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Editor’s Notes

Challenging Tradition

When I first learned of Hatia Al-Manour’s film, I thought she would make an interesting profile, as a former female filmmaker who had crossed a new frontier. Then, when I read her interview “For the Love of Her Country” (page 29), I was impressed by her desire to bring about change in her homeland, respecting and valuing its heritage and culture. In her film, Al-Manour looks at subjects related to women and their role in Saudi society. She has brought to the surface discussions on subjects considered taboo and dared to question tradition.

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

And while poverty and access to education are clear obstacles, tradition remains in many cases a hurdle. Egypt’s second MDG country report issued in 2005, for example, notes that illiteracy rates for girls aged 15–19 are twice that of boys regardless of economic class. The report attributes this to the high illiteracy of female children in rural areas to cultural behavior. According to the UN report, Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2005, in 2002, 44 million adult Arab women — almost half the female population — could not read or write.

Additionally, Arab women have among the lowest rates of political participation in the world, occupying only 8 percent of seats in national parliaments. Ultimately, it will be up to our region as a whole and specifically women to bring about the needed changes in economic, social or cultural conditions and traditions that sometimes hold women hostage. What Al-Manour and other Arab women like her offer is a chance to question these traditions, while simultaneously embracing the rich culture that makes us define ourselves as Arabs.

Dina Abulfotuh

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For the Record

Taking retirement after 22 years at AUC that followed nine years as NBC News Cairo bureau chief — in all 31 very high profile years in Cairo, has meant a flurry of profile pieces in Egyptian and regional media. But the one I enjoyed the most was the AUC Today Summer 2005 profile “Broadcasting Schleifer,” probably because it quoted so many great people saying such nice things and it ran my favorite photo, hanging out with Egyptian troops close to the Kuwaiti border on the eve of the 1991 Gulf War.

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

The second part of the rumor is that I was fired because we technically missed the assassination. “Technically” because in the end it was NBC that broke the story with a radio report from the bureau two minutes after the attack when everybody out at the parade ground couldn’t get to a phone line for many minutes more, and because we did end up with footage to screen (how we managed that is another story). Because of the long forgotten submarine story, we had two correspondents in Cairo and myself as producer reporter to do follow up on Sadat’s assassination, while both CBS and ABC were out of pocket for reporters for at least 24 hours after the first stories ran (again that’s another story). So we paled on one follow-up report after another, and TV Guide judged that the best coverage of the assassination was the NBC News coverage, even though we missed the main event, which TV Guide never quite realized. As for myself, instead of being fired as the rumor goes, I continued to serve as bureau chief for nearly two years until I resigned to join the AUC faculty in September 1983, with full honors and a consultancy from NBC News. This is a quick sketch — the full story is both funny and fascinating, although it revolves around a terrible and tragic event; but that was typical of the times when foreign correspondents could still work at the edges of danger without being among the victims.

S. Abdallah Schleifer

Reconnected

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

Swar Khairy Selena ’83

Ohio, United States
U.S. Ambassador Tours 9/11 Exhibition

Commemorating 9/11, AUC’s Sony Gallery for Photography hosted an exhibit by Lucie Pavlovich titled “Ground Zero: 9/11/01” U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Francis Ricciardone opened the exhibition. Ambassador Ricciardone noted that the events of 9/11 resonated around the world. “What this date means to Americans and to people all over the world,” Ricciardone said, “is commemoration and honoring the memory of those we lost in that tragic event and the heroism of all of those who responded to it, including the photographer herself.”

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

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

Queen of Great Britain Honors Harrell-Bond

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

Harrell-Bond began work at AUC five years ago, helping to set up the FMRS program and teaching refugee studies. Since she founded the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University in 1982, Harrell-Bond has been advocating the rights of refugees and has established legal aid programs internationally.

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

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

AUC Professor and Students Receive United Nations Award for Excellence

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

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

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

Former UNIC Director Dynse Dorani selected the course for the award after visiting last spring upon Fahmy’s invitation. He praised Fahmy for the emphasis placed on the study of internal issues, structures and problems of the United Nations. The core content of the course included the latest report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which was the focus of the Millennium Summit this September in the General Assembly.

