



Ahmad El-Nemr

Contents

Nobel laureate Ahmed Zewail delivering the dinner address at the Knowledge Society Symposium Page 8

FEATURES

- 8 FROM BRAIN DRAIN TO BRAIN GAIN**
AUC and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina team up to host the Knowledge Society Symposium, a high-powered two-day meeting on higher education in the Arab world.
- 12 GOING UP: AUC'S NEW CAMPUS ON THE MOVE**
As above-the-ground construction speeds ahead, AUC's new home is rapidly evolving.
- 16 WEDDING ON THE PLATFORM**
Volunteers in Action creates a new tradition, as three couples tie the knot on the Greek Campus.
- 18 GRADE EXPECTATIONS**
With today's students demanding more A's, grade point averages continue to creep up at universities around the world.
- 20 WHAT'S IN A NAME?**
A flashback through AUC history gives insight into names on campus and the stories behind them.
- 23 PHONETASIA**
Computer science students develop interface for cellular phone communications.
- 24 OF STEEL AND SPICE**
Dina Sarhan '89 tells of her leap from mechanical engineering to the culinary arts.
- 30 DE-CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS**
Through videoconferencing students from AUC, New York University and Yale bridge the cultural divide.

On the cover: Construction crew hard at work on AUC's new campus, photographed by Ahmad El-Nemr

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 AUSCENES**
New chair elected to Board of Trustees, Largest class graduates, El Hitami retires as vice president of student affairs
- ALUMNI PROFILES**
- 37** Sophie Sarwat '70 reflects on a lifetime of swimming success
- 39** Yousef Jameel '68 fuels education
- 34 ALUMNI NEWS**
Alums meet in New York and Qatar, Distinguished Alumni Awards, Foreign service reunion, Senior class gathering
- 37 CLASS NOTES**
Class updates and weddings
- 40 AKHER KALAM**
Mohammed Selim '04, journalism and mass communication graduate student and vice president of the Graduate Student Association, shares views on media ethics

Editor's Notes

Seeing is Believing

In the first issue of *AUCToday* that I worked on as editor, the new campus project was our cover story. At the time — about three years ago — we only had watercolor renderings of what the campus would look like, and that was a step up from the initial conceptual drawings that required even more imagination. For 80 plus



Amid the construction work on AUC's new campus project site

years, generation after generation of alumni can probably remember talk of a new, more spacious home for AUC and have no doubt wondered whether it would ever materialize.

Having for the first time walked through the new campus site, I must admit the experience is transforming, especially for the little skeptic in all of us. I am not sure what strikes first: the sheer size of the project, the absence of the downtown symphony of horns or the small army of construction workers clad in bright blue helmets and bustling in every direction.

One thing is for certain: AUC will have its new campus. The questions now are about all the little details of what the campus will be like, what unique facilities it will have and the difference in the student experience. For those of us who work or study at AUC, dodge traffic on Mohammad Mahmoud Street and are constantly trying to make the most out of every inch of space, the answers never come fast enough. In the meantime, we can take comfort in knowing that while we are shuffling through the downtown campus, an entire crew is making steady progress on what will one day be AUC's new home.

Considering that the first class to graduate from the new campus has already enrolled and that 2007 is on the horizon, it will not be long before we witness a major milestone in AUC history.

Until that day, we look forward to continuing to bring you real, full color play-by-play coverage of the new campus project as it unfolds.

Dina Abulfotuh

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AUC's Board of Trustees Elects Boyd Hight Chairman



During its November meeting, AUC's Board of Trustees elected Boyd Hight as its new chairman. Hight, the board's former vice chairman, succeeds Paul Hannon, who has served on the board since 1976 and held the post of chairman since 1998.

Hight, 65, first joined the board in 1987 at the suggestion of Hannon. "Like many members of our board, my wife and I have fallen in love with Cairo and AUC," said Hight, explaining his decision to take on the additional responsibilities of serving as chair of AUC's board. For many trustees — who volunteer their time, money and energy — the turning point is their first visit to Cairo and the university, said Hight.

Having led a distinguished career as a lawyer, Hight has now retired and will be focusing on his new role as

chairman. The current challenge facing AUC, in Hight's view, is building the new campus on time and within budget, while simultaneously continuing to invest in the enhancement and development of the academic programs.

When asked about specific areas he is personally interested in, Hight emphasized the importance of enhancing AUC's quality and finding ways to adequately finance the graduate program. "We would like to get the graduate program on the kind of financial footing that enables us to expand it," said Hight.

