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Editor's Notes

Challenging Tradition

When I first learned of Haifaa Al-Mansour '97, Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker, I thought she would make an interesting profile, as a pioneer who had crossed a new frontier. Then, when I read her interview "For the Love of Her Country" (page 20), I was impressed by her desire to bring about change in her homeland, while respecting and valuing its heritage and culture. In



Al-Mansour teaching me a few tips on using a camera

her films, Al-Mansour has focused on subjects related to women and their role in Saudi society. She has brought to the surface discussions on subjects considered taboo and dared to question tradition.

While Al-Mansour's films focus on her country, the issues she discusses are relevant and timely to the rest of the region. The second Arab Human Development Report specifically highlights the empowerment of women as a prerequisite to development and economic growth, while each of the next two reports also mention gender equality. Moreover, the Millennium Development Goals — to which all Arab countries have pledged — call for ensuring universal access to primary education. All of these make it clear that a significant share of the advancement of the region will come at the hands of today's women and girls.

And while poverty and access to education are clear obstacles, tradition remains in many cases a hurdle. Egypt's second MDG country report issued in 2005, for example, notes that illiteracy rates for girls aged 11-15 are twice that of boys regardless of economic class. The report attributes the high illiteracy of female children in rural areas to cultural behavior. According to the UN report, *Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2005*, in 2002, 44 million adult Arab women — almost half the female population — could not read or write. Additionally, Arab women have among the lowest rates of political participation in the world, occupying only 8 percent of seats in national parliaments.

Ultimately, it will be up to our region as a whole and specifically women to bring about the needed changes in economic, social or cultural conditions and traditions that sometimes hold women hostage. What Al-Mansour and other Arab women like her offer is a chance to question these traditions, while simultaneously embracing the rich culture that makes us define ourselves as Arabs.

Dina Abulfotuh

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InBox



For the Record

Taking retirement after 22 years at AUC that followed nine years as NBC News Cairo bureau chief — in all 31 very high profile years in Cairo, has meant a flurry of profile pieces in Egyptian and regional media. But the one I enjoyed the most was the *AUCToday* Summer 2005 profile "Broadcasting Schleifer," probably because

it quoted so many great people saying such nice things and it ran my favorite photo, hanging out with Egyptian troops close to the Kuwaiti border on the eve of the 1991 Gulf War.

My only regret is that I didn't take advantage of the opportunity to put to rest an incredible rumor that has circulated on our campus for years — which shouldn't surprise me because academic life can take on a cloistered hot-house atmosphere in which rumors, like extravagant untended weeds, do flourish. So let me do that now. There are two parts to this persistent rumor. The first was that NBC News missed the Sadat assassination in October 1981. That part of the rumor is true. After more than a decade of covering the military parade even when it had no news value precisely because the president was a sitting duck so-to-speak, we weren't there that day. That's because we were advancing a story we had scooped the region on the day before: how an Israeli sub stuck on a sandbar off Jeddah the day before almost sparked a new Arab-Israeli war, and we knew we had another scoop because the sub was off the sandbar and would be sailing through the Suez Canal the next day (parade day) on its way back to Israeli waters. So we counted on the TV news agencies to cover us, not realizing that while we and our direct competition were now using videotape, the agencies were still shooting film, which meant our cover really wasn't a competitive cover.

The second part of the rumor is that I was fired because we technically missed the assassination. "Technically" because in the end it was NBC that broke story with a radio report from the bureau two minutes after the attack when

everybody out at the parade ground couldn't get to a phone line for many minutes more, and because we did end up with footage to screen (how we managed that is another story).

Because of the long forgotten submarine story, we had two correspondents in Cairo and myself as producer reporter to do follow up on Sadat's assassination, while both CBS and ABC were out of pocket for reporters for at least 24 hours after the first stories ran (again that's another story). So we piled on one follow-up report after another, and TV Guide judged that the best coverage of the assassination was the NBC News coverage, even though we missed the main event, which TV Guide never quite realized. As for myself, instead of being fired as the rumor goes, I continued to serve as bureau chief for nearly two years until I resigned to join the AUC faculty in September 1983, with full honors and a consultancy from NBC News. This is a quick sketch — the full story is both funny and fascinating, although it revolves around a terrible and tragic event; but that was typical of the times when foreign correspondents could still work at the edges of danger without being among the victims.

*S. Abdallah Schleifer, professor emeritus in journalism
Cairo, Egypt*

Reconnected

The Summer 2005 issue featured Mennat Allah El Dorry 10 hours before graduation. Her father was featured also, and I was so happy to see him. He was one of my late father's dear friends, and I lost total contact with him after my father died and I immigrated to the United States. It would mean a lot to me if you can either forward my e-mail or help me in getting in touch with them. I am an AUC graduate, and currently I am an associate professor at Central State University of Ohio. My e-mail address is sselem1@aol.com.

*Susie Khairy Selem '85
Ohio, United States*



We Would Like to Hear From You

AUCToday welcomes letters from readers. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Please send to auctoday@aucegypt.edu or Editor, *AUCToday*, Office of Communications and Marketing, 113 Kasr El Aini Street, P.O. Box 2511, Cairo 11511.

AuScenes

Freshman Class Largest Ever at AUC

This fall's freshman class has broken a record. An 8.6 percent increase over last fall's figures, this is the largest class ever admitted to AUC. Of the group, 12 percent are international degree-seeking students. The breakdown by gender is almost even with slightly more females, 53 percent, than males.

Almost one-third of the entire class applied without having declared a major. Of those who did declare, electronics engineering was the most popular major in the sciences and engineering school; political science and psychology in the humanities and social sciences school; and business administration and journalism and mass communication in the business, economics and communication school.

Graduate admission figures are almost identical to last year's, totalling 278 new students in addition to about 36 readmitted ones.

Of all the undergraduate and graduate students, one-third are international, mostly study-abroad and Arabic Language Institute students. Of these, 64 percent are American, 14 percent European, 11 percent Middle Eastern, 5 percent are from the Far East and 4 percent are African.

U.S. Ambassador Tours 9/11 Exhibition

Commemorating 9/11, AUC's Sony Gallery for Photography hosted an exhibit by Lucie Pavlovich titled "Ground Zero: 9/11/01." U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Francis Ricciardone opened the exhibition.

Ambassador Ricciardone noted that the events of 9/11 resonated around the world. "What this date means to Americans and to people all over the world," Ricciardone said, "is commemoration and honoring the memory of those we lost in that tragic event and the heroism of all of those who responded to it, including the photographer herself."

Ricciardone also spoke of "honoring the losses" of those all over the world who have suffered acts of terrorism. "We know that no cause can justify this kind of crime against humanity. No religion justifies any such thing. Terrorism knows no borders. It afflicts all of us and it does, at the end of the day, bring us together, contrary to the division that the perpetrators seek to foist upon all of us," he said.

Pavlovich was born in 1973 in the Czech Republic. She had an international career as a fashion model before studying international relations and politics. Pavlovich also studied at the London School of Photography.

Queen of Great Britain Honors Harrell-Bond



In recognition of her years of service to refugees worldwide, Barbara Harrell-Bond, distinguished visiting professor of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (FMRS), was awarded the title of Officer of Order of the British Empire in June 2005.

Harrell-Bond began work at AUC five years ago, helping to set up the FMRS program and teaching refugee studies. Since she founded the

Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University in 1982, Harrell-Bond has been advocating the rights of refugees and has established legal aid programs internationally.

Her recently co-authored book, *Rights in Exile*, has just been published and holds both governmental and nongovernmental bodies accountable. "The book was an attempt to address the extent to which refugees enjoyed their rights in exile, but it became a catalog of violations," she explained. Her previous book, *Imposing Aid*, is a critique of humanitarian work and an analysis of emergency relief.

Through her work with the British-based charity organization AMERA, Harrell-Bond helped provide legal representation for refugees in Uganda, Sudan and Kenya. Currently, she is working on the establishment of refugee legal aid programs in Zambia, Turkey and Lebanon. "Legal aid is a right of a refugee," she asserted.



AUC Hosts Dinner in Honor of Queen Rania

AUC recently hosted a dinner honoring one of its most prominent and devoted alumni, Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah '91 of Jordan. The dinner took place in November after AUC's Board of Trustees meeting and was held at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. It brought together many of AUC's distinguished alumni and supporters. The gathering was held to both celebrate the university's success in the past and to ensure its continued rise to regional and international distinction.

The dinner highlighted the university's new campus and its Comprehensive Capital Campaign. In addition to raising funds for the new campus construction, the campaign, which has achieved more than 80 percent of its target, will help support increased scholarship opportunities for the best students. It will also provide funds for faculty development, professorships, fellowships and academic programs.

Queen Rania is a long-time supporter of AUC and its role in the region. Delivering a commencement address at AUC in 2001, the queen stressed that the region was in need of graduates like them who had the advantage of being "made by the Arab world and for the Arab world."

AUC Professor and Students Receive United Nations Award for Excellence

This summer, the United Nations Information Center (UNIC) in Cairo awarded Nihal Fahmy, adjunct political science professor, and three of her top students for their comprehensive study of the United Nations in a course titled Seminar in International Organizations.

The students, Amr Fahmy '05, Chotika Suwanwattana '05 and Sarah El-Kazaz, a political science graduating senior, were recognized for their exceptionally high performance and Fahmy for her outstanding effort in teaching about UN organizations. The professor and students were granted certificates of appreciation by Shashi Tharoor, UN undersecretary-general

for communications and public information.

"I am so proud of this award and of the students for showing such an eager desire to learn about and grasp the internal and external intricacies of such a complicated international organization as the United Nations," Fahmy said.

Former UNIC Director Dysane Dorani selected the course for the award after visiting last spring upon Fahmy's invitation. He praised Fahmy for the emphasis placed on the study of internal issues, structures and problems of the United Nations. The core content of the course included the latest report of Secretary-General

Kofi Annan, which was the focus of the Millennium Summit this September in the General Assembly.

The students were delighted to receive the awards after making their way diligently through the coursework.

"The award means so much to me, especially after all the hard work," said Suwanwattana. "It reminds me that hard work and academic honesty are not always taken for granted or overlooked."

Amr Fahmy shared his classmate's sentiment. "The feeling of being awarded always pushes me to aim for more and appreciate the confidence I have in myself," he said.

AuScenes

Web Camera Captures Hourly Snapshots of New Campus Progress



Members of the AUC community can now view work progress on the new campus site without having to leave their computer screens. By logging onto ncd.aucegypt.edu, users get an hourly image update of the construction work in New Cairo.

Meeting the challenges of connectivity for the new campus has required an innovative and flexible approach.