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

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

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Haroun Begins Term as Science Dean

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

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

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

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

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

Theater Design Director Wins State Incentive Award for AUC Play

Harem Shebl, technical director in the performing and visual arts department, recently won the 2004 State Incentive Award in theater décor for the play Elmin fi Alja (Two in a Basket) performed in early 2003 on the Falaki Studio Theatre. The award, which consists of a certificate and cash, is the highest government honor given to young artists and is presented by the president of Egypt. The award committee cited Shebl’s innovative and ideal use of space as the main reason for winning the award. “I cherish this award because it is from my country. I feel recognized as an Egyptian artist,” he said.

Shebl has been working at AUC for the past 11 years. He has also worked in venues outside the university, including the Cairo Opera House and public theaters. He has recently returned from Canada where he took part in the World Stage Design international exhibition. In addition, Shebl is a member of the United States Institute for Theater Technology and the International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians, based in the Netherlands.
A veteran journalist for the past 30 years, a media consultant to governments around the world and former editor of a major newspaper and Internet news site, Lawrence Pintak is the newly appointed director of the recently renamed Adham Center for Electronic Journalism. He comes to AUC from the University of Michigan, where he served as professor of journalism and public policy.

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

Reporting from four continents, Pintak served as the Middle East correspondent for CBS News and contributed to such leading U.S. networks as PBS and ABC. He covered the birth of modern radical terrorism in the 1980s and more recently reported on the Indonesian revolution and the rise of political Islam in Indonesia. He won two Overseas Press Club citations for his Middle East coverage and was nominated twice for an Emmy Award.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"If Egypt's population continues to grow and we keep using water at the same rate per person, the demand may exceed the supply and the government may have to resort to water rationing," said Smith. "Even more problematic than municipal use is the area of agriculture. El Haggar pointed out. Farmers in Egypt still use flood irrigation, a low-tech method by which water is poured onto the fields and allowed to flow along the ground among the crops. However, a lot of water is wasted because about one half of it does not reach the crops. A more efficient method is drip irrigation, where water is sent through perforated plastic pipes that are laid along the rows of crops and sometimes buried along their root lines.

The problem, El Haggar explained, is convincing farmers to change their traditional methods of irrigation. He recounted how during his field visits to Egyptian villages when he was working on his co-authored book People and Pollution, farmers would tell him that flood irrigation is the way their ancestors used to water their land and that they don’t intend to change it. "It's difficult to convince them that what their parents were doing was wrong," El Haggar said.

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

Is Our Water Safe?
The key question on the minds of many is whether the water we drink is clean or filled with bacteria and dangerous substances. "For the most part," Smith said, "tap water in Cairo meets Egyptian and international safety standards. But occasionally — and I say occasionally — there may be a level of organic substances that form compounds with chlorine, which could increase the risk of cancer if ingested over a long period of time."

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

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

El Haggar also differentiated between water in urban and rural areas. "If urban areas have polluted water in the..."
industrial sector, where waste is not always disposed of safely and many times is left to run into the canals. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge that having filters at home is a good way to remove impurities and a limited amount of dissolved pollutants. ‘‘Most filters will do some good,’’ he said.

Smith, who is currently in the midst of a four-year research project on residential water quality, said that most actuated carbon units are good at removing organic substances as well as chlorine. Reverse osmosis units, some of which cost more than LE 2,000, are very effective in removing most of the substances in water, but they are expensive to purchase and regularly maintain. ‘‘They sometimes remove substances that wouldn’t hurt if they remain in the water,’’ Smith added. El Haggar noted that although conventional filters generally remove suspended solids, they do not get rid of salts and chlorine. Chlorine is added during the purification process to disinfect water from bacteria and viruses, and that’s why it is unsafe to store filtered water in plastic bottles since chlorine may react with the plastic. ‘‘What’s more dangerous is the chlorine reacting with organic matter thrown in the water. That may cause cancer on the long term,’’ El Haggar said. ‘‘Reverse osmosis units, though expensive, are good because they remove chlorine and salts in the water.’’

