



Ahmad El-Nemr

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Editor's Notes

Lifelong Graduations

Benjamin Franklin is known to have famously said that nothing in life is certain except death and taxes. In the same vein, every AUC alumni shares several definitive moments that together form the certainties of an AUC education. One of those moments is commencement. While over the years, the event must have evolved and the graduates are always different, there is still an amazing uniformity to this rite of passage.



Me along with our department's two recent graduates Dana Dinnawi (left) and Dalia Al Nimr

This June, I attended the graduate commencement in Ewart Hall because two members of our department were earning their master's degrees, along with the first class of graduates in two new programs at AUC (*First Class*, page 8). An odd mix of happiness, enthusiasm and achievement permeated the room. Hundreds of people all share in a singular moment with a contagious sense of excitement.

Sitting in the audience watching and listening, I could not help but think of my own master's graduation from Ewart Hall not long ago. I could distinctly recall the feelings — also mixed — of relief to have been finally finished, uncertainty of what I will do next, thrilled to see pride in my parents' eyes and a tiny bit of sadness. I had figured that short of the arduous journey for a doctorate, I had essentially completed the last educational milestone one could achieve. That was it, no more graduations, no nicely carved out phase of my life that I could officially complete and get a certificate. Learning of course never stops, but it is no longer in the same nicely packed bite-sized class offerings in a university setting, where you always knew how far you had gotten and what was left to reach the end.

And for the most part, I was right about graduations. The only caveat, however, is that now after four years of being editor of *AUCToday* — about the time it takes to finish a bachelor's — I am graduating from that role. As it turns out, life is full of graduations. Dalia Al Nimr '98, senior editor whose master's commencement I just attended, will serve as the new editor of *AUCToday*. Dalia has been an instrumental member of the *AUCToday* team since she joined as a reporter in 2002. An alum, former *Caravan* editor and talented writer, I am confident she will be a masterful editor.

It has been a privilege to serve as editor of the magazine, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a vibrant alumni community. I look forward to continuing to work with you in my new role, and I wish Dalia success and many graduations.

Dina Abulfotuh

AUCTODAY

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO Summer 2006

Volume 14, No. 3

The American University in Cairo is a nonprofit private institution devoted to providing English-language liberal arts education to serve Egypt and the Middle East.

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AUCToday is published three times a year by the American University in Cairo.

We welcome all letters. Submissions may be edited for space and clarity. Please send all correspondence to:
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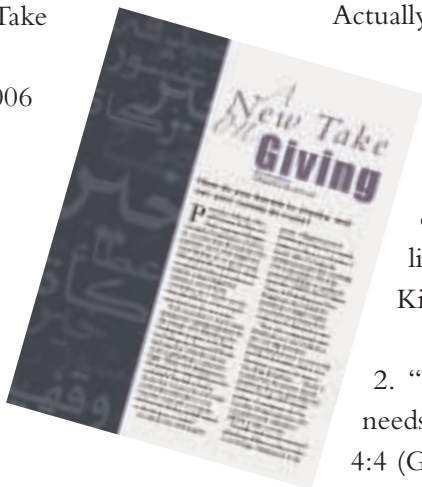
Keep on Giving

I really enjoyed reading the article on philanthropy, “A New Take on Giving,” which was published in the Spring 2006 issue of *AUCToday*. I was proud to see my friend Marwa El Daly ’96, ’01, who works at the Center for Development Services, featured in the article. I really believe in the importance of the philanthropy project she is working on, and the article was a good way of letting people know about it.

It was also interesting to see how alumni working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are exerting big efforts to make philanthropy take on a meaning beyond charity. Some of these NGOs operate under difficult conditions, and the work these alumni are doing is something to be appreciated.

One of the things I liked most, however, was the calligraphy. It’s a new idea, and it gave the article a nice look and feel. The headline was also very catchy.

Keep up the good work.



*Hana Abdel Meguid '97
Cairo, Egypt*

Correction Please

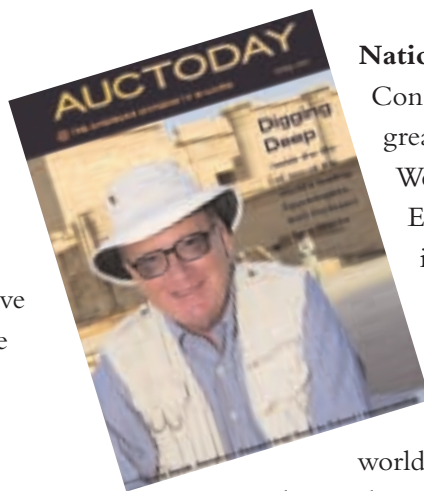
In the Spring 2006 issue of *AUCToday* on page 25, there is a dictum identified as an Arabic

proverb: “Not only with bread does a human being live.”

Actually, this statement is a verse from the Bible as shown below:

1. “Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” Deuteronomy 8:3 (The Holy Bible, King James Version)
2. “Man cannot live on bread alone, but needs every word that God speaks” Mathew 4:4 (Good News, New Testament Today’s English Version)

*AUC Instructor Magd Kahil
Cairo, Egypt*



National Treasures

Congratulations on your great profile of Kent Weeks, AUC’s famous Egyptologist. Kent is an inspiration to aspiring Egyptologists the world over. He is also a wonderful ambassador to the world for AUC, and

together with Egypt’s redoubtable Minister of Antiquities Zahi Hawass, a great proponent of the wonders of that incomparable land, Egypt.

*Steve Hindy
New York, 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.

AUC Campuses Not Yet for Sale

Revamping the Core Curriculum

A new Core Curriculum program will go into effect for incoming freshmen in Fall 2007.

In the revised structure, courses will be divided into three levels: an elementary level, which includes new 100-level courses specifically designed for AUC's freshmen; a secondary level, which includes 200- and 300-level courses; and a final capstone level. The capstone level is intended to foster students' research and practical skills through involvement in a senior thesis or project, senior seminar or supervised internship. Students will also choose from a variety of service-learning courses, international dialogue courses or seminars in international issues.

"The primary goal is to create a structure that we hope will allow the university to achieve its basic general education objectives more effectively and efficiently," said John Swanson, director of the Core Curriculum.

As part of the restructuring, students will now choose two courses on the Arab world from among the three subjects that they were formerly required to take. Students will also be required to take a course dealing with some aspect of the history, culture, politics or society of other regions of the world. "Initially, these courses will probably be selected from a variety of such courses that already exist," Swanson explained. In addition, the Core Seminar will probably become a 400-level course and be revamped to give it a stronger international focus.



As the new campus move inches nearer, President David Arnold publicly announced that the Board of Trustees has voted to sell the Greek Campus, the rare books library and the Zamalek Dormitory. However, the university will keep the buildings on the Main Campus, including Ewart Hall and the New Falaki building. The real estate that will be sold is not yet on the market.

In addition, at the latest University Forum, Arnold declared that no Israeli has indicated interest in the property, as was stated in some Egyptian newspapers.

Business Programs Gain Specialized Accreditation

AUC is the first university in Egypt and North Africa to be awarded accreditation for its business programs from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International).

While all AUC programs are accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, professional programs are seeking a higher and more rigorous accreditation. AUC's School of Business, Economics and Communication (BEC) sought and received this accreditation from AACSB for its bachelor's degrees in business administration and accounting, as well as its Master of Business Administration.

According to Amr Mortagy, BEC dean, AACSB International is the premier accrediting agency for degree programs in business administration and accounting. "We are proud that AUC is the first university in Egypt and one of only 85 outside the

United States to be awarded this accreditation," Mortagy said. "It is a distinct honor for the university, and it also provides graduates of our programs in business the additional recognition conferred internationally by AACSB."

AACSB accreditation is considered the highest standard of achievement for business schools. There are about 45,000 business schools worldwide, but only 527 are accredited by AACSB. "The rigorous review process that our school went through has placed it at the forefront of business programs worldwide," Mortagy added.

This is not the first time that AUC has received such a distinction. AUC's undergraduate programs in computer science and engineering are the first ones outside the United States to be awarded accreditation. These accreditations were awarded by the Computer Science Accreditation Board and the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology.

Prince Talal Calls for Political Reform

Democracy and human rights in the Arab world will only come through internal dialogue, without pressure or threats from the outside, declared Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud in a lecture at AUC titled “Political Reform: U.S. and Arab Perspectives.”

“There is an inherent contradiction in a policy that confronts terrorism with war and at the same time works to spread democratic values,” he said.

Prince Talal asserted that Arab countries need to foster internal dialogue and be active in seeking democratic reform. The United States, on the other hand, should attempt to understand Middle Eastern issues and societies on a deeper level so that the mistake of the war in Iraq is not repeated.

“What we see in Iraq could be worse if U.S. policymakers insist on striking Iran militarily. . . . This would lead to a regional humanitarian crisis worse than that in Palestine and Iraq,” he said.

Prince Talal was born in Saudi Arabia in 1935. He is known regionally and internationally for his philanthropic contributions and numerous initiatives in the field of development. His core philosophy is based on a strong conviction that protecting the dignity of disadvantaged citizens around the world can only be achieved by investing in people. To that end, he established schools and hospitals and founded the Saudi Society for Education and Rehabilitation to promote the welfare of children with Down syndrome. A strong believer in education, he also funded scholarships for Saudi Arabians to study in foreign universities and set up several vocational schools in his country.

Prince Talal has a special interest in encouraging sustainable human development, especially with regards to disaffected populations such as women and children. Believing that women play a key role in the development of their societies, he established the first school for women in Riyadh in the early 1950s. He was also the first in the Arab world to call for

the establishment of banks to support the economically disadvantaged. As a result, the Hope Institution was established in Egypt to provide loans for people in need to fund small business projects.

In addition to his philanthropic endeavors in the Arab world, Prince

Talal is recognized internationally. In 2002, he was named by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization as its special envoy for water for his promotion of sustainable use and protection of fresh water.

Helping push forth development in the Arab world, Prince Talal established the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) to ensure cooperation and coordination between different players associated with development. Equating development with democracy, he said in a 2003 AGFUND speech in India, “Democracy is the safety valve that prevents development from adding more burden on the shoulders of the poor.”

Prince Talal holds various important posts in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world. He is the chairman of the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organization in Riyadh and the Arab Council for Childhood in Cairo. He is also the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Open Arab University in Kuwait and The Arab Network for National Organizations. In addition, he is the former finance minister of Saudi Arabia.



AUC Egyptology Professor Fayza Haikal Elected to Egyptian Science Academy

Fayza Haikal, professor and chair of AUC’s sociology, anthropology, psychology and Egyptology department, was recently recognized for her decades of contributions to the science community.