After looking into both satellite and terrestrial technology, Mahmoud El Akabawi, associate vice president for computing and professor of information systems, chose wireless radio frequency (RF) from the New Cairo site to its nearest telephone exchange and then via a terrestrial link from that exchange to the downtown campus.

“We started testing in December 2004 with an experimental, wireless RF link between the downtown campus and the dormitories in Zamalek. We found it to be stable, economically viable, and to this day that link is still up and running,” said El Akabawi. Four months later, an operational link was created between the new campus and the nearby Kattamiya telephone exchange. In a week’s time, “everything was ready for data exchange, telephony and the ability to transmit the Web cam pictures to the world,” he said.

“We have eliminated the distance between the city and the new campus,” said El Akabawi, adding that “there will be a complete high-tech environment that will enable the new campus site to be the most advanced learning space in the entire Middle East.”

Senior U.S. Officials Discuss Development with LEAD Students



Karen Hughes, U.S. undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, and Dina Powell, assistant U.S. secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, held an informal gathering with students on the Main Campus. Addressing the students, all of whom are attending AUC as part of the Leadership for Education and Development

(LEAD) program, the two women shared their ideas on international cooperation and development in the region.

Hughes spoke of “fostering a sense of greater understanding” and referred to public diplomacy as being people driven. “We know our policies affect people and their lives all over the world,” she said.

Powell is an Egyptian who moved to Texas at the age of four. Her mother, Hoda Soliman '75, studied psychology at AUC. Emphasizing the importance of cooperation, Powell told the students, “Today, let’s start to get to know each other and work together.”

LEAD student Amira Hassanein asked Hughes whether the kind of development Egypt needed most was humanitarian or political. In her response, Hughes cited economic reform, education and the need for people to be able to express themselves as the most pressing issues. “We believe it’s important to help the countries that respect the steps that need to be taken to make them better countries,” she said.

Haroun Begins Term as Science Dean

After a rigorous international selection process, Medhat Haroun, holder of the AGIP endowed professorship in the construction engineering department, was chosen to serve as the new dean of the School of Sciences and Engineering. Haroun succeeds Fadel Assabghy, who served as the school’s dean since 1999 and has now returned to teaching and heading AUC’s Science and Technology Research Center.

As dean, Haroun is responsible for overseeing the departments of biology, chemistry, computer science, construction engineering, mechanical engineering, electronics engineering, interdisciplinary engineering programs, mathematics and physics. “I would like all departments to actively participate in mapping what directions the school will take to further enhance its stature and programs. The final say will be up to the faculty,” Haroun said.

Haroun received his doctorate from the California Institute of Technology in 1979, after which he taught at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) for 20 years. He served for two terms as chair of the UCI civil and environmental engineering department and received the University Distinguished Professor Award for Teaching. He then became director of the University of California’s Education Abroad Center, overseeing the needs of study-abroad students.

Haroun joined AUC in 1999 as a construction engineering professor and chair of the engineering department, and in 2003, he received the AUC Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

Besides his teaching career, Haroun is a world-renowned expert in earthquake engineering, having conducted considerable research on seismic loading and structures’ response to earthquakes. He focused his research on buildings, bridges and particularly tanks, for which he received the Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize from the American Society of Civil Engineers.



Theater Design Director Wins State Incentive Award for AUC Play

Hazem Shebl, technical director in the performing and visual arts department, recently won the 2004 State Incentive Award in theater décor for the play *Etnein fi Ufa* (Two in a Basket) performed in early 2003 on the Falaki Studio Theatre. The award, which consists of a certificate and cash, is the highest government honor given to young artists and is presented by the

president of Egypt. The award committee cited Shebl’s innovative and ideal use of space as the main reason for winning the award. “I cherish this award because it is from my country. I feel recognized as an Egyptian artist,” he said.

Shebl has been working at AUC for the past 11 years. He has also worked in venues outside the university, including

the Cairo Opera House and public theaters. He has recently returned from Canada where he took part in the World Stage Design international exhibition. In addition, Shebl is a member of the United States Institute for Theater Technology and the International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians, based in the Netherlands.

Change Agent



**Former
CBS News
correspondent
Lawrence
Pintak is the
Adham center's
new director,
bringing three
decades of
experience to
one of the
world's leading
centers on
Arab media**

A veteran journalist for the past 30 years, a media consultant to governments around the world and former editor of a major newspaper and Internet news site, Lawrence Pintak is the newly appointed director of the recently renamed Adham Center for Electronic Journalism. He comes to AUC from the University of Michigan, where he served as professor of journalism and public policy.

"I have a very long interest in the Middle East and the broader Muslim world," Pintak said. "Cairo is a leading force in the Arab world, and it's fascinating to work in a place that has such an impact on the development of young Arab journalists and the regional media they operate in."

Reporting from four continents, Pintak served as the Middle East correspondent for CBS News and contributed to such leading U.S. networks as PBS and ABC. He covered the birth of modern radical terrorism in the 1980s and more recently reported

"Cairo is a leading force in the Arab world, and it's fascinating to work in a place that has such an impact on the development of young Arab journalists and the regional media they operate in."

on the Indonesian revolution and the rise of political Islam in Indonesia. He won two Overseas Press Club citations for his Middle East coverage and was nominated twice for an Emmy Award.

"I saw how the U.S. policy in Beirut systematically alienated Lebanese

Muslims and how that led to the rise of radical Islamic militants. That's what initially triggered my interest in the subject," he said, adding that spending five years in Indonesia during which he married his Indonesian wife and his three children were born made him understand even more about the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world.

Heading the Adham center, Pintak plans to continue the "phenomenal" work carried out by Abdallah Schleifer, the center's founder who has now retired. Pintak's vision for the center is to expand its regional and professional scope, which is reflected in the change in the center's name. It is no longer the Adham Center for Television Journalism, but is now the Adham Center for Electronic Journalism. "Replacing television with electronic is to emphasize the converging nature of digital media," Pintak said.

He added that he expects the Adham center to help foster the evolution of Arab journalism, not in a way that is a recreation of the U.S. media, but by instilling a sense of professionalism that would help Arab journalists "think about what they're doing, examine the options they have and choose the way they deem appropriate."

Author of *Seeds of Hate: How America's Flawed Middle East Policy Ignited the Jihad* and a forthcoming book, *Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens: Bush, Bin Laden and the War of Ideas*, Pintak is highly critical of President George Bush's post 9/11 policies. He's even more critical of the way the U.S. and Arab media have handled the situation.

"The U.S. and Arab media focused on stereotypes and extreme rhetoric," Pintak said. "The result was a lack of understanding on both sides. Most Americans fail to recognize that while most Arabs condemn the violence of

9/11, many sympathize with the reasons behind it. It's important for Americans to understand that there are reasons Arabs are angry and for Arabs to understand that not all Americans support U.S. policies."

That's the kind of analysis he hopes graduates of the Adham center can learn to make — presenting both sides of the story and not letting their preconceived notions get in the way of giving balanced coverage. "The media

"It's important for Americans to understand that there are reasons Arabs are angry and for Arabs to understand that not all Americans support U.S. policies."

should present the full picture of events," he said. When that doesn't happen, things become problematic, as was the case with media coverage of the war on Iraq.

"The U.S. and Arab media were showing two different versions of the story," Pintak said. "Americans were seeing it as a justified war and the Arabs were seeing it as an unfair and offending war. Americans didn't see people dying, babies wounded and mothers crying, and Arabs were seeing just that." The result was a strong sense of anger among Arabs and Muslims all over the Middle East, he noted.

"The solution is to resume a dialogue and for reporters to be balanced," Pintak asserted. "We need to consciously avoid allowing the extreme voices on both sides to drown out the mainstream. That way, we will begin to rebuild a conversation." □

By Dalia Al Nimr

Water Woes

By Dalia Al Nimr
Illustration by Mohanad Kassem
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

“Projections to the year 2050 show that 66 countries, comprising about two-thirds of the world population, will face moderate to severe water scarcity. The consequences of these water shortages on economic and social development, political stability and preservation of life will be immeasurable.”

Mahmoud Abu-Zeid

Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation

Expert opinions on the quality of the water we drink and the potential shortages facing Egypt in the future

Egypt is among those countries, as Abu Zeid told *Al Ahram Weekly* upon his return from the second World Water Forum in Holland. In fact, if water in Egypt is not properly managed, the country may face a serious food and water crisis in the near future.

“If Egypt’s population continues to grow and we keep using water at the same rate per person, the demand may exceed the supply and the government may have to resort to water rationing,” said Edward Smith, construction engineering professor at AUC who specializes in water quality and wastewater treatment.

The situation is compounded along the banks of the Nile, where each of the three principal Nile basin countries — Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan — wants to increase its share of water at the expense of the other two. With their populations expected to surge from 167 million to 264 million in 20 years’ time, the three countries are also faced with a grain shortage resulting from water deficits.

The problem in Egypt is not only the availability of water, but also its quality.

With sewage and garbage being dumped into agricultural drains and some irrigation canals, issues of water quality become all the more important.

Faculty members at AUC have researched water quality and quantity, coming up with answers that are not always black and white, but which nevertheless show that viable solutions are long overdue.

Will Water Run Out?

As we all go about swimming, taking regular showers, hosing our cars and washing the dishes, it’s hard to think of water as anything but abundant and renewable. And with the Nile River flowing, people feel that water is here to stay.

“It’s not that you’ll open the tap one day and no water will come out,” said Emad Imam, construction engineering professor and consultant to the Egyptian Ministry of Irrigation. “But we need to utilize our supply more efficiently and manage our demand if we want to attain food security.”

Salah El Haggar, mechanical engineering professor who specializes

in sources of water contamination, described the situation as a lack of appreciation of the finite supply of water and the need to manage it. “People do not pay for water, so they have no sense of its value and use it wastefully,” he said.

The most effective way to control individual water consumption, El Haggar noted, is water pricing. Water meters should be installed in homes so that people pay for the amount of water they consume. Currently, in places where such meters are available, they are mostly out of order. “Pricing will make people think twice about the way they use water,” El Haggar said.

Agreeing, Smith noted, “You’re not going to think about how much water you use until it affects you financially.” He added that unaccounted for water in Cairo averages about 30 to 40 percent, one of the highest urban rates worldwide.

Even more problematic than municipal use is the area of agriculture, El Haggar pointed out. Farmers in Egypt still use flood irrigation, a low-tech method by which water is poured onto the fields and allowed to flow along the ground among the crops. However, a lot of water is wasted because about one half of it does not reach the crops. A more efficient method is drip irrigation, where water is sent through perforated plastic pipes that are laid along the rows of crops and sometimes buried along their root lines.

