

The Voice of AUK

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American University of Kuwait

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The Voice Members

Editor-in-Chief

Zeinab Wasfy

Hello. I'm a 21 year-old who like's the color green. My vision for the future is to be surrounded by trees, greenery, a blank un-lined book that comes with an attachable pencil and a puppy that will grow old with me. Maybe also a turtle, because they're usually green.

General Reporter

Farah Hamoudah

I'm Farah Hamoudah, an 18-year-old computer engineering major. I have a passion for all things mind-boggling and writing happens to be one of those things. My friends say I'm too loud, but I think that makes me more enthusiastic than everyone else. I can't write too loud, so that's why I do it. Technology, science fiction, comedy and people (social psychology) are the four fields that I think I'll always be curious about, and AUK helps me curate that curiosity. My ultimate goal is to travel through time to erase all bad vampire novels from existence, which is laughable but necessary (like myself).

General Reporter

Sara F. Ayesh

السلام عليكم I'm a 20 year old senior majoring in Management. I enjoy being a fact debunker, and taking photographs; ironic occurrences are my favorite subject, selfies are not allowed. I hope to be a writer in the near future.

Section Manager

Shahad AlMousa

Entertainment Section Manager and social media correspondent. managing and editing the articles that fall under 'entertainment', also in charge of social media platforms related to The Voice Of AUK.

Section Manager

Shahad Al-Failakawi

My name is Shahad Al-Failakawi and I am a 20 year old. I love to spend my time writing random things, cooking, and binge watching TV shows.

Section Manager

Ahmad Hasan

Hello! My name is Ahmad Hasan; I am a 22 year old business student at AUK with a diploma in marketing and in a little under two years a degree in Finance and Management from AUK. The English language has always captivated me, to the point where my Arabic skills have fallen laughably behind in comparison. As such, I look forward to working in the Voice in a way that not only lets me share my love of the English language with others, but also combines that passion with a more practical, business-like application, which is relevant to what I am currently studying at AUK. I have also recently gotten into playing music as well as physical fitness, two aspects of my life I also enjoy sharing with others, and look forward to writing articles about.

Graphic Designer

Alaa' Dashti

I'm Ala'a Dashti, a 26 year-old graduate from Box Hill College, Kuwait with a diploma Graphic Design. I enrolled in AUK to continue and get my bachelors degree in Graphic Design. One of my initial projects for The Voice of AUK was the logo, which was successfully changed. I designed it to portray that all AUK'ers have the right to express their opinions freely.

General Advisor

Omar Mehdi

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of Kuwait, or its faculty, staff and students.**

Student Center Finally Opening

By: Sara F. Ayesh

The new Student Center will be opening mid February, near the Science Building and it will hold all the clubs, organizations, ALASS (Academic Advising & Learning Support Services) as well as a the student gym.

Alamarat Aljadidah Company, AJC, is the main contractor of the project and has been working with the consulting company Dar Salleh Al Qallaf for the past year on the AUK Student Center. AUK students will finally be able to enjoy the fruits of their labor this month.

The Student Center will have a men's gym in the ground floor, and private women's gym in the first. The second floor is reserved for student clubs and

organizations, including The Voice of AUK's office, Student Life, and the department of Student Affairs. The second floor is also the new Hangout and will include billiards tables, a library, a Play Station area, and study nooks. Public Affairs is in the third floor, and all of ALASS (Academic Advising and Learning Supportive Services) which includes the tutoring, writing and advising centers, will be there as well.

The new Student Center is behind the Science Building where the old AUK Gym and Grass Field were. It will be hard to miss with the beautiful chess board in the front of the building. Hopefully, if the plan goes as expected, Students and faculty should start moving into the new building with a fully functional gym, during the second week of February.

The Student Center should be open from 8 AM-9 PM weekdays and 12PM-6 PM weekends.



The World of Tomorrow

By: Ahmad Hasan

Mankind has seen a tremendous boost in technological advancement over the past century, with scientific progress exponentially on the rise. From the wheel to rocket engines, the human civilization has advanced to an unparalleled degree of technological sophistication. Globalization has rendered the world as one, with people connected to each other as never seen before. Automation is taking an ever-increasing role in our day-to-day lives, and more and more jobs seem to become made obsolete as we discover ways to do it faster, cheaper, and better. This new era we live in has only just begun, and as we truly dig our heels into the 21st century, we can only wonder at what marvels await us in the future.

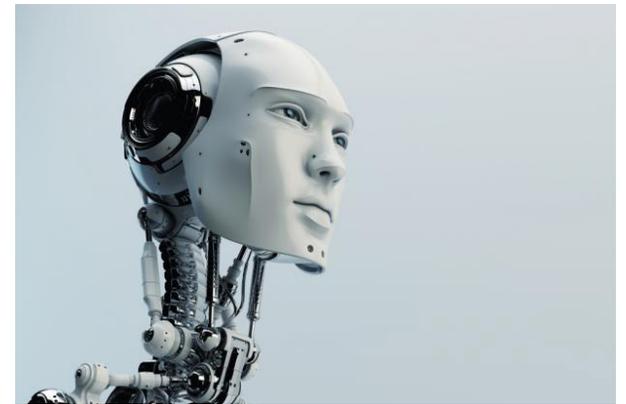
There are many aspects of our lives today that would be so laughably unbelievable to people living just a few centuries ago that it makes a person wonder what the next few decades have in store for us. Transportation has been steadily improving and becoming more available on a global level, with many exciting prospects waiting to be exploited to their full potential. Self-driving cars are a very real thing, and people rarely seem to think of this outside of personal, day-to-day commutes. With transportation well on its way to being automated, it becomes possible for much, if not all, of traffic to become a thing of the past.

Smart cars which communicate to each other and drive themselves would not only improve safety and reduce time spent on the road, but also allow for more free time for the average person. It also allows for many of the logistics of trade to be handled in a more efficient manner. Trucks which ferry themselves from location to location can replace much of the driver force of modern-day trade routes. Another exciting prospect with transportation of goods comes in the form of drones.

Commonly associated with clandestine military behavior, drones provide a possibility for smaller-scale transportation and delivery. Everything from groceries, pharmaceuticals, fast food and entertainment products can be brought to you, in your home, by a small courier drone. This would take out another sizeable chunk of the forces of the road, and improve the world in countless ways, from more open space to less pollution. In a similar vein but dealing with a dramatically wider variety of things is the reality of automation. Little by little, from the first cotton mill to the latest car assembly factory, we are getting remarkably better at doing the same job with significantly less people. This opens up a world of possibilities, and a world of concerns. Most jobs will no longer need to be done by people; with many already being replaced by high-tech machinery, and only the future will show us what this means for us as a whole.

The amount of technology we encounter on a daily basis is staggering. Everything, every single aspect of the day-

to-day life of a first-world citizen, has been tailored by someone, somewhere, to improve the general quality of life on this Earth. We are ever-improving and always coming up with the unexpected. I personally cannot wait to see what the moon landing of our generation turns out to be, with fingers crossed that no cantankerous old buffoon decides to ruin this planet before it reaches its potential.



The Untapped Realm of Fiction

By: Ahmad Hasan

While not the most popular genre, science fiction has always appealed to me like no other type of entertainment has done before. I cannot recall what triggered this obsession, or when it became obvious to me that no other reading would do, but for over a decade of my life I have been quaffing books of fiction at a rate that honestly has me worried about my own mental health. Reading is a very personal thing, with likes and dislikes boiling down to an individual's preferences. However, it is very hard to find out what you would like or dislike without actually attempting to read it; no pre-existing judgments or misconceptions about a genre will hold when faced with the reality of the situation. You may think you dislike all things fiction just to read one novel or watch one show that changes your outlook completely. In this article I will share some of the authors and books I've encountered throughout my reading career, assuming I haven't lost you already, as well as a brief mention of some noteworthy shows that have come out recently that fall under this category.

When it comes to works of fiction, the most noteworthy aspect, in my opinion, is the setting. You can tell a great

deal about what to expect from a book based off of its setting. Is the book set in the future, with mankind living among the stars, with all the perils and wonders looming out there in the cosmos waiting to be uncovered? Or is it a more traditional high-fantasy novel, with magic and swords and dragons and all that jazz? Could it even be set on Earth, at the present date, with only the subtlety of chances marking that it is in fact fiction and not reality that you're reading? There are countless possibilities and countless topics to choose from, from the genre-defining works of authors such as Tolkien, Asimov, and Vonnegut, to modern day authors influenced by them, millions of unique worlds are out there waiting to be explored.

While science fiction has been around for a while, its popularity has often been low, with sci-fi, whether in the form of games, comics, books or television, remaining a niche market without many followers. This has steadily been changing, however, as more and more people are won over to the side of fiction. It is unclear when exactly this transition started happening, but the evidence of its newfound popularity can be found everywhere. Superhero movies, once rare and barely noticed, are now among the highest grossing films in cinemas. Even television, once only home to the rare passing sci-fi show, is now dominated by shows featuring anything from dragons to androids. It is clear that science fiction is on the rise, and I encourage anyone and everyone to sample this genre in whatever way they want.



Networking

By: Mariam Naser

“The world gets smaller, as we connect with people from across the globe... networking can open doors you did not know existed”-The Student Talk magazine, November issue.