Elected to the prestigious Egyptian Academy of Science, Haikal is an Egyptologist who specializes in ancient

Egyptian language. She is a member of the academic editorial committee of the newly launched Encyclopedia of Egyptology at the University of California, Los Angeles. It is the world’s first comprehensive online encyclopedia of ancient Egypt. Haikal was also former president of the International Association of Egyptologists.

Members of the Egyptian Academy of Science come from a variety of disciplines and are recognized for their services to science, as well as their academic worth. “It is practically the oldest academic institution in modern Egypt, and it is considered an honor to become one of its members,” Haikal said of her new appointment.

AUC Scores 20 Medals in Sports Tournament



AUC brought home 20 medals, including eight gold, from the 33rd National Universities Tournament that took place during March and April 2006 throughout Egypt.

Competing with 25 other universities, AUC students won two gold medals in squash, two in fencing, two in tae kwon do, one in tennis, and for the first time, one in women's basketball. They also won silver and bronze medals in track and field, judo, swimming and rowing.

Mohamed Ragab, acting director of the sports department, was pleased with AUC's showing at the event. He noted that some of the competing universities attract the most talented athletes in the country by offering full scholarships and that AUC's size sometimes makes competition more difficult.

"We're selecting our teams from just 5,000 students, while others are selecting their teams from 250,000," he explained.

The women's basketball team fought against these odds and defeated Cairo University for the gold medal on a last-second shot. Team captain and graduating senior Susan Jamus was relieved to have finally beaten the team they always came up short against. "We played with heart in the last game," she said. "Everyone had a really good feeling."

Harvard Professor On Developing Leadership

In an inspirational lecture, Harvard business professor and renowned author Rosabeth Moss Kanter advised students on what it takes to be a leader.

Kanter shared insight as a woman who has guided leaders of large and small organizations across the world for more than 25 years. Kanter has been named to lists of the "50 most powerful women in the world" (*Times of London*) and the "50 most influential business thinkers in the world" (*Accenture* and *Thinkers 50*).

She used the term "kaleidoscope thinking" in encouraging students to always look at the world from different perspectives. "Leaders take elements that are already in place, and they think in a new way about them," she said. "Leaders measure themselves against potential, not just competition."

Forum in New York Discusses Media Stereotypes of Islam

The inaugural AUC Forum in New York titled "Radical Islam and the Western Media: How Accurate is the Portrayal?" brought together renowned media experts to discuss common misrepresentations of Islam by the Western media and how they can be dispelled.

"With AUC's unique position between the two worlds, we see it as our responsibility to help correct misperceptions or, at the very least, shed new light on both sides," said moderator Linda Vester, news anchor and AUC trustee.

Mona Eltahawy '90, '92, who has covered the news as a writer and commentator for both Western and Arab news organizations, noted that the most common representations of Islam in the West today are those characterized by "women wearing head scarves proclaiming platitudes about Islam is peace" and "Abu Hamsa Al-Masri, whom the British press like to call Captain Hook."

Pointing out how the media tend to emphasize extreme images, Lawrence Pintak, director of AUC's Adham Center for Electronic Journalism, noted that the "vast middle ground in Islam has been silenced" in both the Western and Arab media. "The focus has been on the harsh rhetoric," he said.

This problem is exacerbated by the need to report superficially, especially on television. "When you're trying to explain the Middle East in a minute-15, you tend to fall back on stereotypes, clichés and simplistic answers," added Pintak.

Abdallah Schleifer, AUC professor emeritus and *Al Arabiya* Washington bureau chief, commented that once the spiritual side of a religion has been politicized, then it stops becoming a religion. "There is an overly politicized Islam which is now emptied of spirituality and turned into an ideology," he said. "This is the sort of thing that, to the degree that the Western press can be conscious of these things, I think the reporting will get better."

MUN, Computing Teams Receive Global Recognition

Competing in New York against 250 universities, AUC's Model United Nations (MUN) team earned top honors as outstanding delegation for the first time since they began competing in 1996. The 24 delegates represented South Africa in 13 different councils.

Maye Kassem, assistant professor of political science and the MUN coordinator who worked with the team all year round, said that this victory is of special significance for AUC. "Since we are the only university from Egypt and the Middle East that participates in this conference, the fact that our delegation won the first place ... is an indication of the high caliber of AUC students," she said.

Meanwhile, after winning the Association for Computing Machinery's (ACM) Middle East and North Africa championship for the second year in a row, AUC's team ranked ahead of a number of prestigious universities in the world finals. The team came in ahead of Duke, Carnegie Mellon, Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech.

Mahmoud Abdel-Fattah '05, one of the AUC team members and Citibank Public School Scholarship recipient, noted how such competitions motivate him to perform at his best. "One of the most important benefits ... is getting the chance to compare oneself with some of the best people in the world in our field," he said. "...You can challenge your limits and reach levels of competence that you could hardly achieve otherwise."

Haroun Receives Earthquake Engineering Award



In honor of his lifelong contributions to earthquake engineering, Medhat Haroun, dean of the sciences and engineering school, was named the recipient of the 2006 Charles Martin Duke Lifeline Earthquake Engineering Award.

Issued by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the award is given to an individual whose contributions are seen as advancing art, science, or technology as it relates to lifeline earthquake engineering. "It is pleasing to be recognized by one's peers in the field," Haroun said.

Working in structural earthquake engineering since the beginning of the 1980s, Haroun is an expert in the seismic performance of liquid storage tanks and bridges. He has conducted numerous experimental tests on the design and strengthening of bridges so that they can withstand earthquakes and has devised models for the retrofitting of oil, water and gas tanks for the same purpose.

Haroun has previously received the Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize from ASCE. On a local level, he serves on the main committee that updates the Egyptian code of loads and has recently been named to the permanent committee for the development of the new Egyptian code of bridges.



Ahdaf Soueif Scrutinizes Arab Image in West

Even in seemingly liberal, broad-minded Western literature, Arabs are portrayed negatively, argued best-selling novelist Ahdaf Soueif '73 at a lecture on campus.

Soueif dissected three American novels. Reading selections from each, she showed pestering, cynical and even retarded Arab characters seen always in large mobs. They are marked by incomprehensible speech and fanatical Islam, she said, and the women are always shown as kinder than the men, yet trapped with them and their "backward Arab customs."

"In old colonial pictures, they despised the Arabs," she said. "But at least they knew that there were Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, Arab Jews; the characters varied. What has happened today is that there has been a collapse of this. ... What we see now is failure of the imagination in imagining Arab characters."

Soueif is author of *Aisha*, *Sandpiper* and *In the Eye of the Sun*. Her best-selling novel, *The Map of Love: A Novel*, has sold more than a half million copies in English and has been translated into 15 languages.

First Class

Making graduation history, the first class of Jameel MBA fellows and law students earn their degrees

Bringing a new twist to an 83-year-old tradition, the June commencement witnessed the graduation of the first class of master's students in two new programs. Five graduates from the Yousef Jameel MBA Fellows Program and 11 from the Ibrahim Shihata Memorial LLM in International and Comparative Law are pioneers in their respective fields.

The Jameel program awards full MBA scholarships to Egyptian and Palestinian professionals with backgrounds in sciences or information technology. The graduates were recognized at the ceremony by President David Arnold and received their degrees from their benefactor, Yousef Jameel '68, who had dinner with the graduates and all of the current fellows after the ceremony.

One of the graduates, Ayman Ayyad (MBA '06), pointed out the importance of the program: "Lack of education is the greatest loss in the Arab world. It's a greater damage than corruption or even war. It's not money that is wasted here; it's people's minds and lives that pass year after year with ignorance, paralyzing them from making the changes our nations desperately need. Thanks to Mr. Yousef Jameel and to all great people who volunteer their money and effort to make Arabs a well-educated nation."

The only Palestinian graduate in the program this year,

Rida Barakat (MBA '06), added, "Usually we get scholarships from programs and institutions, but the Jameel program is different. ... My studies are funded by a person who I never met, a person who did not have to fund my studies, but he chose to."

Also graduating its first class, the LLM program is the first in Egypt to give an American-style legal education. Like the Jameel program, AUC's law department selects professionals who are established in their field. This includes corporate attorneys, public prosecutors, law professors and judges.

With an increasingly interconnected world and the United States' central role, many of the graduates pointed out how useful this degree will be in the future. Corporate legal counsel Amany El Zayati praised the program. "I work in a multinational company where I'm exposed to many laws I haven't studied. This LLM gives me a chance to study new laws ... like the antitrust law," she said, adding that the students also obtain a stronger foundation in the local legal system because most Egyptian laws are based on international laws. Zaki Osman, an attorney at Zaki Hashem & Partners, agreed: "It provides for an intense exposure to the American system, which is extremely beneficial. ... We are not taught these systems in Egyptian universities."

By Cole Gibas

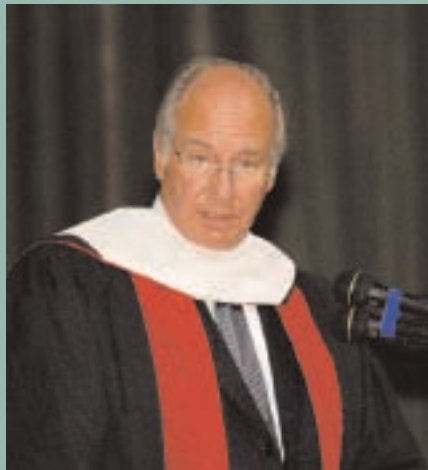


Left: first graduating class of the Yousef Jameel MBA Fellows Program with Yousef Jameel (seated front center); right: first recipients of the Ibrahim Shihata Memorial LLM



Bottom row left to right: Ahmed El Orabi, President's Cup recipient and undergraduate class representative; Hedayat Heikal, President's Cup and Parents Association Cup recipient; Ambassador Moushira Khattab, secretary-general of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and graduate commencement speaker

Aga Khan Delivers Undergraduate Commencement Address



“At various times in world history, the locus of knowledge has moved from one center of learning to another. Europe once came to the Islamic world for intellectual enrichment and even rediscovered

its own classical roots by searching in Arabic texts. ...

Indeed, Islamic culture in past centuries was distinctly dynamic, constantly reaching out — both to India and the East and to Europe and the West — for enrichment. ...

I believe that same pattern must be our model today. In keeping with our past traditions, and in response to our present needs, we must go out and find the best of the world's knowledge, wherever it exists.

But accessing knowledge is only the first step. The second

step, the application of knowledge, is also demanding. Knowledge, after all, can be used well or poorly, for good purposes or bad. ...