We are in Danger?

Faculty experts agree that there is no immediate danger, but if water quality is not adequately addressed, there is a potential long-term threat. ‘‘Eighty percent of the diseases that have become widespread in Egypt — including cancer, hepatitis C, as well as liver and kidney failure — come from pollution in the water, air and soil,’’ El Haggar said, adding that chemical fertilizers and pesticides not only weaken the soil and land, they are also carcinogenic. He noted that a lot of money is spent treating patients when the real solution is to have an all-encompassing system that would not allow pollution to happen in the first place. ‘‘Prevention is better than treatment,’’ he ascerted.

To Filter or Not to Filter

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

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

El Haggar also pointed out that, besides environmental considerations, experts to come up with a unified water resources management scheme. ‘‘Overpopulation could be viewed as a burden or as a repository of human resources. As long as you have a good system in place, things would work fine no matter how many people there are,’’ he said. Sharing the same viewpoint, El Haggar noted that strategic planning is the first step forward. The country needs a comprehensive agricultural scheme, with a clear vision and mission statement. The plan should provide villagers with a central location to dump their garbage and create adequate sewage collection and treatment facilities. ‘‘Fines should then be inflicted on those who don’t abide by the law,’’ he said, adding that the media could play a pivotal role in educating farmers about safe irrigation methods.

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

El Haggar also said that the lack of foresight and initiative, coupled with carelessness and greed, are the root causes of the problem. ‘‘We have to stop being shortsighted and not lean on the government to do everything for us; we all bear responsibility for our circumstances,’’ he said. ‘‘We should operate with the mindset that fresh water is finite and that we have to work hard to use what’s available in the best way possible so that we have something for ourselves and generations to come.’’
Foreign Affairs. There, she attended wardrobe, tie her hair in a bun and set heels borrowed from her mother's up at 7 am, dress in a suit and high Though she learned a lot as a political experience lay in developing an scientist, the real value of her through AUC's summer internship program. Students come face-to-face with life in the real world. Mourad, summer was not a internship program. A major transition juniors and seniors who participated in more about the dynamics of the work outlook on life.

For Sara Khafagy, a chemistry senior
accurate in what I'm doing. I also
began to notice errors even before they
looked through the manual to see what
error. I was frightened and frantically
very first lab experiment, I got an error
Kraft Foods Egypt, the experience gave her a new foothold in her field. “In my very first lab experiment, I got an error message. I was frightened and frantically
engineer is very strict and demands a
field.” It’s a real hierarchy,” he said. “The
engineer is very strict and demands a
lot of respect, and the worker has to
obey. I sometimes felt that engineers
were too harsh with workers.” It was
only when Azer's competence was
challenged that he began to understand
why engineers need to be so harsh.
Azer asked a group of workers on site
to fix a piece of equipment, and when
he found that his instructions were not
followed, he had to keep repeating his
request. After losing his temper and
asking for the eighth time, the workers
finally carried out his request. When
Azer's boss learned of the story, he
reprimanded the workers and was fully supportive of Azer.

“I don’t know if they felt that I was
too young to give them instructions or
“the politics of the work environment is very tricky. At first I was timid, but I gradually learned to speak out about what bothered me. That gave me a lot of self confidence and always made me feel better.”
By Dalia Al Nimr
continuous interest in what I’m doing, it is very flattering. It definitely gave me a push to work harder.”
When Nounou started his internship, he was amazed to see workers from all levels address the senior managers by their first names. “There were no formalities,” he said. He was even more surprised to find out that there weren’t any defined working hours. “It gave me a new sense of responsibility because I had to manage my own time. I felt committed to get the job done.”
Lively alone also helped Nounou become more independent. “I had to calculate how much money I had for my expenses and transportation and had to stop being a spendthrift.” He also began to look after some of the details that he didn't pay attention to at his parents' home. “Before I went out, I had to check that nothing was on the stove, that the electricity was turned off and that everything was in order. I became another person,” he said.
An active member of the Help Club and president of the Mechanical Engineering Club, Nounou believes that those who make the most out of their internships are those who make the most out of their stay at AUC. “It’s not just about high GPAs; it’s the communication skills you acquire through extracurricular activities that make all the difference. You learn how to deal with situations and manage several tasks at a time. That’s how the multinationals are looking for: a well-rounded individual.”
Spending decades covering war zones, natural disasters and political strife, Ashraf Hamdi ’82 shares his survival tactics with fear at his side.

