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Editor's Notes

New Beginnings

Our life is full of new beginnings. This is my first issue as editor, and for me, this job marks the start of a new phase of my time at AUC — new responsibilities, challenges and opportunities. Beginnings are usually scary and unclear, but I am lucky to be taking over after Dina Abulfotuh, the previous editor, who was instrumental in reshaping the magazine and upgrading its look and content. I hope to develop and build on the great work Dina has done.

In this issue, several articles focus on the theme of new beginnings. In “Lebanon: A Story of Resilience,” students and alumni talk about the hardships of surviving the month-long war, but also express hope about the rebuilding of Lebanon and the country starting anew. “Campus Life 101” takes readers through the new First-Year Experience program, which introduces the incoming class to life at AUC as they begin their new career as college students. With “A New Alumni Connection,” Raymonda Raif '91 begins her new responsibilities as alumni director, while Mary Iskander '76, who has held that position for exactly 30 years, will continue to work with alumni as the associate vice president of institutional advancement for alumni affairs and with President David Arnold as his special adviser, helping to develop and support the university.

AUCToday is also embarking on a new start. Having just surveyed 500 alumni living in Egypt (see page 6), we now have a clear picture of what you as readers want from your alumni magazine. As always, we will continue to strive for good quality issues and stories that hit on a variety of topics and interest you as readers. On your part, we want your input. Send us your story ideas, your thoughts, your experiences as alumni — anything you would like to share with fellow alumni. We also welcome your letters, submissions and comments on the magazine. We are always looking for ways to make the magazine more interactive and appealing, and this will only come about through your participation.

In addition to the print copy in your hands, *AUCToday* has now gone online. Visit our Web site, www.aucegypt.edu/publications/auctoday, and let us know what you think and how we can improve it.

I look forward to our new beginning together.



Dalia Al Nimr

AUCTODAY

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO Fall 2006

Volume 15, No. 1

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.

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Appreciated

When my cousin, who got her PhD from Oxford University, came back from her trip to the United States after lecturing there as a professor, she was excited about the whole trip and said, “I felt appreciated.” That word struck me like thunder, and I thought about it for a long time. Do I feel the same? Frankly, I don’t feel it that often, but I did feel it from the moment I entered AUC gates.

I graduated from AUC in 2004 with a bachelor’s in business administration, and two years later, I received my MBA from the same castle of education. Through those gates, you can experience lots and lots of emotions: happiness after success, stress before and during exams — although that was all fun for me. I felt satisfied with the work I did and with the great relations I have with my professors and classmates until this day. You pass through difficult times at university, but with the help and support of your professors and classmates, you pass and succeed and they are the first to stand by your side and applaud you. At AUC, I always felt appreciated after working hard.

When I graduated in 2004, I found my aunt telling me, “You looked so good and happy in that photo of yours at *AUCToday*!!” I felt: Wow, imagine choosing your photo among 400 people to be put in the magazine. It felt good. That happened again in 2006! My friends told me “nice photo.” I found my photo in the last issue of *AUCToday* after my MBA graduation, and that was awesome. It really lifted my spirits. AUC made me felt appreciated, not of course by putting my photo in, but by showing me that those who work hard get good things in return.



Thank you AUC for giving me the chance to know a good side of the world, where people are there to help and support one another. I don’t study at AUC any more, nor elsewhere, but I know I can always go and knock on my professors’ doors and I will find them, to support, encourage and push forward as they always did. Thank you AUC for making me feel appreciated.

*Sylvia Zaky '04, '06
Cairo, Egypt*

Eye on the Environment

I was glad to see the article, “A Way With Waste,” published in the last issue of the magazine. It not only deals with a very important topic, i.e. recycling, it is also a live example of how AUC professors and students are very much involved in social service. The article helps raise awareness of the various activities that take place on campus, and this could be a way to build a bridge between the AUC community and Egyptian society. Many people think that AUCians are isolated from their community, but the article provides a good example of how AUC students are deeply concerned about their country’s development.

In addition, highlighting projects like these might open a new venue for fundraising to support community service research and activities. As a faculty member participating in these projects, it’s rewarding to see such outcomes.

*Salah El Haggar
Professor of energy and environment
Mechanical engineering department, AUC*



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.

O'Connor Appointed as New Dean for BEC School

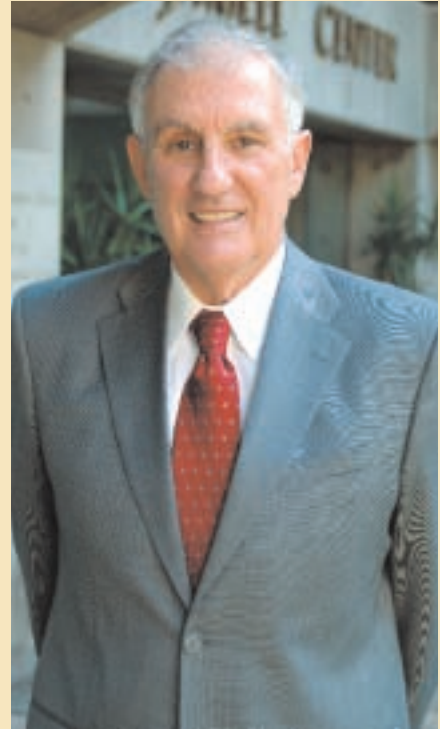
Coming from California State University in Fullerton, Dennis O'Connor has recently joined AUC as dean of the business, economics and communication (BEC) school.

"I recognize that AUC is an important place," he said. "Nothing like it remains in the Middle East, and the education it provides is the best available in the region. It is nice to do important work in an important and unique university."

O'Connor is not new to Egypt or to AUC. He served as visiting professor of economics from 1969 to 1970 and visiting professor of finance from 1998 to 2001. He also visited Egypt in 1988. "I have known Egypt and AUC for a long time. We are old friends, and I'm excited to be returning. My wife and I love the pace of life in Cairo and the city's many charms," said the father of four.

As dean of the BEC school, O'Connor's main focus is quality. "The management department has recently received AACSB [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business] accreditation, and I hope to maintain the momentum of that department in order to encourage even higher levels of quality," he said. O'Connor also plans to work closely with the journalism and mass communication department to move toward similar professional accreditation.

Holder of a bachelor's in history from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a master's and doctorate in economics from the New School for Social Research, O'Connor served for 27 years as professor of finance at California State University in Fullerton, 11 of which he was chairman of the finance department. He is currently professor emeritus at that university.



Stelzer Awarded Undergraduate Teaching Award



Steffen Stelzer came to AUC from Berlin 28 years ago without any preconceptions about the place or his work. Today, he has an Egyptian wife, five children, is professor and chair of the philosophy department and was the recipient of the 2005-06 Parents Association Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

Happy to be recognized, Stelzer noted that the best award for a teacher is one based on student recommendations. "The students who express through it their appreciation of their teacher are at the end of their undergraduate career. They don't derive any benefit from it," he said.

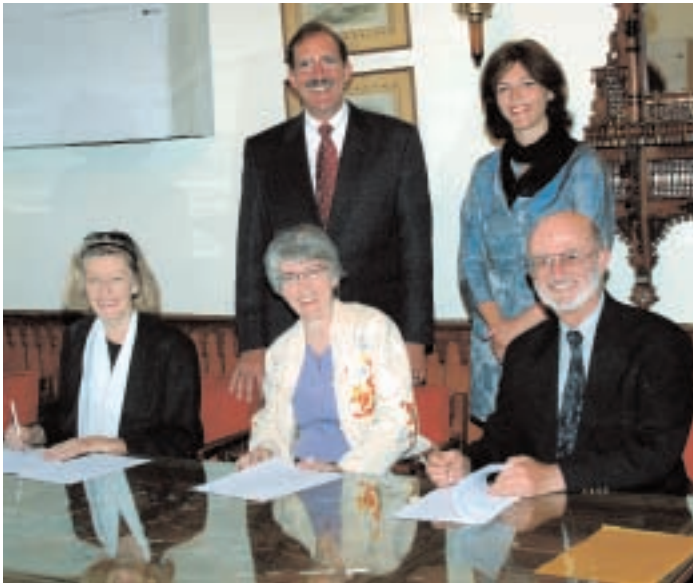
In his classes, Stelzer emphasizes to students that philosophy is not a matter of mental acrobatics, but about a love of

wisdom. "I try to show them that it's not something they can get from books; they must translate everything they read into their own personal life," Stelzer said. "If you cannot translate a lesson into something that touches you in your innermost humanity, it's not worth dealing with."

Although his passion for philosophy comes through in his teaching, music is his first love. In his spare time, he likes to compose music and play the classical guitar and flute.

Stelzer fell into philosophy through his own search for wisdom. "I am motivated by a search, not by anything I can settle on and stay there, be it a reason, a truth or a reality. I am motivated by a search that has not come to an end," he said.

University of Zurich Signs Law Agreement with AUC



Front: Enid Hill, chair of AUC's law department; Ann Lesch, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences; Provost Tim Sullivan; back: President David Arnold and Andrea Buchler, chair of private law at the University of Zurich Law Institute

AUC will host between 25 and 30 law students from European universities for a summer program beginning in 2008.

After three years of working out the details between AUC and the University of Zurich, an agreement was reached between the two institutions.

Enid Hill, professor and chair of the law department at AUC, believes the agreement may lead to other areas of cooperation as well. "Some of the Zurich faculty would like to come as visitors here to give lectures during the year, and they would welcome us going there," she said.

According to the agreement, law students and faculty from Europe will use AUC's facilities and classrooms. AUC professors will also be able to take part in the program by giving lectures to visiting students on campus.

Officials at AUC and Zurich believe that the benefits of working together are found on many levels. "Cooperation between universities contributes to cultural enrichment, scientific progress and the consolidation of friendship between the two countries," the agreement reads.

AUC Welcomes Vice President for Continuing Education

Edward Simpson, Jr., the new vice president for continuing education, brings both experience and enthusiasm to the university.

"AUC has a rich tradition in continuing education and outreach to the community dating almost to its founding. This makes the possibilities for programming in lifelong learning for Egypt's citizens ... all the more exciting," said Simpson.