Throughout history, the application of knowledge has often been determined by a few powerful rulers or by highly dominant governments. But I believe the hour is passing for these outmoded, top-heavy ways of deciding how knowledge should be utilized. ...

In such a time, we need to depend less on government and more on what I call the institutions of civil society. These civil institutions are normally private and voluntary, but they are committed to the public good. ...

In the long sweep of human history, Egypt has been among the first and most distinguished centers of world learning. Building on those traditions, this country and this region can again play a central role in the knowledge society of the future, and each of you can be a vital part of that exciting process. ”

— The Aga Khan, 49th Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims, recipient of the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from AUC and the undergraduate commencement speaker

Balancing *the* Beat

By Dalia Al Nimr

**Mahmoud El Esseily '06
reflects on his life between
campus and in the studio**



Almad El-Nimr

At age 6, his mother sensed his musical talent and arranged for in-home piano lessons. With time, he developed an affinity for the instrument, rendering it his best friend. At age 10, he composed a song

for a girl he liked in school. By the age of 15, he was composing his own songs and singing them at school concerts. During his freshman year at AUC, he won first place in the Talent Show. Today, 22-year-old Mahmoud El



Left and center: El Esseily as a child; right: El Esseily with his mother

Esseily '06 has become a star in Egypt and the Arab world.

"I never thought of being a professional singer, although I always had this vision in my mind of me singing and playing the piano in front of a large audience," he said.

El Esseily's name rocketed to the top of the music charts during his time as a student at AUC. His first hit, *El Dunya Magnoona* (The World is Crazy), topped the charts for months when it was first released in 2002. His duet with female singer Bouchra about a married couple, *Tabat wi Nabat* (Happily Ever After), was rated by Melody Music channel as one of the most successful 20 songs in the last 10 years. Even outside Egypt, it was the number one song among Arab populations abroad for four consecutive months. His latest song *Akeed fi Masr* (Definitely in Egypt) is frequently aired on television during national celebrations.

"I owe it all to AUC," he said with gratitude to his alma mater. "This is where it all began, and without the time I spent here, I would not be the Mahmoud El Esseily of today."

Reflecting on his years as a student, El Esseily remembers vividly his first day at the university. "I had relatives and friends who were already studying at AUC, so I instantly felt at home."

By the end of his first week, El

Esseily was sitting on the platform among a group of friends, singing to them excerpts of his favorite songs. Although not yet a professional singer, many of his friends felt he would be a big success. "They really believed in me and that made all the difference."

Humming tunes on the platform and near the Social Science Building with a circle of friends around him became a regular part of El Esseily's days at AUC. The circle was small at first, but gradually began to widen. "I enjoyed it because I was with friends, so there was no pressure," he said. "Sometimes I would get mocking looks from seniors, but with time, those very same seniors joined our circle and began to request songs for me to sing."

What started as a mini-performance on the Greek Campus turned into a full-fledged career for El Esseily. His friends from the Student Union (SU) who knew of his singing talent included his name in the AUC Carnival performance. It was during that show that he first sang *El Dunya Magnoona*, which he had written as a 15-year-old, and received an enthusiastic response from the audience. "It was a blast," he said. "I was asked to sing it three times, and I knew then that I had something to offer as a singer."

El Esseily then became a core part of many student concerts and shows.

Some of the songs he sang at the university were also featured on the talent CD distributed as part of the welcome package for freshmen. The climax was during a party held in Ramadan, when El Esseily was approached by a young alumnus businessman who liked his voice and offered to help him produce his first tape. "It was then that my career just took off," El Esseily explained. "If it weren't for the push I got from my friends at the SU, the performances I did at AUC and this man's help, I wouldn't have made it."

But El Esseily's early success did not come without cost to his student life. A journalism and mass communication major, El Esseily maintained a GPA of 3.76 during his freshman year, with an almost perfect attendance record. However, with the flourishing of his singing career, his academic performance began to drop as he struggled to strike a balance between his obligations as a student and his duties as a singer. In the end, he graduated with a GPA of 3.1.

"Most students are able to devote their time to their studies, but I had a full-time job to maintain as well," he said. "I was responsible for two demanding things at the same time. The pressure sometimes made me feel 10 years older."



Left: El Esseily with his family.
right: El Esseily on the day of his graduation.

El Esseily's typical day was not the same as that of his classmates. Whereas most people would be ready to go to sleep at midnight, El Esseily would be just beginning his day at the music studio where he records his songs, or at a wedding celebration where he would be singing as the prime performer. He would continue his work until dawn, sometimes later, going home to sleep for a couple of hours before going back to university. With his early morning classes, El Esseily had to drag himself out of bed, and although he sometimes ended up skipping classes, he always caught up on the material he missed.

"I had to get my degree," he said. "My studies were part of who I am, and who I wanted to be in the future. I knew that if I fail as a student and succeed as a singer, then I haven't really succeeded. I also couldn't let my parents down, so I was motivated to continue."

In addition to his lack of sleep, El Esseily sometimes had to make professional sacrifices. "Although I traveled frequently, I turned down several offers to sing in concerts abroad because I had exams during that period. It pained me, but I didn't have a choice. Both were important," he said.

On the social front, El Esseily's situation changed completely compared to when he first entered AUC. A famed singer by his junior year, El Esseily was

approached by students many times on campus, asking to take pictures with him and to get his autograph. Some would recognize his face and point at him from a distance. Although this gave El Esseily a taste of success, he considers his real achievement the difference his songs make in people's lives. "That's why I like to choose themes that communicate a message about life."

With *El Dunya Magnoona*, El Esseily's message was for people to learn to enjoy life, but also remember that one can die tomorrow. In *Akeed fi Masr*, his aim was to capture the minute details and authenticity of Egyptian society and culture. On the other hand, *Tabat wi Nabat*, which tells the story of a married couple as they journey through life together raising their children, was inspired by El Esseily's desire to marry and have his own family.

"A divorced man once told me that when he heard the song *Tabat wi Nabat*, he went back to his wife and children," El Esseily said. "I felt then that what I'm doing is worthwhile, that I can influence people positively so that they can appreciate the beauty of things around them and see the world differently."

On the day of graduation, El Esseily also felt different from his classmates.

"Everybody felt that they were starting a new life, but ~~my~~ life had already begun for me as a junior," he explained. "To me, graduation was special because I felt I managed to achieve my goal of becoming a professional singer who has acquired a high-quality education — an education that is not just a diploma I receive on stage, but one that affects me as a person and a professional."

While most singers have managers to handle their affairs, El Esseily is his own manager. "I feel I can do that because AUC has helped me become coherent in the way I think and act," he said. "I am trying to create a unique style for myself as a singer, and I believe my education has helped me become more creative and more open to different ideas and perspectives."

Looking ahead, El Esseily plans to release his new album, *Meen Ana* (Who Am I) this summer. His long-term plans, however, extend much beyond that. "I wish I could compose musical pieces for movies and for the opera," he said. "I like to venture wildly into the world of music. The key is to follow your heart and make your decisions courageously." □

Political Science Alumni Attend Campus Reunion



At the political science alumni reunion in May, more than 100 AUC graduates gathered on campus for an evening of dining, mingling and reminiscing. Provost Tim Sullivan, who served as political science professor from 1973 to 1998, spoke of the department's expansion and progression throughout the years, as well as the numerous accomplishments of its faculty, students and alumni.

"We're very proud of all of you," Sullivan told alumni of their achievements. "As a professor, I always thought about my classes: these are students who are really interested in knowing the world that they are in. These are people who question what is going on around them."

He especially credited Professor Enid Hill, who also attended the reunion to meet with previous students. Hill joined the faculty in 1968 and has contributed greatly to the field with her research and publications on Egyptian law and politics.

Laila El-Missiri '62, '69 and Iman Bibars '81, '88 were awarded alumni achievement awards for their great contributions to the political science field



Iman Bibars '81, '88 is the founding member of the Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women, which spearheaded the campaign calling for the right of Egyptian women married to non-Egyptian men to pass their nationality on to their children.

"AUC has always been like a breath of fresh air in Egypt," said Bibars upon receiving her award. "I hope it continues to be that, and I would like one day to have the opportunity to come here to teach and contribute to the community."



Laila El-Missiri '62, '69, who wrote speeches for the former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat, has made important advances in political studies, extending its applications to rural governance and making discoveries in probability theory, induction, causation and determinism.

She is currently professor of economics and management at the Arab Academy and a board member and representative of the private sector in the maritime holding company. While an undergraduate student at AUC, El-Missiri excelled in her studies with the highest grade point average among her class. She was also crowned Miss AUC in 1962.

Insight *from* Alums *on* Site

By Lamyia Tawfik
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr



Having graduated from downtown, alums working to build AUC's new campus have a unique insider's perspective on the university's new home

From rushing to class on the Main Campus, attending an event in Ewart Hall or simply relaxing on the platform outside the library, generations of AUC alumni remember their college days with the downtown campus as the backdrop.

Yet among the thousands of alumni who have experienced campus life downtown, there is a small group working on making the new campus a reality. Combining the knowledge of the current campus that only alumni have and the opportunity to see the progress of the new campus on a daily basis, they have a unique vantage point on the project and AUC's future home.

For each individual of this group, his or her job on the new campus has a special significance. Ghada Abdel Rahman '90, assistant to the vice president for new campus development, finds it especially rewarding to witness daily progress. "As a graduate of AUC, I find it very interesting to be a part of the university's future, even if in a small way," she said. "I'm one of the first

people watching the new campus grow from the beginning, and so like anything in your life, I want to see it completed."

For Waleed El Nemr '97, '01, who serves as contracts administrator on the project and construction management team (PMCM), working on the new campus is unlike any of his previous work experiences. "In other projects I've worked on, I'm only doing my job, but here it's not the same," he said. "I feel a special connection and a sense of belonging to this project. I have an additional desire to give back to AUC what it has given me."

One of the aspects of working on the new campus El Nemr enjoys the most is making comparisons, which



Ghada Abdel Rahman

he is able to do quickly through the mini-archive of new campus pictures he keeps on his mobile phone. "I always do a comparison. This happens more when I walk on the site. I'd walk past the administration building, and I'd pause and tell another colleague ... this is a very small building in the downtown campus," he said, adding, "There are arches on the new campus that remind me very much of the arches throughout the Main Campus."

Tarek Mahrous, another member of the PMCM team and currently a construction engineering graduate student, is also drawing parallels between the two campuses. To him, it is the peacefulness of the new campus that will make the biggest difference.