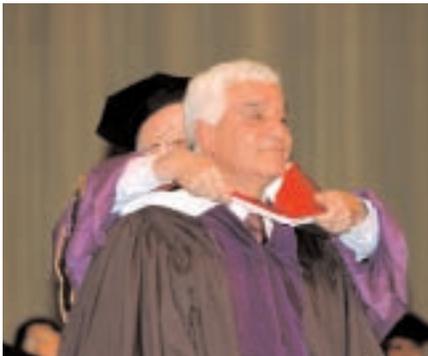
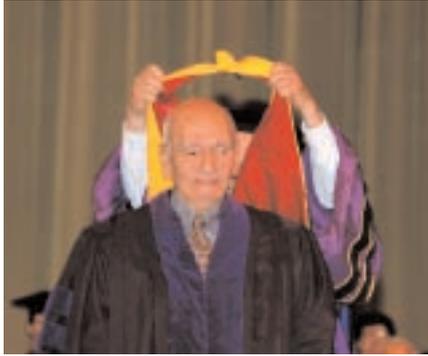
Prior to his retirement, Hight served as a partner in the Los Angeles-based law firm of O'Melveny & Myers. The best known of the firm's partners is former US Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Among Hight's many victories as a practicing lawyer was winning the third largest verdict in the state of California in 2000. Described by the *Los Angeles Daily Journal* as a lawyer who projects "a subdued air of authority and places a premium on professional respect and courtesy," Hight's activism and leadership date back to his time as an undergraduate at Duke University. As a senior, he founded and launched the Duke Symposium. First held in 1959 on the "US-Soviet Conflict," the symposium became an annual tradition for 11 years.

Hight received his law degree from Yale University, where he was an editor of the *Yale Law Journal*, and a diploma in comparative law from the University of Stockholm. A father of two, Hight has served as deputy assistant secretary for transportation and telecommunications at the US Department of State. During this period he negotiated the first civil aviation agreement between the United States and China. He also spent five years as executive vice president, general counsel and a director of Santa Fe International Corporation, a large oil services firm based in Alhambra, California. Hight's son Kevin served as a presidential intern at AUC in 1990.

Hight is also an overseer of The Huntington Library, a trustee of the Autry Western Heritage Museum and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Pacific Council on International Policy.

AuScenes

AUC Graduates Largest Undergraduate Class in its History



Provost Tim Sullivan hoods honorary doctorate recipients Rushdi Said (top) and Zahi Hawass

This year's mid-year commencement marked the graduation of the largest undergraduate class in the university's 85-year history. The 467 graduates received their degrees at the Cairo International Conference Center, amidst cheers and applause from the audience of friends and family. In a similarly festive event, 110 students received their graduate degrees at AUC's Ewart Hall, including 92 master's degrees and 18 graduate diplomas.

Recognizing the works and contributions of two prominent Egyptian scholars and scientists, AUC awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Zahi Hawass, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, and an honorary Doctorate of Science to Rushdi Said, one of Egypt's best known geologists, who served under former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser as head of the national mining organization.

Hawass, who is also director of excavation at Giza and Bahariya Oasis, delivered the undergraduate commencement address. With contagious enthusiasm, Hawass spoke to the graduating class about his passion for Egyptology and love of antiquities. The lesson, he stressed, is "that it's important to love what you do and to concentrate to make the best out of it."

Delivering the graduate commencement address, Said shared with the graduates a vision for Egypt, which he wished they could bring about. "I cannot imagine a leadership more fit for the task of regenerating Egypt than you," he told the graduates.



Iraqi Writer Wins Naguib Mahfouz Medal

Iraqi novelist and short-story writer Alia Mamdouh was awarded the 2004 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature for her novel, *Al-Mahbubat*. Mamdouh is the 11th recipient of the award, which consists of a silver medal, a cash prize and translation and publication of the winning book by the AUC Press.

"This award is for Iraqi literature itself, not just for me," Mamdouh said at the ceremony. "It is an award for all Iraqi women writers, alone and disillusioned by dictatorship in the past and occupation and extremism in the present."

In a televised address from Mahfouz, the Nobel laureate commented on this

year's prize, saying: "Modern Arabic poetry was born in Iraq, then it spread to the rest of the Arab world. Iraq is a cornerstone in modern and ancient Arab culture."

Mamdouh has served for more than a decade as editor in chief of the Iraqi magazine *Al Rassed* and then worked as a journalist in Lebanon and Morocco.

Censored for the themes she raises in her books, most notably women's rights and the ideology of power, Mamdouh has lived in exile in Beirut, Rabat, London and finally Paris where she currently resides.

She is also author of two short-story collections and four novels.