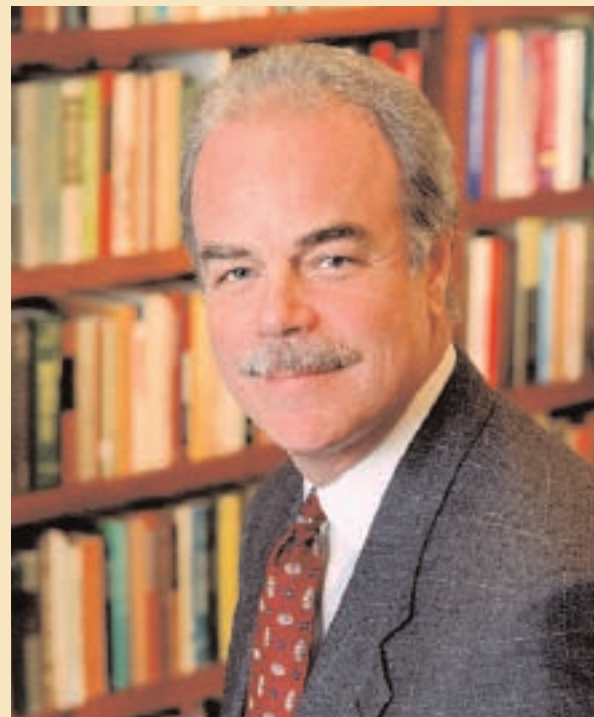
Leaving their three adult children in the United States, Simpson and his wife Beverly, both originally from Virginia, are looking forward to life in Egypt. "Cairo is one of the great cities of the world, and we will be experiencing the history of one of the world's greatest civilizations while living in a truly fascinating culture and country. I will certainly be continuing my education," he said, adding that AUC's move to the new campus was among the major factors that drew him in.

"AUC is at a truly remarkable place in its history; it's at a watershed," he said. "The university's future is exciting and promising in a fashion that the students, faculty and

administration of few other institutions could possibly hope for or imagine."

In his new post, Simpson will oversee and direct the Center for Adult and Continuing Education, while also coordinating the academic and community outreach programs that will take place in AUC's downtown location after the move to the new campus. "I am committed to seeing that continuing education in its various forms fulfills the mission and vision of AUC in a fashion that brings credit to the university and becomes a point of pride for all its stakeholders," he said.

For the past eight years, Simpson has served as a distinguished public service fellow at the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. He has also served as national president of the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA). In recognition of his extraordinary



contributions to the field, he was granted the 2000 Julius M. Nolte Award for Extraordinary Leadership, the highest recognition conferred by UCEA.

LEAD Students Attend U.S. Summer Session

AUCToday Reveals Survey Results

Last spring, *AUCToday* conducted a readership survey among 500 alumni residing in Egypt to obtain their input on the magazine and how it can be improved. Following are the results of the survey.

In terms of readership, approximately two-thirds of the respondents read the magazine, and only a quarter skim through without reading. The most popular story types are alumni profiles, articles about groups of alumni in the same field or sharing common interests, new campus updates, as well as events and speakers on campus. These areas will be given more emphasis in the future.

The quality of the magazine was generally found to be appealing. Around 75 percent of the respondents rated the writing and photography as good or very good. Sixty-four percent rated the design as such.

In terms of distribution, only 45 percent of the respondents receive *AUCToday* regularly, i.e. three times a year; 39 percent receive it only once or twice a year; and 16 percent said they never receive it. Therefore, distribution is a problem that will be addressed.

Though receiving the magazine in print was important for the majority of respondents, having an additional online version was an appealing option for more than half of the alumni surveyed. As a result, *AUCToday* has gone online. Visit www.aucegypt.edu/publications/auctoday for the electronic version of the magazine.



Six students in AUC's Leadership for Education and Development (LEAD) program earned scholarships to study in the United States this summer. The students were selected on the basis of a leadership performance indicator, which measures GPA, leadership skills, community involvement, as well as ethics and values. All of the students spent five days in Washington D.C., after which they were split into two groups: some traveled to Harvard and others went to Portland State University (PSU) in Oregon.

Mary Wassef, a business administration student who attended Harvard Summer School, felt the benefit of the experience extended beyond the classroom. Pointing out that 20 different countries were represented in her class of 50 students, she noted that being at Harvard provided an opportunity not only for academic and intellectual growth, but also for cultural exchange. "Meeting new people from all over the world is really helpful," she said. "You get to know about the differences in cultures and learn how to accept and respect everyone."

Mark Fahmy, a computer science student who attended classes at PSU, noted that this was his first experience outside Egypt. Inspired by the university's motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City," Fahmy was impressed by how much people are motivated to participate in community service activities and plans to apply what he has learned back in his homeland. "I'm motivated to do more development work. I saw how people use simple ideas to accomplish things," he said, giving the example of a local Web site in Portland that was used to match people's interests with volunteer work throughout the city.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development and the Egyptian Ministry for International Cooperation, LEAD is an outreach program that awards top Arabic public school students in Egypt a full undergraduate scholarship to study at AUC. For three consecutive years, a male and female student from each of the country's 27 governorates have been selected after a rigorous process. The aim of the program is to build future leaders for Egypt by instilling in its recipients the knowledge, attitude and skills to become active players in their country's development.

Lebanon

A Story of Resilience

By Larissa Lawrence
Photos by Omar Mohsen

Students and alumni living in Lebanon recount firsthand what it was like to have survived the month-long war

Almud El-Nour



Top: Transfer students to AUC from the Lebanese American University and the American University in Beirut: Bahaa Al Yafi, May El Zein and Suha Afyani; bottom left: AUC students take part in Day for Lebanon held on campus



Despite his parents' wish that he remain home at all times during the recent crisis in his country, occasionally Bahaa Al Yafi, a recent transfer student to AUC from the Lebanese American University, would feel desperate to seize a moment of normalcy with his friends. On one occasion, he left his home in downtown Beirut, four kilometers from the southern suburb that was believed to be the Hezbollah headquarters, to gather at his friend's home that was a mere 500 meters from the targeted zone. There, Al Yafi and his friends heard the sounds of bombs with crystal-clear precision; the shockwaves set off by each blast shook the home down to its foundation and threw their bodies backward. They photographed the destruction they saw to show people in the outside world what was happening in their city.

“My father did not permit us to leave the house except to go to safe places,” explained Al Yafi. “However, the bombings went on for more than a month, and it was difficult to stay inside for so long. There were moments when it was possible to laugh, but then the sound of a bomb or plane would remind us of the situation.”

Directly or indirectly, members of the AUC community felt the effects of the recent tragedy in Lebanon. Many AUCians were living in Beirut when the air raids started, while others had friends, family or colleagues there. Regardless of their geographical location, nobody felt safe when the bombs began to rain down over Lebanon. Yet, through the stories of people who survived the outbreak of war, a common thread of resilience and hope emerges.

“The more someone gets hit, the tougher he gets,” said Al Yafi. “My spirit is much stronger already. I can’t wait to get back to Lebanon.”

Nadim Hreiz, a Lebanese graduate student at AUC, attributes the tenacity of the Lebanese spirit to familiarity with conflict. Hreiz explained, “My generation, we are used to this kind of war. We’ve lived in worse times.”

Despite their determined spirit, the escalation of the situation took the international community by surprise, and few could have predicted the ramifications of the July 12 incident, when two Israeli soldiers were captured by Hezbollah. Mark Sorial ’04, who had lived in Lebanon for nearly a year before the war started, remembered how the bombings were shocking to him at first. “I was worried, but was comforted by my Lebanese friends that such incidents are not unheard of and that this would not escalate,” he said. “However, when the airport was struck the next day, I began to get a sense of

the seriousness of the situation.”

As days went by, the mounting destruction wrought by the attacks was horrifying to watch. Mervat Tallawy ’61, executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, observed with sadness as inhabited areas were bombed and irreplaceable cultural heritage was decimated. “The sounds of bombs hammering all night and the images of collapsed buildings being bombed again

“There were moments when it was possible to laugh, but then the sound of a bomb or plane would remind us of the situation.”

and again — those are things I’ll never forget,” she said.

As the majority of air raids were carried out over Beirut and its surrounding areas, Lebanese civilians suffered most as a result of the conflict. The number of homes destroyed climbed at a frightening pace during the attacks. Public gardens and schools were overflowing with thousands of citizens who had fled their homes, many of them carrying their belongings on their shoulders. The public garden next to Al Yafi’s house was filled with more than 3,000 people. “They were sleeping on the grass and ground without blankets, and infants were suffering from malnourishment due to lack of milk,” said Al Yafi.

Also reflecting on the horrid scenes she witnessed, Dina Gohar ’94, who stayed in Beirut with her family for 10 days during the war, described how fear pervaded every moment’s existence. Gohar recalls the danger inspired by going outside. “We stayed at home because we didn’t know where they

would bomb next. The day we left, they bombed right next to our house,” she said.

For Gohar, living near the airport was especially devastating. “On the first day, the Israelis hit the airport and fuel tanks, and we could see all this from our window. By the fourth day, they were bombing every 15 minutes so that it was rattling the house,” she said. The tension heightened for Gohar when her four-year-old daughter began to feel the intensity of the attacks. “At the beginning, she thought the sound of bombs were fireworks, but then she began to get really scared. Until this day, she is frightened from loud noises,” Gohar said.

Amid such destruction and confusion, one thing that stands out in the minds of many alumni living in Beirut is the display of camaraderie and compassion among people. Many Lebanese risked their safety and shared their limited resources to assist the families who were left homeless. Along with his family, Al Yafi was cooking 500 meals a day for fellow Lebanese. Others donated blankets, food and milk to the masses of homeless people spilling out into the public areas. “We all tried to do as much as we possibly could,” Al Yafi explained.

While most people were trying to leave Beirut with their families, others were trying to get back in to be united with loved ones trapped in the city. Omar Odeh ’94, director of marketing and publications at the American University in Beirut, had been on business in Washington, D.C. when the fighting broke out and was desperately trying to get back to his wife and three children in Beirut. Traveling by a Syrian taxi five days after the war began, Odeh made his way into Beirut on practically deserted side roads. By that point, nearly all of the main roads between

Syria and Lebanon had been bombed repeatedly, rendering them impassable. As Odeh continued toward the border, he was confronted with evidence of the city's vast destruction. "In one area," described Odeh, "I recall seeing a large truck bombed on the road with smoke still visible from the burning. It turned out to be one of the four trucks that the United Arab Emirates had sent to Beirut filled with medical supplies."