"Downtown, the traffic, noise pollution and constant struggle to find a parking spot irritate you. But with the new campus, everything will be



Tarek Mahrous

calm and spacious. People won't come to college under pressure. There will be no stress, no sound pollution," Mahrous said.

Sharing the same viewpoint, El Nemr pointed out how the new campus will be self-contained, with a unique sense of space. "To go from the library to HUSS, for instance, you have the walkway, and you feel that you're inside. The campus is one entity that is spacious, and you have your own room. You feel more of a sense of being at home," he said. This is unlike Tahrir, El Nemr explained, where you have to cross streets to get from one class to the next. "The

congested space adds to the stress we



experienced as students," he said.

It's not only the sense of space that is appealing, it is also the interior design. With Arabesque doors and offices, the new campus carries some resemblance to the old. "It will have

"Because this is AUC's new home, this project carries a special place in my heart. I feel emotionally attached to it, and feel that I am witnessing the making of AUC history."

the same spirit as our old campus, only much more beautiful. There will be greenery and fountains. ... It will be a lovely place to work and study," Abdel Rahman said.

Looking back at her days at AUC, Abdel Rahman pointed out how she wishes some of the facilities available to prospective students on the new campus were part of her own

classroom experience. "I wish I had wireless technology when I was a student at AUC," she said. "Students on the new campus will be able to connect to the Internet from anywhere on campus. I think it is very exciting."

Abdel Rahman has passed on her enthusiasm to her 15-year-old daughter, who is currently in her final stage in high school. "She wants to be here and won't take any other alternative," Abdel Rahman said. "I've spoken to her a lot about the new campus and shown her a lot of pictures. She feels it will be different than any other university in Egypt or even the entire Middle East."

To all these alumni, there is a deeper connection to the new campus project than just its sheer size or unique facilities. It is their personal bond with the place that makes their job exciting. "AUC is my home, and seeing the new campus come into reality is like watching my own home being built," Abdel Rahman said. "I have a special tie to the place."

Echoing the same sentiment, El Nemr said, "Because this is AUC's new home, this project carries a special place in my heart. I feel emotionally attached to it, and feel that I am witnessing the making of AUC history."

The new campus project will be built over a total of 165,000 square meters and will use 24,000 tons of reinforcing steel, as well as 115,000 square meters of stone, marble, granite cladding and flooring. The current construction is designed to accommodate 5,500 full-time students and 1,500 faculty and staff members, with room for expansion. The estimated cost of the project is \$304 million, and its completion is set for early 2008. □



Waleed El Nemr

Alumni Reunite at the *NEW* Campus

Alumni from different generations got a chance to visit AUC's new campus site at three separate reunion events. Classes of '00, '01 and '02 celebrated their five-year reunion at the new campus site; Classes of '95, '96 and '97 celebrated their 10-year reunion; and Classes of '80, '81 and '82 celebrated their 25-year reunion. As they reminisced about the past, the alumni got an insider's look into AUC's future.

Touring the new campus construction site with AUC alumni, Ashraf Salloum, director of new campus planning and design, briefed them on the development of the project that covers 260 acres of land. They were then treated to lunch at the Arabella Country House in Kattameya.



A Tale of Two Cultures

AUC faculty and alumni books dissect Arab and American perspectives on life as an Arab in America, media coverage and the views of one group toward the other



The Arab Americans, Randa A. Kayyali, Greenwood Publishing Group

Since September 11, the Arab world's relationship with the United States has been under close scrutiny. A number of events since then have increased stereotypes for some Arabs and Americans, and left others seeking answers.

AUC's unique blend of the two cultures gives its faculty, staff, students and alumni an important vantage point from which to view and analyze the inter-workings of Arab-American relationships. One professor and two alumni have recently published books examining the different perspectives and promoting a greater understanding between the societies.

Randa Kayyali (MA '96) recently published *The Arab Americans*, in which she discusses the history, demographics, culture and politics of Arab Americans. "There is a great deal of misunderstanding in the United States about people who come from

the Middle East," the former sociology/anthropology major said. She pointed out that many Americans group Persians, Pakistanis and Turks with Arabs, and use the words Arab and Muslim interchangeably, even

"There is a great deal of misunderstanding in the United States about people who come from the Middle East."

though more than half of the Americans with Arab ancestry are Christian, according to the U.S. census.

An American of Palestinian descent, Kayyali's year abroad at AUC spurred her interest in living in Egypt and attending the university. After she graduated, she returned as a

presidential intern for one year, and was then awarded a Sasakawa fellowship to obtain her master's degree at AUC. After researching Arab Americans during her stay, the opportunity to write the book presented itself. "I am lucky because this is a topic that I find very interesting ... and necessary. There is not much literature aimed at the general adult reader on Arab Americans, but ever since 9/11, there has been so much talk about [them] ... We could do with more factual information about the community," she said.

Taking a similar path, *Arab Voices Speak to American Hearts*, by Samar Dahmash-Jarrah '85, also aims to inform U.S. society on Arab perspectives. While teaching classes at the University of South Florida and giving speeches on Arab culture after 9/11, she was encouraged by the reactions. "My American students admired the fact that an Arab woman took the initiative to teach about her culture and faith at a time when all that Americans heard about Arab women was very negative. My students and people attending my public speaking engagements wanted me to reach out to as many Americans as possible, and a book seemed like a good idea," she said.

After an extensive e-mail campaign to gather questions that ordinary Americans wanted to ask ordinary Arabs, she travelled to Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait, interviewing a variety of Arabs about different topics such as politics, religion and personal relations. Common themes throughout the interviews include Arab openness to share their ideas and values with Americans, as well as frustration with

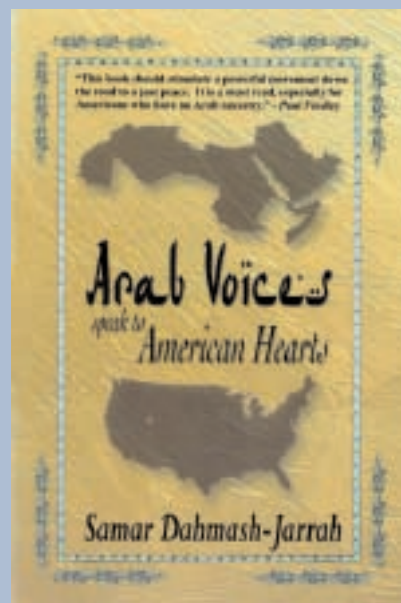
U.S. policy toward Israel.

Although knowledge of Arab issues in the United States is minimal, Dahmash-Jarrah sees positive signs. "Americans are, in general, open to hear the voices of the other and are very respectful even when they disagree with the other. ... This is why it has been very easy for me to engage their minds about issues," she said.

Focusing on the same relationship through analyzing the media, Lawrence Pintak, journalism professor and director of the Adham Center for Electronic Journalism at AUC, also promotes greater communication between the two cultures in *America, Islam, and the War of Ideas: Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens* (AUC Press). He points to the media as shaping society's perceptions in both the Arab world and the United States and widening the rift between the two cultures. Pintak explains that because media audiences have different backgrounds, the ideal of objectivity is inevitably lost and a different story gets told. The Danish cartoon controversy underlines Pintak's theories. "For Westerners, the cartoon controversy is about press freedom, and for Muslims, it's about respect for culture," he said.

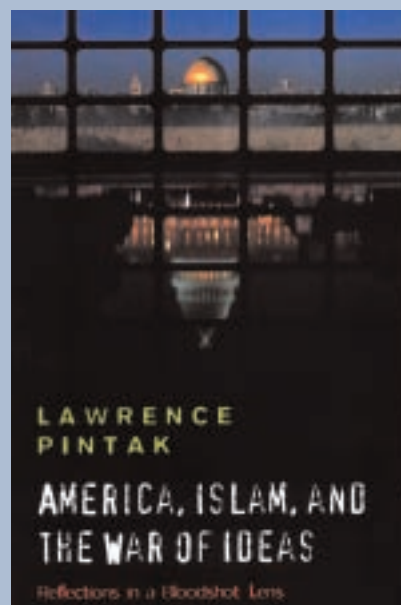
But he also sees a role for the media in alleviating conflict. "Instead of denouncing Al-Jazeera for its aggressive coverage of U.S. policy, Washington should be flooding its airwaves with spokespeople fluent in Arabic," he said, adding that it's also important that this communication goes two ways. "Cooperation must replace confrontation. The United States must listen as much as it speaks." □

By Cole Gibas



Arab Voices Speak to American Hearts, Samar Dahmash-Jarrah, Olive Branch Books

“For Westerners, the cartoon controversy is about press freedom, and for Muslims, it’s about respect for culture.”



America, Islam, and the War of Ideas: Reflections in a Bloodshot Lens, Lawrence Pintak, AUC Press

The *new* Superhero in Town

By Cole Gibas



Launching the first comic book in the region with Arab superheroes, Ayman Kandeel (MA '94) and his team fuse business sense with community service

With a golden scarab blazoned across his chest, Zein, an ancient pharaoh, fights evil and strives to bring peace to the Middle East.

Roaming a city based on modern Cairo, Zein is one of four new Arab superheroes starring in a comic book series created by an AUC alumnus.

The superheroes are the brainchild of Ayman Kandeel (MA '94), an economics professor at Cairo University, who is the creator and chief executive officer of AK Comics, the company that disseminates Zein's message to the world.

The company is also managed by another economics alumnus, Marwan El Nashar '97 who came on board in the first half of 2004 after the demand for the comic book series started increasing. Working together as a team, this dynamic duo has increased the company's output by 200 percent from 2004, when the first 300 copies of *Zein: The Last Pharaoh* were printed.

Now, the monthly comic book series is coming out in batches of more than 50,000, not to mention agreements with candy, clothing and stationery companies that use the Middle East's first superheroes to promote their products, as well as the animated television series that is in production and due to be released this Ramadan.

Along with Zein, three other characters carry the hefty weight of being the region's first superheroes. Each character stars in his or her own comic book title, alternating on a monthly basis. By next year, the alumni plan to release two issues per month, and in the future they hope to expand to four issues — one for each character — every month.

Men on a Mission

In addition to being a successful business, the company maintains a cultural mission: to encourage reading, provide positive role models

“The lack of role models in the Middle East is a problem. ... It's confusing in terms of social identity, in terms of learning what is good and what is bad.”

for children of all socio-economic levels in the Middle East, and bridge the cultural gap between the Arab world and the West.

For Kandeel, 37, the idea of creating the first Arab superheroes has been in the making since he was only a child. “I was less than 10 years old when I started thinking about a long-living pharaoh like Zein,” said Kandeel, who already owned three successful companies in the finance sector before he launched AK Comics — a lifelong dream and labor of love.