Graduate Student Wins WASH Media Award

Journalism and mass communication graduate student Nadia El-Awady received the first Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) Media Award for her article “The Nile and Its People: What Goes Around Comes Around.” Established by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, a UN affiliate, the award recognizes investigative reporting carried out by journalists in developing countries on water, sanitation and hygiene issues.

El-Awady’s article highlights the impact of industrial pollution, sewage and solid waste management on the health of people living along the Nile River, with a focus on Al Munufiya governorate.

“I had attended conferences and workshops on water and sanitation and wanted to write about water issues in Egypt because I believe

journalists play an integral role in making society aware of these issues,” said El-Awady, who is a graduate of Cairo University’s faculty of medicine and is the managing editor of the health and science section at IslamOnline.

El-Awady’s article was ranked first by an international panel of judges who evaluated more than 100 entries submitted by print, radio and television journalists from more than 40 countries. Entries were evaluated according to subject originality, content and research quality, relevance of WASH issues and potential public impact.

Robert Lamb, chair of the judges’ panel, praised El-Awady’s article, describing it as an “outstanding piece of journalistic work — clear, concise and investigative.”

Proud to have received the award,



El-Awady wishes her article would be translated to Arabic for the Egyptian public to read and understand the issues at hand. “I have been recognized at an international level, but not read by people in my own country. I hope to reach the public in order to help build awareness about water and sanitation,” she said.

Watergate Expert, Nixon Adviser Exposes Bush’s Secret Presidency

Watergate expert John Dean, who also served as counsel to former US President Richard Nixon, delivered two lectures at AUC: “The Secret Presidency of George W. Bush” and “The Nixon White House During Watergate.”

Sharing some of the secrets to the Bush presidency, Dean said that the 9/11 attacks, “though extremely tragic, allowed for many things to happen that may not have happened otherwise.” Terrorism, according to Dean, was played up time and time again to further Bush’s political objectives.

“Bush won the 2004 elections by frightening people into believing that he can deal with issues of terrorism better than John Kerry,” said Dean. Yet Bush failed to come up with a good definition of terrorism. “One

man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter,” he said.

Dean also blamed the president for what he called a new tradition of offending allies and ruining decades of good will. Drawing parallels between Nixon and Bush, Dean asserted that both presidents never really felt that they could fill their office. “Both presidents would refer to themselves in the third person as if they were someone else,” Dean pointed out.

Famous for recounting the Watergate scandal and his days in the Nixon White House in two books, *Lost Honor* and *Blind Ambition*, Dean has also written many articles on law, government and politics. His most recent book is *Worse Than Watergate: The Secret Presidency of George W. Bush*.



AuScenes

Goneid on Supreme Council Committee



Mr. Goneid, computer science professor, was re-appointed for a second term as secretary for the Supreme Council Committee for Computer Science and Informatics.

The committee reviews and accredits all computer science programs in Egypt. "It seeks to establish high-quality standards for the education of computer and information sciences in Egypt," Goneid said.

Goneid has previously served as a consultant to the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, Ain Shams University's Information Network Board, the International Academy for Media Sciences and AUC's state-of-the-art campus in New Cairo.

Recognized for his achievements, Goneid has received the Egyptian State Prize for Physics in 1971 and the Egyptian First Degree Order of Sciences and Arts in 1973. In 1994, he was honored by the Egyptian Computer Society for distinguished contributions in the development of computer science studies at AUC.



AUC's Regional Programming Champions

AUC's team won first place in the Seventh Association for Computing and Machinery ICPC regional contest held in Kuwait last December. The team competed against 35 other teams representing 26 universities from 11 countries in the Arab world and North Africa.

The AUC team will represent the region in the world finals in Shanghai, China this April, competing against 78 teams from 71 countries.

AUC's team will be the only team from the region to participate in the world finals, where awards, prizes and scholarships will be at stake for top computer science and engineering university students.

"Just being part of the finals among teams from the world's top universities is an honor. I have high hopes for them," said Amir Zeid, visiting computer science assistant professor and the team's coach.

Made up of Citibank Public

School Scholarship recipient Mahmoud Abdel-Fattah '05, electronic engineering graduate, and computer science seniors Ahmed Ezzat and Fadi Mounir, the AUC team won two honorary titles at the regional competition.

The team secured the future gurus title by being the highest ranking undergraduate team and were dubbed the relentless programmers for coming up with the right answer two minutes before their allotted five hours were up. In addition, the team had previously won the Egyptian national title.

"They are truly dedicated to programming and approach it with a passion," Zeid said. "You have to be dedicated to program in your spare time to win this competition, and that's what the students are like."