Also remaining in Beirut for most of the war period, the UN's Tallawy was shouldered with the responsibility of evacuating 1,200 UN staff members from the country. "Some were stranded in mountains, where bombardment was close and intensifying. I had to guide them on how to move safely according to the information I had. One wrong judgment from me would have cost them their lives," she said, adding that in such stressful situations, the important thing is to remain strong.

"You have to be able to make daring decisions and take the fear out of you in order to function."

With a determination to bring back the country to its previous state, many alumni have returned to Lebanon to join relief efforts. Sorial, who works for a construction company, is glad to have the opportunity through his job to rebuild areas that have been destroyed. He is also volunteering with his friends to help with the oil-spill clean ups that threaten to endanger the Lebanese coast. "It will take some time for Lebanon to return to what it was like, but the Lebanese are determined people, and I'm sure they will get back on their feet," Sorial said.

Agreeing, Tallawy noted, "The reconstruction effort will cross all lines in Lebanon's society, making the people more inclusive and cohesive than ever before." □

AUC Hosts Day for Lebanon

In response to the recent war, AUC hosted a Day for Lebanon on September 20, 2006. The day included Lebanese songs, dances, a documentary on the war, as well as the sale of Lebanese handicrafts and t-shirts. All proceeds were donated to the Red Crescent Society in Lebanon.

Amr Waked, AUC alum and star of the movie *Syriana*, pleaded for people to donate to the cause. "There are over 70,000 children who have suffered gravely. They did not have a choice. ... Most of us have a choice. We can help them," he said.

Referring to the various clubs on campus that initiated a semester-long campaign to collect money and raise awareness about what happened, Seif Abu Zeid, Student Union president, said AUC is ready to help. "We, the students of AUC, have decided to take action," he asserted.



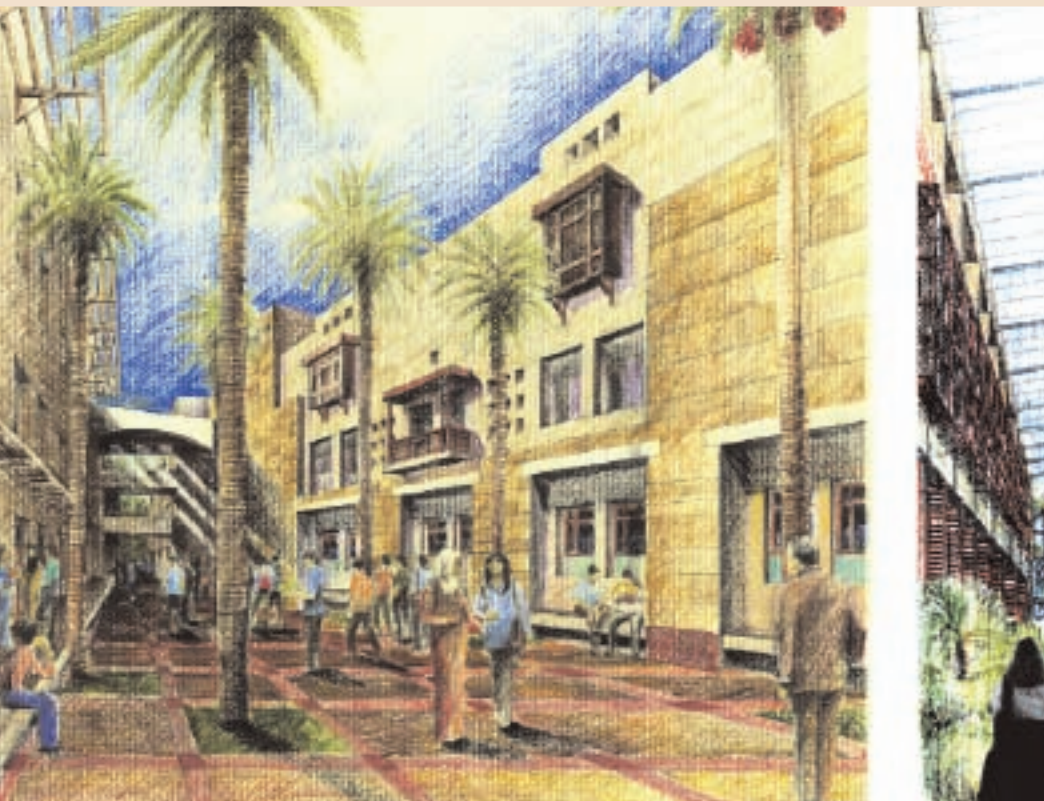
Bottom left: AUC students dancing the dabka at Day for Lebanon; bottom right: Amr Waked, star of the movie *Syriana*, calls for donations to the Lebanese cause

What's *new* on the New Campus

As the move to the new campus is inching nearer, construction is proceeding, gradually forming the reality of what will one day be AUC's new home



Nestled within the heart of the new campus, the science building will house AUC's departments of biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics and physics. It will be a highly populated area, as students and faculty members congregate within its many laboratories, conference halls and meeting rooms.



The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Hall houses the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and its departments of Arabic studies, English and comparative literature, history, philosophy, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology and Egyptology, as well as the Arabic and English language institutes and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies and Research. This 20,770 square-meter building occupies a prime location on the new campus, adjacent to the park and in close proximity to the theaters and locations for cultural events.



The Abdul Latif Jameel Management Center houses the School of Business, Economics and Communication. This three-story building occupies a total area of 16,750 square meters and houses conference rooms, faculty offices, teaching laboratories and training rooms.



Student housing, located within the university garden, is framed by a canopy of palms, arcades, walkways, fountains and shallow pools. Each three-story building will include single, double and triple rooms, group-study rooms, administrative offices and visiting faculty apartments.





Occupying five floors and a total of 20,500 square meters, the Main Library will house AUC's Rare Books and Special Collections Library, computer laboratories, distance learning rooms, reading rooms, as well as space for more than 600,000 volumes of books and periodicals.

The Garden Reading Room (pictured right) is located on the ground level of the library, overlooking the university garden. This 430 square-meter space will be utilized by AUC students, faculty, staff and visitors and can accommodate up to 200 people.



IT and Energy Systems Get Upgrades at the New Campus



As construction on the new campus proceeds, plans are being finalized with Nortel Networks to develop the information technology (IT) infrastructure that will employ cutting-edge technology.

"It is extremely rare that a university is built from the ground up," said Mike Kerwin, IT consultant for the new campus project. "This helps ensure that the current and emerging trends in information technology are implemented in a uniform manner throughout the entire campus."

Kerwin pointed out that computer equipment and servers are typically scattered across university campuses because buildings are built or renovated at different times. "There is rarely the

capacity for centralized equipment rooms and for standardized technology systems and connectivity," he said. With AUC's new campus, however, technology systems will be consolidated, integrated and housed in primary and back-up data centers. "It will operate with greater capability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness."

However, although most universities do not have the privilege of starting anew like AUC, Kerwin noted that this does not mean that the current technology is inadequate. "Rather, it is a profound, unique opportunity to leap ahead in a manner that is not reasonable or practical in an operating university," he said. "This will ensure that faculty, staff and students have the

privilege of superior technology integrated into the teaching and learning process."

In addition to the centralized equipment, the entire campus, both inside and outside the buildings, will have wireless capabilities. Each classroom will also be set up to support the smart classroom concept, where instructional lecterns, laptops, projectors and video monitors may be used. Videoconferencing facilities will be available in a number of rooms, and all classrooms will be equipped with the infrastructure needed to implement them in the future if desired.

Sami Akabawi, associate vice president for computing, indicated that the new system will be more secure as well. "The security systems will be enhanced through several new authentication and management measures," he said. On the new campus, students, faculty and staff will be allowed access to different features of the network, including printing, administrative systems and online journals. After signing in, the network will determine the level of access allowed for each individual.

Besides the advanced technology infrastructure, the utilities plan on the new campus will also be upgraded.

Mohamed Shaker, president of Shaker Consultancy Group, is a consultant on the project. He explained that the cooling system on the new campus will be powered by natural gas instead of electricity. "By eliminating the step where natural gas is converted into electricity, we are relieving the power stations of energy they would need to produce, thereby improving the efficiency of the system." □

By Cole Gibas

Alumni Profile

Returning to *Ewart*

Through her new book, Mai Khaled '85 describes her affinity for AUC



Sitting in the last seat of Ewart Hall, Mai Khaled '85 looks out at the cherished auditorium and reflects on four of the best years of her life. For Khaled, each seat represents an important day at AUC. Front left, her final Arab history exam with Ragia Abdel Wahab. Center middle, her first performance with Hisham Abbas in the choral group. Back right, auditions for the talent show during her junior year. Khaled's best-selling novel, *Maqaad Akhir Beqaat Ewart* (Last Seat in Ewart Hall), draws on those years and the effect they've had on her adult life.

"I discovered myself at AUC," said Khaled. "I found all of the nice things that I had inside, all of the power and energy that I held as an artist and a person. The entire place is very dear to me, and I was glad to be able to present my experience to people outside of the university who may have the wrong idea about what goes on in there."

The outside world has discovered Khaled through her writing — one collection of short stories titled *Atyaf December* (December Phantoms), 1998, and three novels, *Gidar Akhir* (Last Wall), 2001, *Noqoosh wa Taraneem* (Carvings and Crenelations), 2003, and *Maqaad Akhir Beqaat Ewart*, 2005, in which she recounts her days at AUC

through the eyes of an 18-year-old girl. "People have the impression that AUC students are Westernized and isolated from Egyptian society. I wanted to break that stereotype and show that AUCians have a mixture of cultures inside them. They take some aspects from the West, but still maintain their Egyptian identity."

Always involved in the arts, with an aptitude for acting and painting and a father who played music, it was at AUC's student newspaper, *Caravan*, that Khaled recognized her talent for writing. After graduation, she began to write short stories in her free time, but never thought of getting them published. For 11 years, Khaled's work was nothing more than a personal outlet. However, when her friends strongly encouraged her to publish her work, Khaled's hobby soon turned into a full-fledged career. "I didn't think much of it during that time, but when my work was published, I was so happy. It was a fabulous feeling," she said.