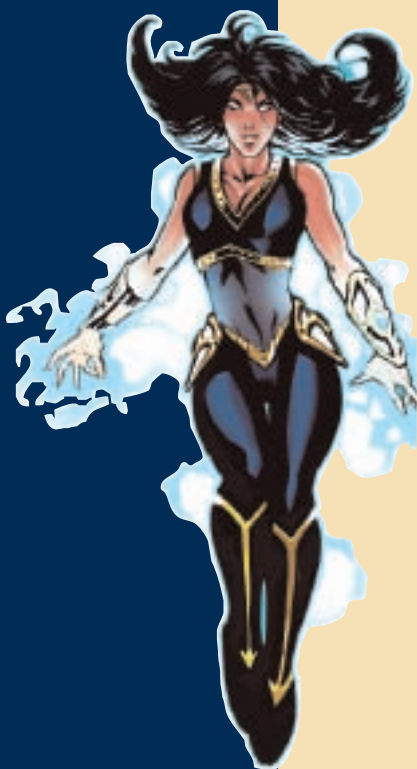
“There was a gap in the Middle East,” said Kandeel, who

was an avid reader of Western comic books as a child. “All of them [superheroes] were being imported from overseas,” which has a direct effect on the psyche of Arab youth, he believes. “The lack of role models in the Middle East is a problem. ... It's confusing in terms of social identity, in terms of learning what is good and what is bad.”

Kandeel, a husband and father of two, has also earned master's degrees from the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of Southern California, where he went on to receive his doctorate.

It was the opportunity to be a part of Kandeel's mission and impacting Arab youth that initially attracted El Nashar, 30, to AK Comics. He had just quit his job as marketing services manager at Citibank and was planning to relocate his family to Canada, when he saw the job announcement in a Career Advising and Placement Services bulletin from AUC.





Sharing with Kandeel an interest in comic books since childhood and intrigued by the company's social mission, El Nashar decided to stay in Egypt. "It's really worth it for me," he said. "There's an absence of modern role models in Egyptian society. ... We believe that it's a basic human need, especially at a kid's level, to have a supernatural, powerful or mystical being that embodies good and always triumphs over evil."

Developing story lines and shaping the superheroes isn't enough for these collared-shirted crusaders. Wanting to ensure that the comic books were accessible to everyone, a LE 1 black and white copy is printed and sold along side the LE 5 colored version of the same issue. The company has also donated thousands of copies to orphanages and underprivileged children in Egypt, as well as to Palestinian refugee camps. "We want to generate enthusiasm and an increased interest in reading," Kandeel said, explaining that there is no profit made on the black and white issues.

Besides donating issues to orphanages, non-governmental organizations and refugee camps, representatives of the company visit children's hospitals. In addition, after sponsoring the youngest driver in the Pharaoh's Rally in 2005, Abdel Hamid Abou Youssef '99, they brought him to an orphanage to talk with kids there about how determination and persistence can lead to positive results.

Behind the Characters

To deliver their message, four characters — two men and two women — fight against evil in the current AK Comics series. Zein, Aya

and Jalila all live in the not-so-distant future, after the devastating 55-Year War, which was followed by the emergence of a relatively peaceful and tolerant society in the region.

The fourth character, Rakan, wanders around the Gulf region in medieval times protecting innocent people from marauders and thieves.

While Rakan's adventures take readers more into the realm of fantasy, the other three story lines include heavy doses of reality that people can

“We believe that it’s a basic human need, especially at a kid’s level, to have a supernatural, powerful or mystical being that embodies good and always triumphs over evil.”

more easily relate to. Many familiar Cairo monuments, such as the national museum, Cairo Tower and the pyramids, appear throughout issues of Zein, but the other two series draw more on political and social realities. "I don't want whole story lines that are void of things people can relate to," Kandeel said. "You want it to have some attachment to reality."

Jalila is known as the Protector of the City of All Faiths (Jerusalem), where she resides along with Christian, Jewish and Muslim citizens, united in peace after the 55-Year War. Her parents died in the Dimondona nuclear reactor blast (Dimona is the site of Israel's nuclear reactor in

reality), but a radiation suit she was wearing saved her and allowed her to harness and control nuclear power. By day she is a nuclear scientist, and by night she battles the extremists in the United Liberation Force and the Xenoz Brigades, both of which haven't shed their intolerance since the war. In addition, a multinational terrorist organization with secret headquarters underneath the Dead Sea seeks to return turmoil to the once-violent city.

As evidenced in many of the characters' story lines, close parallels with reality are found in the comic books. "Current events do affect us," El Nashar said. "We believe that art imitates life and vice versa. ... We just try to position it in both a fictional yet more transparent light and leave the reader to ponder and conclude."

Not all of the superheroes find themselves up against mythical beasts or enemies with special powers that are often seen in Western comic books. These four characters regularly battle demons that Arabs can relate to: drug abuse, threats of terrorism, organized crime, unjust court systems or even bullies on the street.

"People have been demanding a more political story line. It's something that you feel is around, but nobody talks about. It seems this is a healthy direction. They want stories that relate to reality somehow," El Nashar said, pointing to a recent Jalila issue which showed terrorists attacking a world pride celebration in the City of All Faiths. The terrorists killed numerous civilians, including Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders who were previously standing arm-in-arm, smiling and chatting with each other.



El Nashar



Going West

While making headway in their cultural mission on the home front, AK Comics is gaining ground internationally as well. According to the company's Web site, they are seeking to close the cultural gap between East and West. "Ultimately, we are presenting to the entire world a strong and optimistic vision for a futuristic Middle East, void of war, violence and turmoil. ... Those heroes are predestined to become global ambassadors, spreading peace and good will, creating a more optimistic and positive image of the world's most turbulent and misunderstood region," it reads.

Beyond carefully crafted story lines, special traits are emphasized in all of the characters, including loyalty, honor, dedication, tolerance, justice, patience and intelligence. Likewise, being the world's only Middle Eastern superheroes, regional values are focused on as well. "Mainly through their alter egos as 'regular' people, we stress on family values, heritage pride and history, as well as interaction in society," El Nashar said. "We also try to instill concepts such as respecting time, environmental concerns, waste disposal and consumption habits — like save, reduce and recycle — among other things."

El Nashar also pointed out that the creative team, himself and Kandeel included, often take certain characteristics from real people. "This is valid for everyone in the department. We all have the mission of making them as good as can be from traits in us or in those we see around us," he said.

"So we do what we can to improve our [Arab] image through our superheroes, story lines, comics and animation, and leave it up to the foreign reader to decide on how to categorize us."

To help get past this misunderstanding, El Nashar said that although they try to instill Middle Eastern characteristics into the superheroes, they also draw on the similarities among people throughout the world. "At the end of the day, people are all the same," he said. "Stereotypes created by the media play on the differences more, since it's more exciting than expressing the similarities. ... So we try to focus on the basics and the commonalities among humans."

El Nashar explained that they do not aim to directly change people's perceptions, but rather help them see things in a different light. "I believe that people are becoming more open to suggestions, but that doesn't mean they'll change their minds or stereotypes. The Quran sold out in Paris right after 9/11, but only a fraction, if any, did in fact convert to Islam," he said. "So we do what we can to improve our [Arab] image through our superheroes, story lines, comics and animation, and leave it up to the foreign reader to decide on how to categorize us."

Creating this image, however, is just part of the challenge. The company must also convince Western readers, who have been reading superhero comic books for decades, to try out their product. "The interest is there and the market is huge," El Nashar said. "We can't afford not being there one way or another." While the English issues represent 30 percent of sales in Egypt, AK Comics also recently signed a deal with a major U.S. distributor, dramatically widening their consumer base and reaching out to Western audiences. However, El Nashar insists that the lucrative market will not cause them to neglect their Arab values in the comic books. "We're trying not to be swayed too much; if there are any changes they will be very minor."

This does not mean that they will be blind to market forces, though. Recent trends in the demands of readers in the United States include younger heroes that children can relate to more. Although they're focusing on the animated series for Ramadan right now, four or five new characters are in the works. One idea



is to have a trio of teenagers who are only effective when they work together. But they are also injecting a bit of their cultural mission into good business practice: one of the teenagers is Christian, one is Muslim and the other Jewish.

“There are risks when you walk down the street. If you avoid risks your whole life, you won’t accomplish anything.”

Mixing good business practices with a cultural mission can be a difficult and risky operation, but the

superheroes lead by example. Kandeel pointed out that he didn’t get to where he was by always taking the safe path. “There are risks when you walk down the street. If you avoid risks your whole life, you won’t accomplish anything,” he said, adding that making a positive contribution to society makes it all worth it.

Kandeel isn’t made of steel, nor is he immortal like Zein, but the dream he created is set to live on. His two sons are both big fans of the comic books and have shown potential to carry on in their father’s footsteps. “They love them,” Kandeel said, “My 8-year-old is already pitching me story ideas.” □

A Room *with* Two Views

Inside the dorms, two students from different worlds realize that culture, religion and nationality can easily be bridged



Jordanian freshman Farah El Sharif and American study-abroad student Rebecca Hopkins were complete strangers when they moved into their dorm room at the Zamalek hostel. In two beds on either side of the room, desks separated by a shared mini-refrigerator, shoes tossed together in a pile, the young women learned that differences mean little in their shared experience.

Rebecca: I arrived at the dorms a week before Farah, and I didn't know anything about her except for the fact that she was Jordanian. I had lived in a dorm at Emory, but things were different in Zamalek — the separation of guys and girls, the security, the guidelines for behavior in common

areas. Everyone was a little nervous in the beginning of the year, meeting new people and all. I liked Farah from the very first day. The first night that she came I got very sick, and when I woke up in the morning she brought me a bowl of soup from the cafeteria downstairs. She said, "I know you probably don't want to eat but I figured that you should." I thought, "I just met you 12 hours ago!" She was so sweet.

Farah: Rebecca and I are very different people, in background and in personality. I am from Jordan and she is from America. I like quiet in the room and she likes to talk. In the beginning, our difference in lifestyles created a bit of awkwardness — I don't go out to clubs very often, but she does. She

always used to invite me out, and I would thank her for offering and explain why I couldn't go because it just wasn't what I liked to do.

One thing that I think was different for her about having a Muslim roommate was that I pray in the room. I'll be wearing my boxer shorts and a tank top, and I'll put on a big prayer scarf and roll out my prayer rug. She respects it, and I really appreciate that. But sometimes, if her friends are in the room, she'll have them leave. They don't have to; I can pray with them in there. It's not a big deal. This one time my sister, who is more religious than I am, was visiting. She was reading the Quran and wearing the prayer scarf, and Rebecca opened the door to come



in, saw my sister, and apologized profusely and left. Praying is sacred but it's okay for other things to be happening in the room, so I tell her "don't mind me." I'll just do my thing and she can do hers. I know she's just trying to be respectful. She asks a lot of questions, and I appreciate her curiosity.