AUC's computer science program is the first outside the United States to be accredited by the Computer Science Accreditation Commission.

El Hitami Retires as Vice President

A man who has been an integral part of AUC's development throughout the last 39 years says that he is "disengaging gracefully" as he retires from his position as vice president for students affairs. Farouk El Hitami, who is currently serving as senior adviser to the president, will be on sabbatical for a year as he prepares himself to return to an old passion: teaching.

"I resisted the administrative assignments until I was forced into it in 1982. In 1993, I was the first dean for the School of Business, Economics and Communication," he said.

After serving as dean for seven years, El Hitami was asked to fill the position of vice president for student affairs in 2000 by John Gerhart, AUC's late president emeritus. "I liked working with Dr. Gerhart so I accepted," said El Hitami.

Having started the management department in 1966, El Hitami enjoyed the one-on-one interaction with students and is keen on resuming his teaching responsibilities once again.

"When you see a student grasp a concept that you have been explaining, it's a very gratifying compensation in that line of work," he said.

Over the years, El Hitami has seen the university change. "We were much smaller. I only had 15 students in my class, which allowed me to take care of each student's needs," he said.

Speaking on his style of management, Nahed Serour, assistant to the vice president for student affairs, said that El Hitami is a "true example of professional leadership. Through his firm belief in delegating authority, he helped build high caliber people who have reached success and continue to do so."

Having worked with him for more than 23 years, Samia El Shazly, deputy director of the student financial aid office, commented on his ability to build a team. "He let us have a say in what we do, encouraged teamwork and was very considerate of personal requirements," she said. "He is a wonderful person to work with."



Last December, President David Arnold presented El Hitami with the Presidential Award for Distinguished Service in recognition of his role in improving student services and building a strong and dedicated team at the university.

Explaining why El Hitami was chosen for the award, Provost Tim Sullivan said, "This award is not just about years of service to AUC; this is recognition of an outstanding human being. It is a chance to honor a wonderful man — a *mahatma*, or person of great soul."

AUC's Connection to Hit Film on Media Coverage of War in Iraq

Recipient of five international film awards in 2004, *Control Room* gives a behind-the-scenes account of the Arab satellite channel Al Jazeera during the US-led war on Iraq. Directed by the award-winning Arab-American filmmaker and Harvard graduate Jehane Noujaim, the documentary was a hit in the United States, where it played for months in art-cinema theaters in every major city.

In *Control Room*, shot at CentCom — the press office set up in Qatar during the war — and at Al Jazeera's headquarters, Noujaim focuses on a few US and Arab journalists. Through them, she portrays the intricacies of news

operations during wars and reveals issues of truthfulness, humanitarianism and journalistic integrity.

Abdullah Schleifer, director of AUC's Adham Center for Television Journalism and distinguished mass communication lecturer, served as the film's executive producer. A professional journalist for more than 20 years and a senior editor of *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* (TBS), a journal produced by the Adham Center, Schleifer developed extensive contacts with journalists at Arab news stations, and in particular at Al Jazeera. He was instrumental in helping Noujaim get approval to shoot at Al Jazeera headquarters and to

interview the station's Managing Director Mohammed Jassim Al-Ali.

In addition, through his press contacts as TBS senior editor and former NBC Cairo bureau chief, Schleifer helped Noujaim gain access to CentCom, where she met and interviewed key characters in her film, including NBC journalist David Schuster and the US press liaison Lieutenant Josh Rushing.

"When I was approached by Noujaim, I sensed her sincerity and talent, and I wanted to encourage such a young and dedicated artist," said Schleifer. "I knew this was going to be a serious film — one where journalism meets art."

From Brain Drain to Brain Gain

By Dina Abulfotuh
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

AUC teams up with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina to host a two-day Knowledge Society Symposium



In early February, the Knowledge Society Symposium was born in a room roughly the size of AUC's Oriental Hall, barely able to contain the stature and prominence of the high-level group gathered within.

Drawing around 70 key players in the development of the Arab world, the symposium's list of participants read like a *Who's Who* that included ministers of Egypt and Jordan, presidents of major universities in the region, a Nobel laureate, high-level officials from the US Department of State, representatives of the various United Nations agencies and the president of the Ford Foundation, to recount only a few.

The high-powered group was selected and invited through a joint initiative between AUC and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, designed to provide a forum to discuss higher

education in the Arab world and the creation of a knowledge-based society with a focus on potential solutions and possible paths to progress.

