths student at Tehran Sharif Technical University who was given 20 minutes to openly criticize and question Grand Ayatollah Khamenei before Khamenei was going to give his own speech.

According to *The Guardian*, Vahidnia calmly began asking questions of Iran's Supreme Leader, asking about the truth behind the unfair treatment and representation of demonstrators protesting against the re-election of President Ahmedinejad. He also brought up the allegedly strong levels of control over state-run media outlets and the infallibility of the Supreme Leader. Vahidnia, a gold medalist in the country's Mathematics Olympiads, is quoted as having said, "I don't know why in this country it's not allowed to make any kind of criticism of you." Khamenei is said to have replied in a "fatherly" manner, saying that he always welcomed any criticism, including the comments from the young man.

Before anyone could cheer for the brave voice from within the crowd, a few skeptics wondered whether the event might have been staged and whether Vahidnia was "planted" deliberately to present the Iranian government in a better light. From the news coverage, it is hard to tell whether or not this was

the case; another way of looking at it has been that the Iranian government attempted to re-appropriate the whole event and carefully tailor their response in a way that represented them well.

At a time where there are multiple representations of events, where the truth (whatever that might be) is mirrored countless times from the most extreme perspectives, I find that what we need is a clearer vision. Vahidnia may very well have been planted; that said, the broadcasting of the event was cut off at one point, the remainder of the speech and response posted on government websites, suggesting there was no "rehearsal."

We should probably laud Mahmoud Vahidnia for his seemingly simple request to learn the truth, especially as standing up before the Grand Ayatollah of Iran is no small feat. Given the unfortunate, violent turn of events that followed President Ahmedinejad's re-election on 12th June, Vahidnia's voice is surely one that should be remembered as gently heroic, perhaps not in the same way as the tragic death of Neda, but a quieter form of resistance.

Vahidnia will probably have graduated with his degree in Maths long before the changes he asked about or proposed occur, but I like to think that part of learning at the higher educational level is the ability to question thoughtfully with the honest truth in mind—questioning both oneself, one's peers as well as higher administration and other parties if one's intent is to shed light on truthful facts. Vahidnia has surely learned that lesson. We can only hope others might have also listened to some of it, too.

Magic of the Ballot Box, from pg. 1

decided that for the sake of nuclear peace and fraternal love, the incumbent President should rise out of the Ballot Box.

Only a few hours after the polls closed late in the evening of June 12th, results of a grand victory was forecast by the official media of Wonderland. At 2 a.m. on the morning of June 13th, less than four hours after the polls closed, preliminary results were announced with the incumbent President leading the way. The votes were released in blocks of two million, without any indication as to where in Wonderland these votes were cast. In every instance, the champion of liberty and world peace was declared riding high on the road to victory. Later that same notorious day of June 13th the votes were switched to blocks of five million. However, the percentage announced for each of the four candidates remained unchanged until all the 39 million votes were counted. The miracle was stupefying. Throughout the country, the electorate had voted in exactly the same proportion for each of the four candidates. In the final call, the ordained one had acquired over 24 million votes, some 62.5% of the electorate. Further miracles indicated that in several provinces, the total votes outstripped the eligible voters. Surprisingly, the incumbent president was supported in regions in which he was least popular, such as provinces occupied by religious and ethnic minorities who had suffered most under his prudent leadership. The other candidates even acquired fewer votes in their respective hometowns where they have their political and social base of support. This is the true magic of the

Ballot Box.

Despite the shock and awe, His Eminence, the Holy Padre, validated the results by extending his congratulations to the incumbent, even before the Council of Guardians had an opportunity to investigate the wide reaching protests. The public however felt otherwise. Millions of disenfranchised voters came out into the streets demanding back their votes. The Circus was about to begin. The battered streets of Wonderland were now a big performing theatre. It was a primetime show to watch. Every day, thousands took to the streets to reclaim their votes. Their demands were simply "give back my vote." The authorities took the threat seriously and ordered a crackdown. This has continued for months on end.

The reformers appropriately duped as "godless" liberals and western spies, diabolically known as the Greens, had now landed in the famous Evin prison, known as the country's Open University. They were kept there against their will and for their own safety, in order to protect them against the mercenary tugs, notoriously known as the Janassaries of Wonderland. These soldiers of fortune were most eager to rape and conquer for the Holy Padre. After all, whether you kill or get killed for his Eminence is a blessing. You conquer both the heaven and the earth, and you are blessed either way.

One recently raped victim described his ordeal in detail: 'They take you to a miracle room where the walls speak to you. You view your entire life fleeting past you. You must experience heaven and hell. They talk about salvation while they kick you in the rear

end. As you fall, they hit you again and again, demanding repentance. The louder you plead the more they demand. While you lie on the hard concrete bleeding from the nose, begging for mercy, they rip your pants and complete their act. They then pour icy water over you to freshen your soul. The cell is designed to break you to save you. You have no choice, all you do is submit while you plead for clemency.'

The Greens who were out to redeem their "stolen" votes were now branded as traitors of Wonderland. They had defied the Holy Padre by their overwhelming presence in the elections as they cast their votes for the Greens. By not having voted for the ordained candidate they had disrespected his Eminence. In fact they had served the enemy. Further objection to the miracle of the Ballot Box had landed them in Evin University, where, god willing, they will remain for their own protection and as long as their re-education necessitates. Despite themselves, this was needed for their redemption.

What makes Wonderland so special is its visionary leadership that is seldom seen elsewhere on earth. Perhaps one puff on the magic opiate flute is sufficient to hallucinate into the ever wonderland of self deception and grandeur. Opium can do wonders, particularly of high quality. They call it the Napoleonic brand, produced in the neighboring Afghanistan and abundantly available to the ordained and the select few. Only five puffs are enough. It will elevate you to heaven itself. Soon you fly above the clouds and your mind is crystal clear. Opium strengthens and broadens the vi-

sion and provides self illusion beyond limits. While hallucinating you are no less than God himself. In fact you transcend God, and commandeer the sheep to servitude and obedience. You become Thou, the Almighty, the Supreme Padre, all in one.