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

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

During the most recent Iraq war, Hamdi was in charge of the southern border for Abu Dhabi TV, for which he still works. He had promised his wife it would be the last war he covers. Leaving behind his family to cover yet another catastrophe, Hamdi has become no stranger to fear.

“If you are not afraid, you won’t make it. It is not courage that keeps you going; it gets you wounded or worse. Your instincts help you survive. Knowing where you are is very important and this comes through being cautious. No story is worth your neck,” said Hamdi.

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

In such an environment, keeping yourself safe is never going to be straightforward, said Hamdi, pointing to the increased number of deaths of members of the media in recent years. “CNN was the first to bring armed guards into a press vehicle; everyone covering events in Iraq now has armed security. There is a huge debate about whether this is inviting bullets in your direction,” said Hamdi.

Recently, journalists have been required to take hostile environment awareness courses before entering dangerous war zones. For Hamdi, these courses, which weren’t available when he started working, would have helped him deal with the emotional and psychological trauma he experienced after returning home. One of Hamdi’s first assignments as a young reporter was covering the famine camps in Darfur, Sudan. “I was asked to do the photography and had to come back with close-ups of all those children during the famine,” he recalled. “To this day, I cannot watch such scenes even on television. It gives me the shakes, and I can smell the death in my nostrils.” Hamdi continued to explain that he was unable to understand his feelings until recently when he learned of post-traumatic stress. “We simply didn’t know these things back then; we would come back after covering something and feel funny for a few days,” he said.

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

By Wael Elazab

Fear Under Fire

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

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

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

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

By Wael Elazab

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

Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr
Behind the controversial camera of Saudi Arabia’s first female filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour ’97

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

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

In an interview with AUCToday, Al-Mansour talks about her upbringing, her struggles as a Saudi Arabian woman and her goals and ambitions as a female filmmaker.
You were born and raised in Saudi Arabia. How did that shape your character?
I don’t really know how it shaped my character, but it made me a real Saudi. It wasn’t alienated from my own culture. My views are always from within, and I have an insider’s view that a lot of non-natives don’t even get if they try.

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

Is that why you decided to become a filmmaker?
Yes, because I believe that films are agents of change. Films are very poetic and human. Through films, you can transcend the barriers and engage others and at the same time send a message to your community.

As a female filmmaker in Saudi Arabia, do you face opposition?
Of course I do, but I also find a lot of support. It seems like people in Saudi are very divided: either totally with me or totally against me. What is most important to me is the support of my family. I have always felt that my parents are very proud of me. They’ve always been open minded with my siblings and me about the choices we make in life. My sister chose to be a painter in the United States. One of my brothers is a music composer, and the other one an actor. My parents always trusted our judgment and never stood in our way.

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

What was the main message you were trying to convey in *The Only Way Out* by focusing on three Saudis stranded in the desert?
I wanted to show that in Saudi society nowadays there’s a growing tension between liberal reformists and conservative Islamists, and that dialogue is the only way out. I wanted to present my message in a creative way, and that’s how I thought of the idea of three engineers — a liberal, a conservative, and a moderate — stranded in the desert together. The film shows the clash of ideas in modern Saudi Arabia and the need for tolerance. It’s okay to be different, but we shouldn’t cancel each other out.

*Women Without Shadows* sparked a strong public reaction, ranging from outrage to praise. Did you expect such a reaction?
I didn’t expect it, even though I thought the film would trigger some opposition because it deals with sensitive topics in Saudi society such as male and female segregation and women having to wear the face veil. Some didn’t like the idea the movie presented; others welcomed it.