"Our intent is for this conference to be forward-thinking and action-oriented," said AUC President David Arnold at the inauguration. "One of our goals for the symposium is to ... discuss promising new approaches and reform initiatives geared toward knowledge-based development."

Emphasizing the symposium's long-term focus, Ismail Serageldin, director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and librarian of Alexandria, expressed his hope that the symposium "be succeeded by other events in alternating years between Alexandria and Cairo." Drawing attention to the role of human resources in the creation of knowledge-based societies, he said, "Whatever is done in policy at the end

of the day, it is the human resources that will make the difference."

Also speaking at the symposium's inauguration were Amr Salama, minister of higher education and minister of state for scientific research, and Tarek Kamel, minister of communications and information technology. Both Egyptian ministers highlighted the country's dedication to reform programs that aim to build a knowledge-based society. "It remains the only hope for the region to bridge the development gap and ensure an equitable share in the growth in welfare potential brought forth by globalization," said Kamel, who served as the inauguration's keynote speaker. "Knowledge is power, and we are fully committed in the region to harness this power and create a better future."

The two-day intensive gathering was composed of four main sessions, each



“It remains the only hope for the region to bridge the development gap and ensure an equitable share in the growth in welfare potential brought forth by globalization.”

Left: Zewail; right: Mark Welland, professor of nanotechnology at the University of Cambridge and Fadel Assabghy, dean of AUC's science and engineering school

involving one or more major presentations followed by an open-format discussion. Allowing for a free exchange of ideas, the participants were seated on round tables with a microphone for each one.

In the first session, which gave the context for the discussion, Maen Nsour, senior program adviser at the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States, enumerated the challenges currently facing the region. Presenting the key issues in the 2003 Arab Human Development Report, Nsour ended on an optimistic note. “The foundations of the Arab civilization once supported a knowledge society that was the pride of the world,” he said, calling for a new “Arab renaissance.”

In the second session, “Achieving Quality in Higher Education: A

Culture of Assessment,” Isam Naqib, project manager for the UNDP's Higher Education Project, underscored the importance of adopting standardized assessment models and fostering a culture of self-evaluation as an integral part of improving higher education in the region.

Interspersed throughout the conference and offering a respite from the main sessions were several special addresses. In the first lunch address, Susan Berresford, president of the Ford Foundation, delivered a passionate plea for widening access to education, especially among the developing world's most underprivileged. Berresford spoke about the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program, a unique initiative designed to find ways to reach new categories of students not formally in the higher education system.

Funded through the largest grant in the foundation's history, the program has thus far supported the graduate education of 1,506 fellows who have come from many of the most marginalized groups around the world. To recruit these local leaders in their communities — who would not emerge in normal selection processes — program recruiters have gone to hill tribe areas in Vietnam, to remote regions in Brazil and worked with women's organizations in rural Senegal. Calling for a sense of urgency about widening access to education, Berresford asserted, “Broad and assured access to quality education is an essential ingredient in modern and successful states.”

As the dialogue continued to deepen, the symposium's third session, “Capacity Building for Science and Technology,” looked at the issue of



“There is no way out of investing in research and development. If you buy what’s available in the market and stand still for a while, you will ultimately be in a backward situation.”

A group photo of the participants; bottom center: Fayza Aboulnaga, Egypt’s minister of international cooperation

expanding the region’s science and research base through four different lenses: research institutions, universities, industry and international partnerships. The common denominator throughout the debate was the essential role of human capital, which needs to be developed and supported through institutional frameworks that nurture research and scientific endeavors.

Carrying forward the discussion on the critical importance of joint initiatives, Fayza Aboulnaga, Egypt’s minister of international cooperation, delivered the second special address titled, “Building International Partnerships in Education and Development.” Calling for an expanded role for international partnerships, Aboulnaga suggested non-traditional forms of cooperation. “We must not think of international

partnerships as a means of providing knowledge from those who have it to those who don’t,” she said. “Rather, the most fitting potential of international partnership lies in sharing knowledge while preserving diversity, at the core of enriched scientific research.”

The fourth and final session, “Policy Reform and Action,” examined the necessary educational policy reforms from the public sector, private sector and university perspectives. Illustrating a new example of educational reform in the public sector, Jordan’s Minister of Education Khalid Toukan spoke of his country’s 10-year \$500 million program to raise the performance of Jordanian students to global standards.

Sharing another example of successful reform efforts, Sheikha Al-Misnad, president of Qatar University, presented Qatar’s expansive educational

reform initiative. Focusing on the program’s major elements, Al-Misnad asserted that these reforms would ensure that “Qatari society will be endowed with the capacity and desire to seek, generate and capture new knowledge and the ability to absorb and utilize this knowledge efficiently.”