The magic of Wonderland is its ability to erase its past, particularly those popular among the wretched of the earth. The magic of Wonderland is its dictates, which goes beyond the Ten Commandments. 'Thou shalt not question the elections,' 'Thou shalt lie in order to protect the *nezam* (system),' 'Thou shalt punish those who march in the streets demanding their votes.' Appointed by God himself, He is the Master. Therefore, history is rewritten, and clichés are made to stand tall on their heads. Wonderland is a living proof that all 'animals are not after all created equal, nor are they entitled to life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness,' unless ordained by the Supreme Padre. He alone has the audacity and the key to blissful happiness. No one else can acquire such a privileged position without his explicit consent. He is the righteous, entitled to nuclear peace and nuclear bliss.

The Wonderland show has continued into the New Year. The curtain is unlikely to fall in the foreseeable future. Who shall win remains a mystery. There is a power struggle between God's representative and his rebellious flock. The people continue to demonstrate their will in order to fight what they consider to be a 'stolen election.' But how God sees the whole scenario remains a mystery. Ultimately 'God decides.' *Inshallah*.

CAB CHARITY CARNIVAL



Photos by: Dalal A. Marafie and Fatma Khamis

Islamic Art at the Grand Mosque

By Nur Soliman

Kuwait's 4th Annual International Forum for Islamic Arts was hosted by the Grand Mosque between 4th and 15th January. Sponsored by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in conjunction with the Kuwait Center for Islamic Art in the Grand Mosque, this forum was just as diverse and interesting as the previous one, showcasing the arts of the Islamic world as well as hosting short lectures and workshops.

The forum showcased some of the beautiful works of Islamic calligraphy and paintings from across the world, from China and Iran to Turkey and Jordan, in addition to presenting the native crafts of Syria, Turkey, and other countries, from paneled wood-and-mother-of-pearl from Syria and Jordan to textile work from other nations. Also, to celebrate Jerusalem as 2009 Capital of Arab culture, the forum hosted calligraphers from the Occupied Palestinian Territories to display their art. One of the more popular demonstrations that will return to this year's forum will be sharing Turkish marble-painting techniques known as 'Ibru', where passersby and their children can even try their hand at the art.

This is one of the few more interactive artistic events in Ku-



wait, where viewers can not only observe and look at works of art, but also listen to lectures while surrounded by beautiful works of calligraphy in black ink or delicate Safavid paintings of birds and flowers, the lecturer's voice occasionally muffled by the sound of wood panels being cut or hammered or the voices of children as they colour in patterns, or overcome by the compelling calls to sunset or night prayers at the Mosque.

The artists themselves are also very genial, and are often willing to hold conversations and answer questions for passersby, also providing them with leaflets, brochures, or even letting them help in their crafts. In addition, there are many stalls representing libraries from Bahrain, Qatar, or Turkey and Southeast Asia selling or displaying books on Islam, history, Islamic art, science philosophy, and other related subjects.

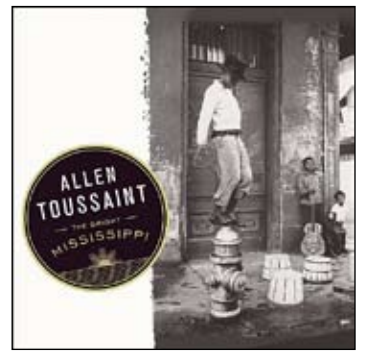
The forum is a place where

visitors can immerse themselves in cultures and artistic traditions that go well beyond their own, be they Arab or traditional European, affording them an opportunity to understand Islam as a more diverse, dynamic entity that goes beyond traditional "Arab" Islam, but is understood and reflected in far more representations, leaving viewers with an increased respect and interest for these arts and these communities.

The Bright Mississippi

By Sara M. Soliman

Played by contemporary artists, some known for their R&B music more than jazz, *The Bright Mississippi* is an interesting compilation of old Dixieland and Swing classics, as well as some of Thelonius Monk's compositions, played with a delightful mixture of styles, ranging from that of Monk to Armstrong, from Ellington to Sidney 'Jelly Roll' Morton. While listening to several numbers in Toussaint's album, one would believe greats like Sidney Bechet or Art Blakey were playing. Toussaint's band is remarkably talented; able to swing through the jazz timeline to recreate old favorites the way they were always meant to be played, but with the clarity and solidity of contemporary jazz music. In several old favorites, like Dixieland classics *Dear Old Southland*, there is pleasant evidence of Toussaint's contemporary playing, his fluid, elegant runs unlike those of a Dixieland pianist, but delightfully contrasted against trumpeter Nicholas Payton's clean, Harlem sound. The weight of the blues chords and climbing



tonic triads is heard in Ellington's classic, *Solitude*, pulling the Billie Holliday number up several decades, her coarse, elegant voice replaced by Marc Ribot's electric guitar, lilting and almost like that of a country ballad. Ribot's guitar then smoothly shifts into the familiar strumming of Django Reinhardt, forming the bass line for Louis Armstrong's soulful, *St. James Infirmary*. This compilation of musical styles, sounds, timbres, tempos and atmospheres, mixed and matched throughout the songbooks of jazz greats in history, presents a colorful album that is pure delight to listen to, delivering old favorites with a flare either convincingly faithful to the original or charmingly recreated with a modern twist.