The problem, El Haggar explained, is convincing farmers to change their traditional methods of irrigation. He recounted how during his field visits to Egyptian villages when he was working on his co-authored book *People and Pollution*, farmers would tell him that flood irrigation is the way their ancestors used to water their land and

that they don’t intend to change it. “It’s difficult to convince them that what their parents were doing was wrong,” El Haggar said.

Smith shares El Haggar’s notion that changing farmers’ attitudes is not an easy task, but he believes that a solution must be pursued at both national and local levels. “It’s a long-term strategy and is not something that will happen immediately, not even in a few years, but it will take good planning and hard decision making ... If the problem of agriculture is not addressed, then we would be spending 90 percent of our resources on 10 percent of the problem,” he said.

Is Our Water Safe?

The key question on the minds of many is whether the water we drink is clean or filled with bacteria and dangerous substances.

“For the most part,” Smith said, “tap water in Cairo meets Egyptian and international safety standards. But occasionally — and I say occasionally — there may be a level of organic

substances that form compounds with chlorine, which could increase the risk of cancer if ingested over a long period of time.”

Imam shares Smith’s view that drinking water in Egypt is not hazardous. “All in all, the Nile River is in good condition except for some black spots that indicate high pollution areas,” he said. “We don’t expect the Nile to have clear or distilled water, but it should be in balance for all species to exist safely. Therefore, external pollution has to be limited.”

An expert on pollution, El Haggar confirms that tap water is generally free from bacteria. However, because water tanks on the roofs of buildings are not regularly maintained, it means that drinking water is not as clean as it should be. “Tea is a great indicator of water purity,” El Haggar noted. If the water is impure, the color of tea will be dark and murky. If the water is clean, the color will be light and clear.

El Haggar also differentiated between water in urban and rural areas. “If urban areas have polluted water in the



Emad Imam conducting an experiment at AUC’s hydraulics laboratory



Salah El Haggar taking a water sample from a canal in Giza

range of 20 percent, villages have a rate as high as 80 percent. The drinking water in villages is not safe," he said, recalling how he was served a cup of water with tiny worms floating in it during a field visit to one of Egypt's governorates.

El Haggar attributes water pollution to people's lack of awareness. In the villages, because there is no sewage system, people drain their sewage into water canals. They also dump their garbage and solid wastes into the water because there are no garbage collectors. In addition, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in farming means that chemicals run into the canals. The situation is the same in the industrial sector, where waste is not always disposed of safely and many times is left to run into the canals.

"It all comes down to what people do with water," El Haggar said. "People only think of what they can do to get rid of their waste, but they

don't think of how it impacts the whole community. Environmental awareness is a science — a crucial science — that needs to become widespread here in Egypt."

To Filter or Not To Filter

"Bottled water is an economic burden that may not be necessary. Water here is not that unsafe, with the exception of coastal areas and some northern cities where water purification systems are not very efficient," Imam said. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that having filters at home is a good way to remove impurities and a limited amount of dissolved pollutants. "Most filters will do some good," he said.

Smith, who is currently in the midst of a four-year research project on residential water quality, said that most activated carbon units are good at removing organic substances as well as chlorine. Reverse osmosis units, some of which cost more than LE 2,000, are

very effective in removing most of the substances in water, but they are expensive to purchase and regularly maintain. "They sometimes remove substances that wouldn't hurt if they remain in the water," Smith added.

El Haggar noted that although conventional filters generally remove suspended solids, they do not get rid of salts and chlorine. Chlorine is added during the purification process to disinfect water from bacteria and viruses, and that's why it is unsafe to store filtered water in plastic bottles since chlorine may react with the plastic. "What's more dangerous is the chlorine reacting with organic matter thrown in the water. That may cause cancer on the long term," El Haggar said. "Reverse osmosis units, though expensive, are good because they remove chlorine and salts in the water."

Are We in Danger?

Faculty experts agree that there is no immediate danger, but if water quality is not adequately addressed, there is a potential long-term threat.

"Eighty percent of the diseases that have become widespread in Egypt — including cancer, Hepatitis C, as well as liver and kidney failure — come from pollution in the water, air and soil," El Haggar said, adding that chemical fertilizers and pesticides not only weaken the soil and land, they are also carcinogenic. He noted that a lot of money is spent treating patients when the real solution is to have an all-encompassing system that would not allow pollution to happen in the first place. "Prevention is better than treatment," he asserted.

Echoing the same sentiment, Smith said that people have to realize that "it's more expensive to pollute than not to pollute. Violators have to be fined, and pre-treatment has to be done properly.

We can avoid a lot of problems if we do things correctly from the start."

Smith also pointed out that, besides the health risks, water contamination poses a threat to the quality of life that many have gotten used to. If coastal areas are polluted, going to the beach may not be an option in the summer. In addition, if there are bad years with little rainfall and snowmelts in the headwaters of the Nile, widespread conservation may be the only way out. "People might have to significantly alter their lifestyle, and if everyone insists on doing nothing, this could happen in a short time," he said.

The Solution

Imam believes that the solution is multifaceted. "Water issues are closely tied to the whole fabric of society," he said. "To address the problem of water, you need to address a host of other issues as well." He noted that an integrated water resources management system should be put in place. To operate effectively, this system should include a close monitoring of performance to reward those who abide by it and punish those who don't. Rural sectors should be provided with better services, and the government should coordinate its efforts with nongovernmental organizations, local villagers and water experts to come up with a unified course of action.

"Our problem is not that we are poor or incapable of doing something; we just have an inefficient system," Imam said. "Overpopulation could be viewed as a burden or as a repository of human resources. As long as you have a good system in place, things would work fine no matter how many people there are."

Sharing the same viewpoint, El Haggar noted that strategic planning is the first step forward. The country

needs a comprehensive agricultural scheme, with a clear vision and mission statement. The plan should provide villagers with a central location to dump their garbage and create adequate sewage collection and treatment facilities. "Fines should then be inflicted on those who don't abide by the law," he said, adding that the media could play a pivotal role in educating farmers about safe irrigation methods.

On a local level, small-scale organizations made up of village residents should be trained on matters such as waste disposal and recycling, making them accountable for the cleanliness of the village. Most importantly, each individual should be guided by a sense of responsibility toward his or her community. "Ancient Egyptians had to swear an oath that they did nothing to harm the Nile. Today, we do it without thinking because we are only considering what benefits us personally, no matter what the consequences are," he said.

El Haggar likened human negligence toward the environment to ostriches burying their heads in the sand so as not to look at the enemy. Because the ostrich cannot see the enemy, it reckons that it is safe that way. "We have to stop acting like ostriches," he said. "Because the impact of environmental degradation is not immediately visible, we are oblivious to any coming danger and keep harming it more and more."

Also emphasizing that the solution has to come from within, Smith said that the lack of foresight and initiative, coupled with carelessness and greed, are the root causes of the problem. "We have to stop being shortsighted and not lean on the government to do everything for us; we all bear responsibility for our circumstances," he said. "We should operate with the mindset that fresh water is finite and that we have to work hard to use what's available in the best way possible so that we have something for ourselves and generations to come." □



Edward Smith conducting lab tests on water quality



Photos by Omar Mohsen

From Peers to Professionals

Students come face-to-face with life in the real world through AUC's summer internship program

For political science senior Dina Mourad, summer was not a relaxing time to sleep in, sit by the pool or travel with family and friends. For six weeks, she had to wake up at 7 am, dress in a suit and high heels borrowed from her mother's wardrobe, tie her hair in a bun and set off to work at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There, she attended meetings with top diplomats, took part in conferences and prepared reports. Though she learned a lot as a political scientist, the real value of her experience lay in developing an insider's view of the professional world.

"Although I had rough times dealing with some people, I now understand more about the dynamics of the work environment than I would have from just attending classes," she said.

Mourad is among approximately 300 juniors and seniors who participated in internships last summer through AUC's internship program. A major transition from the sheltered university walls into the prickly real world, the experience proved difficult for many. Yet in the end, most emerged with a new sense of self worth and a more mature, realistic outlook on life.

For Sara Khafagy, a chemistry senior

who worked as a nutritional analyst at Kraft Foods Egypt, the experience gave her a new foothold in her field. "In my very first lab experiment, I got an error message. I was frightened and frantically looked through the manual to see what went wrong," she said.

Khafagy discovered that since she hadn't put enough solvent, the solution evaporated and the machine stopped. By the end of her internship, Khafagy was more competent in handling the company's specialized equipment. "I began to notice errors even before they appeared and became extremely accurate in what I'm doing. I also

learned how to find my way through tons of data in order to formulate my research."

One of her first lessons in adulthood, Khafagy learned that people think differently and therefore can't be treated the same way. "I used to think that changing faces is a form of hypocrisy, but that's sometimes needed at work. You have to find the key for dealing with every personality," she said.

Mourad also came to the same conclusion. "The politics of the work environment is very tricky. At first I was timid, but I gradually learned to speak out about what bothered me. That gave me a lot of self confidence and always made me feel better."

At the construction site of AUC's new campus, Michael Azer, a construction engineering senior and an intern with Project Management International, also got a taste of the real world. As an assistant engineer, he spent the hot summer days on site and witnessed firsthand the relationship between engineers and workers in the field. "It's a real hierarchy," he said. "The engineer is very strict and demands a lot of respect, and the worker has to obey. I sometimes felt that engineers were too harsh with workers." It was only when Azer's competence was challenged that he began to understand why engineers need to be so harsh.

Azer asked a group of workers on site to fix a piece of equipment, and when he found that his instructions were not followed, he had to keep repeating his request. After losing his temper and

asking for the eighth time, the workers finally carried out his request. When Azer's boss learned of the story, he reprimanded the workers and was fully supportive of Azer.

"I don't know if they felt that I was too young to give them instructions or

"The politics of the work environment is very tricky. At first I was timid, but I gradually learned to speak out about what bothered me. That gave me a lot of self confidence and always made me feel better."

if it was a lazy attitude, but the fact is that they were not doing their job," said Azer. "I guess the engineer had to get tough with them so that others wouldn't follow in their lead." After that incident, all workers on site were efficient in their work with Azer.

Spending his internship overseas, Mohamed Nounou, a mechanical engineering senior, flew to Dubai to intern with General Electric. "Everybody was very accommodating, from the top managers to the workers. I felt happy to be part of that world even if it was only for six weeks."

Nounou added that his real source of motivation was sitting with the general manager on a weekly basis to give him an update on the progress of his work. "When a man as busy as him shows

continuous interest in what I'm doing, it is very flattering. It definitely gave me a push to work harder."

When Nounou started his internship, he was amazed to see workers from all levels address the senior managers by their first names. "There were no formalities," he said. He was even more surprised to find out that there weren't any defined working hours. "It gave me a new sense of responsibility because I had to manage my own time. I felt committed to get the job done."