With *Maqaad Akhir Beqaat Ewart*, Khaled wanted to demonstrate how education, especially at university, can have a profound effect on people's lives. The book takes readers through the main character's university experience, from deciding to enroll at AUC to her

classes and the activities she joined, including the *Caravan*, choral group, theater plays and talent shows. To Khaled, the book was personal and "therapeutic." She explained, "When I wrote *Ewart*, I felt it was time to let people know who I am."

To Khaled's surprise, the book was received well not only by critics, but by readers of all classes. Invited to various Egyptian governorates to participate in panel discussions, Khaled was happy to see that her book was popular among people far removed from AUC life. "The book gained reactions from people of all classes," she said. "They connected with it on a human level. . . . A lot of women were also able to relate to the idea of playing roles after graduation: getting married, having kids and finding a job. They feel a yearning for the past, especially their university days."

Her newest novel, *Sehr Turquoise* (Turquoise Magic), 2006, is the love story of a painter and a jewelry designer. Still in the first decade of her career as a writer, Khaled is enthused by the direction it is taking her. "I don't just write," she said. "I write when I have an idea, when I feel that what I am writing is real and artistic." □

By Lily Hindy

The Professor of Persuasion

By Cole Gibas



Photo by Justin Ide/Harvard News Office

Stirring a sizzling debate inside his classes, Emad Shahin '80, '83 handles the heat with a cool calm

Remaining calm under pressure, Emad Shahin '80, '83 is adept at turning confrontational situations in the classroom into learning experiences. Currently on a two-year leave from AUC to teach and conduct research at Harvard University, the associate professor of political science has left an impression on many students who have attended his classes.

Chana Solomon-Schwartz, one of Shahin's Harvard students, was impressed with his professionalism. After an onlooker in his course on political Islam at Harvard began to attack Shahin for comments made about Al Qaeda, the AUC professor listened to his position, calmly responded and went on to stress the importance of this dialogue to the rest of the class. "He emphasized that while individuals may disagree, truth exists in such dialogues," Solomon-Schwartz said. "He was a powerful advocate of the understanding and interchange that is much needed in our world today."

Echoing the same sentiment, Reem Abu Zahra '06, who studied political economy at AUC, said, "Dr. Shahin teaches with passion and a sincere desire for arousing his students' interests and awareness of their nation's political problems. I feel he is trying to make his students think responsibly of their role in reforming their nation."

Janan Delgado, political science senior, especially admires Shahin's attitude toward his students. "I believe what makes Professor Shahin a remarkable teacher is first and foremost his commitment toward his students' formation and education. He believes in a lofty, higher purpose of education which inspires his students to be better persons, and along with him, fight against the mediocrity that hinders the development of our countries."

Delgado also pointed out that his lessons stretch far beyond the classroom. "Dr. Shahin

convinced me that we have an important role to play in society and that our responsibility is to be the best, not for any selfish reason, not to beat the other out there in the market, but to work with the other for the betterment of society. ... When you are in Dr. Shahin's class, you don't feel you are preparing for an exam, you feel you are preparing for the future."

With bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from AUC and a doctorate in international relations from Johns Hopkins University, Shahin has a long history of contributions in the field. He has taught at George Washington University in the United States and Al Akhawayn University in Morocco and has attended numerous conferences on Middle East politics. Most recently, he spent the 2005-06 academic year at Georgetown and Harvard universities, as part of a research grant for his new book. The grant allowed him to work at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown and in the legal studies department at Harvard.

In addition to researching his book, he served as visiting associate professor at the two universities, where he taught courses on comparative and Middle East politics. In recognition of his work, Shahin, who won AUC's 2001-02 Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, has been invited to spend an additional two years at Harvard, teaching classes and researching his current book before returning to his post at AUC.

To Shahin, his experience at Georgetown and Harvard was both challenging and stimulating. "It's useful to be in a different academic and research environment," he explained, noting that the demand for scholars specializing in political Islam significantly increased after the 9/11 attacks on the United States. "What I contributed was a fresh perspective. Also, there is a growing interest in

my area of focus: political reform in Egypt. There were 85 students actually enrolled in my class, but sometimes there would be approximately 120 people who would come to my lectures.”

One challenge Shahin faces in the United States is adjusting to different student audiences. “Teaching Egyptian politics there is a lot different than teaching it to Egyptians here,” he stated. “A book on colonialism will have a completely different effect on Egyptian students at AUC than on American students at Harvard,” he pointed out.

Shahin added that teaching political Islam to a class full of Egyptians would require a different starting point than teaching it to a typical class in the United States, since students’ approaches and historical knowledge vary greatly between the United States and Egypt.

His U.S. students, in turn, appreciated his knowledge and interest in students. Nomnso Kal, a senior majoring in government and Near Eastern languages and civilizations at Harvard, studied contemporary political Islam with Shahin and admired his ability to back up his arguments with facts and solid information.

“Professor Shahin was very good at playing devil’s advocate when he was teaching and could just as easily argue an Orientalist point of view as well as he could argue that of the Muslim Brotherhood,” Kal said. “He enjoyed engaging students and welcomed challenges to both what he said in class and what students found in the readings. Not all the students in our class wanted to hear what he had to say, but he was always able to identify places for us to look to try and understand the other’s point of view. I

thought that it was admirable how Professor Shahin exhibited grace under fire. Despite the occasional heated disagreement, he always handled himself well.”

Similarly, Ingrid Wassmann, an American graduate student who took a course on political Islam with Shahin at AUC, explained how his perspective is insightful to those from outside the Middle East. “He taught us that we need to keep in mind that political Islamist movements, wherever

“Professor Shahin was very good at playing devil’s advocate and could just as easily argue an Orientalist point of view as well as he could argue that of the Muslim Brotherhood.”

they may arise, like Hamas or Hezbollah, appeared for a reason, as a reaction to a larger context, to specific conditions,” Wassmann said. “This may seem like a very obvious thing to say, but more often than not, it seems that in today’s world, not enough people understand nor want to accept or even consider this possibility as a reality. ... I believe that what I gained from Dr. Shahin is to be proactive, committed, concerned and engaged in the community we live in.”

It was not only in class that Shahin presented his arguments well, but also during scholarly engagements. While at Harvard and Georgetown universities, he gave nearly 10 public lectures, many on the democratic processes in Egypt. “It really sharpens your skills,” Shahin said. “You have to be ready to engage in academic

exchanges with people from think tanks and other intellectuals. It keeps you energized and up-to-date.”

Besides teaching, Shahin is busy establishing himself as a published scholar. Working on his current book, which is due to be finished by the end of this year, Shahin is the prolific author of numerous academic articles and book chapters. He is the co-editor of *Democratization in the Middle East and North Africa*, set to be published in late 2006. His first book, *Through Muslim Eyes: Muhammad Rashid Rida and the West*, 1993, offers a comprehensive account of the influential Islamic figure. He is also author of *Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa*, 1997, in which he compares Islamic movements in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, examining their roots, nature and ideology. His argument states that these movements have expanded since the 1960s in response to the marginalization of Islam and the perceived failure of imported development models.

His current book, however, is an analysis of major debates among Arab intellectuals during the past century. Shahin finds that although there have been some gains, agreeing on many of the subjects of contention has remained elusive.

“Many of the issues that we think are current have already been raised and subjected to vigorous debate,” he said, noting that despite a century of discussion, the file is not closed. “We are still arguing about women’s issues in the same way it was debated 150 years ago,” he said. “We are not building on this debate to achieve a breakthrough or create our own model of development.” Shahin referred to women’s role in society, their dress and education as topics of

“You have to be ready to engage in academic exchanges with people from think tanks and other intellectuals. It keeps you energized and up-to-date.”

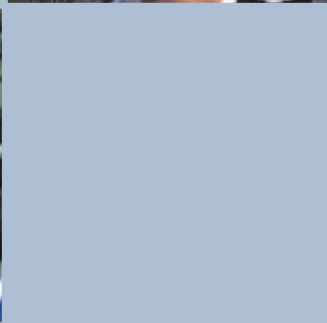
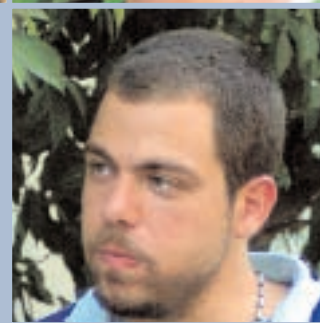
disagreement that have spanned generations.

According to Shahin, the issues that were a source of academic and ideological contention in the past and continue into the present include identity, political community, education, women and the status of Copts in Egypt. “It’s difficult to achieve political development without agreeing on a basic framework and major values that should guide political life and society,” he said, pointing out that religion’s role in society is one of the many aspects that intellectuals fail to agree upon. “Hopefully this book will serve as a kind of critical analysis of the way debate has taken place between Arab intellectuals that has unfortunately led to hostility and the inability to reconcile differences,” he said. “How can you build a political community without agreeing on a framework? We don’t have a native Arab political liberalization model. We don’t even have a shared Islamic model.”

While many may blame the political system in the region for the lack of progress, Shahin attributes the problem to the struggle between traditional and modern values in Arab society. “It is still in a phase of transformation,” he said. “The roles in society have not yet been reconciled. Unfortunately, there are two systems developing side by side without any bridges.” □



Justin Ide/Harvard News Office



Campus Life 101

By Cole Gibas
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

The First-Year Experience program shows the incoming class the ins and outs of life at AUC

Well tanned from their final trips to the beach this summer, more than 800 incoming freshmen battled all the mixed emotions of starting a new chapter of their lives as AUC students. Worried about everything from the heavy workload to making new friends, this year's freshmen had a chance to learn more about how AUC works while getting to know each

other at the same time.

"It's a completely new system for me," said Christine Mohsen, a freshman from Cairo, referring to the American-style education she will have to adapt to. "I'm scared I won't get used to it. It's a new experience in every way."