I feel this controversy is a healthy sign if it is well directed. It makes people talk, and it raises a lot of things that are taken for granted. In this film, I spoke to elderly Saudi women who recall that 30 years ago, they were able to dress the way they like, move about freely and function normally in a mixed society. I wanted to show that traditions are not sacred. It’s very important to take an objective look at traditions, preserving what’s good and removing what’s bad — especially practices that demean women. We have reached a point where we have to be realistic and honest with ourselves.

The social restrictions on women in Saudi Arabia must affect your work. How do you cope with these limitations?
Social restrictions are there only if we want them to be. I am moving ahead with my career, and I have a lot of support. Much of what we think of as social restrictions are actually our fear of challenging the status quo and accepting what society forces on us. Unfortunately, women in the Arab world sometimes have a misconception that blindly following traditions and social customs will protect them and make them more virtuous. They end up losing themselves and their dreams to social norms that are very unfair.

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

What are your future plans?
Next year in theaters in the Gulf and Lebanon. But the thing I care about most is for my movies to have a real social, artistic and cultural value. I want to establish credibility with my viewers because that’s the only way to bring about social change.
Tackling Terrorism

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

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

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

The Sharm El Sheikh incident — like 9/11, the London bombings and countless other acts of terror — raises concerns about the roots of terrorism and how it can be subdued. The situation has become even more critical, since statistics show that international terrorism is on the rise.

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

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

Ideology of Terror

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

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

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

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

The Roots of Terror

Walid Kazziha, political science professor, believes that any terrorist act stems from political frustration.

"Political problems are always at the heart of the matter," he said. In his view, the Arab world is plagued with internal problems of leadership, corruption and curtailment of individual freedom. In addition, there are mounting external pressures, most notably the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and post-war Iraq. "It's a depressing situation that perpetuates misguided movements," he said.

What compounds the situation is the Middle East's crumbling.
relationship with the West. “Iraq and Afghanistan are symptoms, not the core,” Kazziha noted. “The core of the problem is that Western governments treat Arabs as inferior, as dependents. As long as the West can’t understand that the real objective of people in the region is to be free from Western hegemony and to be treated as independent nations with their own sovereign power, terrorism will continue.” Kazziha believes that resorting to terror is a means of waking one’s voice heard. “You can’t look at the Sharm incident as an isolated terrorist act. It’s not just about hitting a hotel or market, it’s about sending a strong political message.” That message, he explained, will continue to pulsate as long as major political crises like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq remain unresolved. But Kazziha affirms that terrorism is not the correct path. “Through terrorists think they are advancing the cause of Iraqis and Palestinians, they are actually doing them a disfavor. The real way to fight back is to arm oneself with the requirements of modern times — education, science and technology. If you want to compete, you have to be prepared to face your adversary with the elements of power of this age.”

**Behind the Stereotype**
Many of the terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world in the past 20 years have been given an Islamic label. Numerous groups have claimed to act in the name of Islam, assuming responsibility for taking innocent lives. Kazziha attributes that to historical reasons. In the 1960s and 1970s, he explained, there was a suppression of socialist and nationalist movements. “The only movement that gained support from the West back then as a way to combat communism was the Islamic movement,” he said. “Over time, those Islamists became stronger and asserted themselves as an ideological and political power, and they are now the most prominent players on the scene.”

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

In the meantime, the image of Muslims has been tarnished in the Western media, creating what Ken Livingstone, the mayor of London, recently referred to on BBC News as a “rising tide of Islamophobia.” “The fact that many terrorist groups do not represent the majority of Muslims,” said Lawrence Pintak, director of AUC’s Adham Center for Electronic Journalism. “Also, moderate Muslim groups have to vociferously condemn those terrorist actions.”

Although Pintak believes that the Western media could play a better role in showing the “other face” of Islam, he acknowledges that it is not always an easy task. “The shorthand media method where TV reporters have only one minute to tell a news story necessitates that journalists find a way to communicate with their audience simply and briefly.”