Ravi Coltrane Not Just John's Son

By Nur Soliman

While some offspring of famous figures might follow in their parent's footsteps, many of them also follow their own paths and styles, techniques, and talents that make them more unique. One great example is Ravi Coltrane, son to the legendary tenor saxophonist John Coltrane and his wife, Alice Coltrane, also a noted jazz pianist and performer. Ravi's name has always been tied to that of his father's; his style and techniques on the tenor sax are likewise compared. But with this fifth album, it is clear that Ravi Coltrane, while intimately familiar his father's style, ventures forth with his own voice.

This album, *Blending Times*, impresses the listener with how John-Coltrane it sounds, and also how remarkably modern it sounds. Tracks like 'First Circuit'

and 'Last Circuit' evoke the rich, frenetic, almost mystic sounds of John Coltrane, almost symbolically paying tribute to the great saxophonist, reflecting what his father sounds like in his *Love Supreme* suite, as well as in *Giant Steps* or *My Favourite Things*.

Very different to these are tracks like 'Amalgam,' where the opening certainly has a John Coltrane sound to it, almost like 'Acknowledgment,' yet the sentimental bass and piano give it a more creative, softer tone. 'Narcined' also has a very unique piano and rhythm arrangement, where the piano is more fluid, the percussion a little more edgy and adventurous like modern jazz. 'One Wheeler Will' has an almost bossa nova like percussive beat; the dual basses of Haden and Gress are on-the-spot, with the saxophone sounding more like Rollins or Parker, ultimately.



One touching piece is 'For Turiya,' dedicated to his mother Alice who later gave herself an Indian name. The track features very lyrical, mystic harp chords, something like Andreas Vollenweider, the famous Swiss harpist. 'Before with After' is very solemn, sounding like Coltrane, but also like Adderley, with an almost Ellingtonian bluesy lilt that is very interesting to hear.

My personal favourite, though, has got to be 'Last Circuit,' as

though Ravi Coltrane has come full circle and created an entirely new, creative blend between his own style, the very edgy, upbeat, and abstract cool sound of the percussion working very well with the rich, mellow sound of the tenor, really 'blending' the times.

This disc is a definite recommendation for those interested in seeing where 2009 is taking us with artists taking the older with the new to create something exciting.

Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Drew Gress, acoustic bass; Charlie Haden, acoustic bass (guest appearance); Luis Perdomo, piano; Brandee Younger, harp (guest appearance). Producer: Ravi Coltrane, Executive Producer: Joshua Sherman. SAVOY JAZZ Recording, 2009 (Audio CD). Approx. 54:27 minutes

Furore of Joyce Didanto

By Sara Soliman

With a voice fiery and rich, DiDinato presents a fine selection of Handel's arias, accompanied by the distinctive Baroque orchestra, Les Talens Lyriques.

Heavy and urgent, DiDinato's voice gives life and character to the arias, creating a colourful impression of a singer in full costume on stage. The opening piece, *Xerxes*, exhibits DiDinato's virtuosic talent and impressive vocal abilities, presented against the elegant period-instrument orchestra.

The delicacy and vibrancy of the ornamented Baroque melodies are contrasted by the dark, descending motifs in the *Ira* movement of the *Teseo* opera, constantly heightened by the minor chords of the harpsichord. DiDinato's flexible voice



and powerful vibrato enables her to switch roles smoothly, each aria delivered with renewed vigor and individual strength.

Similar to the poignancy and enthusiasm with which Lorraine Lieberman Hunt sings Bach's cantatas—for which she is most renowned—, DiDinato here presents many of Handel's well-loved arias with rich feeling and virtuosic strength, demonstrating these arias in 'furore' in its highest splendor.

Do they give us homework 'cause they can? Because there's a lesser chance they'll bump into us while they're abroad? Because they all think we have nothing better to do?!

Well, that may be the case, but still! It's sacrilege to deprive us of our freedom!



But you know, I'm still gonna do it... because I'm like that.



By Nur Soliman

A Parting Message from President Tolmacheva

December, 2009
By Marina Tolmacheva, PhD
Dear AUK Students:

I am writing this message for *The Voice* in the last weeks of my tenure as President of the American University of Kuwait. Beginning January 1, I will be *President Emerita*, and AUK will be led by Interim President Sullivan while the full presidential search is going on. Some of my last steps at AUK have included the supervision of preparation and publication of the 2008-2009 Annual Report and the meeting with the AUK Board of Trustees, which took place December 5-6. Earlier this Fall, the Board members and Dr. Sullivan met with the Minister of Higher Education Dr. Moudi Al-Homoud. In late November, Dr. Sullivan participated in faculty interviews and other meetings in Washington, DC together with Dean Nizar Hamzeh, Dr. Dale Eickelman and other Dartmouth consultants. Some Trustees have met with AUK student leaders and alumni and we look forward to their continued support of our student activities and academic work. As some of you know, AUK Trustees are enthusiastic supporters of the Liberal-Arts educational mission of AUK and champions of our holistic approach to student development.

Accreditation Update
As I reported to the Board, AUK is looking forward to the next steps in the accreditation process. For all AUK graduates and current students, it is most important to know that when questions of accreditation arise, what AUK needs first and foremost is Kuwaiti accreditation by the Council for Private Universities (PUC). This is what is called “*institutional*” accreditation, and this is what you need in order to certify your degree in Kuwait, to transfer to another institution (in Kuwait or abroad) and to apply for graduate study programs. Rest assured, AUK is accredited and has been since 2006. PUC is an autonomous branch of the Ministry of Higher Education. At this time, AUK has no institutional international accreditation (no American-style university in Kuwait does), but that is not an admission requirement for transfer students or for graduate-school application, in or outside Kuwait.