Living alone also helped Nounou become more independent. "I had to calculate how much money I had for my expenses and transportation and had to stop being a spendthrift." He also began to look after some of the details that he didn't pay attention to at his parents' home. "Before I went out, I had to check that nothing was on the stove, that the electricity was turned off and that everything was in order. I became another person," he said.

An active member of the Help Club and president of the Mechanical Engineering Club, Nounou believes that those who make the most out of their internships are those who make the most out of their stay at AUC. "It's not just about high GPAs; it's the communication skills you acquire through extracurricular activities that make all the difference. You learn how to deal with situations and manage several tasks at a time. That's what the multinationals are looking for: a well-rounded individual." □

By Dalia Al Nimr



Alumni Profile



you wounded or worse. Your instincts help you survive. Knowing where you are is very important and this comes through being cautious. No story is worth your neck," said Hamdi.

But this has to be put into practice on the ground. "The chaos in Iraq at the moment is terrible as it is taking place among civilians. The war itself was much safer than the aftermath," said Hamdi. "During the war you were on one side or the other. The enemy is over there, and you can see the planes flying overhead; essentially you have an educated idea of where you are going. But now in Iraq, you can step outside your hotel and cross the road to get a bottle of water and find yourself dead. The killing is completely random, so it is just as dangerous for observers as it is for soldiers," he explained.

In such an environment, keeping yourself safe is never going to be straightforward, said Hamdi, pointing to the increased number of deaths of members of the media in recent years. "CNN was the first to bring armed guards into a press vehicle; everyone covering events in Iraq now has armed security. There is a huge debate about whether this is inviting bullets in your direction," said Hamdi. Recently, journalists have been required to take hostile environment awareness courses before entering dangerous war zones.

For Hamdi, these courses, which weren't available when he started working, would have helped him deal with the emotional and psychological trauma he experienced after returning home. One of Hamdi's first assignments as a young reporter was covering the famine camps in Darfur, Sudan. "I was asked to do the photography and had to come back with close-ups of all those children during the famine," he recalled. "To this day, I cannot watch such scenes even on television. It gives

me the shakes, and I can smell the death in my nostrils." Hamdi continued to explain that he was unable to understand his feelings until recently when he learned of post-traumatic stress. "We simply didn't know these things back then; we would come back after covering something and feel funny for a few days," he said.

Though his wife doesn't believe that he can stay away from covering another war and Hamdi himself suspects she may be right, he is adamant about the work he does being separate from who he is. He is resolute that any celebrity status is counterproductive in reporting the news. "Correspondents should not be the source of the news, which is becoming a trend; they should be reporting the news," said Hamdi. "We are not important; what we do is important." □

By Wael Elazab

Top-left: With Jordan's King Abdullah after an interview in 2000; bottom-right: Under a statue in Basra, Iraq after the city fell in the recent war in 2003

Fear Under Fire

Spending decades covering war zones, natural disasters and political strife, Ashraf Hamdi '82 shares his survival tactics with fear at his side

He said goodbye to his wife and three children and was flying into a war zone to cover an emergency story. Never having been there before, he had no real contacts or any tangible leads. But he had to figure out the lay of the land, getting to the right people at the right time and place to start the stories flowing.

Based in Abu Dhabi, Ashraf Hamdi '82 has spent decades entering dangerous situations to dig for stories, meanwhile making sure he gets out alive. With 20 years behind him as a news correspondent with Reuters, Hamdi has reported from combat situations,

natural disasters and peace talks in Washington, D.C.

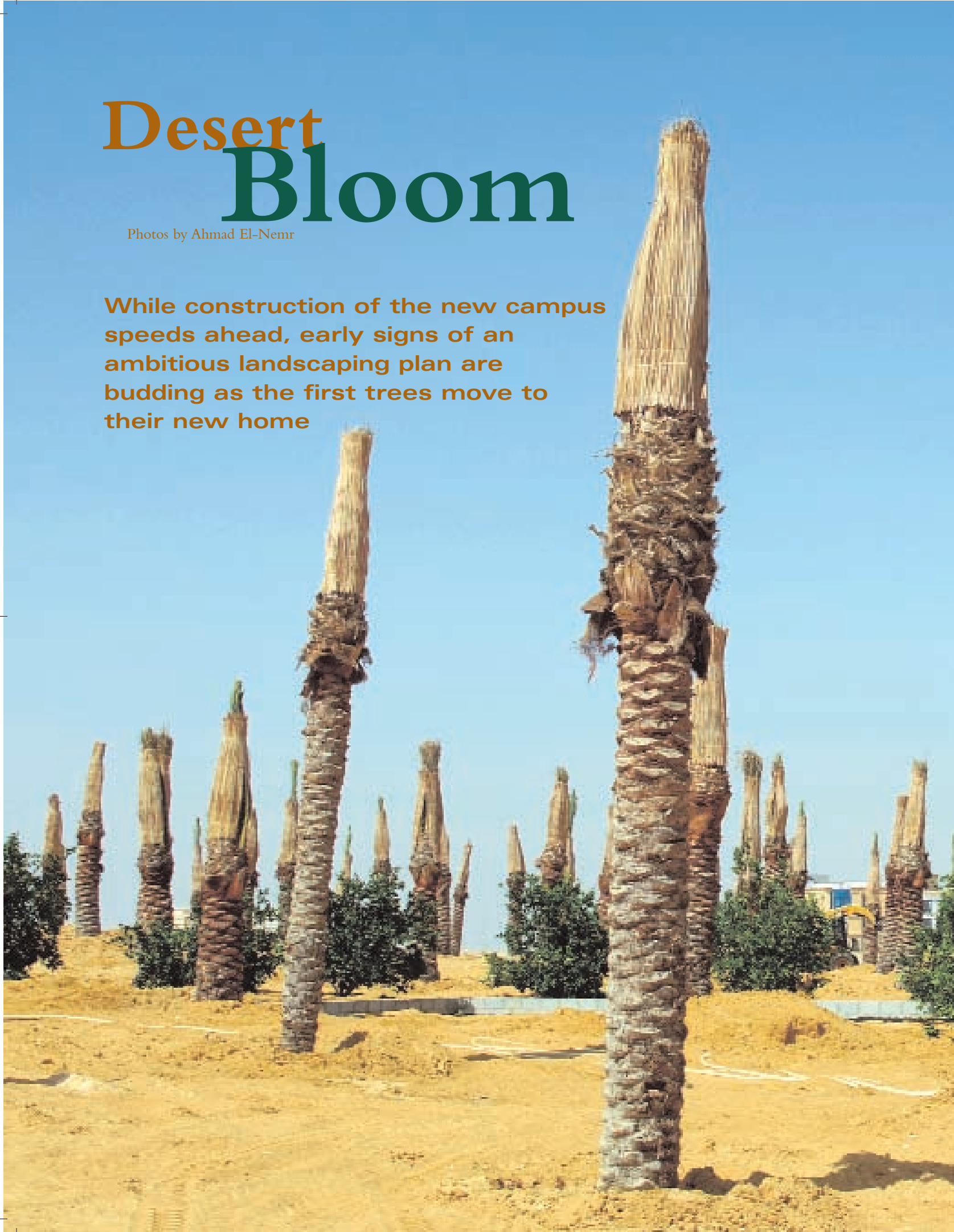
During the most recent Iraq war, Hamdi was in charge of the southern border for Abu Dhabi TV, for which he still works. He had promised his wife it would be the last war he covers. Leaving behind his family to cover yet another catastrophe, Hamdi has become no stranger to fear. "If you are not afraid, you won't make it. It is not courage that keeps you going; it gets



Desert Bloom

Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

While construction of the new campus speeds ahead, early signs of an ambitious landscaping plan are budding as the first trees move to their new home



“The architectural approach in this part of the world has to be designing the open spaces first, not solids. We designed open courtyards for definite space functions: some for movement, some for relaxation, some for spiritual rejuvenation,” said Mozhan Khadem, Boston Design Collaborative president and director of design, about AUC’s new campus landscaping.

AUC’s own Desert Development Center (DDC) is supplying the required plants and putting them into the new campus landscape. The landscaping — designed with a respect for nature and an awareness of the region’s climate — will contain numerous green areas that include nearly 150 different species and more than 8,000 trees. The plants will be a mixture of international and native Egyptian species. The campus is divided into zones, each employing a specific concept for the plants.

The most centrally located zone is referred to as the garden. It is in a depression and will be a formal, ornamental garden with pathways and fountains. There will be many flowering plants that provide fruit smells, aromas and colors. “We have a high number of citrus trees. These have aromatic flowers and are evergreens that bear fruit yearly,” said Yehia El Alaily, DDC new campus landscape project manager. This is in contrast to the perimeter zone, where the purpose is to create a “shelter belt to screen the campus from the surrounding area and also to serve as a wind breaker,” explained Richard Tutwiler, DDC director.