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

“If we don’t understand why Arabs are angry,” he said. “That is a good sign.”

**Real Remedies**
The question that lingers in the minds of many is what can be done to counter terrorism. Said Eddin Ibrahim, sociology professor and an expert on militant groups in Egypt, asserts that terrorist attacks like the Sharm incident occur because of two factors: the dissatisfaction of marginalized groups and the radicalization of religion. He was quick to point out, however, that not all attacks should be labeled as terrorist. “Only when the disruption, violence and killing is aimed at innocent lives does it deserve the term terrorism,” he said.

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

As for the radicalization of religion, Ibrahim noted that a “culture of killing” has become predominant among a circle of extremist Muslim groups who divide the world into two sects: friends and enemies. Anybody outside the group — whether women, children or even fellow Muslims — is considered an enemy worthy of being murdered. Contrary to the common wisdom of killing the terrorists outright, the solution in Ibrahim’s view is to converse with the terrorists.

“Dialogue is the way forward,” he said. “In order for terrorism to stop, we have got to talk to the people who commit such crimes, understand their needs and wants and help assimilate them into the mainstream,” he said. Sharing the same viewpoint, Pintak noted that the media have a pivotal role to play in that respect. “Journalists need to talk to the terrorists and understand the motivating factors behind their actions. If we don’t understand why people do such horrific acts, they are never going to stop.”

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

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

Sweet Success: byte-by-byte

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

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

What seems to have brought Amin and El Kaliouby together is a shared desire to realize a dream. Undaunted by life’s thorny circumstances, both set goals for themselves and were determined to reach them, despite any setbacks or obstacles along the way.

At a rented apartment in Heliospolis, Amin, a 17-year-old computer science student at AUC, and two of his classmates were busy preparing software applications to sell to clients in the Arab world. Each had borrowed LE 20,000 from his father to establish a software company called Mircobals. The company was off to a great start, and the three computer scientists felt that money would soon be pouring in. After a few months, however, expenses started to add up and far exceeded revenues. Employee salaries could not be paid, and the company folded within a year. “We did everything wrong because we didn’t understand the business side of things, but it was a great learning experience,” said Amin.

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

“The demand for software services in North America was huge at the time. It was good timing,” he said.

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

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

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While her husband-to-be was exploring his entrepreneurial flair, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby was working to realize her own dream on the research end of the same computer-driven technology. Recipient of the 1998 President’s Cup, El Kaliouby received her eagerly awaited Distinguished Dissertation Award. By Dalia Al Nimr

El Kaliouby continued with Women@IT, a UK-led initiative that aims to promote women’s role in technology. An organizing committee member, she contacted successful women in the field of computer science and organized seminars in which women spoke about the difficulties they faced in such a male-dominated field. “I was the only Muslim and Arab woman there. I felt that by playing an active role in this initiative, I would present a positive image of women in our region and inspire many women in Egypt and abroad.”

As for Jana, El Kaliouby smiles when she remembers their time in England. “We suffered together, but enjoyed every bit of it,” she said cuddling her toddler.
While on vacation in Egypt with her father, Amra Bukvic began looking at studying in Cairo during February 2004. She is no stranger to international travel, having spent time in numerous foreign countries including three years in Indonesia prior to returning to her native Bosnia to complete high school. At 17, Bukvic moved to Cairo with high hopes and a little apprehension about how she might fare as a woman. Her fears were mainly rooted in previous experiences in other developing countries. “When my father and I came to Egypt we stayed in a hotel in Zamalek. It was our second night there, and I was propositioned by an older man,” said Bukvic, recalling how this made her question whether she had made the right choice.