Days before the start of the fall semester, this year's freshman class were pioneers in the First-Year

Experience (FYE), a program that was initiated this year in order to familiarize incoming freshmen with AUC and assuage some of their fears. The days were filled with a variety of events, from lectures on academic integrity to parties with live music. At the end of the four-day event, the incoming students were not only better informed about AUC's activities and majors, they also got the chance to mingle with faculty members and current students, as well as make new friends.

Mary Victor, a sophomore who served as a peer leader for the event, was responsible for a group of 11 students for the four days and felt a connection with them. "I had so much fun," she said. "When you're





responsible for people, you end up becoming their friends.” Victor also believes that just being on campus for four days helps the freshmen adjust. “They need to get used to the place — the people, the professors, the system — so it’s not a shock on the first day of classes.”

While the students benefited from the event, it also gave faculty members

an opportunity to do something different. “One of the great joys to me in teaching is interacting with students,” noted Adham Ramadan, assistant professor of chemistry. “During FYE, this interaction was continuous and intensive for four consecutive days. ... I felt privileged to experience the students’ enthusiasm and excitement about their new university life.”

Even before FYE, many of the new students were aware of AUC’s solid reputation. Maye Khamis, an Egyptian who grew up in New York, said, “If you go out to work after studying at AUC, people choose you over everyone else. It’s like the Harvard of Egypt.”

Even though students like Khamis knew they were beginning something good, they didn’t know exactly what this entailed. That was the gap FYE aimed to fill. “Along with academia, we wanted to expose them to AUC student life,” explained Hoda Grant, FYE director, pointing out that all new students were required to attend. “AUC is not only about academics. ... If they get involved in both academics and extracurricular activities, they acquire lifelong skills and values. AUC tries to create well-rounded characters, and this is what makes them successful in life,” she added.

The program’s three-fold structure seeks to influence the new students in not only academics, but with lessons

“If you go out to work after studying at AUC, people choose you over everyone else. It’s like the Harvard of Egypt.”

they can apply throughout their lives. According to Grant, the goals of the program are to help freshmen acquire the knowledge they need to become informed and discerning citizens; develop the skills to achieve both academic excellence and life goals; and cultivate an understanding of the values of integrity, community service and respect for the other.

The four days were organized to give incoming students a wide breadth of knowledge on a variety of topics, instead of packing everything in one afternoon that left the students tired and overwhelmed. With FYE, social events were organized every evening so the new freshmen could spend time together.

The first day served as a practical introduction to AUC. Students learned how to operate the university Web site, manage their time and navigate the various offices on campus. The second day focused on academic and career goal-setting, which included sessions on choosing a major. Parents also came to campus that day and learned about their role in their children’s education, as well as an overview of what is expected out of the new students and the opportunities afforded to them.

The third day veered away from academics and looked at civic engagement, diversity and student life. New freshmen were able to peruse the variety of clubs and activities they can participate in on campus and talk to

student representatives about various extracurricular activities, whether they are in community service, sports or environmental protection. Layla El Sherei, a freshman from Cairo, was surprised to see so many options. “The activity booths were very helpful. I didn’t know there were that many,” she said, excited that she had already signed up for the Anti-Cancer Team.

The final day introduced the

freshmen to academic integrity and student conduct. Seif El Borollossy, a freshman from Cairo, was shocked that cheating could lead to serious repercussions that included expulsion from the university. “It was very important to see how a professor would react if you are caught cheating and what the consequences are,” he said, noting the stern message delivered in the academic integrity workshop.





As to be expected, hundreds of teenagers in the same place for four days are not going to stay worried too long about meeting people. By the fourth day, they were lounging around the Main Campus on their lunch break with an air of comfort and belonging as they chatted with their new friends. “The problem of every new student is to integrate in the atmosphere of the university, but people here are very friendly. They

“The first day, they looked scared and had the ‘deer-in-the-headlights look.’ But by the last day, they were laughing and joking around — much more comfortable.”

make newcomers feel welcome,” said Hasan Bseiso, a freshman from Palestine.

While the students got to know their fellow classmates better, the new freshmen were also exposed to their future professors during the daily information sessions and had the opportunity to mingle with them in a less formal setting. The students were divided into 43 sections, with a current student and faculty member as a part of each one. The professors conducted interactive workshops with the students throughout the four days, helping them adapt to academic life on campus.

Gretchen McCullough, writing program instructor, worked with the same small group of students throughout the long weekend. “The

first day they looked scared and had the ‘deer-in-the-headlights look.’ But by the last day, they were laughing and joking around — much more comfortable.”

Besides the social integration and mingling with faculty members, the goal of conveying the broader benefits that extend beyond academics at AUC was also achieved. Mohamed El Sayed, an incoming student from Cairo, was impressed with what he learned. “The program is fantastic,” he said. “When I was at AUC the first day, I didn’t know anything about it except that it is a good university that has been here for years. The program taught us about a lot of values like self management and lifelong learning.”

Raghda Moussa, also from Cairo, pointed out that the First-Year Experience program made her recognize that there is more to an AUC education than the academic degree. “Students here learn how to act in society and how to communicate with people in their own society and in other cultures as well,” she said. “I learned that, at AUC, they are teaching us for life, not just for four years.” □

WARMING THE WELCOME FOR REFUGEES

By Cole Gibas
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr



World Refugee Day on campus, held in June 2006

Displaced and discriminated against, refugees find a safe haven in AUC's programs and activities

Three years ago, Desta Assefa*, 22, fled her native Ethiopia and came to Cairo, where she has been among the thousands of uprooted Africans applying for refugee status in order to have a safe place to live.

For many refugees from Africa, Egypt is seen as a waiting room. While not eager to return to the difficult conditions they escaped in their home countries, the temporary status many are granted in Cairo leaves refugees



wanting to be resettled in other countries. Due to discrimination, legal barriers and an overall high unemployment rate in Egypt, it's hard for refugees and asylum seekers to find work and integrate into society while they are here. While not able to give them a home, AUC is helping those refugees make a living and assimilate with the local community.

Overcoming both legal and cultural obstacles has been a challenge, but Assefa has managed to persevere. A graduate of AUC's Cairo Community Interpreters Program (CCIP), Assefa works as an interpreter for AMERA, an organization that provides legal assistance to refugees. Now she is the one helping her community, but she is well aware of the problems refugees in Cairo face. "The first year is very difficult because of the language," she said, pointing out that learning Arabic makes it easier for refugees to deal with practical matters such as finding affordable housing. More importantly, however, it helps them cope with and respond to physical and verbal harassment. "The harassment is bad," she lamented.

Through her experience translating, Assefa also sees a gap in the law that compromises refugees' rights. Due to the complicated process of applying for and awaiting refugee status that often

takes many years, people are sometimes left without proper paperwork to reside in Egypt. "If something bad happens, most people are afraid to go to the police because they will get deported," she said.

In an effort to lend a hand to refugees in Cairo, the AUC community is working to overcome legal obstacles and increase public awareness of

"Small things like being ignored while you're waiting in line in a shop can build up into serious resentments."

refugee issues. The Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (FMRS) program works to educate students, lawyers, refugees and humanitarian workers. Student Action for Refugees (STAR), a student club, organizes a variety of activities throughout the year. The group coordinates English, Arabic, handicraft and essay-writing classes for refugees. They have also reversed the roles and hired refugees to teach AUC students Swahili and cooking courses. In addition, STAR organizes film festivals, soccer tournaments and handicraft bazaars on campus. The club's crowning event is the annual World Refugee Day, which combines food, music, dance, handicrafts and

awareness booths in a daylong event on the Greek Campus.

James Pearce, international human rights law graduate student and FMRS diploma recipient, served as president of STAR last year and explained the club's mission. "The main objective is raising awareness about refugees in Cairo and the larger issue of refugees worldwide," he said. "We want to engage the AUC community and the larger Egyptian society in different ways."

Building a bridge between Egyptians and the refugee community is a major goal of refugee rights advocates. Ray Jureidini, associate professor of sociology, believes prejudiced attitudes toward refugees should be examined more closely. "Small things like being ignored while you're waiting in line in a shop can build up into serious resentments, as they're representative of bigger issues," he said. However, Jureidini points out that it's not as simple as pointing to racism as an irrational cause. "If Sudanese are working for low wages, they may be seen by local citizens as taking away their jobs. ... One has to understand if it's racism, scapegoating or xenophobia. There's no one kind of attitude among people. Many are also sympathetic and volunteer services, provisions and money [to refugees]," he said.

Besides STAR activities on campus,

Students mingle with refugee children on World Refugee Day; African bazaar on campus; refugee children use artwork to express themselves at World Refugee Day



AUC also spearheads CCIP, which provides training for refugees to interpret between Arabic, English and various African languages, such as Amharic, Somali, Tigrinya, Fur and Sudanese Arabic. The program, which has existed since 2003, certifies between 50 and 60 interpreters each year who go on to work at a variety of agencies dealing with refugee issues. The courses are not only geared toward linguistic accuracy, but also teach strategies in dealing with cultural, legal, medical, counseling and gender issues.

Mariam Hashim, a Somali refugee

and head teacher of the program, believes that training interpreters to be neutral is the most important thing. “People used to interpret with biases. The pressures from their communities are great, and it’s hard to be neutral,” she said.

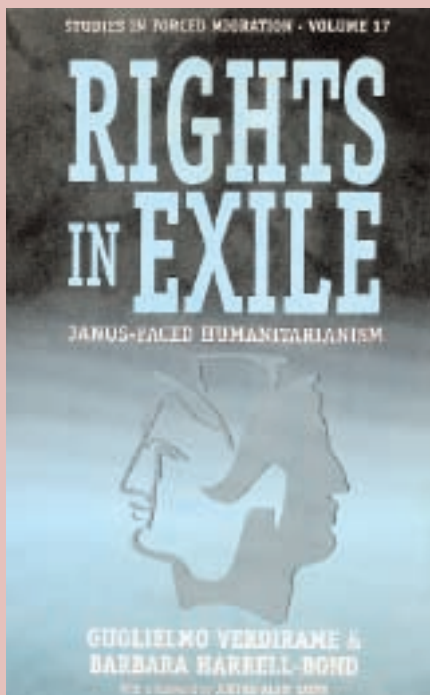
Akhililu Teclay, who fled Eritrea in 1982 for Sudan and arrived in Cairo four years ago, translates Sudanese Arabic and Tigrinya and believes the most valuable thing CCIP teaches is the necessity for confidentiality. “Before, I translated because I knew the languages, but people wouldn’t express

many things. Now they are starting to put their trust in interpreters and speak deeply about their problems,” he said.