While the obstacles to educational policy reform in the region are many, the participants identified complete transparency about the reforms taking place as the key to their success and widespread adoption.

Among the highlights was an address by Ahmed Zewail, Nobel laureate and Linus Pauling Professor of Chemical Physics at the California Institute of Technology. Well-versed and often quoted on the state of science in the Arab world, Zewail honed in on the necessity of creating a knowledge





society to bring the Arab world in line with the demands of the 21st century.

“There is no way out of investing in research and development. If you buy what’s available in the market and stand still for a while, you will ultimately be in a backward situation because other countries are developing as fast as possible to get into new frontiers of research and development,” said Zewail. “We have to find a way; otherwise, we will not sustain this effective revolution that is happening.”

After the concentrated discussions covering a vast array of topics, a final wrap-up session adjourned the symposium, synthesized its recommendations and brought hopes that this would be only the beginning. Led by Arnold and Serageldin, the closing session recapped the symposium’s major highlights.

Arnold structured his summation

and analysis around three central questions: what the region has, what it needs and how it can use the former to secure the latter. What the region has, he said, is an excellent diagnosis and analysis of the problem, as well as a core network of committed individuals “who get it.” What the region needs, Arnold elaborated, is the leadership and support, financial resources, management capacity and the desire to sustain and institutionalize change.

Covering the issue of brain drain, which was at the core of several discussions, Arnold stressed the importance of creating “an enabling environment” that allows for fostering high-end local talent and making use of Arabs abroad through partnerships that turn brain drain into “brain gain.”

Following Arnold’s summary, Serageldin, who was the symposium’s final speaker, delivered a lucid and

moving account that captured the essence of the participants’ reflections and built on the words of great Arab intellectuals like Ibn Al Haytham and Ibn Al Nafis. Citing the words of Bryon and Gandhi, Serageldin called the group to action.

“Within this group, this emergent coalition, this nascent network and the networks that each of us have, we should be able to promote many knowledge-based development initiatives,” he asserted. “We should meet again periodically, to measure our achievements, assess our shortcomings and draw strength from our shared values to redouble our efforts.”

Urging the symposium participants to form the “coalition of the caring,” Serageldin ended with a palpable energy and sense of urgency, as he asked the group, “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

“Within this group, this emergent coalition, this nascent network, and the networks that each of us have, we should be able to promote many knowledge-based development initiatives.”

Right: Magdi Yacoub, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at the British Heart Foundation; top: Al-Misnad, Toukan and Berresford



Going Up: AUC's New Camp u



Keep us on the Move

By Lamyia Tawfik
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

Construction on the new campus picks up the pace with the first signs of buildings starting to take shape

Structures are finally starting to mushroom as the above-ground construction of AUC's 260-acre new campus buildings started last August. The construction began after AUC signed an LE 850 million contract with the general contractor, which is a joint venture between Samsung, the Korean partner, and the Egyptian contractor Samcrete.

In many parts of the construction site cranes, pumps and bulldozers are humming away as the overlapping of various stages of construction work take place. So far, work has begun in four "parcels," a word used by the engineers on site to refer to buildings as they communicate with one another through more than 70 walkie-talkies across the site.

"In the Park and Square area — where the performing and visual arts building, the information center and the bookstore will be built — we're now doing foundation work. Excavation has also begun in the library area, the humanities and social sciences school and the science and engineering school," said Tamer Nasser, civil engineer and site inspector. The five-floor library, which has a total area of 19,000 square meters, is the first building that is expected to be completed by February 2007.

"This will allow for the gradual transfer of material to the campus by the spring of 2007 before the start of the all-university move during the summer of the same year," said Ashraf Salloum, director of





planning and design for the new campus. Scattered throughout the site are steel rebar workshops where foundation steel reinforcement is being prepared and carpentry workshops where the forms for the concrete are being constructed. “During the days in which we pour concrete, we place an average of 50 to 280 cubic meters of concrete in the building foundations,” said Nasser.

He added that the new campus construction crew is currently working on a 10-hour shift each day, except when concrete is being poured, which sometimes requires that the work day extend until midnight. Sometimes, Nasser explained, the workers also come on Friday to prepare for the next day’s work, in order to ensure that the project is moving according to the schedule.

“We are working aggressively with the contractor in overcoming obstacles to ensure all facilities are complete for the fall of 2007. At present, we are confident of achieving this date, barring any unforeseen delays,” said Bruce Malinski, site construction manager from Fluor International, the project manager for the new campus project.