Rebecca: I knew about praying five times a day, but to actually see Farah do it every day is really cool. It's so impressive to see such a strong personal devotion to religion. And I can ask her questions about it, and she is very accommodating and helpful. She's very up-front and forthright about everything, which is so nice.

On International Day, everyone was getting ready in the dorms to go to their country's booth. Some of my friends came in and we sang American songs, like "Fifty Nifty United States," and funny ones like that. We asked Farah to sing something from Jordan and she sang a nice Jordanian song. It was really fun. She listens to lots of old Arabic music, which is pretty, but a very different sound than I'm used to. I'm always playing American music. When some friends and I traveled to Jordan, Farah showed us where to go and how to get around, which was so thoughtful.

Farah: I think very highly of Rebecca. She has such a positive spirit. She's almost too perky and cheerful. But

there is another side to her that is so intelligent. She's very gifted academically. She comes home and tells me about how she challenged this or that professor with a question she asked. She's very motivated, outspoken and confident. Her parents are worried about her being here, and they were freaked out when she traveled to Beirut and Jerusalem. But she always tried her hardest to put them at ease. She's trying to show her parents that Arabs are not bad people, and I admire this so much.

Rebecca: My parents were worried about my coming but in the end, they let me come, which says something. My mom and brothers have come to visit me. They were most worried that I would stick out so much as a blond-haired female. I thought about dying my hair but I decided that was unnecessary. Many people in the community back home didn't understand why I chose Egypt and the Middle East for study abroad. But I love it here, and I've learned so much Arabic, which is one reason I chose it. At Emory, my roommates have mostly been Christian southerners. Living with a Middle Easterner has been such a broadening experience for me.

Farah's the best roommate I've ever had. It's really nice to come back to the room and have her there. She's absolutely fantastic. I really respect the



way she handles herself. She's very much a lady. She's so graceful in social situations; she knows how to speak to people. Sometimes I am more impatient in situations than I would like to be. I've learned from her how to handle my impatience a bit better.

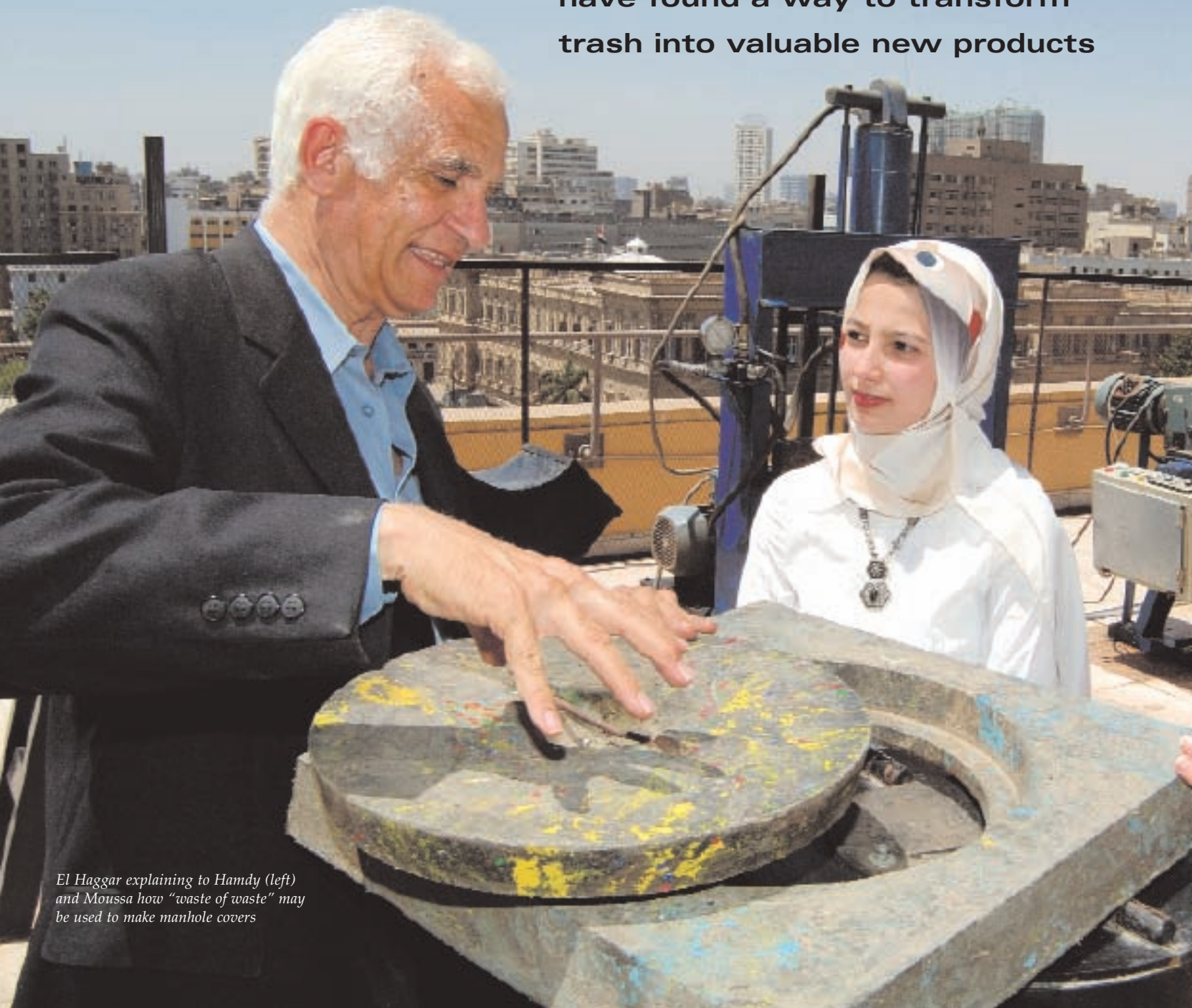
Farah: We've built a very respectful friendship. Rebecca's there for me and I'm here for her. I know that for her, the room feels like home when she can come and tell her girlfriend about her day. I've really made an effort to make conversation like this, even though at first it didn't come naturally to me. She's a genuinely good person. I bought this gardenia plant in the middle of the semester because I liked the way it looked and smelled. But I'm very careless, and I left the plant in the room when I went to Jordan. Someone else would have just said, "Silly Farah left the plant in the room to die," but Rebecca took care of it while I was gone. When I came back and saw that it was still alive, I thanked her, she said, "This is our plant! I wouldn't let it die." □

By Lily Hindy

A Way *with* waste

By Dalia Al Nimr
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

If it can be reused, remade or recycled, AUC's students and faculty have found a way to transform trash into valuable new products



El Haggar explaining to Hamdy (left) and Moussa how "waste of waste" may be used to make manhole covers



“G arbage in, garbage out.” While the saying holds true in the world of computers, it is certainly a fallacy when it comes to recycling. From papers, plastic and product packs to food scraps and organic waste, almost everything in a typical garbage can may be turned into usable products.

“Everybody puts out garbage, but not everybody thinks about where the waste goes when they throw it out,” said Salah El Haggar, mechanical engineering professor at AUC. “Things that can easily be reused and recycled are usually tossed in the trash and many times disintegrated. These include not just paper and plastic, but also empty soda cans, chips packs, milk cartons and even diapers.”

El Haggar and Ahmed Ezeldin, associate professor of construction engineering, along with a group of AUC graduate students and alumni, are currently involved in a project with the New Jersey Institute of Technology. The three-year project will identify and prioritize environmental problems in Egypt and the United States in order to come up

with optimal solutions. “Both teams are working together to solve one common problem: solid waste management,” Ezeldin explained.

During the course of the project, AUC students visited dump sites, garbage collection companies, ministries and environmental organizations, learning firsthand about the collection, sorting and disposal of solid waste. Identifying recycling as the most pressing environmental problem facing Egypt, the students developed technology that would aid in the reuse of resources, particularly those that have traditionally been labeled as non-recyclable. In the process, they emerged with a more environmentally sensitive outlook on both a personal and professional level.

“Before, I used to look at waste as mere statistics. But when I saw things for myself and realized the huge amounts of waste that we release, I began to look at solid wastes as my problem,” said Yasser Ibrahim ’96, ’06, a mechanical engineering graduate involved in the effort.

Recounting the findings of his research, Ibrahim projected that by the year 2008, the world’s municipal waste

Rejects to be recycled at the Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE)





1



2



3



4

would be enough to cover the continent of Australia, with a depth of one millimeter. “We have to start to see the big picture,” he said.

Through the course of their fieldwork, the students found out that only 10 percent of solid waste in Egypt is recycled. “That is a complete waste of natural resources,” said Amal Moussa ’95, one of the students in the group. “Garbage collectors sort out trash, keep paper and plastic because they know they can make money from them, and disintegrate everything else. ... Garbage is a huge industry and can be very profitable. The problem is that in Egypt, we don’t have an institutional basis. No awareness, no education.”

Hoping to develop recycling systems for all types of waste in Egypt, El Hagggar and his students experimented with the recycle of material that is usually rejected and

referred to as “waste of waste.” Used black garbage bags are a prime example. When these bags are emptied of their trash content, they are left with a lot of impurities. “It is an expensive process to clean these bags for recycling, so they are thrown

“Garbage is a huge industry and can be very profitable. The problem is that in Egypt, we don’t have an institutional basis. No awareness, no education.”

away,” Ibrahim said. Aiming to make use of such rejected material, Ibrahim mixed sand with the impure garbage bags, and through a process of heating and solidification, was able to produce beach revetment tiles and breakwaters.

“It is a very efficient and cheap

method,” Ibrahim said. “You put in a used garbage bag that many reckon is worthless and come out with a perfectly usable product.” El Hagggar added that these garbage bags can also be used to make products such as road ramps, tables, pots, manhole covers and sidewalk blocks.

Moussa did the same with diapers. In AUC’s recycling laboratory located on the roof of the Falaki Academic Center, Moussa worked closely with El Hagggar to develop technology that would enable the recycling of clean diapers by separating the plastic from the fibers. Taking it a step further, she plans to test the recycling of dirty diapers at the Association for the Protection of the Environment, where she hopes to be able to separate the plastic from the organic waste and the fibers. The organic waste with the fibers may then be used as a fertilizer.