Maintaining a positive attitude, Hashim focuses on helping people open up. “When refugees first come to the course,” she said, “they think their culture is the best. We tell them that it’s important that they listen to each other. Half-way through the course, they learn not to be judgmental and see the importance of understanding and appreciating one other.” □

*The interviewee’s real name has been changed for security reasons.

AUC Professor Exposes Violation of Refugee Rights



Humanitarian organizations meant to protect refugees are often responsible for the violation of their rights, argues Barbara Harrell-Bond, forced migration and refugee studies professor, in her new book.

A leading scholar on refugee issues, Harrell-Bond recently published *Rights in Exile: Janus-faced Humanitarianism*, which exposes power abuses of

humanitarian organizations. The book, co-authored by Guglielmo Verdirame, is based on socio-legal fieldwork conducted in the late 1990s in Kenya and Uganda.

“Brace yourself. This is a painful book,” wrote South African Supreme Court Justice, Albie Sachs, in the foreword of the book. Taking the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a prime example of a humanitarian organization that fails to protect refugees, Harrell-Bond believes that in addition to increasing accountability, the organization should shift its emphasis away from camps and sending refugees back to their countries of origin to protecting them and promoting the rights contained in the UN convention. “UNHCR should not be involved with repatriation in my view,” she said, pointing out that the original UN refugee convention of 1951 stated that refugees must only return to their countries voluntarily. “All that seems to be forgotten.”

Harrell-Bond also affirms that humanitarian organizations should

focus their energy on integrating the various refugee populations into the local communities. They should help them find jobs instead of putting them in camps that make them completely dependent on the organizations and isolated from the host communities.

Concluding the book, Harrell-Bond wrote, “That, of all people, those who are uprooted should be relegated to camps at the margins of society and be denied their freedom of movement is a tragic irony. Hopefully, in a not-so-distant future, confining refugees in camps will be perceived for what it really is: a breach of the most fundamental human rights, a cruel and dehumanizing absurdity which neither economic nor political factors can justify.”

Harrell-Bond previously authored *Imposing Aid*, which is widely considered to be groundbreaking work in refugee studies. She founded the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford, and Queen Elizabeth recently honored her as an Officer of Order of the British Empire for her contributions to the field.

Getting the Inside Scoop



Top: Wedeman with his wife Yasmine Perni; bottom: With Zahi Hawass, chairman of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, during a recent discovery in Saqqara

CNN's former Cairo bureau chief, Ben Wedeman (YAB '81) values the time he spent in Egypt

was during that time that he met his future wife, Yasmine Perni, who attended AUC from 1979 to 1981.

An Italian, Perni shares with Wedeman a multicultural childhood. She spent most of her formative years in Sudan and Egypt before studying at AUC. "I'm one of those people called third-culture kids," she said.

Besides the people, the centrality of the region in current world affairs also makes Wedeman persistent on staying in the Middle East. His position in Cairo often required him to travel when major news stories appear on the radar — a frequent occurrence in the region. He has covered the war in Afghanistan, was the first Western journalist to communicate with Al Qaeda in the Tora Bora Mountains and

made frequent trips to Israel and Palestine. Wedeman also reported on Iraq under Saddam Hussein, during the war and its aftermath, as well as provided the world with a glimpse of the war in Sierra Leone, for which he won both an Emmy Award and an Edward R. Murrow Award. He most recently followed the war in Lebanon this summer from Tyre.

After eight years in Cairo, Wedeman and his family moved to Jerusalem this summer, where he now serves as a correspondent. Though the frequency of stories inside Israel and Palestine will not require traveling as much and will enable him to spend more time with his family, Wedeman is fully aware of the risks. He has already made dozens of trips to Gaza, including one when an

Although he looks like a foreigner, CNN's former Cairo bureau chief carries with him the mindset of a local. Ben Wedeman (YAB '81), who speaks Arabic fluently, has always felt at home in the Middle East. "I think it's the relaxed nature of it," he said. "For people in the Middle East, and Egypt in particular, being friendly and polite is taken for granted. ... You walk down the street here and exchange more niceties in a morning than you do in a year in other places."

The son of an American diplomat, Wedeman attended boarding school in Lebanon until the war there forced him to leave for Morocco, where he graduated from high school. While attending the University of Texas at Austin, he missed the Middle East and decided to come to AUC for a year. It





Left and bottom: Wedeman in Malaysia with his wife and three children: Alessandro (9), Christopher (12) and Amira (16)



Israeli soldier shot him in the back during a border skirmish, another when a CNN producer he was in the car with was kidnapped at gunpoint, and most recently in June when he reported from a clandestine Palestinian missile factory. When asked if these hair-splitting moments have ever tempted him to quit, the award-winning journalist shrugged it off.

“Since I have no other known skills, I can’t think of anything else to do,” he said with a smile, adding, “The most rewarding thing about working here has been seeing people who were afraid to speak out now speaking. There’s a process of opening up that didn’t exist when I first got here.”

It’s not only the people, but the media has also witnessed significant change, Wedeman explained. “There was a time when working for CNN made you feel like you were the only game in town. Then came BBC World, Al Jazeera, Fox, Al Arabiya and the Internet. There’s no monopoly on information any more, which is a good thing.” The increase in outlets, he

added, has led governments to expend more effort on the media front.

“Governments are more aware of the importance of getting their message across. It’s much more critical than before. . . . Now, governments have to adjust their message because there are so many messengers.”

A major reason for both Wedeman’s success in the region and the fact that his family considers it their adopted home is that they made the effort to speak Arabic. Wedeman and Perni toss around a mixture of Arabic, Italian and English with each other and are fluent in all three. Wedeman points out that it’s extremely important in journalism to understand the language. “It helps a lot if you take the time to read the headlines on the newspapers, read the graffiti on the walls, and understand historic and religious references,” he said, explaining how understanding the culture, including jokes and rhymes, decreases the amount of miscommunication that can occur in

cases when you use an interpreter. He acknowledges that after 9/11 and the war in Iraq, there has been a surge of interest among Americans in learning Arabic, but regrets that this didn’t happen sooner. “Maybe a lot of problems could have been avoided, but it’s better late than never,” he said.

For this tri-cultural family, leaving Egypt is like leaving a part of themselves behind. “I’m going to miss people’s friendliness,” Perni said. “If I’m at home and sad, I just have to go out, and I’m happy again here. Everyone greets me with a smile that makes me feel welcome.”

Agreeing, Wedeman noted how he is still astounded by the unofficial parking attendants throughout the city. “Where else can you go to a restaurant, give your car keys to a complete stranger standing on the street, and when you’re done with dinner you get your car back?” he exclaimed. □

By Cole Gibas

Career Chameleons

By Dana Dimnawi
Illustrations by Maryam Farrag



From banking to aerobics and from engineering to marketing, alumni switch careers in search of fulfillment and self-realization

For 16 years, Dina Dakroui '80 led the typical life of a banker. Assistant general manager at the Commercial International Bank, Dakroui would head off to work at 8 am and spend her entire workday sifting through loan applications, credit reports and bank accounts. Today, she leads a different life, having shifted her career to being a full-time aerobics director at Gold's Gym Egypt. Though the decision was not easy, Dakroui has no regrets.

"It's what I want to do, and I am convinced it's better for me," she said. "The hardest part is taking the decision and going ahead with it, despite the social pressure that surrounds you."

Dakroui is one of many alumni who choose to change career paths when they feel their original jobs are not fulfilling anymore. These alums are proof that planning a career does not necessarily end with graduation or even with a first job. It can be a life-long process that continuously evolves as individuals mature and discover their needs, strengths and interests.

For Dakroui, working at the bank was a job she liked and had grown accustomed to. "I loved it dearly," she said. "It was extremely interesting and challenging, the work atmosphere was excellent and the majority of the people I dealt with on a daily basis were mostly AUC graduates." However, when the bank was

bought out by a government-owned bank, Dakrouri became unhappy with the bureaucracy and rigid system of administration. “That was the beginning of the end for me, so I decided it was time to move on,” she said.

Having taken aerobics classes during her last two years at the bank, Dakrouri decided to pursue an international certificate in aerobics. “My initial aim was not to teach, but to educate myself on what is right and safe when exercising,” she said. However, once certified, she became one of a handful of certified instructors in Egypt, and this was when she decided to pursue her newfound career full-time. “I knew for sure that aerobics was what I enjoyed most at that point in my life, and that encouraged me to do it on a full-time basis,” she said.

Also searching for a stimulating career, Emad Aziz '00 shifted his path from politics to business. Starting off as an international cooperation specialist in the Egyptian Cabinet then as special projects officer with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Aziz left these jobs and delved into the realm of business project management. “I moved in pursuit of a more challenging career and to fill a gap in the Egyptian labor market, as there aren't enough business project managers in Egypt,” he said.

Aziz started off working on project management with international organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations Development Programme and eventually moved to Barclay's Bank, where he managed large-scale projects. Educating himself in the field, he acquired a graduate diploma in project management from Cambridge

“It is better to take a step back and do something you enjoy than be miserable in your job, perform poorly and not move ahead in your career. ... The longer you delay the decision, the harder it becomes.”

University and also completed a Project Management Professional certificate, which is the highest degree given to project managers.

“Coming from a political background meant I was seen as something of an outsider in the business world — one who needed to learn everything from scratch in order to reach the level of those more trained and experienced in this field,” he explained.

Aziz currently works in Saudi Arabia as chief operations officer at Gulf Data International. Looking back, he is



happy with his decision to move from politics to business. "I am more productive in business and have more potential for growth in this area," he affirmed. "In politics, I played a supportive role; now I'm in a leadership role."

Taking a similar path, Ahmed Nada '97 left his job as a construction engineer to become a marketing specialist. "I didn't like the lifestyle of construction engineering — working six days a week in remote areas with bad working hours," he explained.

When the Egyptian construction industry plunged, Nada felt that this was the time to pursue a career with better working conditions and, more importantly, the chance to be creative. "I wanted something with a bit more variety and opportunities to innovate," he said.