The buildings expected to follow the library include the performing and visual arts theater and the School of Science and Engineering, both scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2007, just one month after the library is complete.

In April, the new campus development office was relocated to the new campus site, becoming the first AUC office to move to the university’s new home. “We are literally the first office to be



moved to the new campus and are excited about this important milestone,” said Salloum.

In addition to obvious special equipment, reams of steel and concrete, site visitors will notice that everyone dons hard hats and eye shields. “This is one of many safety measures that are taken on site. In fact we recently celebrated a fantastic milestone of 1,500,000 safe hours,” said Nasser.

The safety regulations on the site also require that all cars, cranes and trucks be equipped with reverse alarms and under no circumstance should any car drive at a speed that exceeds 20 kilometers per hour, explained Nasser.

The high level of safety and quality control makes this project stand out among all construction projects in Egypt, said Nasser, who has worked on several other large-scale projects in Egypt. “This is one of the biggest construction projects in the country alongside the building of the new Cairo airport and the Sharm El Sheikh airport,” he said, stressing that it is a career challenge as well.

“You don’t get the chance to be a part of building a university complex everyday,” he said. “You’re using the

same materials as you would in other construction projects, but you have lots of unique specifications to build labs, theaters, a library and classrooms.”

As construction rapidly progresses, a tower at the center of the site has been built for visitors to get a bird’s-eye view of the construction development.

Over the next few months, Web cams will also be placed in different parts of the campus site to broadcast hourly live pictures from the construction site onto the AUC Web site for those who would like to monitor progress.

The campus will be built over a total area of 165,000 square meters and will use 24,000 tons of reinforcing steel, as well as 115,000 square meters of stone, marble, granite cladding and flooring.

Throughout last year, the first phase



Construction workers prepare for the day ahead with morning exercises

of the AUC new campus site preparation was completed, which included the grading of the site and the installation of the underground networks for natural gas, sewage, irrigation and fire fighting and the construction of a 1.6 kilometer long service and utility tunnel. The current construction was designed to accommodate 5,500 full-time students and 1,500 faculty and staff members, with room for expansion. The projected cost of the project is \$300 million.

Expected Completion Date by Building

Library	February 28, 2007
Performing and Visual Arts	March 28, 2007
School of Science and Engineering	March 28, 2007
School of Humanities and Social Sciences	April 30, 2007
School of Business, Economics and Communication	April 30, 2007
Student Housing	April 30, 2007
Campus Center	May 31, 2007
Sports Facilities	June 30, 2007



Wedding on the Platform

**Volunteers in Action pioneers a
new tradition on campus**

The Greek Campus has been witness to more than five decades of AUC traditions and activities. On a Friday evening in January, an entirely new tradition was born on campus when three young couples tied the knot at AUC, complete with wedding decorations, entertainment and a full-fledged *zaffa*, the traditional Egyptian wedding procession.

The creative event was organized by the student club Volunteers in Action (VIA) and was the brainchild of Marwa Yahya, an economics junior and the head of VIA's housing and supplies program, which is focused on furnishing the homes of orphan brides.

The program is one of many charity activities that VIA has undertaken since its establishment in 1997, including Children's Day during Ramadan and weekly visits to poor areas in Cairo to provide literacy training. The club, which continues to expand the scope of its activities, has a primary focus of helping orphans in Egypt from infancy all the way to independent adulthood.

The couples were chosen from the underprivileged areas of Meet Okba and Zaytoun, where club members regularly volunteer and have become close with orphans in these areas.

Over the last couple of years, VIA has helped seven couples get married and has purchased home appliances and furnishings ranging from bed linens to washing machines and refrigerators. This year, however, Yahya said that she wanted to take their work "one step further" by providing a wedding celebration that would have otherwise not been feasible for the couples. "We just wanted something extra, to walk that extra mile, to bring joy to their hearts," said Yahya.

The wedding, which Yahya describes as the icing on the cake, represents the culmination of their work and a vehicle to increase awareness about the club's work with orphans among the AUC community.

"A large sum of the money came from the annual charity concert and from sponsors. We're so glad this worked out the way it did," said Randa Ahmed from VIA's public relations committee before rushing to meet her colleagues who were helping the brides get ready.

For a year, Yahya along with fellow club members, diligently raised funds, courted sponsors and managed to make the wedding a reality. "We rented the brides' dresses, and through our networks managed to bring sponsors for the food and many of the arrangements," she said.

"One of the brides kept delaying her marriage for almost two years because all she needed was LE 500 worth of appliances," said Yahya, adding that this wedding is the first of what will be an annual event.