AUK is also working on gaining international *programmatic accreditation* (for selected degree programs). The College of Arts & Sciences, under the guidance of Dean Hamzeh, is working hard on a self-study for the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE). The self-study process is being coordinated by Dr. Rawda Awwad, CAS Assistant Dean for Accreditation and Curriculum. If AUK succeeds in submitting the self-study to AALE in early 2010, our Bachelor of Arts programs in the Humanities & Arts and Social Science divisions may hope to receive international accreditation in time for AY 2010-2011. The Division of Business & Economics is going through the pre-application process with ACBSP (Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs, which accredits Business degree programs at liberal arts institutions). Dr. Jeremy Cripps coordinates the self-study process for AUK’s Bachelor of Business Administration program. The study will involve all the BBA major programs and take most of the year 2010. AUK hopes to submit the self-study to ACBSP in 2011. As you may know, our Intensive English Program (IEP) already has international accreditation (from US-based CEA, Commission for English language program Accreditation), the first such program in Kuwait and only second in the Middle East.

Academic Credit Transfer
Accreditation status of AUK may be important to you in three cases: (1) For degree certification by Kuwaiti authorities, if you intend to complete your Bachelor’s degree studies here at AUK; (2) if you plan to apply to graduate school after graduating from AUK, and (3) if you plan to transfer to another university (here or abroad) before graduating from AUK. For some countries and institutions (not all), the validity of your degree or transferability of your academic credits depends on our accreditation standing. AUK has been accredited since 2006, and our status can be checked on the PUC web site (www.puc.edu.kw).
At the undergraduate level, AUK credit transferability depends on the other institution’s policy. The first thing they need to know is that AUK is licensed and accredited in Kuwait. The

questions about whether your AUK credits will transfer to another institution can be answered only by the other school’s Admissions office. Some institutions (for example, Dartmouth) allow very few transfer credits and may count them only as electives or General Education credits. Others may allow up to 60 credits (as does AUK) and some institutions accept even as many as 90 credits, but all depends on the academic field or discipline you are majoring in. Also, all schools expect you to spend your last year studying at the institution whose degree you intend to earn at graduation. So: if you plan to transfer from AUK before graduation, you need to ask the intended school how your credits will be applied toward your chosen **degree requirements** in the new place. Some universities require that courses in the Major be taken only in their own program. This means that you can expect to spend more than four years pursuing your bachelor’s degree. If you depend on the Kuwaiti government scholarship program for financing your education, you have to know what programs at what foreign institutions are on the Ministry of Higher Education approved list for scholarship support. But remember: the degree approval (for MOHE certification or for employment purposes through the Kuwait Civil Service Commission) is different from the program approval for purposes of international scholarship for Kuwaiti citizens. You can find Kuwaiti MOHE-approved lists of degree programs eligible for international scholarships on the MOHE web site.

Graduate Study
AUK is extremely proud that some of our Agraduates have been admitted to such prestigious American schools as Yale and the University of Chicago, which are extremely selective in their graduate admissions. Others now study in the UK or have entered graduate programs in Kuwait. Some of our very first graduates who received their degrees in June 2006 applied to graduate school right away and had no problem having their AUK credentials recognized. If you are earning two different undergraduate degrees, you can apply to graduate programs internationally in either field or even in yet another, new field. How-

ever, for Kuwaiti credentials, it is best to apply to a Master’s program in the field of your first major. Again, if you depend on the Kuwaiti international scholarship program for financing your education, you have to know what programs at what institutions are on the Ministry of Higher Education approved list for graduate (in British English, post-graduate) scholarship. This may limit your choice of location, institution, and field of study.

Good-bye
December 2009 is my last month here at AUK, and soon I’ll be returning to the United States. Looking back on the four years in Kuwait, I take pride in the distinguished academic institution that AUK has become. The strength of any university is rooted in its faculty, and we have attracted and retained outstanding teachers who are actively engaged with our students and maintain their expertise through research and creative activity. AUK is also very fortunate in having a dedicated staff of academic and administrative professionals who help us serve our mission of building an institution of excellence which provides a broadly-based arts & sciences education and educates global citizens for success in the twenty-first century.
You, our students, are both our main constituents and a “product” of our efforts. The knowledge you acquire and the skills you develop at AUK will serve yourselves, Kuwait, and the world. The distinctions and successes achieved by our students over the last five years – be they in academic, extra- and co-curricular activities, in athletics or in community service – all speak well to the learning and personal growth that take place on the AUK campus. The current student population of about 2250 total (undergraduates and IEP) is being well served by our faculty and staff. Even with a growing number of private institutions of higher education in Kuwait and the region, AUK is continuing to build the excellence of our programs, faculty, and facilities in order to ensure the learning outcomes and career success of our students.
I wish you all continued success in your studies at AUK!

AUK Continuing Students Academic Scholarship

In order to maintain your scholarship award, make sure you read the ‘Terms and Conditions’ document which was given to you upon receiving your award.

To read more about how to apply for this award, please visit the following webpage:
http://www.auk.edu.kw/student_affairs/registrar_academic_scholarships.jsp.

For inquiries you may e-mail us at scholarship@auk.edu.kw.

Government Scholarship Students

(This includes PUC internal scholarships, Diplomats & Minister’s Seats)

In order to maintain your scholarship award, make sure you familiarize yourself with your scholarship awards’ Rules and Conditions.

You may do so by visiting the Private Universities Council (PUC) website at www.puc.edu.kw. And for any inquiries you may e-mail us at scholarship@auk.edu.kw.

Eloquence...

By Nur Soliman

When I thought about this question, of eloquence and the skill or the art of writing, it sort of reminded me of a conversation (it bordered on an argument) with a young musician about whether mastering the technique was more important than the “spirit” of performance. I was somewhat inclined to the idea that you had to have the “essence” or the content before you work on mastering the “technique” or the form, which meant much more. The young musician responded by saying that spirit or feeling was no good if one couldn’t adequately master the techniques; it might even sound worse. She had a point, but taking it a step further, I thought then about how deeply intertwined the two were.