Very well said, the message delivered here is true and it intertwines with communication. Appreciating and respecting diversity is a hugely important skill that has many advantages that help us all stay connected. Allowing us to make great long lasting friendships and relationships for work and outside the workplace. Also, it helps us have a better understanding of other cultures allowing us to connect with other diverse places, as well as making us avoid ethnocentrism. This skill is extremely important especially now a days with a life that is hugely reliant on communication, travel and moving constantly. Adaptation is one of the most crucial skills to learn and work on always, it will help us immensely and happens to go hand in hand with networking and communicating.

The world becomes ours and we start to have a wider audience to share our ideas and voice, as well as finding

like minded individuals, when we start to network. Social media helps us massively by providing the ability to communicate to a wide variety of people from all around the world, however does have its own disadvantages. Travelling and taking advantage of communicating and networking whenever the opportunity presents itself is the easiest way to start. With people in your area at work, society, tourists, and travelling. 'Experiences does for the soul what education does for the mind'-Casey Neistat. As it helps us network and be immersed with people from diverse places, and that have different backgrounds and lifestyles. All help us become better well rounded individuals not only for society but for ourselves as well.

Many doors start to open up when we can communicate and network with others well, especially people who are from diversely different places around the world. Doors and opportunities start to open and present them self that we never even knew existed or could happen. There are numerous advantages of networking and connecting to others. It makes us better and have a broader perspective, that helps us be able to achieve our goals and dreams more effectively and efficiently. The world does start to get smaller as we start to network and can create meaningful amazing relationships with people from all around the world, even now with a population of 7 billion people. We are all more similar than we think and meeting

others from different places around the world allows us to get a variety of perspectives. It allows us to get a better view as we can start to learn more and witness different traditions and cultures. Other perspectives from all around the world open our mind and can introduce new ideas and spark up new dreams and goals. Also it allows us to be able to form some of the best relationships and friendships as we get introduced to many people and get to choose who to spend our time with. There are so many advantages of networking and implementing connections with others as we leave our comfort zone and have to adapt as well as put ourselves out there to the world. All these experiences push us and make us better, stronger and more independent. Allowing us to think for ourselves, be more open minded, never ignorant and be able to make the right decisions for ourselves.

Other advantages of networking include having more opportunities and being able to reach new limits in our goals and dreams. Either for work, our personal goals. As it helps us realize 'we don't know enough'-Alessia Cara, Seventeen, the importance of learning and experiencing more. That there is always something new to learn, and to take every opportunity to educate ourselves and our soul. Take our time to breathe, live in the moment and appreciate every second and every breath.

14 Things Every Student Should Do Before They Graduate

By: Shahad Almousa

1. Write for a university publication, because who better to voice their opinions to and about a university, other than a student at the university?
2. Strike a pose with something- or someone- known on campus. How else will everyone on Instagram know which university you go to?
3. Try to abuse perks and discounts you can get from your student ID. The worst thing about this is that not many people know about the places that offer student discounts; make it a mission to find out. If this is what it takes, ask every single person working in a store or shop.
4. Join at least one club: the key to having the best college experience is to be as involved as possible.
5. Learn something about a different culture: college is the place to expand the range of your thinking spectrum. Let different aspects of different cultures open your mind to a whole new idea.

6. Stay awake for at least 24 hours straight. Really? what's finals week without one of those.

7. Make new friends. College friends will stay with you for life, so make sure you find your people.

8. Travel!! Take trips whenever you can. You'll need a physical, mental, and emotional break.

9. Get an A (grade wise). Not only does an A mean you've found your calling, but it also means that you have been inspired by your professor enough to showcase your best at a certain subject.

10. Participate in a silly event: of course, I am not saying there exists such a thing as a 'silly' event, but every once in awhile some club decides to organize an event for fun and there, only there, is where all the fun exists.

11. Sing at a karaoke event. This goes for whether you spontaneously do it with some friends, or at a university jam session, open mic or concert.

12. Speaking of concerts, ATTEND ONE! Whether it be this semester's concert organised by the Drama department or an actual concert by a well-known celebrity.

13. Induce an existential crisis: question your existence, why not? Whether you are sleeping in your accounting class, or nervously sweating in your engineering lab, you

have at least on one occasion thought of whether or not this is worth your sanity.

14. Switch up your routine! Starting university or college is like starting with a clean slate. Try to be more social, eat healthier, workout more, study hard, read many many books and last but not least have as much fun as you can.





“Dr. Strangelove”, The Cold War and The Syrian Catastrophe

By: Anonymous

52 years ago, Stanley Kubrick deflected his razor-sharp wit, childlike curiosity, and sheer charm into the production of the ever-famous satire film revolving around the events of the cold war titled “Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb”, which has left many with an unshakable sense of confusion, a milky no-where of dread and fun. After first watching it, my own face couldn’t decide whether to laugh or frown. The slideshow of the nuclear clouds setting off one by one in tune to Vera Lynn’s infamous “We’ll meet again” imprinted the film so that it would haunt you for as long as you shall live. That scene alone would make you quiver for days. It would haunt you to remind you that one man’s mistake can ruin it for everyone- for good; that some things are truly unforgivable. Most importantly, it reminds you that the world is ridiculous. War too. People as well! Bonkers is the keyword here.

Today, amongst the escalating Syrian war, the terrorism in the region, and the eccentric decisions global leaders have been making, it is undeniable that life seems pretty bleak. I mean, this feels eerily nostalgic. Antagonists fight it off from their war rooms with their little remote-control toys, and as a result millions of people lose their homes, their dignities, their lives. Then come the nuclear threats! Come again? What was that? Another threat? Let’s add that to the Earth’s fumbling pile of hate mail. “Someday I reckon the world’s gonna stop turning” my grandmother says. I didn’t believe her when I was four. But that was then, this is now.

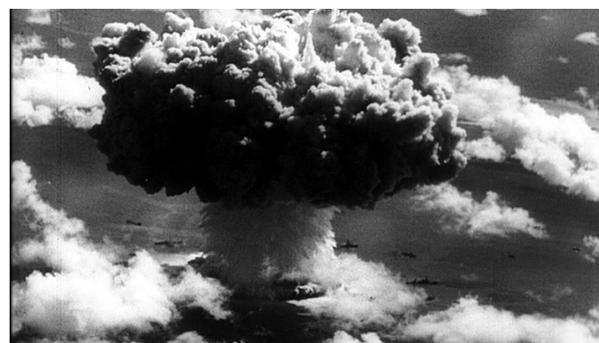
When I was younger, I thought it was impossible to be an optimist. Because I always tried to fix things that were inevitably broken. I tried and tried and tried and I could never fix them.

I do not feel defeated anymore. It’s all perspective, really. Kubrick’s darkish humor and Peter Seller’s outstanding performance in playing 3 roles simultaneously taught

me that impossible times means you just have to force a laugh. We choose how to take things, and not the other way around. If you take the worst imaginable scenario ever- the Earth’s definite doom and make people smile while watching a film about it, how is that not ingeniously impossible?

Kubrick’s point in the film was to facilitate hope in the time of The Cold war, where hope seemed to have fled everyone’s thoughts. We need more film producers like Kubrick that have the special ability to pick people up when they’re feeling their worst. We need people that know the art of motivation and the importance of moving forward no matter what. And most important of all, we need to laugh. No matter what we absolutely need to laugh! It has been only 19 years of life for me so far but if there’s anything I learned it’s that life is laughter.

I know that everybody hated 2016. But maybe that’s why it hated us back? We needn’t take life too seriously. Everything in it is already serious enough. The situation is dire in some people’s homelands, I know that already. But we have to realize that against all odds, we have the power to fix the unfixabl,e even with a laugh.



Inside Out

By: Noor

Dare I try to explain, yet not understand, how disconnected we have become. It’s true we came into this world with unique bodies, faces, voices, and we were to be internally distinguished as well. Is it natural that those differences would set us apart? It can’t be, it started somewhere. Some place and time that must have seemed so insignificant but mirrored countless imitations thereafter. And now, they speak selectively to those they think to be their own.

Not all of us are like that of course, and usually we are the ones who suffer the most. We breathe the same air as you, and we have feelings just as you do, underneath it all we are not all that different. But we suffer the most because we see beyond this shallow and distorted idea that is almost impossible to avoid because once they’re aware of it, they catch this seemingly contagious belief.

And here I am, wondering of how I’ve become. Riddled with insecurities because of the differences that made me. My kindness being mistaken for weakness and ignorance. So I hesitate more as I grow, and I know this is not who I am on the inside. She basically said to me, “Change to fit in with the rest.” I know she means well, but she started to concern me more than my bullies did. I said to her, “To be free, I must be real.”

Now isn’t it odd that the price we pay to be free is to be punished. Punished by those who have no way of knowing exactly what we deserve because we are ever-changing. They find pieces of me and make up their own story. To that I say, your story is deceptive and has no value to those who matter the most. And to that we say, we’d rather be different than be like you.



Interview With 2016

By: Sara F. Ayesh

2016 walks into The Voice office slowly. With measured steps and an unsure expression it knock on the ajar door twice, and an unsure expression it knocks on the ajar door twice.

2016: Hello, is this The Voice?

The Voice: Yes! Welcome, come on in. You must be 2016.

2016 (nods their head): I'm here for the interview?

The Voice: Of course, take a seat. We will start in a minute.

2016 (they keep the door unlocked and sit on the edge of the brown, leather couch).

The Voice: You know 20-16, a lot of people have been waiting anxiously for this interview.

2016 (says nothing and keeps glancing at the door)

The Voice: Um..., okay... So, let's start with something easy, why don't you tell us a little about yourself?