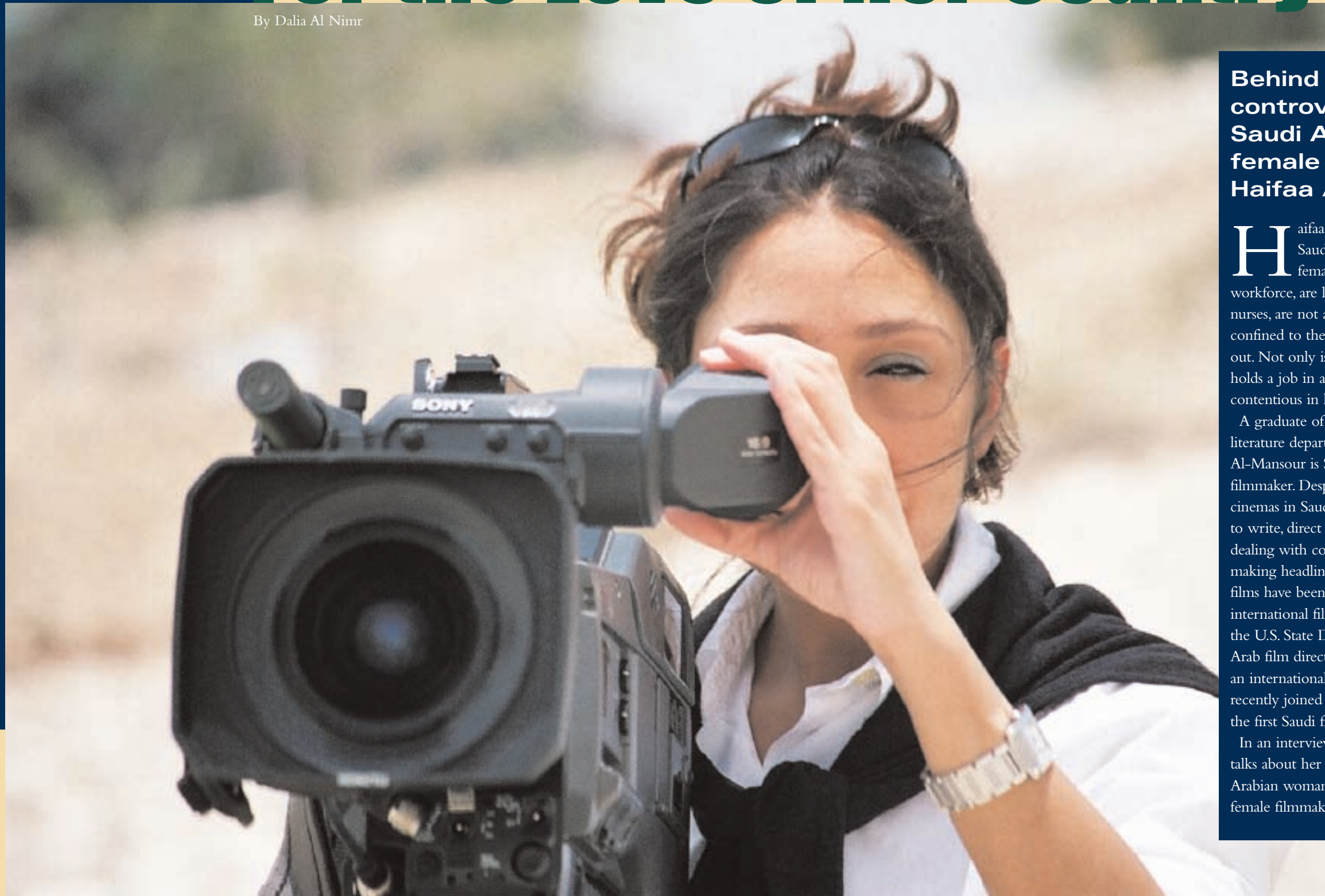
More than 350 date palms have been planted in what will become the AUC Park. “The idea of the park is to provide a connection between the university and the community and at the same time a transition; the concept is an oasis of palms,” Tutwiler said.

By Wael Elazab



For the Love of Her Country

By Dalia Al Nimr

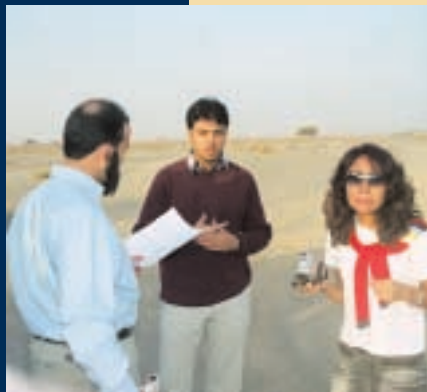


Behind the controversial camera of Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour '97

Haifaa Al-Mansour '97 is not your typical Saudi woman. In a country where females only comprise 5 percent of the workforce, are limited to careers as teachers or nurses, are not allowed to drive and are generally confined to the private sphere, Al-Mansour stands out. Not only is she constantly on-the-go, she also holds a job in a field that is considered contentious in her country: filmmaking.

A graduate of AUC's English and comparative literature department and the eighth of 12 siblings, Al-Mansour is Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker. Despite the fact that there are no cinemas in Saudi Arabia, Al-Mansour has managed to write, direct and showcase four short films dealing with controversial issues in Saudi society, making headlines in her country and abroad. Her films have been screened in numerous Arab and international film festivals, and she was chosen by the U.S. State Department in 2003 as one of seven Arab film directors invited to go to Hollywood on an international visit program. She has also recently joined Rotana production company as the first Saudi filmmaker.

In an interview with *AUCToday*, Al-Mansour talks about her upbringing, her struggles as a Saudi Arabian woman and her goals and ambitions as a female filmmaker.



Top-right: *Al-Mansour* during a trip to Shaiba, Saudi Arabia; top: With two of the stars in her film, *The Only Way Out*, shot in the Emirates; center: A scene from her movie, *Women Without Shadows*; bottom: Filming *The Only Way Out* with assistant director Abdallah Hassan

You were born and raised in Saudi Arabia. How did that shape your character?

I don't really know how it shaped my character, but it made me a real Saudi. I wasn't alienated from my own culture. My views are always from within, and I have an insider's view that a lot of non-natives don't get even if they try.

How does that perspective as an insider move you?

It makes me feel that the mix up between tradition and religion has humiliated women and hindered their development for years. I strongly believe that Saudi women need a propeller for change. They need to see women in their society standing up for what they believe in and taking up careers other than teaching and nursing. Otherwise, it will be hard for them to change.

Is that why you decided to become a filmmaker?

Yes, because I believe that films are agents of change. Films are very poetic and human. Through films, you can change a lot of things around you. It's nice and challenging to tell a story that engages others and at the same time sends a message to your community.

As a female filmmaker in Saudi Arabia, do you face opposition?

Of course I do, but I also find a lot of support. It seems like people in Saudi are very divided: either totally with me or totally against me. What is most important to me is the support of my family. I have always felt that my parents are very proud of me. They've always been open minded with my siblings

and me about the choices we make in life. My sister chose to be a painter in the United States. One of my brothers is a music composer, and the other one an actor. My parents always trusted our judgment and never stood in our way.

Why did you decide to focus on the issue of the face veil in your first film, *Who*?

I derive my ideas from things happening around me. People think that I like to tackle controversial topics for the sake of going against the grain. That's not true. I like to talk about topics that I feel are essential to be tackled if my country is to advance. The face veil is definitely one of those topics. Two years ago, a rumor circulated around Saudi that a male serial killer was wearing the face veil to deceive his female victims. People were freaking out and closing their doors. Nobody knew who he was because he was completely cloaked in black. My aim was to highlight the security issue posed by such a dress.

What was the main message you were trying to convey in *The Only Way Out* by focusing on three Saudis stranded in the desert?

I wanted to show that in Saudi society nowadays there is a growing tension between liberal reformists and conservative Islamists, and that dialogue is the only way out. I wanted to present my message in a creative way, and that's how I thought of the idea of three engineers — a liberal, a conservative and a moderate — stranded in the desert together. The film shows the clash of ideas in modern Saudi Arabia and the need for tolerance. It's okay to be different, but we shouldn't cancel each other out.

***Women Without Shadows* sparked a strong public reaction, ranging from outrage to praise. Did you expect such a reaction?**

I didn't expect it, even though I thought the film would trigger some opposition because it deals with sensitive topics in Saudi society such as male and female segregation and women having to wear the face veil. Some didn't like the ideas the movie presented; others welcomed its new vision. I feel this controversy is a healthy sign if it is well directed. It makes people think and question a lot of things that are taken for granted. In this film, I spoke to elderly Saudi women who recall that 30 years ago, they were able to dress the way they like, move about freely and function normally in a mixed society. I wanted to show that traditions are not sacred. It's very important to take an objective look at traditions, preserving what's good and removing what's bad — especially practices that demean women. We have reached a point where we have to be realistic and honest with ourselves.

The social restrictions on women in Saudi Arabia must affect your work. How do you cope with these limitations?

Social restrictions are there only if we want them to be. I am moving ahead with my career, and I have a lot of support. Much of what we think of as social restrictions are actually our fear of challenging the status quo and accepting what society forces on us. Unfortunately, women in the Arab world sometimes have a misconception that blindly following traditions and social customs will protect them and make them more



virtuous. They end up losing themselves and their dreams to social norms that are very unfair.

How do you cope with the lack of a film industry in Saudi Arabia?

The lack of a film industry is surely an obstacle, but I manage. There are no movie theaters in Saudi, so I showcase my films in schools and other venues while promoting them on the Internet. *Women Without Shadows* was shown privately at the French Consulate in Jeddah — that was the only venue offered to me. With *The Only Way Out*, I had to shoot in the Emirates, where I used 16 millimeter cameras that aren't available in Saudi. But I've realized that if I do something real and genuine, it will find its way to people. I find support for what I do because there are a lot of people out there interested in culture and art.

Why do you prefer to work in Saudi Arabia rather than London or the United States, for example?

I won't add anything to the American

or British filmmaking scene. I can't pretend that I understand their culture fully or can compete with their technical skills. In Saudi, I can make films that are true about things I feel and live. Saudi culture is rich and diverse, and that doesn't come across in the media. As a filmmaker, I have a chance to rectify stereotypes. I want to paint a true picture of my society because I believe that being authentic to one's culture is the key to success.

What are your future plans?

Landing a deal with Rotana is a dream for many people. I always used to shoot my films alone, but now I have a professional crew and specialized equipment. That will definitely change the quality and standard of my films. I am currently working on my first film with Rotana. It will open by the end of next year in theaters in the Gulf and Lebanon. But the thing I care about most is for my movies to have a real social, artistic and cultural value. I want to establish credibility with my viewers because that's the only way to bring about social change. □



Helen Rizzo

Tackling Terrorism

By Dalia Al Nimr
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

“When people don’t feel part of a nation state or when they feel that there is a lack of opportunities preventing them from reaching their dreams, they feel alienated. It’s not necessarily about being poor or uneducated; it’s a feeling that society is treating them unfairly.”

AUC professors examine a global phenomenon through its social, geopolitical and psychological dimensions, while offering possible solutions for the future

The current trend in international terrorism has encapsulated the world in a wave of death and destruction. The scene on television screens has become all too familiar: rubble, debris, chaos and endless bloodshed amidst cries of pain from people who have lost their loved ones.

Members of the AUC community felt the recent wave of terrorism close to home when near-simultaneous explosions ripped through the Ghazala Gardens Hotel, the Old Market and a beachfront parking lot in the Red Sea resort of Sharm El Sheikh last summer.

The Sharm El Sheikh incident — like 9/11, the London bombings and

countless other acts of terror — raises concerns about the roots of terrorism and how it can be subdued. The situation has become even more critical, since statistics show that international terrorism is on the rise.

A recent NBC News analysis said that out of the approximately 2,929 terrorism-related deaths that occurred worldwide since the September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, 58 percent of them happened in 2004 alone.

To help understand this phenomenon, faculty members from various disciplines shared their thoughts with *AUCToday* on the causes of terrorism, who engages in it and what the motives are.

Ideology of Terror

Kathleen Myambo, associate professor of psychology, differentiated between three types of terrorists: the psychopath, who is usually a self-centered serial killer; the retributational, who seeks revenge for a specific individual or group; and the religious or politically driven, whose sole aim is to cause terror without discriminating targets.