In discussing the question of where eloquence comes in when it comes to writing, I believe we can discuss the issue on similar lines. Before this, I guess we have to think about what ‘eloquence’ and ‘rhetoric’ really mean. Edward Said has a wonderfully rich essay called *Living in Arabic* which he wrote shortly before his death in 2003. In it, he describes eloquence (or rhetoric) and the “elegance” of language in contrast with simple linguistic communication. According to Said, eloquence, something not many of

us think about much, conveys “distinguished verbal practice, a skill with words that will mark an eloquent person as possessing something that others do not,” things that constitute rhetoric that is made up of linguistic tools, such as tropes, schemes, figures of speech and other devices that are part of eloquence. It is not just verbal cleverness, but a way to animate what you say, as he quotes from an 18th century professor of rhetoric, Giambattista Vico.

I firmly believe in the importance of animating one’s writing (or speech) with such a spirit of conviction or passion. That said, the consultant in me also reminds me that without clarity, none of a writer’s enthusiasm and feeling can ever be truly communicated unless it is delivered in excellent clarity of language and organization of thought. If one has not yet mastered a language with its sentence structures, its vocabulary, and its grammar, one cannot yet hope to aim for eloquence. Also, organized thoughts and a planned out draft or skeleton structure to what one is trying to say are really important. If you can spell things out, then all your already epic ideas and deep, rich feelings will find a space for themselves to show, and it is here that a rhetoric device like a metaphor or any other figure of speech will really help.

& Writing

By Kheiriyeh Ahmadi

Eloquence could more often be a natural talent possessed by those who are born with a particular language and they seem to swiftly grasp the structure of their native language from early ages as they often use a sublime style when speaking. The power of persuasion is these people’s innate gift. Nonetheless, eloquence can also be achieved and improved by

practice and after mastering a language but I believe this is a rarity as very few possess that much perseverance and fortitude!

Although it might differ in various languages, I believe that eloquence is not using bravura words to convey great ideas. Eloquence is the use of simple words that create great effects, such effects that move a nation toward a revolution.

Nature

By Fatima Ibraheem

Like charisma, eloquence is rhetorically-based. Eloquence, I believe, is the deliverance of words—whether written or oral—fluently (the correctness of the language) causing a powerful effect (a concurrence to the desired gist), yet in a facilitated manner, wherein lies the honesty and truthfulness of the words. Personally, the first thing that popped into my mind when I read the question is the adages that contain indescribable expressions, which surpass human rhetorical capacity found in *Nahj-ul-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence)* by Imam Ali (the Prophet’s successor, peace be upon him).

The issue of eloquence coming before mastering a language or writing sug-

gests that the characteristic of eloquence is innate rather than learnt in an individual. This is true; however, I believe that it does not get discovered until the practitioner masters the language and its writing, for him/her to express his/her eloquence. For that, a person can be “officially” called eloquent—even if innately. Thus, eloquence being an innate character is the foundation for an individual, and does not get exposed without a bridge that acts as a liaison—and that bridge is the stage when the individual masters the language and its writing skills.

I shall take this opportunity to gently conclude with a valuable saying from *The Peak Of Eloquence*: “Your supremacy over others is in proportion to the extent of your knowledge and wisdom”.

or Nurture?

Moments in Words

By Hanouf S. Al-Juhail

August 1990, Adiliyah, Kuwait

In a room occupied by too many people, there I sat next to my father clinging on to every word he was saying. I was thirteen, and it was the first week of August, where nothing looked familiar, with the exception of the heat. The room became too noisy and clouded with cigarettes’ smoke, so I decided to walk around the house and look for a quiet place. I peeked from a window and saw three Iraqi soldiers, fully equipped with their weapons and machines, roaming the streets of our neighborhood. Saddam’s army invaded Kuwait that week, and in a matter of hours, I had to learn new vocabularies to

comprehend the situation and talk about it with others. I had to gather my belongings and fit them into one handbag, so I grabbed a couple of t-shirts, jeans, pajamas, my toothbrush, and my journal. We were four families clustered into one household; my older aunts urged us to abandon our home and move in with them until we saw an end to that predicament. As a teenager who was consumed with fear, oblivious to what was going on around me, I had to find a refuge, and it was in words. I wrote every day, and on some days, I wrote several times. I had to use words like *invaders*, *retaliation*, and *bombardment* in

my journal entries, which was bizarre at the beginning. Prior to that dark August, my journal entries consisted of vocabularies like *boy crush*, *Madonna’s leg warmers* and *moonwalking*. I started writing at the age of eleven when my English teacher suggested it as a way for me to improve my writing skills. During the invasion however, writing became an outlet for me. It was a way to vent, explore, fantasize, and not to mention comprehend everything around me. When the ground shook beneath me, or when bomb blasts penetrated the stillness of my night, I was hiding between my words.

August 1996, Boulder CO

In a field covered with fall leaves and Frisbees, I felt tiny. I found a tree that I could hide under so that no one could see me cry. Earlier that morning, I was overwhelmed with enthusiasm and joy walking, almost skipping, to attend my first day in college at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I knew it was a big school, so I had my map ready and I was set on making it to my classes on time so that I would leave a good impression on my first day.

I started to walk towards the center of campus, and all buildings looked alike. People looked alike. And I felt as if I was an alien who just landed on planet Earth, and all “humans” were looking at it strangely. A few hours went by, and I was still trying to find my classrooms, until it all started to get to me. Here I was, the first member in my immediate family to attend college, and I can’t even find my classrooms. I couldn’t ask anyone for directions

because I thought I had a weird accent. I cried for a long time under that tree, then reached over and pulled my journal from my backpack and started writing. I questioned my decision to study abroad, and in words, I understood all my anxieties and inhibitions, and decided to give myself another chance and try again the next day. I continued to be lost for much of my freshman year, but when I was consumed with desperation, writing helped me find my way.