2016: Well, I'm 2016 and I have been in session since December 31st, 2015 ,11:60 PM and have just recently been retired.

The Voice: And how do you feel about that?

2016: I saw it coming. We were quite clear on the terms of my stay. They gave me a calendar with my last day marked on it when I got the job.

The Voice: I see, but you're still avoiding clear answers, is it hard to let go of that habit after doing it for so long? When is the last time you answered a "why 2016?" question truthfully? People have tried getting answers from you for a year now.

2016 (laughs sheepishly) I admit I have been a little evasive, but I assure you my intentions where always for the benefit of humanity.

The Voice: Can I quote you on that?

2016: Feel free.

The Voice: People have been calling you the worst year in a very long time.

2016 (relaxes more, confidence starts to show): People like to exaggerate. I was hardly too bothersome. I remember a few other years that were more troublesome than me.

The Voice:....debatable. As I am sure you have already heard, the hashtag #2016in3words was trending a while back, and some of the stuff some people have been saying....pretty heavy stuff 20-16. What do you think of that?

2016 (hold head high): All publicity is good, I always like to say.

The Voice: Is that why you have kept trying to surprise everyone this past year?

2016: It always good to keep people wondering what you will do next.

The Voice: I'm sure. Let's look at some of the tweets; @ChakerKhazaal says: Shocking. Interesting. Historic, and @Manni_FCB, Cruel, Confusing, Disappointing.

2016: Understandable, no year likes to just fly by unnoticed, you can say whatever you want about me, but I have done extraordinary things.

The Voice: Some would say horrific.

2016: Perhaps.

The Voice: @im_fyrex tweets, "It has changed."

2016: Certainly, I tried to work on being

my own independent year, I don't like living in my predecessor's shadow. I hope that people will accept and respect that.

The Voice: Some say you have become selfish, and even self obsessed over time. You don't seem to want the share the spotlight with anyone. Were you trying to fit as many events as you could in your limited time in office? @sonabanjo tweeted "Pray for (Insert new place every other week)"

2016: I don't think I was selfish or narcissistic, I tried very hard to give everyone their own personal spotlight; I spent sometime with The Olympics in Rio, I made Pokemon Go popular and people were tricked into exercising, the tiger population was increasing for the first time in a century. Giant Pandas and the West Indian manatee are no longer endangered-

The Voice: Also Yemen, Afghanistan, and Syria, especially Aleppo continued. The coup in Turkey, Brexit, Ebola, all the deaths and injuries from terrorist groups and shootings, the US Presidential mess-

2016: I'm feeling a little hostility here, The Voice.

The Voice: You have been a very long year, many say you hold a lot of angry people within you, more say you have overstayed your welcome.

2016: Perhaps it is not I that have been so "horrible" maybe it is the world that has become more interested in what is going on around them.

The Voice: The world has hardly been ignorant that past few years 20-16.

2016: True, but see, Yemen started in 2015, Afghanistan has been an issue for many years, and Syria has been going on for almost 6 years now. I was not responsible for them. The coup in Turkey and Brexit were not decided in one night, they were years in the making, festering resentment and political dealings.

Ebola was not discovered during my time, and neither was that hate that drives those terrorists. Those things may have climaxed while I was in office, but I did not start them.

The Voice: That does seem to be a view many tend to ignore. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your stay?

2016: That's not a very fair question, dear. To some I was nothing but a continuous cycle of bad news, to others I redeemed myself in the past few months.

The Voice: Do you think people may have judged you too soon?

2016: We live in different realities, we perceive the world through the lense of our own understanding. I don't think I was such a hard year, I think people have started to look up more at what is going on around them, instead of down to their gadgets and started voicing their thoughts more.

The Voice: I got a little lost there, but am I correct in saying you think it is just a matter of the world getting more open to itself?

2016: Not exactly, I don't think I was filled with a lot of angry people, I think most people were just tired; tired of being quiet, of being silenced, and killed, of feeling helpless and feeling that their voices were not heard, why do you think Brexit, Syria, and Yemen started? Enough people decided that they were not going to follow blindly anymore. People are tired, that's why the US presidential nominees where such a controversial topic. The world wants a new age, and they want it now, everyone is trying to change the world, the problem is that not everyone is welcomed in everyone's world.

The Voice: There is some truth in that 20-16, I admit. I think you require some further contemplation, perhaps hindsight will help as we start to get to know your successor more. Thank you for your time.

2016: It went better than I expected, I was half expecting some rotten fruit to be thrown at me (2016 laughs).

The Voice: There is always time for that later.

2016 leaves The Voice Office.

The Voice tweets; @thevoiceofAUK, "The World's Tired" #2016in3words

The Cast of “Trapped with the Devil” and “Passion for Life and Death”

By: Farah Hamoudah

If you've ever wanted to dive into the subconscious of your favorite characters, as if to truly discover who they might be on the inside and sink into their innermost thoughts and feelings then you are not alone. The amazing casts of the IEP double feature: "Trapped! With the Devil" & "Passion for Life and Death" which are based on the classic novels of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (by Robert Louis Stevenson) and Frankenstein (by Mary Shelley), have successfully materialized into their characters during their performances on the AUK auditorium which took place Sunday 18th December and Monday 19th December 2016. The shows received great applause and many positive feedback from viewers. Ms. Alison Koushki, instructor of the "Bring Reading to Life" course was director and mastermind behind the full-scale productions.

We sat down with the cast to further understand the process they went through and what it was like preparing for their intense, dark roles that most of them were not accustomed to (or comfortable) playing at the beginning. As they all huddled in our modest, quaint office, I could feel the charged atmosphere in the room. The enthusiasm and general boldness clouded their agitated jitters. But the most amazing thing I witnessed from the first glimpse (with both casts) was the phenomenal synergy. Sometimes they'd complete each other's answers. They'd laugh often and poke around some inside jokes from the play. Mostly, the interview was like a bunch of giant extemporaneous monologues put together. Every sound byte recorded in my phone seemed to devotedly defend the actor's corresponding character. It was quite the sensational sight!

The first bunch interviewed were the Frankenstein crowd. And they made quite the impressionable ruckus! A very unique, lovely group of people that represented a particular cohesion that was incredibly endearing.

Abdel-aziz spontaneously spoke of his main role as "The creature." His big build and charismatic persona were indicators that he probably had no problem training as an actor. Shockingly, his first sentence during the interview was "The role made me more confident than I was." His peers nodded in unison. They were all in agreement that the production made them into better people, and greater developed their understanding for such unique, fabricated personalities. All elements from narration, to technical production, were carefully pieced together to make this show a non-stop thrill-ride. As the interview went on, I began to feel a great notion that most of the actors/actresses were in tune with their characters for the reason being that they do secretly relate/understand/

admire the kind of vintage, elegant darkness portrayed in the novels and in the script of the plays (which btw both casts tinkered with and built together after weeks of analysing and reading the original novels). I would constantly get surprise comments that yelled of "She was born for that role!" or "He knew he had to that part," and the "she was perfect for this, so it came naturally to us to cast her." Everyone, it seemed took part in the decision-making, not just Ms. Alison. It was an exciting change of pace, to meet 12 directors in one room simultaneously. Overall, they were fun, they were loud, and most importantly they were passionate about their coursework and what they wanted to showcase to the world. The laughs that echoed in rhythm to a peer's answer was evident proof to that. To think that one could get rid of stage fright so easily and gain such brazen confidence, that's an accomplishment within itself. Furthermore, they spoke of a very gothic storyline, that growled of "lifting sacks of sand as dead bodies off of stage," and "a very realistic stabbing to the creature's stomach" that made the audience cringe in horror. The props used were also a very interesting topic: featuring a horrifying bloodied (fake blood) knife. Moreover, Rayane Bouhali, Ms. Koushki's attentive and eager production manager and diligent student, was also present during the interview and showed a brilliant outlook and a refreshingly authentic yearning towards professor Koushki's creative method of "bringing reading to life." She noted further many times that she had savored every scene of the play; she cried at times, and other times the essence floating around the auditorium gave her goosebumps.

The second batch of interviewees were also equally as zealous and dramatic. They portrayed an alternate version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Coincidentally, the main leads (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) were just as opposite in real life. They were also incredibly close friends which made the process smoother. The most significant (and controversial for obvious reasons) aspect, in the cast's opinion was the bar scenes. There were plenty 'a giggles that made our tiny office spiral out of control. Dr. Jekyll informs me that at one point, when he was fighting Mr. Hyde, they fell down and tumbled on stage accidentally. It wasn't on the script, but the audience were still rattled in their seats, and the actors improvised accordingly! He had to hold a laugh or two from mumbling his speech. Interestingly, the play included a butler and a lawyer, two seemingly mundane characters but with lots of promise for great goodness/great evil, and this also helped to develop a profound and effective story line. They maneuvered through outfits, soundtracks, very limited practice time (which was a great challenge to both productions), technical difficulties (such as microphones falling out of place and they had to raise their voices to be audible), and unexpected setbacks and flip-flops but ultimately all involved in this double feature have learned a great deal, not only from theatre, but also from the experiences they had together, their interactions as friends and peers and people with different interests. A lot of them mentioned that they are indebted to the "Bring Reading to Life" course. They were skeptics at first, most

of them, but as they bowed down on that remarkable stage that many before them have stood on, they felt a rush that was so exuberant, they wanted to do it all over again! An experience worthwhile I'd say!