The latter, Myambo explained, is driven by a solid ideology and is brainwashed into loyalty for a particular group. “Anybody outside the group is considered an enemy. When people don’t feel society is giving them what they want as citizens, they fall prey to such groups,” Myambo said.

She noted that even though religious terrorists are primarily concerned with wrongdoing and political terrorists with wars and policymaking, both have an inflexible mentality and are set to accomplish their mission at any cost.

“They have a very rigid ideology and are so focused on achieving their goals that they don’t look left or right,” she said. “They feel that when they take matters into their own hands and attempt to change the existing system, they are building a new society.”

Linking terrorism to marginalization, Helen Rizzo, assistant professor of sociology, said that occupation and frustration lead to violence. “When people don’t feel part of a nation state or when they feel that there is a lack of opportunities preventing them from reaching their dreams, they feel

alienated. It’s not necessarily about being poor or uneducated; it’s a feeling that society is treating them unfairly,” she said, adding that some of the effective ways to counter terrorism are to stop occupation, help marginalized people integrate into society and give citizens more space to participate politically.

Rizzo added that social factors are not the only cause. “Different [terrorist] groups have different reasons in different contexts.” The Sharm incident, for example, could have been an attempt to destabilize the Egyptian government for a number of possible reasons: “either because it is considered too aligned with the West or too oppressive or too liberal,” she said.

Also commenting on the ramifications of the recent incident in Sharm El Sheikh, Myambo said, “When you hurt tourism, you hurt the economy and eventually hurt the regime in power.”

The Roots of Terror

Walid Kazziha, political science professor, believes that any terrorist act stems from political frustration. “Political problems are always at the heart of the matter,” he said. In his view, the Arab world is plagued with internal problems of leadership, corruption and curtailment of individual freedom. In addition, there are mounting external pressures, most notably the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and post-war Iraq. “It’s a depressing situation that perpetuates misguided movements,” he said.

What compounds the situation is the Middle East’s crumbling

“They feel that when they take matters into their own hands and attempt to change the existing system, they are building a new society.”



Saad Eddin Ibrahim

“Iraq and Afghanistan are symptoms, not the core. The core of the problem is that Western governments treat Arabs as inferior, as dependents.”



Walid Kazziha

“As long as the West can’t understand that the real objective of people in the region is to be free from Western hegemony and to be treated as independent nations with their own sovereign power, terrorism will continue.”



Kathleen Myambo

“The shorthand media method where TV reporters have only one minute to tell a news story necessitates that journalists find a way to communicate with their audience simply and briefly.”

relationship with the West. “Iraq and Afghanistan are symptoms, not the core,” Kazziha noted. “The core of the problem is that Western governments treat Arabs as inferior, as dependents. As long as the West can’t understand that the real objective of people in the region is to be free from Western hegemony and to be treated as independent nations with their own sovereign power, terrorism will continue.”

Kazziha believes that resorting to terror is a means of making one’s voice heard. “You can’t look at the Sharm incident as an isolated terrorist act. It’s not just about hitting a hotel or market; it’s about sending a strong political message.” That message, he explained, will continue to pulsate as long as major political crises like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq remain unresolved.

But Kazziha affirms that terrorism is not the correct path. “Though terrorists think they are advancing the cause of Iraqis and Palestinians, they are actually doing them a disfavor. The real way to fight back is to arm oneself with the requirements of modern times — education, science and technology. If you want to compete, you have to be prepared to face your adversary with the elements of power of this age.”

Behind the Stereotype

Many of the terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world in the past 20 years have been given an Islamic label. Numerous groups have claimed to act in the name of Islam, assuming responsibility for taking innocent lives. Kazziha attributes that

to historical reasons.

In the 1960s and 1970s, he explained, there was a suppression of socialist and nationalist movements. “The only movement that gained support from the West back then as a way to combat communism was the Islamic movement,” he said. “Over time, those Islamists became stronger and asserted themselves as an ideological and political power, and they are now the most prominent players on the scene.”

However, Kazziha believes that the Islamic militant movement will dissolve over time and a new one will take hold. “It could be in the name of liberalization or democracy, but as long as the West’s relationship with the Middle East is troubled, there will always be a movement of some sort,” he said.

In the meantime, the image of Muslims has been tarnished in the Western media, creating what Ken Livingstone, the mayor of London, recently referred to on BBC News as a “rising tide of Islamophobia.”

“The fact that many terrorist groups declare that they are guided by Islamic principles can’t be ignored in media coverage. However, the media need to emphasize that these are fringe groups that do not represent the majority of Muslims,” said Lawrence Pintak, director of AUC’s Adham Center for Electronic Journalism. “Also, moderate Muslim groups have to vociferously condemn those terrorist actions.”

Although Pintak believes that the Western media could play a better role in showing the “other face” of Islam, he acknowledges that this is not

always an easy task. “The shorthand media method where TV reporters have only one minute to tell a news story necessitates that journalists find a way to communicate with their audience simply and briefly,” he said, adding that the fragmentation of U.S. media in the past decade has led to the propagation of biased political ideologies on TV.

“It used to be that the major television networks such as ABC, CBS and NBC gave the audience a common narrative and view of the world. Now, every channel is driven by special political interests,” he said.

But Pintak still has hope. With the number of American soldiers dying in Iraq steadily on the rise and with polls showing an increasing number of Americans discontented with the situation in Iraq, there has been more critical coverage of U.S. foreign policy in the Western media.

“The American public has begun to raise questions about U.S. policy and is becoming a bit more open to hearing why Arabs are angry,” he said. “That is a good sign.”

Real Remedies

The question that lingers in the minds of many is what can be done to counter terrorism.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, sociology professor and an expert on militant groups in Egypt, asserts that terrorist acts like the Sharm incident occur because of two factors: the dissatisfaction of marginalized groups and the radicalization of religion. He was quick to point out, however, that not all attacks should be labeled as terrorist. “Only when the disruption,

violence and killing is aimed at innocent lives does it deserve the term terrorism,” he said.

Explaining why some groups resort to violence, Ibrahim said that terrorist attacks are a common way for discontented groups in society to challenge authority after giving up on peaceful means of addressing their grievances. “When a terrorist incident occurs, it casts doubt on the legitimacy of the regime and its ability to maintain law and order,” he said.

As for the radicalization of religion, Ibrahim noted that a “culture of killing” has become predominant among a circle of extremist Muslim groups who divide the world into two sectors: friends and enemies. Anybody outside the group — whether women, children or even fellow Muslims — is considered an enemy worthy of being murdered.

Contrary to the common wisdom of killing the terrorists outright, the solution in Ibrahim’s view is to converse with the terrorists.

“Dialogue is the way forward,” he said. “In order for terrorism to stop, we have got to talk to the people who commit such crimes, understand their needs and wants and help assimilate them into the mainstream,” he said.

Sharing the same viewpoint, Pintak noted that the media have a pivotal role to play in that respect. “Journalists need to talk to the terrorists and understand the motivating factors behind their actions. If we don’t understand why people do such horrific acts, they are never going to stop.” □

“You can’t look at the Sharm incident as an isolated terrorist act. It’s not just about hitting a hotel or market; it’s about sending a strong political message.”

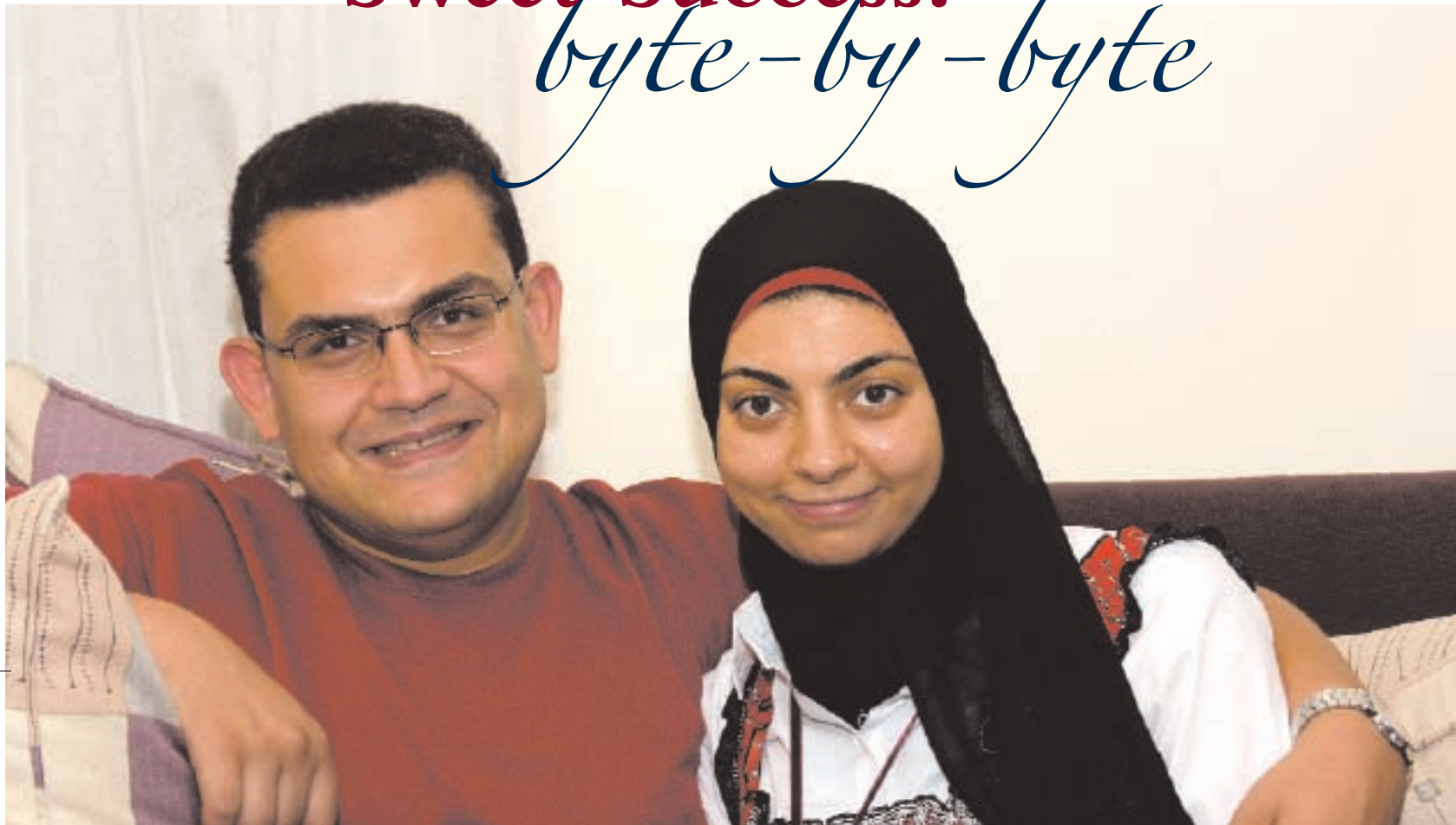


Lawrence Pintak

“In order for terrorism to stop, we have got to talk to the people who commit such crimes, understand their needs and wants and help assimilate them into the mainstream.”