May 2007, Leeds U.K.

It was a beautiful sunny day, which is quite rare in Leeds, where many hospital patients and their families chose to be outside. The hospital’s garden looked so green looking down at it from the 4th floor. I was standing next the window in my sister’s room where she was in a coma. She was sixteen and full of life and laughter, and I struggled to comprehend her condition. The nurse told me that I could speak to her, and that she might hear me, but every time I tried approaching her bed, my feet would stop moving. I had to leave her room several times to breathe, and when I did, I would find my father in utter agony. I couldn’t display any emotions; cry or scream. I had to

be their rock. I left the cancer ward, and kept on walking in no direction until a hospital employee found me. She was a psychologist, who had tried talking to my family members in an attempt to help us cope with our tragic situation. Many of us couldn’t speak, and when we did, it was all in tears. Each one of us had to invent a new mechanism to live through that ordeal. Mine was writing. The psychologist handed us empty journals that are normally given out to patients’ family members to write about everything; their feelings, fears, prayers, and memories. It is thought to be a way to encourage family members to document the moments that are missed by coma patients. On the

first day of writing, I consumed all the space in my journal, while other family members perceived it as a silly way to deal with pain. It was unconventional and irrelevant to them, until they saw me transform. Writing had disguised my trepidations with calmness, and helped me find hope. Although words didn’t reassure us or cast away our fears, they were a way for us, as a family, to bond and understand one another. After many weeks, my sister did make it out of her coma, and reading our journals made her realize how much she was loved by everyone. Now, as she continues her brave fight to recover, she writes most of the time, even on days when words are so difficult to find.

Dean's Corner

By Carol Ross

A new year brings lots of excitement and in Wolf Pack country, it is no different. AUK has a new leader at the helm. Dr. Tim's role is to move AUK further down the road of success. Get on board and get to know him.

Speaking of roads! We have made progress on parking. YEA! We are not building a parking garage but you will see more spaces around the perimeter of campus. No, we don't have a spot for every car and you must still park in only one space but at least we have more spaces!

You survived RAC! We have to do these things to help you make sound decisions about your education. Seeing your advisor wasn't such a bad thing and the vast majority of you are registered for spring and summer. That is was the goal! Pay attention to the deadlines for Spring and Summer terms.

My role as the Dean of Student Affairs, and that of the Student Affairs team, is to serve as your advocate and assist in the development of an environment conducive to learning and your success. We will assist you in negotiating a "situation" and help you work through issues. It is what we love to do.

But...There is always a but(t)! You have a responsibility as a student. (*O, NO-NOT ANOTHER LECTURE!*) Go to class. The sixteen week semester is not optional. You are to attend all the classes. You cannot come to campus, because your parents must see you leave the house, chill at Starbucks and watch your faculty come to Starbucks, get a latte, smile at you on the way to class and you don't go! We see you in Starbucks, behind the Liberal Arts building, sitting behind the Administration building, at the Hang Out, outside the library... DUH! It is much easier to do what is right from the beginning than to explain what went wrong at the end. Value and respect this opportunity enough to take advantage. There are people in this world that really want an education who are not allowed to read, have no schooling option or the money to attend. Think about it before you blame someone for your not being successful. Excuses are monuments of nothingness...and those who so often use them, rarely amount to anything. Every member of the Wolf Pack has the talent to succeed. No more excuses! Backing out of the Dean's Corner till next time! dears



Happy New Year from Admissions

By Maher Dabbouseh

Welcome Back Wolf Pack! As we enter this New Year, it is certain that many of us have New Year's resolutions (goals) that we have set. I have had New Year's resolutions in the past that were broken. I am not the New Year's resolution GURU. However, I have achieved plenty of goals and wanted to share a few tips that hopefully will help you:

Plan: A goal without a plan is a dream. In order to achieve your goal, set timelines and sub-goals. Ask yourself "How am I going to get to my goal?" Write it down. Inspect what you expect! Without follow-up and monitoring of your plan, it will be extremely difficult to complete your goal.

Do It For 30 Days Straight: It takes 30 days to develop a habit. If you stick to your goal or follow your plan towards reaching your goal for 30 days, you are most likely to achieve your goal. This worked for me 2 years ago when I wanted to lose weight, I went to the gym 4 days a week for the first month. I lost A LOT OF WEIGHT. Stop by the office for BEFORE and AFTER Pictures. This is attributed to forming the habit of going to the gym. I am now a fitness freak. I am addicted to exercise!

Don't Shoot for the Stars: If you set an unrealistic goal for yourself, you are setting yourself up for failure. Make sure your goal is realistic/achievable. For Example, if your new year's resolution is to lose 20kg this

year, try to lose 10. Then set a new goal of losing 10 more.

Find Support: You don't have to tell the entire world what your goals are. However, try to tell the near and dear. Many people try to keep their goals to themselves, afraid that others will try to get in the way or provide discouragement. Although this may be true at times, it is important to tell trusted friends and family members about your goals. They may be a great source of encouragement and support. Also, you hold yourself to a higher level of accountability by announcing your goals to others.

You will Slip: Nobody is perfect. Whatever your goal might be, you will reach points of disappointment, setbacks and what-not. Your ability to rebound will

determine whether you reach your goal. Plan what to do when you face setbacks. Ask a friend or family member that has faced similar challenges for assistance. NEVER GIVE UP!

Set Sub-Goals and Rewards: In order to reach the ultimate goal, you must develop small goals along the way. In order to motivate yourself in achieving the small goals, you must reward yourself. This makes tracking your progress fun and gives you something to look forward to.