Photography by the Office of Public Affairs (C) 2016

Feel-Good February Recipes For the Busy Student

By: Sara F. Ayesh

Hershey's Hot Cocoa for One

Hot chocolate has always been at the top of my "are-you-seriously-going-to-buy-it" list. It just seemed like a waste of money to buy a cup of hot chocolate at triple the price, at least, when you can do it so easily at home. It's the same logic I apply when doing my mid term papers; buy them ready, or just save myself the hassle and do them at home. Besides, even with triple the price, the quality never goes up. That is why I am offering you an alternative to AUK's either too bland or too sweet options.

Ingredients

- .Dash of salt
- .1 cup milk
- .1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- .2 tablespoons sugar
- .2 to 3 teaspoons Hershey's Cocoa
- .Optional: dash of cinnamon

How You Go About it

1. Combine salt, sugar, cocoa, and cinnamon if using.
 2. Heat milk in microwave for 1-1½ minutes until hot.
 3. Add milk to cocoa mixture, never the opposite otherwise it will not blend well, and stir very well.
 4. Add vanilla and mix one last time.
- Enjoy, and careful not to burn your tongue rushing to class!



Quesadillas For Beginners

Quesadillas are interesting, mostly because they are one of the easiest appetizers in the culinary world, and yet rarely do we ever eat them homemade. Another name for a quesadilla is "what-do-we-have-leftover-and-tastes-good-with-cheese" unfortunately that name never caught on. Frankly I think it's because there are too many cheese haters. Nevertheless, appetizer politics aside, here is the breakdown of this wonderful and busy-student friendly meal.

The Base- *Lets be real, a quesadilla is just a thin sandwich so just choose whatever grain based casing you prefer,*

- .Tortilla
- .Saj
- .Pita bread
- .Flat Bread
- .Chapati

The Filling- Anything you have on hand, Vegetables; tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, corn, carrots, etc. Meat: Chicken, tuna, ground beef, steak, etc.

Fruit: Strawberry, bananas, pears, etc. There is no rule against sweet quesadillas!

The Glue- *What holds it all together.*

Sweet: jam, peanut butter, nutella, cream cheese

Savory: cheddar cheese, pepper jack, Kraft, mozzarella, halloumi
Make sure not to drown it in your glue of choice so it doesn't make a mess, ooze all over the place, or burn.

The Finish- Lastly just cook it with some oil or butter until golden on both sides. *Or just pop it in the microwave if you're too busy.*



Happiness

By: Mariam Nasser

Happiness is one of the best feelings in the world. It is one of the single most important factors that make life worth living and enjoyable. However, it is abstract as happiness can be defined in different ways. It represents different meanings to everyone and that is the beauty of happiness, it can not be restricted or limited to one way. As there are no limitations or restrictions to achieving or experiencing happiness it is free, up to the individual to feel. The one factor happiness requires is that it needs an individual to create it for themselves. Since it means different definitions to individuals only a person can create their own happiness. Another fact of happiness is that it is universal, anywhere around the world at some point a person feels joy. That thought alone is beautiful. For example, around the globe being able to understand each other and signal joy with a simple smile, no matter the other obstacles that might be present such as language barriers and culture differences. The emotion joy is definitely underestimated and overlooked very often, as it is so powerful, that a simple smile can translate through all cultures and all around the world, this alone proves the power of happiness, it can have.

'Our happiness isn't dependent on what we receive in life, its dependent on our attitude and what energy we put out. We all find joy in being a part of something larger than ourselves, so spend some time being brushstrokes in this wonderful work of art known as the universe. You are a wonderful and important part of this creation, as much as anything else, so shine baby'-Humble the Poet. Loved

this caption Humble posted and felt it beautifully interlocked with the topic I am talking about. A fact of life is that happiness can only be created from within and by you, since it is for you. It is part of life to discover more about ourselves and be able to make our own joy, since it is abstract and huge in itself, it can not be limited or restricted to appear as one definitive only. It is custom made to fit each individually accordingly to them, and one of the similarities everyone shares is that we all feel happiness when we implement goals. Yes our goals, plans can differ but none the less they are planning and following through on our dreams and ambitions to make something of ourselves. To work towards a goal and to have a purpose, at the end of the day.

Some of the easiest and simplest methods for being happy are to focus more on yourself. The first step towards focusing more on you is by surrounding yourself with positivity and having a suitable encouraging environment around you. Next is to stop comparing to others negatively, as it will only lead to 'insecurity, frustration and distress. Instead compare yourself to others for inspiration and motivation. Also, be honest with yourself'-Blue Skies Bianca. At the end of the day the most important factor that has the biggest influence in creating your happiness is you and your attitude. It is up to you to create your own happiness and is in your full control, have dreams, and aspirations. Next create goals and turn them into plans then follow through on them. Look back at all your achievements and the ones you are completing now and be proud of yourself, it will give you the love and support you need to go further and that will encourage you to continue your journey and your path.



AUKause Discovering Kenya

By: Mariam Naser

This winter break I had the privilege to travel with AUKause to the volunteering trip they held in Kenya, Africa. I was at the beginning very shocked and astonished at the poverty and amount of poor people who lived in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa which is the city. However, at the same time was very overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity we received that I witnessed numerous times personally. The Kenyans are some of the best people I have ever come across, their nature is kind, caring and lovely. In their presence you can not help but smile, as many of them have an amazing sense of humor. The trip only consisted of 12 days and I enjoyed every moment of it.

The trip really opened my eyes and broadened my mind to new aspects, cultures and traditions in life. As well as be able to recognize how privileged and fortunate I am. Overall the trip exceeded all my expectations positively. I am still outstated by the warmth the country and the people showed and gave us, it really is heartwarming. To see kids who have very little still be happy and not only that but generous as well. Many people less fortunate than ourselves that have very little but are more than happy to keep on giving. To this day my mind is blown with the generosity these people have and the kindness they hold in their hearts. One incident that really opened

my eyes from many I saw there was when our professor, some students and myself went walking through the village in Mombasa, Kenya. On our way back to where we were staying Born Again children home, our professor had dropped her samsung7 phone and none of us realized it had fallen from her pocket, when a gentleman in the street called for us and ran towards us to hand over the phone, he smiled then left. This was only one mere example of many that showed their kindness, they give without expecting to get anything in return. This was one of the numerous aspects I thrive to learn from, that really opened my eyes.

The second main point I want to highlight is happiness. Again I was astonished and inspired by their positive outlook and attitude in life. Many people we came across who had very little were so grateful for what they had. This concept alone mind boggles me till this day comparing to larger scaled societies, that consist of people who have more than enough still wanting more and never being grateful for whatever amount they have. The greediness many places and people around the world posses, is disgusting and it is time to get over this phenomenon that the more materialistic objects we have the more it makes us happier or richer in life, since that is not true. As I witnessed first hand some of the richest people in life, even though they did not have many materialistic objects or money. They had established concepts in life that many of us have failed to even recognize or acknowledge. Some of the main attributions I saw within them was

courage, strength, persistence, determination and most importantly hope. All of which contribute to building some of the strongest people I have ever encountered. Others around the world, especially in large scaled societies many times pity themselves and are ungrateful for all the things they have resulting to not being happy. There was a huge difference in Kenya most of the people we encountered in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya were happy in life. In my eyes they are rich and lucky to have made a life worth living and are happy. That is because they do not expect anything, are happy for what they have and are grateful for the little things in life that are important many of us brush of or ignore in life.

I am so grateful, fortunate, and lucky to have been able to go on this trip since it was one of the best experiences of my life. I am left with so many beautiful and memorable memories and experiences as well as great friends. However, the one thing that keeps outstanding me to this day is what I was able to get from this trip. I went there to volunteer with AUKause and to help out in any way I could, little did I know that I would be getting so much from it. I learnt so much and am transforming into a better version of myself, one that I can be proud of . I count my self as blessed and extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to have met all the people i did and for the trip in general for everything I learnt and got out of it. Thank you Kenya, and Born Again children home for making our stay so amazing and memorable.



My Experience Volunteering in Kenya

By: Mariam Naser

It is always great to get out of our comfort zone, because no matter how situations turn out, for either the good or bad, we learn something from it every time. Not only do we learn about the experience but also we get some insight into our selves. As we are put in situations that bring out the best in us and or show us our hidden strengths. Also, we find out more about ourselves in general. 'Travelling does for the soul what education does for the mind'-Casey Neistat. I hundred percent agree with this, as we all learn more with experiencing first hand. As we get immersed in the culture and people, seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling and so much more first handedly. Travelling to places that are culturally different from yours have so many advantages. Yes there are some drawbacks, but if you can get over them it becomes one of the greatest feelings in the world. As your boundaries get tested and your limits pushed back. You become vulnerable and raw more often, and find that 'you are more capable than you think or know'-Dr Hanan Muzaffar.

Taking chances and having a positive attitude definitely helps, as you can start to believe in yourself more and learn a lot about your limits and boundaries. At the end of the day all your experiences will become worth it no matter the difficulties you might have gone through. After a while you feel the massive change and difference within yourself, all for the better. A new you, a better, stronger, more experienced and independent you. One of the best advantages of experiencing culture shock and getting out of your comfort zone is that you start to believe in yourself. You believe you can do anything, and that the world is yours to grab. As your self confidence in yourself and your capabilities increases enormously you start transforming into the best version of yourself. It goes beyond feeling a sense of achievement, because it takes more than simply putting in more work or convincing yourself to get started. No, it takes a lot from you, and everyone, and once you do it, you realize you have just been able to do something you never knew or thought you could do. That is one of the best feelings in the world, to be able to believe in yourself no matter who says you cant or if tries to stop you. Another major advantage is the newly sense of confidence that grows within you.