Alumni Profile

Sweet Success: *byte-by-byte*



He founded one of Egypt's leading software companies. She is working to make computers more emotionally intelligent. IT power couple Wael Amin '93 and Rana El Kaliouby '98, '00 share their story

Seven years ago at a friend's barbecue, Wael Amin '93 and Rana El Kaliouby '98, '00 first met. Amidst the laughter and noise of the crowd, Amin and El Kaliouby found themselves drawn into a conversation that lasted for hours. Each had discovered in the other a reflection of their true self. "It was a matter of the right chemistry," Amin said.

What seems to have brought Amin and El Kaliouby together is a shared

desire to realize a dream. Undaunted by life's thorny circumstances, both set goals for themselves and were determined to reach them, despite any setbacks or obstacles along the way.

At a rented apartment in Heliopolis, Amin, a 17-year-old computer science senior at AUC, and two of his classmates were busy preparing software applications to sell to clients in the Arab world. Each had borrowed LE 20,000 from his father to establish a software

company called Microlabs. The company was off to a great start, and the three computer scientists felt that money would soon be pouring in. After a few months, however, expenses started to add up and far exceeded revenues. Employee salaries could not be paid, and the company folded within a year. "We did everything wrong because we didn't understand the business side of things, but it was a great learning experience," said Amin.

Graduating top of his class, Amin was determined to start over. In 1994, he founded ITWorx, determined to build on what he learned from his first failed venture. Today, Amin is the chief executive officer of one of the leading software development companies in Egypt. Contrary to the shrink-wrapped software applications that his initial company was set to sell to the Arab world, ITWorx focused on client-based services for North American markets. "The demand for software services in North America was huge at the time. It was good timing," he said.

Throughout the years, Amin worked on building a strong base for ITWorx with his partner Youssri Helmy, who is now chairman of the company. They learned about management, software processes and recruitment. "We wanted to build a resilient organization, and the key was to hire good people," he said, adding that almost 50 percent of ITWorx employees are AUC graduates. "In any service business, success is based on the caliber of the people rather than the technology."

That caliber is evident, with the company attracting top-notch clients, from Panasonic and Boeing to Microsoft and Vodafone. "We put in every effort to make our customers happy, and that's why most of our business comes through referrals. The key is to focus on doing a good job and letting your work speak for itself."

While her husband-to-be was exploring his entrepreneurial flair, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President's Cup, El Kaliouby pursued a master's degree in computer science at AUC, meanwhile applying to doctoral programs abroad. Still a newlywed, El Kaliouby received her eagerly awaited

acceptance to the University of Cambridge. Torn to be leaving her new husband, but unwavering in her desire to achieve her dream, she packed her bags and headed to England.

Living alone for almost four years in a foreign country, things weren't always easy for El Kaliouby. Less than a year into her program, El Kaliouby discovered she was pregnant. "It was one of the happiest and most difficult moments of my life," she said as she played cubes with 3-year-old Jana.

El Kaliouby's goal now became twofold: to continue toward completion of her doctorate and to be a devoted mother. Overcoming her feelings of guilt, El Kaliouby sent Jana to daycare at an early age. "I would put her in daycare at the morning and hurriedly come back home to work on my research. I would not eat or think about anything except finishing my work so that when it was time for Jana to come home, I would give her care and attention."

In addition to her doctoral research, El Kaliouby volunteered with Women@CI, a UK-led initiative that aims to promote women's role in technology. An organizing committee member, she contacted successful women in the field of computer science and organized seminars in which women spoke about the difficulties they faced in such a male-dominated field.

"I was the only Muslim and Arab woman there. I felt that by playing an active role in this initiative, I would present a positive image of women in our region and inspire many women in Egypt and abroad."

El Kaliouby continued with Women@CI throughout her college years and finished her doctorate in intelligent user interfaces with honors. Her dissertation was nominated for the British Computer Society Distinguished Dissertation Award.

Tackling a field untapped by many, El Kaliouby's thesis in affective computing examines ways in which technology can be used to read moods and adapt accordingly. "If the computer detects that you are in a bad mood, it wouldn't pop up virus alerts all the time, or if it infers that you are sleepy while driving, it would alert you to wake up. It's a nice combination of computer science and psychology and a way to make computers emotionally intelligent," El Kaliouby explained.

As for Jana, El Kaliouby smiles when she remembers their time in England. "We suffered together, but enjoyed every bit of it," she said cuddling her toddler. □

By Dalia Al Nimr



Amin and El Kaliouby's daughter Jana, the couple's greatest achievement

to the *Beat of Cairo*

By Wael Elazab
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr



International degree-seeking students share what drew them to Cairo for four years, their daily challenges and what keeps them going

While on vacation in Egypt with her father, Amra Bukvic began looking at studying in Cairo during February 2004. She is no stranger to international travel, having spent time in numerous foreign countries including three years in Indonesia prior to returning to her native Bosnia to complete high school.

At 17, Bukvic moved to Cairo with high hopes and a little apprehension about how she might fare as a woman. Her fears were mainly rooted in previous experiences in other developing countries. "When my father and I came to Egypt we stayed in a hotel in Zamalek. It was our second night there, and I was propositioned by an older man," said Bukvic, recalling how this made her question whether she had made the right choice.

After being in Egypt for more than a year, Bukvic has become accustomed to ignoring similar advances and is confident she made the right decision to come to Cairo and AUC for her degree in business administration.

Bukvic is one of a rapidly growing number of female international degree-seeking students who choose AUC for their undergraduate or graduate degree. Opting to spend as many as four years in Egypt, they develop an appreciation and understanding of the country and culture that can only come from being an insider. While such a complete immersion in Egyptian life has required special adjustments and compromises, each of the women expects to leave Cairo with not just a degree, but a new perspective.

"Part of my problem when I arrived was that I did not know what it would be like. I had no idea crossing the road could be so frightening; I was in shock for days."



Adjusting to the country's social and cultural customs was one of the most difficult tasks. "In Bosnia, everybody buys their groceries from the same places, goes out to the same cafés at night and meets people who might be richer or poorer than them without even realizing it," said Bukvic, citing the apparent differences in social classes in Cairo. "We also all dress more or less the same way so that these differences in class are not that noticeable. The society



is compiled of mostly a big middle class with subtle differences."

For Mariko Kobayashi, who came to AUC after high school in Japan, the more relaxed attitude toward time is one of the most difficult aspects of life in Egypt. "I get very frustrated by people's sense of time and inability to keep appointments," she said. She also confessed to her own naivety about living in Cairo. "Part of my problem when I arrived was that I did not know what it would be like. I had no idea crossing the road could be so frightening; I was in shock for days," she said. "After six months here I have some understanding of how the system, or lack of it, works."

Beyond social class differences and concepts of time, male-female relationships were especially complicated. In addition to facing harassment on the street, Yulia Akinfiyeva '05, a Russian, is



wary of relationships with men. "I'm very cautious about getting to know men. The male friends that I made during my degree are great, but there is often confusion about the friendship," she said.

Already accustomed to the urban

"I have always been frustrated by the divide between Latin America and the Middle East, as I see so many similarities between the two regions."

crawl after 10 years in Hong Kong, Meredith Brand, a Texan in her final year of an Egyptology degree, was looking for an engaging, noisy and busy lifestyle. For Brand, Egypt was just the right place. "I was in Cairo for only a week before I knew I would have a great time living here." During her time in Egypt since 2002,

Brand has been diving in the Red Sea, visiting the Siwa Oasis and exploring the North Coast. "I see Cairo as a hub and believe its location is perfect for visiting Europe, Africa, the Far East and of course the Gulf."

Akinfiava, who has been in Egypt since 1989, has reached a point where she not only has come to terms with life in Egypt, but relishes it. "I enjoyed my studies very much, but my parents wanted me to study business administration and were furious at me for choosing psychology," said Akinfiava gleefully.

Reflecting on her decision to come to AUC as opposed to a university in Russia, Akinfiava recalled her concerns that studying in Moscow would have been at a similar economic cost, but not the same quality. "The system of education is qualitatively different from the American system," she said. "Teaching methods are very conservative, and the emphasis is more on psychiatry than psychology."

Not yet past the six-month milestone, Kobayashi finds comfort from remaining intently focused on her goal of learning Arabic. "This is what employers are looking for now. Everyone's attention is on the Middle East, and taking the time and effort to learn the language here will help secure a future," she said. "It's crucial that I get the value for the money that it's costing me, and even though I'm much more relaxed, I still get stressed, and I use this stress to motivate my studies."

Unlike other

international students, Janan Delgado's experience with fitting into Egypt is in many ways just the opposite. With Lebanese heritage on her mother's side going back to her grandfather, Delgado grew up in Ecuador as a member of the country's Muslim minority. "I became used to being pointed at and have people staring at me. This went on throughout my schooling," said Delgado of her childhood experience.

"My siblings and I have been raised conservatively, and I have been veiled since I was 12 and was the only veiled girl at my school." A political science junior, Delgado came to Egypt to learn Arabic and study Islam. "I have always been frustrated by the divide between Latin America and the Middle East, as I see so many similarities between the two regions." Arriving at a state of mind that may take other international students years to reach, Delgado has felt it from almost her first day in Egypt. "I feel like one of the people," she said. □



Behind Egypt's English ^{Newest} Newspaper

Mirette Mabrouk '89, '90 at the helm of the *Daily Star*

It's 2 am and there's just been a late breaking story. You wish you had it written in advance, but you had not received any credible confirmation. The printing press sits there awaiting the final copy. Any thought of this 16-hour day ending is vanquished as the phone lines light up. Another red-eye edition is underway.

For Mirette Mabrouk '89, '90, publisher of the *Daily Star* Egypt, such evenings are not uncommon, especially when she first launched the paper earlier this year. Initially headed toward a career in broadcasting during her postgraduate studies at the Adham Center for Electronic Journalism, it was



Alumni Profile

not long after graduation that Mabrouk joined the writing staff at International Business Associates (IBA) Media. In a short time, Mabrouk rose through the ranks of editor, senior editor and managing editor of all IBA publications, and then up to the lofty title of publishing director. Today, she leads Egypt's first independent English-language daily.