In closing, I would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! I wish you the best of luck in achieving your goals this year. I hope something that you read today helps you in your journey towards achieving your goal!

Noura's Winter Word Search

By Noura Al-Ajmi

Things to Do with Winter

Boots
Camping
Coats
Cone
Christmas
Cloudy
Cold
Dim
Ear Muffs
Flu
Frozen
Hot Chocolate
Ice
Jack Frost
Mittens
New Year
Rain
Scarf
Snow
Sweater
Windy
Wool gloves

H L Q I C E B P J E M H R A K O T X D N
V O K F U W I T O H F E C U V Z S G C I
I N T T S L A O W O L D A Q B E P A V H
P E Y C W C R Y E T U I M O G D K W U U
X R A H I A Q G P C C A P L E L O P I X
O R E R O H Z U O H A H I R K O N T T A
F E W I N D Y X M O T M N A L C T A S R
O P E S K A J R I C F T G G I V A P O E
M W N T J G O A T O C U L E P A D E R D
I N O M E E S G T L Z O L K Y N A N F O
J F N A N D M S E A V K O U D I M O K V
E Q I S O O T I N E E D S H W A T D C H
C Y L E C O A T S E P N E Z O R F I A R
O L O L O Y S A A L O J Q R R A B K J A
G U O B W A A R P W X V U T E X O S P E
Y B J U E M M D P T E B M I S T P T Q Y
I F E C D U E F E T A Z Y T E W A U U W
S O T T F Y I S Q P C D O O N I I E G E
U P O F R O U L F W A I S E O J C L W N
H I S E M O B K A E R B R E T N I W O S

Notes from The Business & Economics Division

Dr. Mohsen A. Bagnied, the Head of the Business and Economics Division, participated in the Annual Conference of the Association of Egyptian American Scholars in the US and Canada (AEAS), held at Cairo University on December 28-29, 2009. Dr. Bagnied who is also the Vice President of AEAS presented a paper on "Global Economic Crisis, Causes -Impact on the Arab World—Policy Recommendations". The conclusions of Dr. Bagnied's research were reported in local newspapers in Egypt, particularly his 8-M model for the economic recovery/reform of Egypt. Dr. Bagnied's association with the American University of Kuwait was mentioned several times in the Egyptian press. The conference was also attended by Dr. Aly Mansour, Associate Professor of management at AUK.

In addition, during the Conference Dr. Bagnied Chaired the Workshop



Dr. Mohsen A. Bagnied

"Seeking Excellence in Egyptian Education. He presented a paper on "Reforming Egyptian Education". Dr. Bagnied in his paper addressed the major issues in upgrading both school and university education in all their components from curriculum, to teachers, to facilities to students. Other speakers in the workshop included professors from the American University in Cairo.

Professor Jeremy Cripps presented a paper on "Islamic Finance: The demand issues" at the Asian Pacific Conference on International Accounting Issues was managed by Faculty from The Sid Craig School of Business, California State University, Fresno and held in Las Vegas, Nevada November 2009. The primary objective of the conference is to provide an important forum for academics and practitioners to enhance their understanding of international accounting issues. The conference is one of the most respected and renowned accounting conferences in the world. This year the conference attracted 205 scholars and practitioners from 120 institutions and 28 countries, who participated, discussed, and shared their experience of the gradual convergence of international accounting practices at organizations and corporations active which interact with counter parties in the Asian Pacific region. Besides presenting a paper



Business & Economics Division forms Business Advisory Board with local business leaders.

on Islamic Finance, Professor Cripps Moderated a session on the impact of IFRS on National Accountancy and Commercial Codes.

ACBSP Region 8 Annual Conference:

Professor Jeremy Cripps attended the Annual Conference of the International Region of the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. The annual confer-

ence was held in at International School of Management at L'Institut Supérieur Européen de Gestion (ISEG) Paris, France. The theme for the conference this year piggybacked on the theme for the ACBSP Annual Conference 2010 "Recognizing Excellence in Business Education." The meeting focused on the Rebranding initiative at present under discussion for ACBSP and several

presentations were made on the elements of the Standards for Accreditation by Accreditation Commissioners. Networking sessions concentrated on the teaching of IFRS (International Financial reporting Standards), issues of accreditation for American universities outside the continental USA, study abroad opportunities at ACBSP member campuses, and regional business issues.

Television Soaps Empower Women

An Interview with Professor Shoma Munshi

By Utpal Borpujari

They have influenced fashion, created fierce debates in media and the society and mesmerised people across regions and languages. Some of them even have brought the entire country to a standstill when they are on. Yes, we are talking about the ubiquitous TV serials on the numerous channels, spanning genre, theme and class representation.

A latest book seeks to analyse the impact of prime time soap operas on the contemporary Indian society. The writer, Shoma Munshi, division head of social sciences and professor of anthropology at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), has chosen five most popular soaps for her study. Munshi talks to Utpal Borpujari of Deccan Herald on the idea behind her book, "Prime Time Soap Operas on Indian Television" (Routledge). Excerpts:

You have chosen five specific serials for your book. What were your criteria for selecting them?

It was deliberate. The book tracks the specific time period of 2000–2008. The three most successful soaps from Balaji Telefilms – 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi', 'Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii' and 'Kasautii Zindagi Kay' – were obvious choices, having topped TRPs for eight years. I chose 'Saat Phere... Saloni Ka Safar' and 'Sapna Babul Ka... Bidaai' as a counterfoil, because they were the first to challenge the K soaps' supremacy, and both were issue-based, focusing on the dark skin/fair skin thesis.

How do you view the latest trend of serials taking on social causes like child marriage, female foeticide, farmers' suicides, etc., even if perfunctorily?

Viewership data shows that the audience base has spread from metros to include smaller towns and villages, and TAM (Television Audience Measurement) data now tracks this. In such a scenario, stories of soaps have to take into account issues that relate to a larger base of people. Besides, after eight years of the family sagas of K soaps, people were looking for a change.