As you start to realize many of your problems are just first world issues and are extremely minor in comparison to others around the world. Also, leaving your comfort zone and experiencing culture shock, massively encourage critical thinking within yourself. As you find yourself in situations you have never been put in and have to think on your feet, for solutions. Another advantage is believing in yourself so much that you can start to plan and implement goals that are important to you that require a lot. Doors get opened so much as you have the courage,

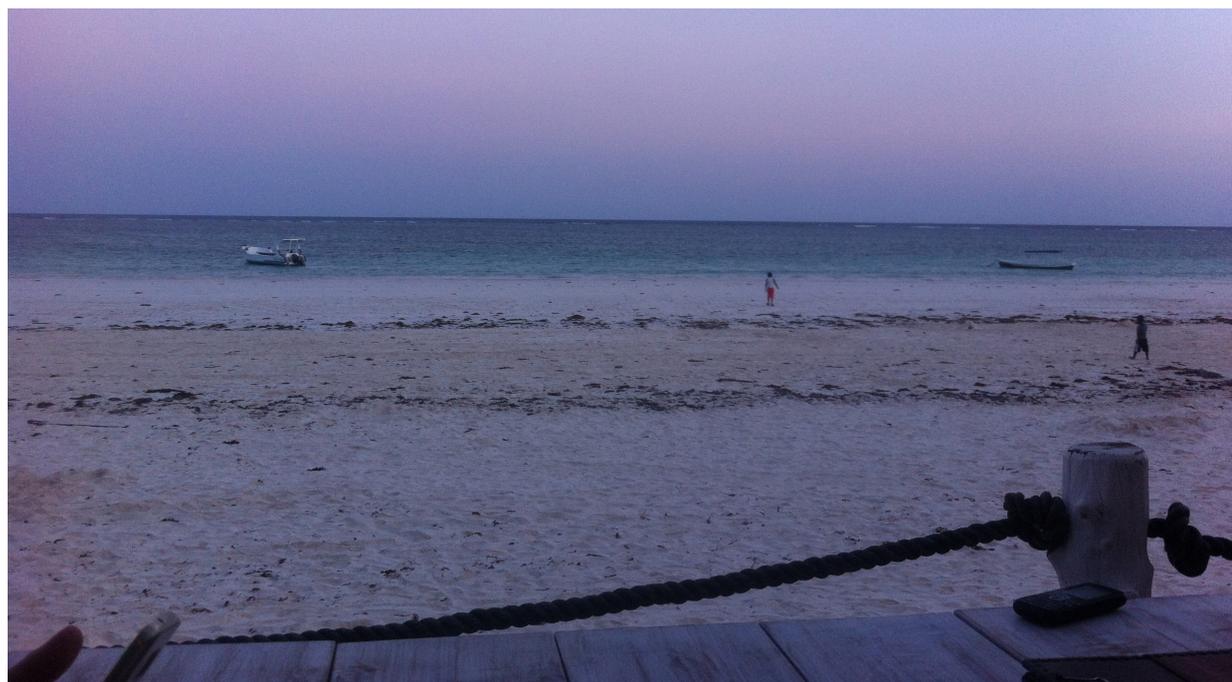
and confidence to believe in yourself to achieve and implement goals in your wildest dreams. Goals you start planning and executing that go beyond all your previous boundaries and you know you can reach the highest limits and can do it, if you put your mind to it. You start to have this newly built character, strength, courage better than before.

Experiencing culture shock is scary and tough as in the beginning it can prove to be a drawback, however getting over this hill is worth it. Believe in yourself and don't be afraid to try new things, all of which adds up and builds character as well as bring out the best version of yourself. In the end you will be left with so many great memories and experiences.

Another benefit of getting out of your comfort zone and experiencing culture shock first hand is being able to appreciate other cultures. As well as having a broader

perspective and knowledge that allows you to look at the world and all its inhabitants, humans, animals, insects, etc. in a whole different better light.

The points mentioned above are only a few advantages I have learned from getting out of my comfort zone and experiencing culture shock first hand when I travelled to Kenya, Nairobi and Mombasa, Africa December 23rd 2016 to January 2nd 2017. This experience and journey has changed me and my life for the better. Going for a good cause and getting to volunteer was amazing but little did I know that I would get so much from this experience, and learn a lot as well. Also, it allowed me to achieve one of my biggest and greatest goals, and in the process was able to transform into a better version of myself, a huge added bonus. So go for your dreams and follow through on your goals, because you can do it and the advantages are limitless, that come out from leaving your comfort zone and also experiencing culture shock from travelling.



Tom Ford's "Nocturnal Animals" is Too Polished for the Movie World

By: Farah Hamoudah

Tom Ford is a man of many means; a fabulous, world-renowned fashion designer who also managed to make a name for himself as the director of the recently released *Nocturnal Animals*, which centers on Tony (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Susan (Amy Adams), an ex-couple. The film was classed in the psychological thriller genre. Which can only mean loose ends in the main leads' lives. Another love story gone wrong, I speculated. Maybe the classic high-class snooty couple act? That foresight may have been mostly accurate, but just how awry did things go for them anyhow? That, I couldn't have thought up. I was not ready for what lied ahead. And one thing's for certain- neither are you.

From only the first few seconds, the film urges us to scan Susan's overall ambience. One glimpse reveals that her bold immaculateness, her inflexible features, the sad, reclining, wincing look in her eyes all screamed "GUILTY!" but of what?

Throughout every single scene, there were very subtle elements that showcased the fraudulence of Susan's life. She was living in an aquarium. No doubt on the outside, the aquarium Susan swam in was breathtakingly glamorous, with its big, intimidating ornaments and her embellished achievements that sparked envy the eyes of passersby. People look at the beauty, grace and charm of that flounder, at the daintiness and meticulousness of her life and they immediately wish to trade places. Why be a person when you can be a flounder? When all you had to do was just keep swimming in circles, basking in your glory, leisuring in your lavish life of pretty plastic accessories while someone else breaks their back to try and sustain you. Susan had it all; at least, compared

to her ex-husband, Tony, whom, in her mind, was just heartbreakingly pathetic. He never impressed her the way she impressed herself. Her life was tidy. His was not. Her big office, with the head-achingly white, white walls, filled with expensive paintings seemed to reassure her that her life was perfect; that she was perfect and he was not. She remarried, naturally. He did not. He probably never moved on, she thought. He probably loves her too much, she thought.

This introduction into Susan's psyche is a great deal to take on by any audience. Someone that's so sure of being loved and unforgotten by one person, that they'd risk being loathed and envied by the rest of the world. Sure, she's confident and that confidence is overpowering the film's main storyline, but it also commences to water down over time, triggered by the violent sound of tape being pulled off of a parcel, in which her estranged ex-husband sent her a draft of his book, which centers herself and her daughter India, as main characters. Susan was the main character! In his novel! This must've certainly given her one more dimension to add to her ego. Still, a mist of mystery roamed the atmosphere of her gigantic, white-tiled manor.

As events in her seemingly intact life begin to unfurl, spinning recklessly and hysterically out of proportion, what's written between the lines of Tony's up-and-coming novel makes her feel worse somehow. The solemn, stony, quiet, eerie tones of Tony's "artwork" not only belittles her as an artist-on-the-verge-of-quitting, but it also urges a greater sensation of vulnerability and threat. She thought this was her love letter. She thought, she thought, she thought. And everything that once made sense to her now makes no sense at all. The image is distorted now. She now looks ugly, repulsive, grotesque, as she reminisces on her past mistakes with Tony. The makeup on her skin feels too heavily painted as if to mask her shame. The couture dress on her body is merely a facade. The aquarium looked see-through before, but now it is as though they can see her for who she really is- a twisted, bitter, untalented, darkness.

The finale was suspenseful, to say the least. At this point, she seeks recovery of her otherwise ill fate. She hopes that at least Tony still loves her. At least someone does. Hope. Hope was the only good aspect of her deceitful, unsatisfying life right now. Yet, we receive an answer from Tony that is both ambiguous and obvious. The film continuously attempts to scrape and scratch at Susan's brain (Susan being an analogy to all of our egos). What makes people treat others they love so badly? What makes them neglect regret? What makes us so terribly loathsome, that we cannot even recognize ourselves at the end because we've been too busy staring into a mirror, perfecting every inch of our lives to showcase to others. In this new social media bound world, we display ourselves to "sell" our accounts to the mass of followers on the web. But why? At what cost? Everything in *Nocturnal Animals* seems to tell us a story of a little, bitter piece of ourselves, but it plays out beat by beat, that it seems soul-penetrating to the watcher, and mind-boggling to the analyst.

The sneak peek into Susan's world as an art gallery owner, feels exquisitely detailed, to the point where the film sometimes felt like it was dragging out its every smart move. In some ways, a critique of Susan could be considered as a critique of the film itself because the film was mostly a reflection of Susan, in its vexatious confidence; in its mission to succeed no matter what. Like the clear whiteness of Susan's household and office, the glaze that *Nocturnal Animals* ended with, seemed frighteningly refined. The film, like Susan was too perfect to be true. The annoying, relentless endeavor makes anything seem pointless. And in the end, you find yourself in a weird limbo, trying to think about what is it that motivates you to be your absolute best- that's where the psychological thriller genre hits you most. Because everybody knows emotional pain scars long and deep. But if there's anything that *Nocturnal Animals* succeeded in, it's the elegance of it all. Everything shot, every act, felt luxurious; as if great effort and time have been poured into it. Which is bound to make any film-goer feel special.