With this in mind, he began to search for a job in marketing, a field that he studied as a minor and had a keen interest in. "I chose marketing because it provides lots of room to come up with new things," he said.

After spending a year in his new job, Nada pursued a Master of Business Administration in the United Kingdom. He currently works in Australia in the field of management strategy. Although Nada is satisfied with his career change, he acknowledges that making the decision was not easy. "Think hard before you make a career change because you may have to take a step or two backwards, professionally speaking, in order to be allowed into a new industry," Nada said, adding, "But it is better to take a step back and do something you enjoy than be miserable in your job, perform poorly and not move ahead in your career. The longer you delay the decision, the harder it becomes." □

AUC Can Help Jump-Start Your Career

AUC's Career Advising and Placement Services (CAPS) office is the first university career center in the Middle East that provides a comprehensive career and recruitment services program to students, alumni and employers. AUC alumni benefit from a wide range of career-planning and employment services that continue long after graduation. Even if you have extensive work experience or may be considering a second or even third career change, AUC can still help you.

"Whether you want to return to work, get a more satisfying job, develop within your career or achieve a better work-life balance, you should base your strategy on informed career decisions," said Maha Fakhry, associate director at CAPS. Get in touch with CAPS by e-mail at caps@aucegypt.edu, indicating your university ID number or contact them by telephone on 20.2.797.5835 or fax 20.2.797.5836. Professional staff at CAPS will assist you through the following stages:

Gather information about yourself. Discover your strengths, values, interests and personality type. In that respect, CAPS is licensed and certified to run and interpret several self-assessment tests that identify personality types and skills, define your relationship to the working world and clarify your potential areas of growth.

Explore career options. CAPS has an extensive Career Resources Library, which is accessible all year. The library is equipped with more than 2,000 corporate reference materials on more than 800 employers, in addition to hundreds of career-planning books, personal development references, video tapes on job-search strategies and graduate study material on

international programs. In addition, CAPS maintains a Career Information Network that connects you to professionals who can respond to career-related inquiries.

Get prepared. The first thing is to develop a professional resumé. A resumé is the way you market yourself and present your qualifications. It creates the first impression for employers. The resumé must be sharp and focused in order to grab your employer's attention and increase your chances for an interview. When you have a draft of your resumé ready, you can get it critiqued with a professional at CAPS to put it in the best format possible. The second most important dimension of the preparation process is getting ready for the job interview. In addition to the interviewing workshops, CAPS conducts mock interview sessions by appointment.

Connect with employers. Subscribe to the CAPS weekly e-job announcement at http://www.caps.aucegypt.edu/bulletin_subscription.html and receive career opportunities at your desktop. Also, network with employers during the semi-annual employment fair.

In providing support to all career-related inquiries, CAPS advice may also include when not to make a change. "We have to be honest in what an applicant's ability can accommodate, and we have to tell them that," Fakhry said, adding that confidentiality is guaranteed in any service provided.

CAPS working hours: Sunday to Thursday, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Individual appointments can be arranged beyond these hours. If interested, please e-mail caps@aucegypt.edu.

Ambassadors *of* AUC

By Dalia Al Nimr
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

Working to develop the university and strengthen alumni ties, six regional representatives are serving as AUC liaisons across the Arab world

Residing in different Arab countries, several alumni have chosen to be ambassadors of AUC. Based in Jordan, Libya, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, these six regional representatives are helping prospective students in their countries understand what it is like to study at AUC, the extracurricular activities available and the advantages of obtaining a liberal arts education. They will also give advice and answer any queries pertaining to the university. In addition, the representatives

will develop and maintain relationships with alumni, parents and friends; arrange and promote alumni activities in the region, including receptions and dinners; establish and maintain contacts with schools in their respective countries to promote AUC; as well as participate in regional educational fairs. To these AUC ambassadors, this work is a way of giving back to their alma mater.

Below is a synopsis of each of the representatives and how they plan to serve AUC in the countries in which they live.





Khaled Bassiouny '91, Jordan

During his undergraduate years, Khaled Bassiouny was an active member of the student body. He was a member of the Student Union, folklore dance group and sports team, as well as president of the Anti-Drug Club. "AUC has developed my personality tremendously," said Bassiouny, who works as business development director at the Arab Academy for Banking and Financial Sciences.

In Jordan, Bassiouny plans on promoting AUC by conducting educational exhibitions, assisting in the coordination of school visits and meeting with parents in clubs and community associations. "People in Jordan know AUC very well as a name, but they don't know much about what makes it unique," he said.

Bassiouny also noted that the Jordanian economy is booming, and multinationals are gradually settling in the country. "These companies want the caliber of AUCians," he said.

Lina Arafat '91, Jordan

Reflecting on her experiences as a child, teenager and adult, Lina Arafat values her time at AUC the most. "My university days were the best period of my life," she said. Having participated in the Model United Nations and Model Arab League, Arafat was fully equipped to begin her career with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia after graduation.

As a regional representative, Arafat plans on inviting prospective students to attend the activities held by the AUC alumni chapter in Jordan. "It would give them a chance to speak to AUC graduates from different generations. They would then understand the type of bond we maintain with AUC," she said.

Arafat believes it is not only AUC's prominent reputation that will draw Jordanians, but also its location in Cairo. "The political stability, accessibility to neighboring Arab countries, the quality and cost of living — all this weighs in AUC's favor," she said.



May Gargani '02, Libya

By serving as a regional representative for AUC, May Gargani, cultural affairs specialist at the American Embassy in Libya, hopes to help in the development of Libya. "Libya is just coming out of a 30-year period in which it was completely cut off from the world," she said. "There is a whole generation of young and mid-career Libyans who were deprived from acquiring a second language because foreign languages were banned from schools and universities. These young people lack many of the skills needed to help their country advance."

Gargani also believes that, for Libyans, the benefits of attending AUC extend beyond education in the classroom. "I hope AUC will develop their sense of volunteerism through the extracurricular activities available, as there are very few nongovernmental organizations and volunteer associations that are active and fruitful in Libya," she said.

Gargani's aim is to work with the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education, which offers approximately 1,000 scholarships annually for postgraduate studies overseas. "I hope to be able to get a number of those students to attend AUC," she said.



Heba Shaaban '92, '05, United Arab Emirates



A certified freelance translator with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Shaaban has always been active as an undergraduate and an alumna. In Dubai, she took the initiative in organizing events and social gatherings for alumni living in the city. “AUC is like my home, and being a regional representative would be a continuation of my relation to AUC. It’s an honor to be working in the name of my alma mater,” Shaaban said.

For Shaaban, being a regional representative in Dubai is not an easy task. Two American universities are already functional in the United Arab Emirates, and residents of the country can afford to send their children to Europe or the United States for education. “But I believe that AUC can compete,” Shaaban asserted. “It is cheaper and safer to send one’s children for education in a neighboring Arab country, and AUC offers an American-style education comparable to universities in the United States.”

Nesreen Al-Refai '90, Qatar

Having lived in Qatar for the past 15 years, Nesreen Al-Refai feels equipped to serve as a regional representative for AUC. “In Qatar, students in schools don’t know much about the university,” she said. “I want to tell them about AUC’s quality education, the interactive classes, the hostel, the new campus with its amazing facilities and the social life they will gain. . . . This is what makes AUC special.”

Currently working as an executive assistant and public affairs specialist at Occidental Petroleum of Qatar, Al-Refai has developed a deep understanding of the Qatari community. However, she acknowledges the difficulties she has to face, particularly with the existence of Education City, a 2,500-acre land on the outskirts of Doha where branch campuses of some of the world’s leading universities, including Cornell and Georgetown, are housed. “That just makes the job more challenging and exciting,” she said.



Nudd Nazer, Saudi Arabia

Although not an alumna, Nudd Nazer, who graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor’s in English literature, chose to represent AUC in her native Saudi Arabia because of her firm belief in education. “I believe that high-quality education is the key to peace in this world,” she said.

Nazer is no stranger to the field of education. Prior to joining AUC as a regional representative, she worked for two years at Dar El Hekma College in Saudi Arabia as an English teacher, student adviser and fundraiser. She is also familiar with AUC, as her parents frequently hosted alumni and senior administrators at their home in Saudi Arabia.

Nazer believes that AUC is an attractive option for Saudi Arabians not only because of its heritage, but also because of the international exposure it provides. “Saudi is largely a segregated society,” she explained, “and many parents want their children to mingle with people from other cultures. AUC provides just that — it is a melting pot of East and West where everyone is in harmony.”



A New Alumni *Connection*



Iskander and Raif

Raymonda Raif '91 is the new director for alumni affairs, and Mary Iskander '76 takes up new responsibilities

Having worked at the Office of Alumni and Trustee Affairs for the past 15 years, Raymonda Raif '91 has become a familiar face among alumni. Helping to organize social gatherings and various alumni events on and off campus, Raif has developed an affinity for her job.

"I love it. It is my passion and has been my dream for a long time," she said. "Since I came, I wanted to work to reunite people again, to reconnect people with their alma mater. And all the work pays off when, after events such as trips and dinners, alumni always

want to volunteer to help. It is so rewarding when you feel alumni are trying to gather and unite on their own afterward."

Today, Raif is stepping up the ladder to become the new director of alumni affairs. Mary Iskander '76, who has held that position for 30 years and was instrumental in the formation of the alumni office, is currently serving as the associate vice president of institutional advancement for alumni affairs, helping to raise funds for the university's new campus, as well as being special adviser to the AUC president.

“AUC alumni and supporters recognize Mary Iskander as AUC’s tireless and gifted ambassador who, with her wonderful personality and commitment to the mission of the university, has made such a significant contribution to AUC’s history,” said President David Arnold. “We are pleased that Mary will continue to serve AUC, ... and we will all benefit from her wise guidance and counsel. At the same time, it is also our pleasure to welcome Raymonda as the new alumni director, with day-to-day responsibility for our ongoing alumni activities and operations.”