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

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

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

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

Beyond social class differences and concepts of time, male-female relationships were especially complicated. In addition to facing harassment on the street, Yuliya Akinfieva ’05, a Russian, is
Mirette Mabrouk ’89, ’90 at the helm of the Daily Star

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

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

Brand has been diving in the Red Sea, visiting the Siva Oasis and exploring the North Coast. “I see Cairo as a hub and believe its location is perfect for visiting Europe, Africa, the Far East and of course the Gulf,” Akinfieva, who has been in Egypt since 1989, has reached a point where she not only has come to terms with life in Egypt, but relishes it. “I enjoyed my studies very much, but my parents wanted me to study business administration and were furious at me for choosing psychology,” said Akinfieva gleefully.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of all the possible formats available in print journalism, Mabrouk chose to move from a monthly magazine to a daily newspaper, searching, she said, for the challenge. “Pace, pace, pace. This is a daily newspaper that runs six days a week; so I have no life left.” Typically, Mabrouk starts her day mid-morning, rarely finishing by the time the next day comes round. “My work is not editorial. I oversee editorial, but I’m the publisher, which means that I have to handle everything, so it makes for a very long day,” she explained.

“By 5 or 6 pm when most people are wrapping up, I’m just getting into it… It’s your crunch everyday, we bring in cake for the editorial staff’s stress management.”

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

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

By Ward Elzalb
Class Notes

Hussein Ibrahim: A Life Full of Optimism

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

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

Having crisscrossed almost half the globe in his 20s, Ibrahim was always eager to see more and know more. On a typical day, the graduate of Cairo University’s agriculture department would go to his work in the morning, tending cotton-ridden agricultural lands. In the evenings, he would take art and language classes at Egypt’s cultural schools including the Lycée Francais and the Leonardo da Vinci School of Fine Arts. He also enrolled at the time cost LE 20 a year, and “photography was the lens through which I saw the world, and I always like to look at the world from the bright side,” he said. “It is you who can make yourself happy and who can see the world through dark spectacles. The key is to love what you do and to do what you love.”

Just before going to print, AUCToday issued a new book, Kenayat Al Ammya Almasrya (The Infatuated Lover), comprised of 11 stories, poems, and information, and is available at www.plataforma.com.

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

‘76 Jehan El Meikawy (MA ‘07) is currently the recruiting manager for the East Mediterranean and East Africa Geomarket at Schlumberger Egypt. He started as a field engineer in 1999.

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

‘97 Walid Khater is currently a freelance writer and translator.

‘82 Ashraf Ariz published his book, Al Kifayy El Amaya. Almayya, after 12 years of hard work collecting Arabic idioms spoken on the streets and in the cafés of Egypt. It is full of stories, jokes and information, and is available at www.alhulara.com.

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

‘93 Nihal El Daly (MA ‘93) is the regional marketing manager for North Africa, the Middle East and Turkey at UAL in Dubai. She has been working with the company for 10 years. El Daly is planning to return to Cairo soon to join her husband Khalid El Gihaly, who has been appointed as business manager for Citibank Consumer Group in Egypt. He is the first Egyptian to be appointed to this position. He speaks six languages and holds an MBA from Strathclyde Graduate Business School in Scotland.

‘96 Youssel Hafez has been transferred to an international assignment with ExcomMobil Europe based in Brussels, Belgium. He is married and has a 3-year-old son Ham.

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

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

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

‘04 Ekundaya Abdulrazag Shittu (MB) won a prestigious award in May 2009 from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMASS) for a research proposal that bridges science, engineering and management. It is a $10,000 award to be implemented over this academic year. Shittu works as a research assistant at UMASS while he earns a doctorate in industrial engineering and operations research.

In Memoriam

VICTOR SHARAIHA ’38 died in Jordan in July 2005.

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

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Political Participation at AUC: Catalysts of Change

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

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

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

During the five days, 345 students voted for the parliamentary and presidential elections together, which clearly signifies the willingness of AUC students to participate politically. The results of the elections also portrayed the political directions of AUC students. In the parliamentary elections, both the Al-Ghad and the National Democratic Party tied for first place with 26 percent of the votes each. The presidential elections brought former Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who was listed as an independent runner, a landslide victory with 42 percent of the total votes. Following the former foreign minister, Gamal Mubarak came in second with 17.5 percent. Ayman Nour came in third place with 11 percent of the votes.

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

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