The Psychology of Rom-Com

By: Shahad Al-Failakawi

Without a doubt, whether you are a hopeless romantic or not, romantic comedies tend to be very enjoyable to watch. Where else would a guy you bump into on the streets suddenly be your soul mate? The psychology of Romantic Comedies all lies within the cognitive thinking of the watcher. A person can watch a movie and be deeply into the story, while one could just mock the actors and have no interest whatsoever. Either way, this says a lot about the genre of the film and your behavior towards it. An effect that is widely known to be present in Rom Com's is the Pratfall Effect. Romantic heroes have a tendency to awkwardly fall down the stairs or trip. Maybe even be a little clumsy, - a spilled cup of coffee, getting caught in a white lie - but the main character is always messing up in a minor way.

The whole point of the effect is to somehow relate to the character. There are times when a minor mistake or flaw only increases our good feelings toward a person. We like people who make relatively small mistakes, and we like objects that have minor flaws. It's not just sympathy for a person in trouble or difficulty. We actually like them more than we would if they were ideal and perfect. Studies have shown that people with high self-esteem had a low vulnerability to the Pratfall Effect, while those with low self-esteem really liked their heroes to mess up. Romantic-comedy films should not a major source for developing unrealistic expectations about relationships among young adults, but rather a way to 'mock' the ideal vision of love and romance.



February Playlist

By: Ehab Soliman



Shakira- Chantaje



Sia- Move Your Body



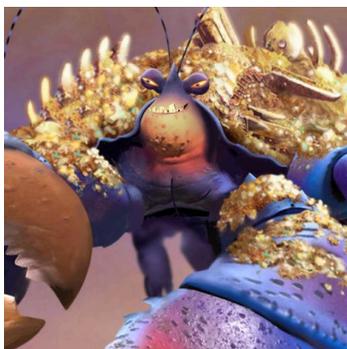
Luis Fonsi- Despacito



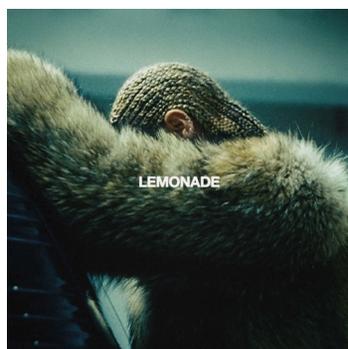
The Chainsmokers- Paris



James Arthur- Safe Inside



Jemaine Clement- Shiny



Beyonce- All Night



Chris Brown- Party



Migos -Tshirt



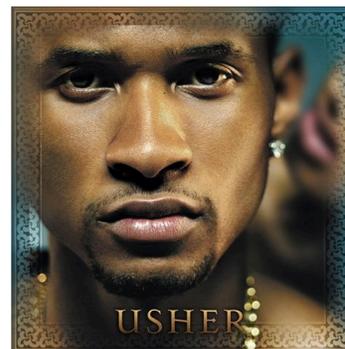
Sean Paul- No Lie



Dua Lipa- Blow Your Mind



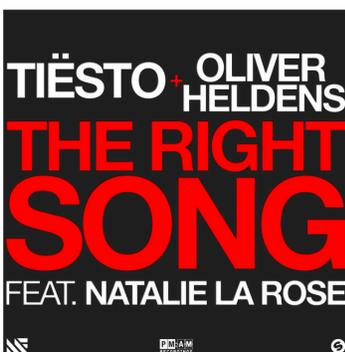
DJ Snake- The Half



Usher- Caught Up



Rag'n'bone Man -Human



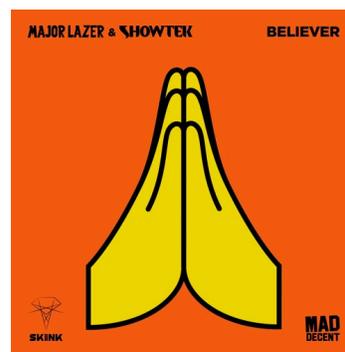
Tiesto- The Right Song



Killian & Jo- Suburbia



Fifth Harmony-Boss



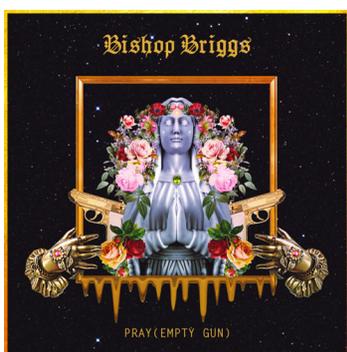
Major Lazer- Believer



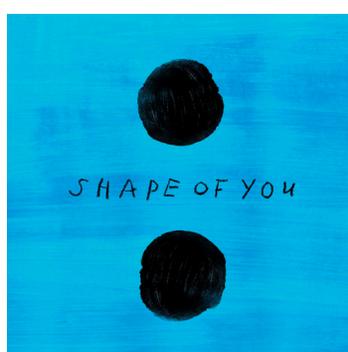
Eva Simons- Policeman



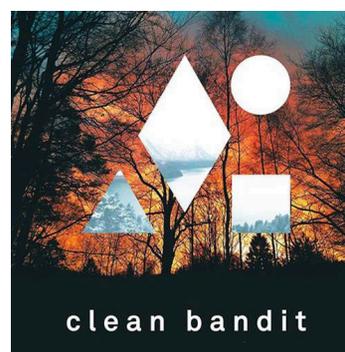
Marshmello- alone



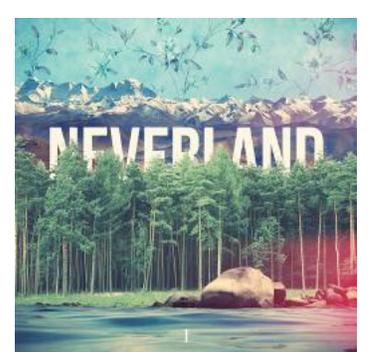
Bishop Briggs-Pray



Ed Sheeran- Shape Of You



Clean Bandit-Rockabye



Abstract-Neverland

Hot Topics

The Arab Dream

By: Anonymous

Surely, we've all heard of The American Dream; a grandiose ambition to becoming the absolute best at what you do. Maybe secretly the rest of us non-Americans want that as well. But, for now, every time I ask an Arab what they truly want in life I get a plain and straightforward answer- not the star-spangled, fancy, glitzy one I was hoping to hear. Most people replied to me with elementary human rights rather than pie-in-the-sky American fantasies.

"I would like to own a small house for me and my children to inherit."

"I want to end the war in my country."

"I dream of an independent state of Palestine."

"I hope to get a job after college so I can support my family."

"I aspire to accumulate some money so I can pray in Mecca."

"All I want is to be content with whatever my situation is."

Of course, I'd get the occasional murmur that whispered of "12 yachts and a mansion" sort-of-dream, but the accents

were not nearly as emboldened or as overbearingly pompous as that of the North-Americans of today.

You may think it to be an insane undertaking- to compare people from two extremely different nations. What is the point of that, anyway? This is all just a mere observation. I'll leave the analysis to you.

The responses I got to "what is your ultimate goal/dream?" may have shocked me in the aspect that they weren't as extravagant as I thought they should be, but they are all incredibly precious and sacred objectives to carry out. Yet, why did most of them fall under the "clear-cut" category. The path to take in order for one to achieve those dreams is incredibly distinct, unambiguous for all the aspirations mentioned had wanted to be unmistakably specific. But why is that? Is it perhaps our convoluted environments and our arduous situations that trigger such simple and coherent manifestations? Is it a lack of self-confidence? Or the malicious acts of someone in a powerful position who is constantly trying to suppress all of us?

Whatever the reason may be, it seems we prefer realism and discipline over virtually hypnagogic, self-indulgent visions. It matters to me if this kind of thinking surpasses the bright-eyed bushy-tailed kind. The wars, the famine,

the injustice that are taking place just beyond the borders of where we stand clearly have a way of wiring our minds, to humble ourselves because others just like us, live tragedies every day. It's a sensitive topic these days- being an Arab; living in the "No-peace" of the Middle East.

Many people, including those in prominence, sit in their little war rooms, stare at their little Picasso paintings, and talk about us, our suffering like we're some kind of circus sideshow. It's something that's bound to ground anyone.

But I will not be grounded.

I am not a nationalist. I am not another flag-waver. Still, I love where I come from. And I will pour my whole soul, if that's what it takes, so that the eccentricity and vibrancy of life in the Middle East influences everyone here to become the best person they possibly can be and to move beyond the discrepancies of our governments, our worlds, even our own selves. Because even though I do dream of a small house, and ending the war in my country, I also dream of something so vast, that I do not think anyone can begin to fathom it. And maybe that's why no one could tell me what they were really dreaming of. Maybe it was because I simply cannot fathom their wildest dreams.

What Food? Campus Dining Options Need Reform

By: Shahad Almousa

It was one of those days when I was extremely hungry I couldn't bear getting into my car and driving all the way to some fast food restaurant. I was with my friends. We collectively agreed to get something from a place on campus, but our options are always very limited. Diner, Starbucks, and Sikkah(Saj Place next to the Library).

We decided that the Diner has the biggest variety of food. We could each find something that satisfied our craving while still eating at the same place. With a happy face I went in and ordered myself some pasta and a cookie. And LORD how I wish I didn't.