Soap operas, ironically, are female character dominated. Why is it so when we see it in the context of the fact that India has a male-dominated society?

There is nothing ironic about this. Soap operas are in fact referred to as 'soaps' because their origins lie in the 1950s radio dramas in the US that were broadcast during the day, when women were mainly at home doing household chores. These radio dramas were sponsored by companies such as Proctor and Gamble who were soap manufacturers, hence the name, which stuck. In addition, the very genre of soap operas is women-centric. This is the case not just in India, but anywhere in the world. The soaps' characteristic address is to women viewers.

What is your view regarding the quality of serials on Indian channels at present, particularly when compared to days when DD was the only channel?

There is no question about the fact that DD had some landmark shows such as 'Hum Log' and 'Buniyaad'. One must also remember, however, that DD was the only channel available to us. Open skies policy means more to choose from. Of course, the recognisability of channels also helps, in that Star Plus, Colors and Zee have greater recognition value.

Soap operas are often alleged to be representing women in a regressive mode...

This is something that I have always taken issue with. Why must women be considered regressive if they are homemakers? Soap stories, being women-centric by definition, locate the woman in the family home. In soaps, competence in the personal sphere is valued and women are able to handle difficult situations well because of it, and this is crucial. Women like Parvati and Tulsi have very strong moral centres. Nowadays, there are women characters with more shades of grey than earlier who are very much in control, as well as characters who despite living in fear of their mothers-in-law, show definite sparks of revolt. And, very importantly, unlike many Bollywood films, women and their bodies in soaps are not objectified.

What, according to you, have been the major qualities of Indian soap operas in terms of their content vis-a-vis society?

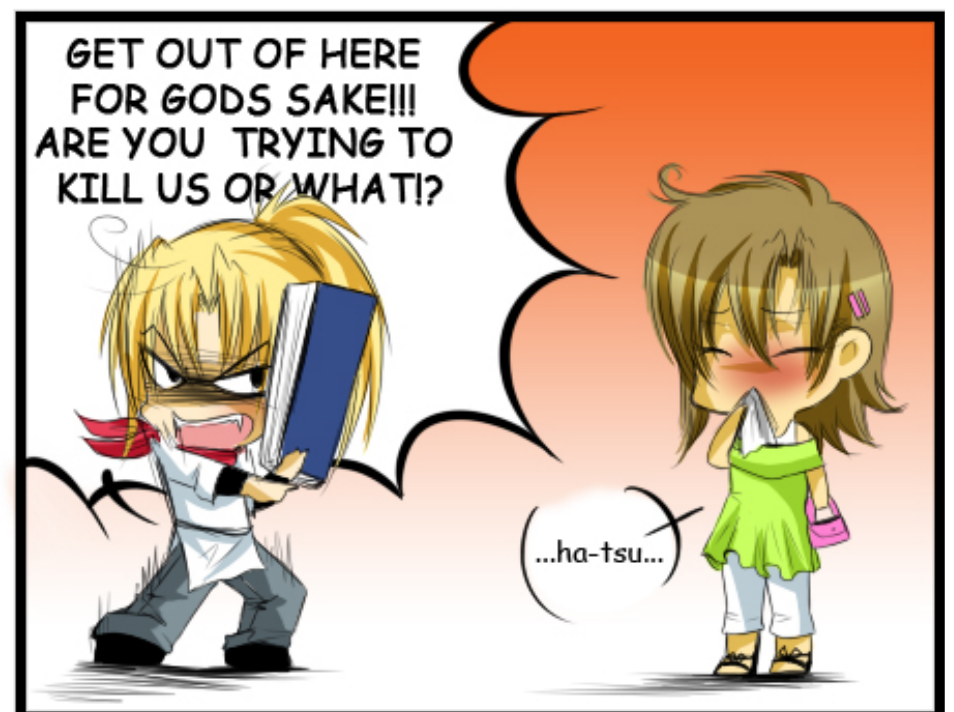
Soaps work at many levels. The overtly visible impact includes the influence on fashion in jewellery, clothes and accessories. Soaps have popularised festivals like Karva Chauth to the extent that it is now celebrated all over India. The mangalsutra is now worn by communities where it was not the norm earlier. Very importantly, and however strange it sounds, soaps play a role in empowering women. Recent academic research clearly demonstrates that rural women admire the independence of strong soap heroines, especially Tulsi and Parvati.

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FLU THEN...



FLU NOW...



Announcements from the Office of the Registrar

Change of Assigned Major

Government Scholarship Students will be able to change their assigned scholarship major during the last week of classes starting January 17th till the 21st, 2010.

Check your AUK e-mail for more details!

Spring Registration

Spring advanced registration ends January 14th, 2010.

Registration opens January 26th, 2010.

Be sure your tuition is paid by 4:00pm, February 11th, 2010, so you won't be de-registered!

Spring Drop/Add

Drop/Add is the first week of the Spring semester,

February 14 – 18, 2010.





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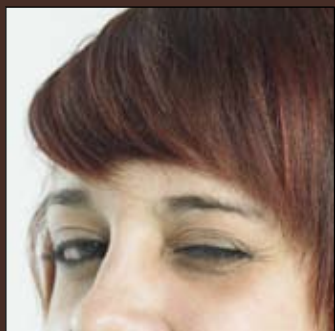
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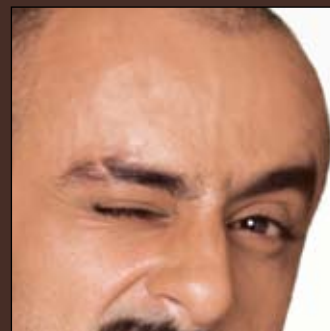
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