“Organic waste makes up about 60



1. A composting plant near the APE used to separate organic waste from rejects; 2. Ibrahim and El Hagggar inside the rejects factory at the APE; 3. At the roof of the Falaki Academic Center, El Hagggar pours crushed waste into a recycling machine for rejects; 4. Ibrahim experimenting with the recycling technology he helped develop; 5. At the APE, El Hagggar examines a paper recycling unit that produces slurry pulp

percent of the trash in Egypt,” El Hagggar said. “It is usually dumped in garbage areas, causing air, water and land pollution. Now, using the technology that we are developing, we may be able to make use of it and in a non-costly way.”

Another student, Eiman Hamdy '02, '06, experimented with milk and juice carton packs and was able to devise machinery that separates the plastic, fibers and aluminum. The plastic is recycled and used to make non-food products such as hangers. The fibers are used to make folders and other paper products. The aluminum, on the other hand, is used to make pots and pans.

“When you see these things materialize in front of you, you feel you are really doing something to protect the environment,” Hamdy said. “It makes you see things from a different perspective.”

It’s not just on a macro level that

AUC participants felt the urge for change; they also sensed it on a more individual level. After working on the project for almost two years, their perspectives and personal habits were transformed.

“I never used to think about the environment so deeply, but now it has become a part of me. If it becomes a part of all of us, we can really make a big difference in our country.”

“I began to think about the environment in everything I do,” Moussa said. “Personally, I stopped wrapping gifts because I consider it a waste of paper. Even with my 4-year-old, I taught her to reuse the wrapping paper she receives. When I

shop, I read product labels in order to buy things made out of recyclable material. I also began to talk to my friends and relatives about small things they can do to prevent waste.”

Sharing the same enthusiasm, Ibrahim began to introduce some changes in his household. As a way to reduce the level of organic waste, he makes sure cooking is done in more limited portions so there is hardly any surplus. Empty bits and pieces of paper now lie on his counter next to the telephone instead of in the trash. In addition, in his family’s optical store, he is promoting the idea of using cards and bags made out of recyclable materials.

“I never used to think about the environment so deeply, but now it has become a part of me,” Ibrahim said. “If it becomes a part of all of us, we can really make a big difference in our country.” □

Archive Trivia



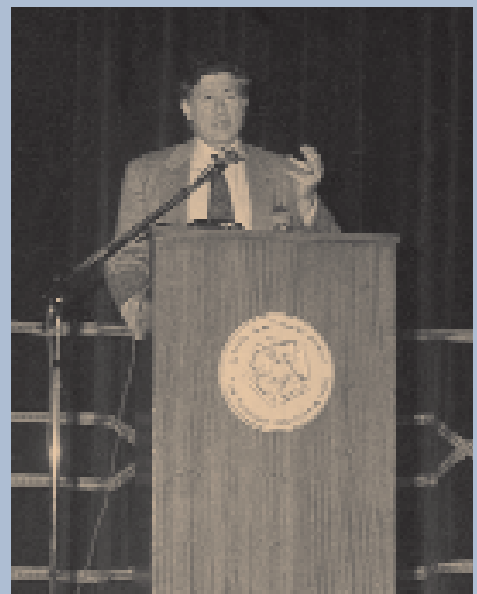
From inside the AUC archives, little-known secrets in AUC history surface

In 1937, Um Kalthoum held her first major performance at AUC's Ewart Hall. Soon after, the Egyptian Broadcasting Company began airing a winter series of monthly radio concerts live from Ewart's stage. The diva's enchanting voice pleased and mesmerized the crowd, but the shows prompted angry correspondence from well-organized Evangelical Christians in Egypt. According to one observer, "It was not suitable to have the type of audience in Ewart Hall who swayed in their seats, rolled their heads and eyes, and bit their lips." (*The American University in Cairo: 1919-1987*, AUC Press, 1987).

In an attempt to mollify the opposition, AUC required Um Kalthoum to stay away from love songs and sing more patriotic and idyllic melodies. The words would have to be submitted in advance and performances toned down. These rules proved unworkable, however, and after a year of negotiation, Um Kalthoum's concerts left Ewart Hall for a commercial theater.

In 1989, AUC held the Cairo International Model United Nations (CIMUN) conference, the first of its kind in any Arab country. The keynote speaker was the late Edward Said, then on the executive board of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. The Palestine issue dominated the discussions, but students also debated South Africa, Iran-Iraq relations and other contemporary international issues. Organized by a group of ambitious students under the guidance of AUC's current Provost Tim Sullivan, who was then professor and head of the political science department, the CIMUN is today the oldest running student activity on campus.

It is also recognized as the largest inter-collegiate Model United Nations program outside of North America. This March in New York City, for the first time since they began competing in 1996, AUC students earned the top honor and title of outstanding delegation at the largest Model United Nations event in the world.





Zeinab Hashem '69 was one of the lucky seniors crowned “all-round campus girl” in the Miss AUC contest that began in 1961 and continued until 1977. In the early years, the winner was chosen solely on the amount of votes she collected, but by 1977 academic achievement and campus activities were considered as well. The coronation ceremony, performed by the previous year’s winner, was traditionally followed by a party in the Fountain Area where the president had the first dance with Miss AUC.

While it was considered an honor to receive the title, the crowned senior had no official responsibilities. By the late 1970s, the contest had dropped in popularity, and it was cancelled in 1978 and 1979 because of a lack of voluntary candidates. By 1980, students were writing tense letters to the editor of the *Caravan*, some continuing to support it as an incentive for female students to participate in activities on campus while others called it an “outmoded popularity contest.”



In the 1920s at AUC, two hours of calisthenics and gymnastics each week were part of graduation requirements. The university was male-only at the time, and male students, wearing white shorts and undershirts, strove to perfect the “AUC pyramid:” a three- or four-tier structure of students standing on each other’s shoulders. Team sports were also very popular among AUCians, playing against the YMCA and the American Mission. The tennis, track, volleyball and soccer teams received school letters and wore special sweaters.

Each spring, to cap off the sports activities of the year, the university sponsored Sports Day. In 1921, competitions were held in drill exercises, long and short races, jumping, volleyball and basketball. By 1932, Sports Day had become an elaborate event with a live band and a bright canopy covering bleachers, which sat faculty, distinguished guests and families of athletes.

*By Lily Hindy, based on information from the AUC archives
and The American University in Cairo: 1919-1987 (AUC Press, 1987)*

Around the World

United States

San Francisco

Abderahman Salaheldin, consul general of Egypt in San Francisco, and Mrs. Salaheldin, hosted a dinner at their home in honor of AUC President David Arnold (center)



AUC alumni and friends at a reception held in Hotel Monaco in May 2006

Los Angeles



AUC Trustee Bruce Ludwig and Carolyn Ludwig hosted a reception for AUC alumni and friends at their residence in Los Angeles in May 2006

New York

Sadek Wahba '87
and Azza Karam '88 receive
Distinguished Alumni Awards
at the Chairman's Reception
held in the Princeton Club in
May 2006



After receiving bachelor's degrees in economics and computer science from AUC, **Sadek Wahba '87** acquired a Master of Science in 1989 from the London School of Economics and a doctorate in economics from Harvard University in 1996. Prior to joining the PhD program at Harvard, Wahba spent two years at the World Bank in Washington D.C. as an economist in the technical department for the Africa Office.

In 2005, he served on a task force for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Vaccine Fund, which worked on evaluating the international finance facility for immunization. Currently, Wahba serves as the managing director of Global Capital Markets at Morgan Stanley. Wahba is author of the book *The Economics of the Middle East: A Selected Bibliography*, as well as numerous articles in leading journals. He has also written articles in prominent Arabic journals.

Azza Karam '88 has a prominent career in the fields of multi-religious collaboration, international gender issues, democratization, human rights, conflict and political Islam.

Karam has worked as a senior program officer at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, serving in the Middle East and Europe.

Her career then took her to New York as the special adviser on Middle East and Islamic affairs to the secretary-general and the director of women's programs at the World Conference of Religions for Peace International.

Today, Karam serves as senior policy research adviser at the United Nations Development Programme in the regional bureau for Arab states. Throughout the years, Karam has authored and published several books and articles, including *Transnational Political Islam; Women, Islamisms and the State; Women in Parliament; and A Woman's Place: Religious Women as Public Actors*.



AUC Board of Trustees Chairman Boyd Hight, Karam and President David Arnold

Lebanon



The first alumni gathering in Lebanon held at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in March 2006, thanks to Mervat Tallawy '61 and Laila Ziada '57; among the guests AUC Advisory Trustee Thomas Bartlett

Saudi Arabia



Alumni gather at a dinner hosted by Seifallah Sharbatly '96 and Dina Bushnak at their residence in Jeddah in April 2006; among the guests was AUC Trustee Suad Juffali (second from right)



President David Arnold (right) presents the Distinguished Alumni Volunteer Award to Seifallah Sharbatly '96 in recognition of his continuous support and dedication to his alma mater



Alumni at the dinner

Greece



Alumni gather at the Egyptian Embassy in a reception hosted by Hamdy Sanad Loza, Egyptian ambassador to Greece, and Mrs. Sherine Loza in April 2006



Provost Tim Sullivan, President David Arnold, Mrs. Sherine Loza, Sherry Arnold, Hamdy Sanad Loza, Egyptian ambassador to Greece, and Mary Iskander '76, associate vice president of institutional advancement for alumni affairs

Class Notes

'44

Phyllis-Hatwell Preston is the former editor of *The Campus*. Her new book, *Testing Children: A Practitioner's Guide to Assessing Mental Development in Infants and Young Children*, is out and available online.

'56

Lillian Gilbert left Egypt in 1962 to study at the University of Texas in Austin. She was married in 1963 and has two children: Loreen Gilbert, a financial adviser in Orange County, California; and Charles Gilbert, an attorney in Dallas, Texas.

'60

Mona Megahed was honored by Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni for her work in cinematography and short documentary films from 1965 to 1998 during an event at the Opera House in April 2006.

'62

Hanie Mubarak is very proud to be a graduate of AUC. Until today, he cherishes the lovely memories of student life on campus.

'70

Hussein Abou Matar was a translator at the Libyan News Agency from 1973 to 1995, and at the World Islamic Call Society from 1995 to 2000. He translated a number of books from English to Arabic and wrote a cultural proposal titled "Give Mass Culture a Chance," which includes a group of common proverbs from different parts of the world. He is working on his new article, "The Role of Education in Fostering World Understanding." He is married and has five children.

Alumna Parliamentarian Seeks Change



Elected to parliament last spring, Shahinaz El Naggar '91 has embarked on a new and exciting adventure in her life: politics. El Naggar, chair of El Nabila Hotel and recent graduate of Qasr El Aini Medical School at Cairo University, plans to tackle issues such as women's health, unemployment and illiteracy while in office. She is a member of the National Democratic Party.