After one single bite of the cookie I found what is the most dreadful thing you could ever find in your food. Baked inside the cookie there was a single strand of hair sticking out. It was one single strand and it's still haunting me, day and night. I promised myself at the time that I would finally find it in myself to go and complain to The Student Council, which I did. But I didn't go alone.

I asked around campus if anyone had any complaints about the Diner. So many people had feedback and I thought it would be fair to put the word out there. To show everyone exactly what our Diner is like and how it needs to improve.

Don't get me wrong, the Diner has some wonderful food. I just wish it was as edible as we think it is. I took it upon myself to list down everything that I thought needed fixing at the Diner. Then I thought "wait the only way anyone would ever read a complaint is if you suggest some solutions as well". So here's what I put together:

A solution to my personal situation would be to have the staff wear hair nets. Not only will this ensure that this doesn't happen again, but if it does we would blame the diner staff, we would deem it as a mistake or an unfortunate, one time incident.

Other people had different types of complaints, almost all indicating that the Diner is in no proper condition to be serving food the way it does right now. One person, who would rather stay anonymous, mentioned that the open buffet looks delicious but too exposed. A solution could be to purchase and put to use some covered buffet bowls.

Snacks Snacks Snacks.. The only type of snacks the Diner has to offer are chocolates and muffins. I wouldn't complain about this, but so many other people are trying to eat healthier. They often refuse to have chocolate for a snack, but what are their other options? Nowadays we have fruit cups. That's it? We need a variety of healthy snacks. By snacks we mean nuts, granola bars, dried fruit the options are endless. Fruit cups are not an 'eat while you run to class' kind of snack.

Ever since joining the university I've only ever seen a handful of options at the Diner. The menu is huge but after a while you notice a pattern where about 80% of the items on the menu aren't always available. After a while

the food options get boring and repetitive. How many days in a row can you alternate between French fries and pasta varieties? Maybe have themes like taco Tuesdays or Machboos Mondays. Nowadays, however, they are trying to present different types of food.

Moving onto complaints that do not include food or cleanliness of the Diner. How many times did you ever want to order food and sit with your friends somewhere where the weather is not scalding hot against your face, or freezing cold against your cheeks. It is understandable that they would prevent 'outside' food from the diner if we had somewhere else to eat. For now we don't. Why not suggest a good in-between solution. Maybe if you buy at least one thing from the Diner then you can sit there with outside food?

Prices are yet again another issue. When I say prices here I'm not saying the Diner is over-expensive. I'm just saying they charge for things that are not what they really are. Throughout two years of buying from the Diner I would always purchase a drink. Come two years later and I find out that if you order a meal you get a free drink? I'm not sure of the validity of this but I have overheard a staff member telling a girl this once.

So, summing up all these issues, it appears that the Diner needs some polishing. The thing is, there aren't enough food outlets on campus. Since it is the place with the highest variety and the one that actually belongs to the university, and serves as its dining hall, we need to demand that whatever comes out of the diner meets our expectations 100%.



The Cultural Column From U.S. Embassy of Kuwait

There's a feeling of national pride in the air! This February at the American Embassy, we enthusiastically join in celebrating our Kuwaiti friends' national and liberation days—as well as our own Independence Day, which we do early, as it gets a little too hot for a garden party here in July. As we say goodbye to winter and welcome the spring, we are reminded of how the change in seasons accompanies various bouts of what rightfully could be called part of “spring fever” in the States, which, as it spans the coming months, encompasses several American practices and eccentricities that help define us as a nation. Here from the Cultural Affairs Office are some highlights of what you could expect to hear and observe if you were Stateside during this time.

The Nation's Smallest, Underworked and Unpaid Meteorologist

Technically speaking, spring starts in March, but let's talk about something that happens in the United States right before the season changes. There's a wait-and-watch moment that Americans obsess about every year on February 2 that you should know about, and it's a little strange: Groundhog Day. That may sound familiar because it's the title of a 1993 Bill Murray movie, in which the same day bizarrely repeats itself—that's not what I'm talking about, but it's totally worth checking out, by the way (in 2006, it was added to the United States National Film Registry for its cultural significance). Here's where I'm going with this: On Groundhog Day, a little guy called Phil steps outside his humble abode in the State of Pennsylvania, and if it's cloudy when he does so, then according to American folklore, spring will come early that year. But if it's sunny out, and he spots his shadow? Well, if he sees his shadow self, then Phil will retreat

back into his comfy little home, and winter will continue for six more weeks. Don't look for any science here, you won't find it.

Groundhog Day is February 2, so by the time you read this, it will have come and gone—but not without nationwide media coverage of the occasion across the great 50 States, Washington D.C., and maybe even Puerto Rico. Oh, and that little Phil guy? He's a groundhog, which is a type of North American marmot. He's been on the job since 1887, so they say. He's not actually salaried, but before you go getting sorry for him, consider this: He has his own team of dedicated human caretakers, and they all wear top hats and tuxedos as they accompany him for his annual feting. Not a bad retinue, and he really only has to work once a year.



Cherry blossom trees in bloom at the Tidal Basin
(Photo Credit: Heather Ward)

Waiting for That Perfect Blooming Moment

Moving on to March, the first true month of spring, makes me think of how beautiful our nation's capital looks this time of year, which leads me to ask the seeming non sequitur, Did you know there's an entire website dedicated to watching trees, and it actually has an extensive following? (Well of course there is, you say; there's a website and an audience for everything.) Yup, check it out: cherryblossomwatch.com.

Those of you who wonder why that would be, and what that has to do with American culture, have probably never been to Washington, D.C. in the springtime, right? Explanation: Right around mid-March in D.C., the walkway that arcs around the Tidal Basin—a reservoir near the Potomac River, just a short jog from the White House—is aflutter with the snowy blush of white and pink cherry blossoms in bloom. It's a lovely touristic spot, often replete with paddle boats that you can rent, if you feel inclined to huff and puff your way through the water as you admire the views. It's also the site of the eponymous Cherry Blossom Festival, which celebrates the beautiful trees, ideally when they are festooned with their pink-and-white petals. Which brings me to why there's an entire website devoted to monitoring their blooming: Because the question of exactly when the trees will put forth their buds is a capital area obsession, year after year. After

all, timing is everything, and anyone who is going to fight traffic to make the trip to the Tidal Basin wants to make sure the trees are at their perfect peak. But listen, here's the catch: Peak bloom lasts about three days. No kidding. Seventy-two hours and whoosh, all the blooms seem to wither and fall off, and it's over. Hence the fervor and fixation—and the website.



A poster promoting the 1963 Elvis “Beach Party” movie

Those Crazy College Kids

The word “fervor” brings us to another topic that engrosses many Americans in March, particularly the 18-to-22-year-old set: Spring break. In the U.S., most colleges and universities have their spring break in mid-March, which means, for many excited college students who can afford it, a week-long beach vacation, usually with a bunch of friends.

If you'd like to get an idea of what spring break means, please stay away from all the movies on spring break. Really. I will sum them all up with two words: Hyperbole and horror (like, real horror—if you do a Google search for “movies and spring break,” you'll see titles like Nightmare Beach, Piranha, and Spring Break Shark Attack, and you may be visually exposed to bloody limbs and other disturbing images). Many of these movies hark back to the original beach film *Where the Boys Are* (1960), which is often credited with having inspired the cultural tradition among American youth of heading to a Floridian beach for spring break. In the 1960s, “beach party” movies—Elvis' *Girl Happy* (1963) is another one, and perhaps the most anodyne, so if you have to watch one, maybe that should be it—helped form the idea that spring break was the best time to flock to the shores for a week.

While Mexico and the Caribbean islands are popular destinations for spring break thrill-seekers, U.S. News & World Report ranks Miami Beach as the number-one backdrop for spring break enthusiasts. This highly anticipated and revered week in March is when college kids relax, have fun, soak up some rays (hopefully with a high SPF), and celebrate the wonderful thing that is student life. Oh, and maybe think about the mid-term papers that are due when they get back.

Pranks and Jokes Shared Nation-Wide

April is the month before final exams loom, and many people across our nation participate in another widespread obsession that involves our love for jokes, silliness, and laughter. On April Fools' Day, on the 1st, everyone is kind of looking over their shoulder in case someone (a friend, a family member, a coworker) plays a prank on them.

April Fools' Day jokes can range from a misplaced stapler to someone inviting you to a meeting across town in a place that doesn't exist. But perhaps the best kind of April

Fools' gags are those wide-scale ones that make national news. And sometimes people manage to pull them off, in a big way. Here's a funny "April Fools" moment to imagine: You're in a plane, and you think you're on your way to Los Angeles for a vacation or a job interview, and as the plane lands you look out of the window and see a huge sign that tells you, "Welcome to Chicago." Real airline passengers arriving at LAX on April 1, 1992 actually saw such a sign.

Imagine their confusion, disbelief, or panic as they laid eyes on an 85-foot-long yellow sign that spelled out a greeting to the Windy City (not the City of Angels) in 20-foot-high red letters on the ground below them.

Now imagine their relief when they found out it was just banner laid on the ground by the fun-loving employees of the Hollywood Park race track, which lies along the LAX flight path. The sign stayed up for two whole days, which gave Hollywood Park management and the surrounding community loads of laughs.