It was during the formative stages of her career that Mabrouk realized she was drawn more to print journalism, "I started off doing television journalism, and I didn't like it very much. You don't really get to go very much in depth unless you're doing a documentary. The traditional three-minute news story doesn't leave much time for analysis, so I moved into print. Even the shortest story, which is seven, eight or nine hundred words, will pack more explanation than a three-minute story where you have maybe a page of script and the picture is king," she said.

Of all the possible formats available in print journalism, Mabrouk chose to move from a monthly magazine to a daily newspaper, searching, she said, for the challenge. "Pace, pace, pace. This is a daily newspaper that runs six days a week; so I have no life left." Typically, Mabrouk starts her day mid-morning, rarely finishing by the time the next day comes round. "My work is not editorial. I oversee editorial, but I'm the publisher, which means that I have to handle everything, so it makes for a very long day," she explained. "By 5 or 6 pm when most people are wrapping up, I'm just getting into it... It's your crunch everyday; we bring in cake for the editorial staff's stress management."

With her work taking up all of her time, Mabrouk is conscious of the adjustments she would have to make if she wanted to start a family at a later stage in her life. "My lifestyle would have to change; I would have to prioritize," she said. "If I were married with children I would have two assistants... One of the advantages to this job, thanks to the myriad advancements in technology, is that you can work from home. I was in Greece for a conference a week ago. It was the first time I had taken the ball and chain off for longer than 10 minutes, and practically the entire time when I wasn't in the conference, I was in my room working via the Internet," she said.

Despite the lack of separation between her career and her life, Mabrouk remains grateful for her busy lifestyle. "I'm happy to be doing this now, and I am massively excited by the challenges it presents. It's very much a work in progress," she said. "I feel privileged because I have gotten to do so many things that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise." □

By Wael Elazab

Class Notes

Hussein Ibrahim: A Life Full of Optimism

At 95, Hussein Ibrahim is a walking history book, with a lifetime that has spanned two world wars, three Arab-Israeli wars, the 1952 military coup in Egypt and the reign of two kings and three presidents. Sitting in his wheelchair in a home for senior citizens in Dokki, Ibrahim recalls days that are long gone.

“Working and being active were the source of my comfort and happiness,” he said. “I used to see youth my age sitting in coffee shops doing nothing and I felt sorry for them. To me, work was my life, and I used to enjoy every minute of what I did.”

Having crisscrossed almost half the globe in his 20s, Ibrahim was always eager to see more and know more. On a typical day, the graduate of Cairo University’s agriculture department would go to his work in the morning, tending cotton-ridden agricultural lands. In the evenings, he would take art and language classes at Egypt’s cultural schools including the Lycée Francés and the Leonardo da Vinci School of Fine Arts. He also enrolled himself for two years at AUC as a nondegree student studying sociology and psychology.

“I loved knowledge and wanted to know about different fields. Courses at the time cost LE 20 a year, and professors came from the United States. It was a golden opportunity.”

His courses came in handy, as he shifted careers from agriculture to tourism. Working as a public relations specialist, Ibrahim found that his background in psychology and sociology, as well as his English proficiency, were assets. “Being at AUC made me another person,” he said, adding that he also took courses in French, Italian and Russian to



complement his English. “Thank you, merci, grazie, spasiba, danke, gracias,” he said, showcasing his ability to say thank you in six languages.

A sports amateur who practiced tennis, swimming, rowing, shooting and long-distance walking, Ibrahim took on a new sport at the age of 50: judo. At the age of 60, he was credited with instituting karate at the Ahly Club in the 1970s.

Always a pioneer, he takes pride in being “the first to introduce color photography to Egypt” and remembers with a smile that when he hit retirement, instead of staying at home, he traveled to Libya to work as a photographer.

“Photography was the lens through which I saw the world, and I always like to look at the world from the bright side,” he said. “It is you who can make yourself happy and you who can see the world through dark spectacles. The key is to love what you do and to do what you love.”

Just before going to print, AUCToday learned that Ibrahim passed away.

'63

Georges Petrellis would love to hear from his colleagues and friends. His address is 2125 Dutton Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 6K3 Canada, gpetrellis@hotmail.com or gpetrellis@rogers.com.

'76

Jehan El Mekkawy (MA) recently issued a new book, *El Moheb El Walhan* (*The Infatuated Lover*), comprised of 11 short stories under three subtitles: Man and Woman, Human Beings and Other Creatures, and Nature and Destiny.

'82

Ashraf Aziz published his book, *Al Kenayat Al Anmya Almasrya*, after 12 years of hard work collecting Arabic idioms spoken on the streets and in the cafés of Egypt. It is full of stories, jokes and information, and is available at www.alhadara.com.

'88

Sherine Fathy El-Fekey received her doctorate in business administration with a concentration in human resource management from the Faculty of Commerce at Ain Shams University in May 2005.

'93

Nihal El Daly (MA '97) is the regional marketing manager for North Africa, the Middle East and Turkey at Unilever in Dubai. She has been working with the company for 10 years. El Daly is planning to return to Cairo soon to join her husband Khalid El Gibaly '85, who has been appointed as country business manager for Citibank Consumer Group in Egypt. He is the first Egyptian to be appointed to this post. He speaks six languages and holds an MBA from Strathclyde Graduate Business School in Scotland.

Youssef Hafez has been transferred to an international assignment with ExxonMobil Europe based in Brussels, Belgium. He is married and has a 3-year-old son Hani.

'94

Dina Gohar (MA '97) is a freelance video editor in Beirut, Lebanon.

'97

Walid Khater is currently the recruiting manager for the East Mediterranean and East Africa Geomarket at Schlumberger Egypt. He started as a field engineer in 1998.

'99

Amira Abdel-Wanis was a reservoir evaluation wireline field engineer for Schlumberger Oilfield Services until August 2004. She was stationed for two years in the field in Indonesia, spending most of the time on land rigs in the jungles. Then she worked for another two years on offshore rigs in Songkhla on the Gulf of Thailand. She has also worked in Syria and Kuwait, as well as the Western Desert, Mansoura and Damietta in Egypt.

'00

Sherif Hafez and **Alia Ibrahim** have been blessed with a baby girl, Malak, in November 2004.

'02

Mohamed Abdel-Latif is working as the general manager and senior business and migration consultant at the Australian Migration and Citizenship Services, Cairo office. He is currently pursuing a master's in public administration at AUC.

'04

Ekundaya Abdulrazaq Shittu (MS) won a prestigious award in May 2005

Alumni Meet in Jordan Over the Summer



Mary Iskander '76 and Nabil El Farouki meet with AUC alumni and friends in Jordan in July 2005. During their visit, they attended a meeting and dinner with the Alumni Club Committee chaired by Senator In'am Mufiti '56

from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMASS) for a research proposal that bridges science, engineering and management. It is a \$10,000 award to be implemented over this academic year. Shittu works as a research assistant at UMASS while he earns a doctorate in industrial engineering and operations research.

Safaa Kanj (MA) has been covering the Israeli disengagement plan in Gaza. She has published many articles on the subject in Arabic, English and French newspapers and online. She will also cover the transfer of the evacuated area to the Palestinian authority. Her articles can be found at www.middle-east-online.com/palestine/?id=32830.

Special Programs

Amy Wilson (SAB '04) will be attending the University of Bristol, England to pursue a master's in Mediterranean archaeology. She has been awarded the Richard Bradford McConnell Master of Arts Studentship in Mediterranean Archaeology.

Stefan Winkler (ALU) is the program director of the Goethe Institute (German Cultural Institute) in Alexandria.

In Memoriam

Victor Sharaiha '55 died in Jordan in July 2005.

Iro Valaskakis '66 died on September 18, 2004. She was a choreographer, dancer and dance historian at the University of Quebec. Her book, *Dancing in Montreal: Seeds of a Choreographic History*, received the 1996 award for outstanding scholarly publication by the Congress on Research in Dance. Valaskakis left a vast collection of writings on dance in Canada and is considered an expert in the field. She was born in Cairo and is survived by her brother Kimon Valaskakis '61, her sister Rhéa Amelon and her daughter Tamar Tembeck.

Omar El Moez Ledin Ellah '94 died on July 5, 2005.

Akher Kalam

Political Participation at AUC: Catalysts of Change

In the past couple of years, AUC has been one of the most vocal educational institutions in Egypt and in the region as a whole. Whereas there is a nationally conceived image of AUCians as pampered upper class youth who are not interested in political affairs, the number of demonstrations and politically related student activities serves to dismiss this fallacious stereotype. Political events in the region, such as the second *intifada*, the invasion of Iraq and the assassination of Sheikh Yassin, are some of the many events that have spurred a strong response from the AUC student body.

However, the one factor that seems missing from this equation is the true level of political awareness present within the students, especially when it comes to issues of internal politics. In light of the amendment of Article 76 of the Egyptian constitution, the first multiparty elections and the uprising of the new political opposition on the horizon, it is now seen as a critical time for youth to have heightened political awareness.

The Cairo International Model Arab League Awareness Program (MALAP) is a committee specialized in creating a medium in which political participation and political awareness in general can be encouraged. In an interactive attempt to bring political awareness to the scene at AUC, MALAP launched its yearly awareness campaign titled "Why Vote Now?" by creating a booth on the Greek Campus where mock elections for both the next parliament and presidential race were being held. Realizing the lack of knowledge AUCians have about the campaign platforms of the different political parties in Egypt, explanatory pamphlets on the parties were distributed to students before voting. The information given through the pamphlets and the process of simulating the experience of casting ballots had a strong positive effect among many students at AUC.

During the five days, 345 students voted for the parliamentary and presidential elections together, which clearly signifies the willingness of AUC students to participate politically. The results of the elections also portrayed the political directions of AUC students. In the



parliamentary elections, both the Al-Ghad and the National Democratic Party tied for first place with 26 percent of the votes each. The presidential elections brought former Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who was listed as an independent runner, a landslide victory with 42 percent of the total votes. Following the former foreign minister, Gamal Mubarak came in second with 17.5 percent. Ayman Nour came in third place with 11 percent of the votes.

This campaign was an attempt to engage all AUC students on the issues of internal politics, whether or not they have a special liking to politics or are participating in politically oriented student activities. At a time when we are at the brink of such political change, students at AUC should constantly make the effort to propagate the importance of political awareness on campus to ensure the prominent role of these students as both political leaders and the citizens of future generations. Only then can we truly become the catalysts of change in Egyptian society.

Heba Rabie, mechanical engineering senior, is head of the Model Arab League's awareness program.

Akher Kalam is an open forum for members of the AUC community. We invite you to share your thoughts on any topic of your choice. Submissions should be sent to auctoday@aucegypt.edu and may be edited for length and clarity.