"Being a member of parliament means that I now lead a really busy life," said El Naggar. "But I really like dealing with people. It has its own flare; when I do something good for someone I feel a psychological satisfaction."

El Naggar has been involved in charity work in the Manyala area in

Cairo for years. Her parents were always involved in social work there while she was growing up, and they had a great influence on her life. While at medical school, El Naggar organized groups of poor pregnant women together for regular visits to physicians. She works with unemployed women and illiterate Egyptians studying to obtain their literacy certificate.

El Naggar is the chair of Queen of the Nile and Queen Abu Simbel, two Nile cruises, as well as El Nabila Travel Group.

She is also a member of the Egyptian Hotel Association. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from AUC, and this fall she plans to start her medical school residency at Qasr El Aini Hospital.

'75

Mona Makram-Ebeid (MA) gave lectures at Georgetown, Maryland and Northeastern universities, as well as Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she earned her second degree in 1982. She focused on liberal reform in Egypt, the Islamist trend and women's role in the

last parliamentary elections, in which she ran as an independent. *Al-Ahram Weekly* is in the process of publishing a book about her political life.

'82

Noha El-Mikawy joined the United Nations Development Programme in Beirut in 2005 as regional governance

policy adviser. She is working on issues related to programming for good governance in various Arab countries. During her regional trips, she enjoys meeting AUC alumni and is proud to be an AUC graduate. She would like very much to hear from anyone who is working on issues related to good governance at noha.el-mikawy@undp.org.

'83

Walid Abdelnasser (MA '85) published his 10th Arabic book, *Dialogue Among Civilizations and the Challenge of Globalization*, in 2006. He has two English books and has also contributed to six other books in Arabic, English and French. He is working as the deputy chief of mission at Egypt's embassy in Washington D.C. until July 2006, after which he will be transferred to Cairo.

'85

Azza Moez owns Automation Management Solutions, which specializes in industrial automation engineering services and developing related software applications. She owes her success to AUC and believes that the education she received helped her to build a good career.

'86

Hassan Abdel-Hamid is managing partner at Abdel-Hamid & Associates, a family financial advisory business. He is also president of the Rotary Club Cairo Cosmopolitan. In February 2006, he inaugurated a project to provide drinking water to a village of 11,000 inhabitants in Upper Egypt. He and his sister, Mona Abdel-Hamid '82, welcome comments from consultants in the same field at hassan.abdel-hamid@abdelhamid.com.

'91

Rania El Farouki moved to Dubai in June 2005. She would love to hear from her friends and colleagues at farouki@aucegypt.edu or relfarouki@yahoo.co.uk.

'93

Ibrahim Hamza (MPA) is married and has two children, Ahmed and Shorouk. He has been working in the tourism field since 1989 and is an owning partner and vice president of the Pegasus Tours travel agency.

'94

Firas Al-Atraqchi (MA '97) started his own media company in Canada in 1999. He then moved to Doha, Qatar to work as a senior editor with Al Jazeera International.

'95

Fady Iskander is channel manager at Citrix Systems in Dubai. He is married to Mariam Iskander '98, and they were blessed with a baby girl, Tia, in November 2005.

Haruko Sakaedani (MA) is the first alumna from Japan to finish the TAFL course. She teaches Arabic courses at several universities in and around Tokyo. Sakaedani was in charge of the Radio Arabic course at Japan Broadcasting Corporation from April to September 2005. The program was broadcasted on the air once a week for 30 minutes and will be transmitted again this year.

'96

Mariam El Wakf (MA) has been working as a journalist with a career that included a long stint as a correspondent for the Associated Press. She is now a program producer

at Al Jazeera International based in Doha, Qatar. She would love to hear from her classmates at mariam1110@yahoo.com.

Randa Kayyali (MA) recently published her new book, *The Arab Americans*, which outlines the immigration patterns, adaptation and assimilation of Arabs in the United States. Kayyali is enrolled in a doctoral program at George Mason University. She would like to hear from her old friends at rkayyali@gmu.edu.

'97

Ahmed Saafan is the managing partner at the Agricultural Group in Dubai. His first son, Said, was born in October 2005.

'98

Mona Amer is a professor at the Program for Recovery and Community Health in the psychiatry department at Yale University. She has been selected by the American Psychological Association to receive the 2006 Award for Distinguished Graduate Student in Professional Psychology. Amer is currently doing policy work at the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as well as providing clinical services at the local mental health agency. She is also an adjunct professor at the University of New Haven.

'99

Mohamed El Gohary earned his master's degree in structures and mechanics from North Carolina State University in May 2005. Currently, he is a structural engineer at BSW International in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

'00

Sami Al Shorafa is associate account manager at Asda'a in Dubai. He was engaged to Samar Gamal Nour '05 in December 2005.

Reham El Menshawy participated in the Middle East Entrepreneurs Training in the United States, held in San Diego in January 2006. She was selected among 20 business leaders from more than 500 applicants in the Middle East to take part in the Information Communication and Technology Program. El Menshawy also received an internship at Fox News TV channel.

Emad Aziz and Alia Jamil Abusulayman (MPA '06) were married on June 15, 2006 and celebrated with family and friends at the Cairo Sheraton. They flew to the Maldives for their honeymoon and will relocate to the United Arab Emirates.

'01

Diana Nada finished her master's degree in engineering management in the United Kingdom. She is a scheduler at Hill International in Dubai and is currently part of the team working on the Bawadi project.

Mai El Dahan recently joined WorldSpace Satellite Radio Network, the first satellite radio provider in the region, as head of content from the Middle East and North Africa. She says that Professor Hanzada Fikry in the journalism department taught her the power and influence of the radio versus television.

Mohammad Abusaa is regional manager of business development at the Stellar Group in Dubai. He is

AUC Alumnus and Wife Blessed with Triplets



On May 5 this year, Bishoy Morcos '98 and his wife Nermine celebrated the first birthday of their sons Fady, Mark and Youssef. Last year, the couple was blessed with triplets, and life since has been a hectic adventure. "We always thought it would be boring to have just one or two children," said Morcos. But little did he know that they would get three at once. The boys are in good health and the family is living in Dubai, where Morcos is production shift leader at Master Foods Middle East.

"They are always around filling

our home with energy, joy and excitement," said Morcos. "Watching them grow together day after day is incredible. It is really a unique experience, with endless fun. But you need to bear the challenges. Traveling and outings need some special arrangements; we need a logistics department for that."

With three boys running around the house, Morcos said it's also been hard maintaining a social life. He's trying to find a balance between work, family and friends. He and his wife are focused more on ensuring a safe home, trying to be patient with the children and each other, and catching up on missed hours of sleep.

Morcos graduated from AUC with a bachelor's degree in physics. He worked with fire alarms and fire fighting in Egypt for four years, after which he moved to the United Arab Emirates to continue in the field. In 2004, Morcos changed career paths, switching to his current position.

Morcos would love to hear from former classmates via e-mail at Bishoy.Morcos@eu.affem.com

married to Mayada Wahsh '02, and they had their first baby boy, Ghaleb, in January 2006.

'03

Hashem El Kadi is working for Ismail Ali Abu Dawood Trading Company in Saudi Arabia. He is responsible for the retail van operation in south Jeddah. The company is the biggest distributor of fast moving consumer goods in the region. He will be getting married by the end of this year to Yousra Baraka '02.

Special Programs

April Wagner (YAB '80) was an exchange student from Kent State University in Ohio. She greatly enjoyed living in Egypt and staying at the Falaki hostel. She believes that studying at AUC was one of the best experiences in her life, and she dreams of coming back again to Egypt at some point in the future. She would love to hear from her friends and colleagues at aprilwagner44224@yahoo.com.

Reflections from a Dahab Survivor

For *Sham El Nessim* weekend this year, I went with 12 of my friends to Dahab for what we planned to be a typical holiday weekend of water skiing, swimming and just hanging out at the beach. On our last night, we all went out to eat at a Chinese restaurant on the boardwalk. We sat in the outside section, ready for a nice meal by the water before heading back to school, responsibilities ... reality. Little did we know, we were sitting two meters away from a bomb. If it wasn't for a concrete barrier that protected us, I wouldn't be here today. Our waiter was on the wrong side of it when the bomb exploded. We saw his body on the boardwalk.

The first thing that I thought when the bomb went off was, "this is war." We all looked up at the sky as though missiles were dropping down at us. I thought of the Israelis, and then I thought of Islamic Jihad. Everyone was frantic and in shock, and for the first two minutes after the explosion I was completely deaf. Then I heard my friend Karim yelling, "Run to the water! Run to the water!" While we were running down to the beach, the other two bombs went off, and that's when I realized that it was a terrorist attack.

All of my friends were injured, some much worse than others. We were all hit with shrapnel from the bomb. I almost went into shock once I got to the hospital, but a foreign medic took care of me and managed to calm me down. The foreign medics were amazing. Everyone at the scene was so thoughtful and helpful to everyone else. It was a local cafe owner who swept us up and drove us to the hospital in his own car. The hotel owner, Shawki, still calls each of us to this day. That night I really got to see that in moments of crisis, Egyptians stick together.

I still have nightmares sometimes. I don't plan on going back to Sinai for a long time, but what's important now is that I am still alive and here to tell the story.

By living through this experience, I could see that terrorism and the killing of innocent lives cannot be the way to solve anything. It's a crime; it's inhuman and it destroys everything beautiful around us.

At the same time, I kept asking myself what would make someone knowingly cause so much bloodshed and pain?



I believe that everyone has a cause or motive for what they do. Terrorists are, for the most part, people who are marginalized and humiliated by society. While their actions can never be justified, their reasons have to be examined if we are going to be able to stop them.

The Bedouins of Sinai have never been culturally integrated into Egyptian society. Their frustration is understandable, especially considering the way in which they were interrogated after the Taba bombings, when the police took Bedouin women out of their homes and questioned them. This is completely unacceptable in their culture.

We all want terrorism to stop in Sinai and elsewhere. It's frightening to think that at any time, any minute a bomb could hit you or your loved ones any place you go. Living in peace is something we take for granted, but is becoming more difficult as political and social tensions mount in the world. The only way to put an end to such bloodshed is dialogue and assimilation. These marginalized people need to feel that they are important members of society and that their concerns really count.

In Egypt, there is much work to be done for reconciliation, and I truly hope that both sides work toward it so that Sinai and all of Egypt is not hit again.

Lama El Hatow '05 is a graduate student studying environmental engineering at AUC.

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.