For Raif, work at the alumni office has always been full of activity. From homecomings, reunions, trips, luncheons and receptions to establishing the alumni-student association and the alumni volunteer reception to publishing the International Alumni Directory, there is little room for repose. “I’m inheriting a well-established entity, thanks to Mary,” Raif said. “We now have 21 alumni chapters in different countries, gala dinners, as well as awards and certificates for distinguished alumni. We have a well-established database; I won’t be starting from scratch.”

However, Raif believes there is still more to be done. “Even though alumni are connected now, our aim is to make them even more connected,” she said.

Raif’s main goals as director are to introduce new activities that will broaden alumni connections worldwide; build new bridges between current students, faculty and alumni; and establish strong ties between students and the alumni office prior to

“I’m inheriting a well-established entity, thanks to Mary. ... I won’t be starting from scratch.”

graduation. “We need to build a strong relationship with students now — freshman, sophomores, juniors, Egyptian and international — to increase their awareness of our office, of the connection, of our services, so that it is well-established and will pay off after graduation. We need to start with students from day one, not just after graduation,” she said, adding, “We want AUCians to feel connected to the university all the time, to have the feeling that AUC is a continuum in their life. We want them to feel part of a big AUC family.”

What About Mary?

With her new responsibilities, Iskander is in charge of major gifts for the Comprehensive Capital Campaign to build AUC’s new campus. Traveling endlessly inside and outside the Arab world, Iskander is taking the lead in fundraising and development campaigns for the university.

“It gives me great pleasure to play a part in building AUC’s future,” Iskander said. “I look forward to my new responsibilities and am sure they will present challenging and exciting opportunities.”

Since she joined AUC in 1976, Iskander’s name has become synonymous with the alumni office. She established several key projects to reunite and honor AUC’s alumni, as well as maintaining personal contacts with alums in Egypt and abroad.

Rashed Fakhro ’67, who has known Iskander for years, appreciates her role in connecting alumni worldwide.

“Whenever I speak of alumni affairs, I think of Mary Iskander who has for years led this noble but difficult work with the highest degree of efficiency and professionalism,” he said.

Along the years, Iskander has made numerous contributions to the alumni

“Whenever I speak of alumni affairs, I think of Mary Iskander who has for years led this noble but difficult work with the highest degree of efficiency and professionalism.”

office. These include compiling a database of nearly 20,000 alumni worldwide; initiating the International Alumni Council in 1981, through which annual awards have been granted to distinguished alumni in various fields; and forming active alumni chapters around the world.

“She waved the AUC flag whenever she traveled outside Egypt to meet her flock of alumni for one single objective: to strengthen their ties with their alma mater,” said Fakhro.

Agreeing, Mizuho Kajiwara, ’94, who is now living and working as a journalist in Japan, noted how Iskander’s efforts make a big difference for alumni living abroad. “Especially for AUCians living outside Cairo like me,” Kajiwara said, “her prompt responses [to any inquiries] never make us feel the distance that physically separates us, but rather make us very close.”

As a result of her work, Iskander was able to play a pivotal role in raising funds for the university through her excellent relationships with AUC’s prominent alumni and friends in Egypt and other countries worldwide.

“I believe Ms. Iskander’s professional work has great influence on us, leading us to want to commit and contribute more to AUC in every aspect, and I am sure that will be the bridge to the brighter future of our AUC,” said Kajiwara. □

By Dana Dinmawi

Around the World

Germany



Alumni reunite in Munich in August 2006 at Der Hofbraeukeller restaurant

Australia



Different generations of alumni from the 1960s to the 1990s gather at a Middle Eastern restaurant in Sydney in August 2006



Mark Your Calendar

November 23-25, 2006

Alumni Weekend Trip

Gouna, Red Sea

December 20, 2006

Media Alumni Reunion

Oriental Hall, Main Campus

March 3, 2007

Fifth Reunion

Classes of '01, '02 and '03

March 26, 2007

Business School Alumni Reunion

Science Building Garden, Main Campus

April 14, 2007

10th and 15th Reunions

Classes of '91, '92 and '93

Classes of '96, '97 and '98

April 28, 2007

20th and 25th Reunions

Classes of '81, '82 and '83

Classes of '86, '87 and '88

May 12, 2007

40th and 50th Reunions

Classes of '56, '57 and '58

Classes of '66, '67 and '68

All reunions will be a visit to the new campus site, followed by lunch at the Arabella Country House in Kattameya. For more details and to reserve a place, please contact the alumni office at 20.2.797.5760 or 20.2.797.5755 or e-mail manara@aucegypt.edu

Class Notes

'59

Samir Dhays worked for 10 years in Kuwait with the Ministry of Telecommunications. From 1966 to 1967, he conducted postgraduate work in industrial management at Aston University in the United Kingdom. He was a management and financial consultant in different Algerian national companies from 1968 to 1978. Dhays returned to Jordan in 1978, where he joined the International Contracting Company as director of international operations. He was also chairman of Jordan Finance House.

Alongside his career, Dhays has opened art galleries in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. He has a collection of more than 1,500 antique books from the 15th to the 19th centuries; 150 ancient maps of the Middle East from the 16th to the 19th centuries; Iraqi and Jordanian paintings from the 19th century; photographs of the region from 1880 to 1920; as well as antique Persian carpets. Dhays is currently organizing the first arts, antiques and collectables fair in Jordan.

'98

Rasha El-Ibiary (MA '01) recently defended her PhD thesis in political communication from the University of

Talented Alumnus Not Afraid to Take Risks



Dismantling and reconstructing texts from the most celebrated playwright in history is a risky endeavor, but that's exactly what audiences at the Falaki Mainstage Theatre were treated to recently.

About Othello or Who's Afraid of William Shakespeare? was created by Ahmed El Attar '93, who was selected by the Arabic edition of *Newsweek* last year as one of the 42 personalities who influence change in the Arab world.

El Attar co-directed the play with fellow alumna Nivine El Ibiary '00. Using characters from *Othello*, the play incorporates text from eight of Shakespeare's works, including *Romeo*

and *Juliet* and *MacBeth*.

El Attar, who also directed *Mother, I Want to Be a Millionaire* at AUC in 2004, believes the genius of these timeless plays is what allows people like himself to adapt them. "The greatness of Shakespeare's plays lies in our ability to reinterpret them over and over again in a multitude of forms, always with the feeling that we are dealing with a new text," he said.

Since his graduation, El Attar has directed plays throughout Egypt and the Middle East. He founded Emad El Din Studio, the first workspace in the region devoted to providing independent theater and dance troupes with rehearsal and training space. He is also the founder of two theater troupes: the Temple Independent Company in Cairo and the Theatre du Temps in Paris.

Theater Professor Mahmoud El Lozy, who El Attar cites as "his best crazy professor," believes El Attar's own craziness is part of the reason for his success. "I was always fond of El Attar as a student," El Lozy said, joking about how eccentric they each are. "It's important that you be a little crazy."

Wedding



Ramy Attalah '01, project coordinator at Projectslink, Palm Island, was married to Nora Rezgallah, information technology engineer at Cairo University, in September 2005 at Saint Mark Church in Maadi. A reception followed at the JW Marriott hotel. The couple relocated to Dubai after spending their honeymoon in the Far East. Attalah would like to stay in touch with his classmates via rattalah@hotmail.com

Newcastle in the United Kingdom. She expects to receive her degree in December 2006. Her thesis is titled "Televisual Representation of the War on Terror: Comparative Analysis between Al-Jazeera and CNN in the Coverage of the 2003 Invasion of Iraq."

In Memoriam

Nefissa Gohar '55 died in September 2006.

Chonchette Rizkalla '63 died in July 2006.

Dr. Abdalla Fikri El Wakil (MA '74) died in September 2006.

Passant Nabet '90 died in August 2006. She was the executive manager of the Egyptian International Publishing Company (Longman). She is survived by her three children: Ahmed, 15, Lamis, 12, and Lamia, 10.

A Show of Support for the Lebanese

I was watching the news one day during the recent war in Lebanon when the image of a young Lebanese girl standing behind a demolished building caught my attention. In the midst of total destruction, the girl looked straight at the camera and asked simply, “Where are the Egyptians?” Her innocent candor touched me and made me think: What should we as Egyptians be doing? What can we do to let our Arab brothers and sisters know that they are not alone in this crisis?

As president of the Help Club at AUC, I spoke to friends and leaders of other student clubs and organizations and found that they were also troubled by the notion that Lebanese and Palestinian people might feel neglected by Egyptians during such a difficult time. Between the Help Club, the Student Union, Volunteers in Action, Alashanek Ya Balady and Resala, we came up with the idea for a campaign that we have named *nusra*. In Arabic, *nusra* means support, and that is precisely what we hope to convey through our campaign: Egypt’s heartfelt support of Lebanon and Palestine that will extend long beyond the period of conflict and hopefully facilitate the reconstruction process.

On October 18, several student representatives and myself plan to travel to Lebanon to show our dedication to supporting our Arab neighbors. Once in Lebanon, we will primarily focus our energies on the southern region of the country, where Israeli air raids did the most damage. In Beirut’s southern suburbs, which were believed to be the Hezbollah headquarters, the extent of destruction is completely horrifying. In addition to the ruined roads and buildings, the conflict took a serious toll on the emotional well-being of the Lebanese people.

With this in mind, we plan to talk to as many people as we can, providing emotional support and encouragement. This may seem like a very simple

thing, but hopefully the act of talking to people and treating them with compassion can show a hint of the immense concern that Egyptians feel for the Lebanese and Palestinians.

As with all relief efforts, we will also attempt to improve the quality of life in Lebanon through assisting in the reconstruction of the city. We are involved in fundraising for a number of development projects, including one dedicated to the rebuilding of a desperately needed hospital in Lebanon. *Nusra* is a cause that is very dear to my heart. All of us involved in the campaign sincerely feel that this is the least we can do to help our wounded neighbors. Perhaps through our delegation’s presence in Lebanon; our helping hands; compassionate ears; open hearts; and supplies of medication, food, blankets and clothes, we would be able to communicate a glimpse of Egypt’s unwavering support.

The essence of the campaign, the message that we aspire to convey is: We are one nation; we stand unified. We, as Egyptians, stand steadfastly beside our fellow Arabs. This is something that should be resoundingly clear, something that a young Lebanese girl will not question again.

Ahmed Fath El Bab, a mechanical engineering senior, is president of AUC’s Help Club.



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.