An Upcoming, Must-See Event

Now with all this talk about fixation and participation, I feel like I should leave you with something to mull over yourself. It's something that we are obsessing about locally this spring: Chelsey Green and the Green Project, a group of musicians we have arriving in March. You'll be able to see them for the first time in Kuwait, where they will come as part of a multi-nation tour. Chelsey Green and the Green Project are Billboard-charting recording artists who fuse classical music with various other genres, including R&B, Pop, Soul, Funk, Jazz, Alternative, Hip Hop, and even Gospel. The group's instruments include violin, keyboard, drums, and a six-string bass guitar.

After coming to Kuwait, they'll be going on to Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain—so we'll be the first country to host them in the Gulf. Follow us on Instagram (USEmbassyQ8) to find out where to catch this music group around town March 5-10—and remember, all of our events are free. Now, don't you feel a little spring fever coming on after reading that?

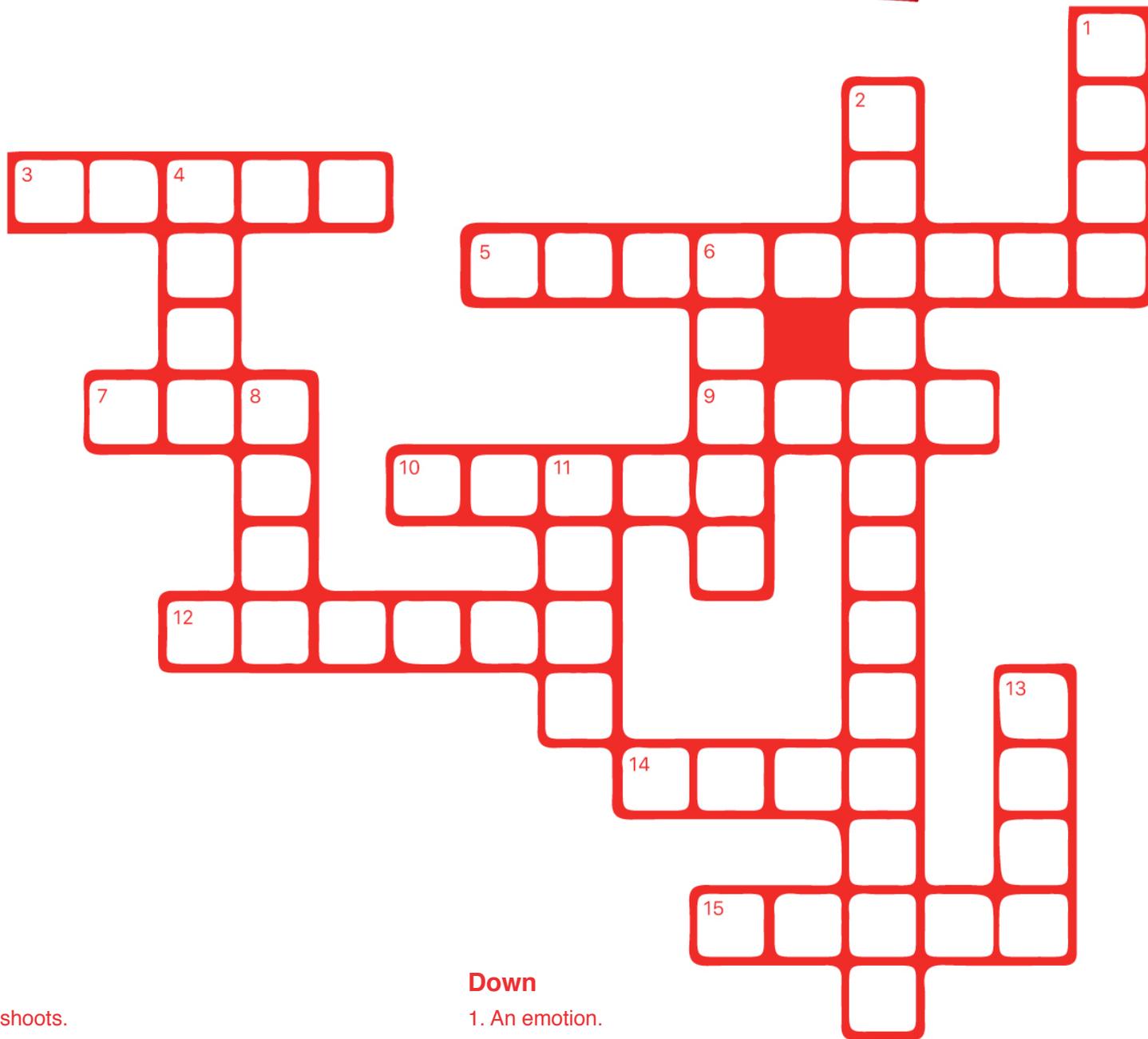
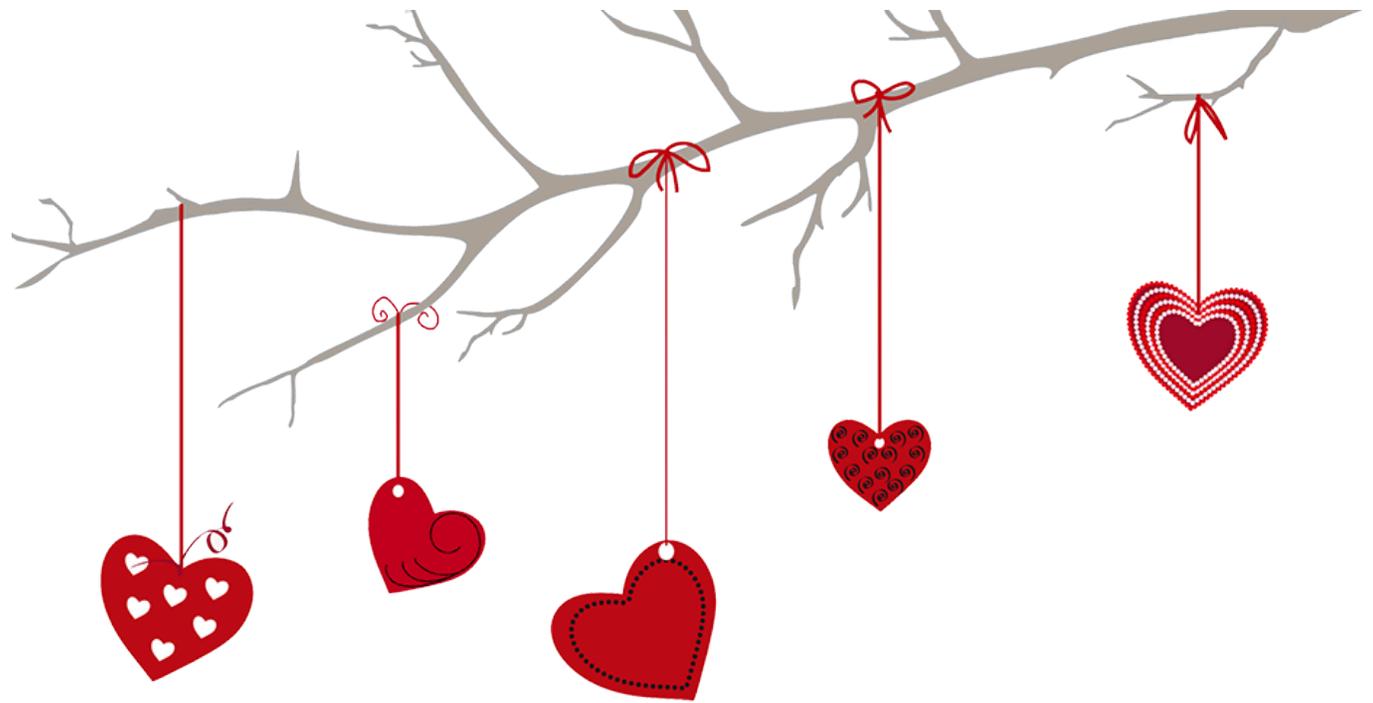


Chelsey Green and The Green Project (Photo credit: PhotogeNick)

By: Sara F. Ayesb

1 National Freedom Day (US)	9 National Sports Day (Qatar)	17 Thomas Edison got the patent for the phonograph	25 Kuwait's National Day
2 World Wetlands Day	10 Human Rights Day 1863, Alanson Crane patents the fire extinguisher	18 1930, a cow flies in an airplane for the first time	26 Kuwait's Liberation Day
3 1972, Sapporo, Japan became the first Asian country to hold Winter Olympics	11 International Purple Hijab Day	19 2008, Fidel Castro, the president of Cuba, resigns	27 Emergency Rescuer's Day (Russia)
4 World Cancer Day	12 International Day of Women's Health	20 World Day of Social Justice	28 Anosmia Awareness Day
5 National Weatherperson's Day (US)	13 1741 The US publishes its first magazine	21 International Mother Language Day	29 Rare Disease Day
6 International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation	14 2005, YouTube is launched	22 World Thinking Day	
7 Family Day (Canada)	15 International Childhood Cancer Day	23 1874, Sphairistike (aka Lawn Tennis) is patented by Walter Winfield.	
8 Safer Internet Day	16 Global Information Governance Day	24 International Stand Up to Bullying Day	

Happy Valentine's Day



Across

- 3. What cupid shoots.
- 5. A Valentine's Day treat.
- 7. Valentine's Day color.
- 9. Something you wear on your finger.
- 10. He shoots love arrows.
- 12. Something often written on Valentine's Day cards.
- 14. Touch lips.
- 15. The symbol of love.

Down

- 1. An emotion.
- 2. A day for love.
- 4. The flower of love.
- 6. People often exchange these on Valentine's Day.
- 8. Go on a _____. Go somewhere with your boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 11. Something a poet writes.
- 13. Present.

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