More than 200 well wishers enjoyed a traditional Egyptian wedding as the couples were greeted with traditional stick dances and even a whirling dervishes show. The theme of the wedding was blue and white, and the couples walked the course of their *zaffa* to the sound of drumbeats and Egyptian wedding songs marking the festive day.

By Lamyia Tawfik



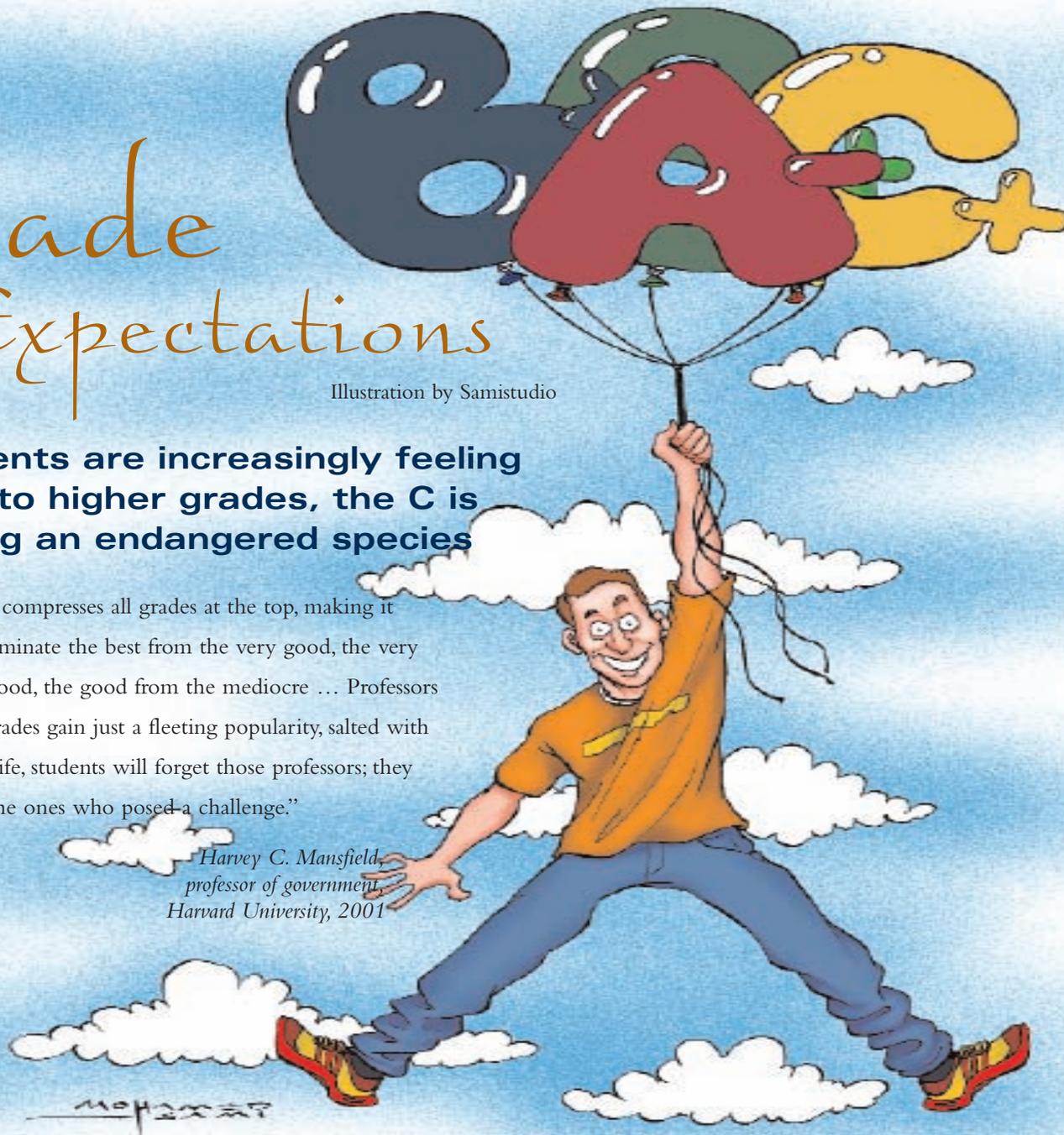
Grade Expectations

Illustration by Samistudio

As students are increasingly feeling entitled to higher grades, the C is becoming an endangered species

“Grade inflation compresses all grades at the top, making it difficult to discriminate the best from the very good, the very good from the good, the good from the mediocre ... Professors who give easy grades gain just a fleeting popularity, salted with disdain. In later life, students will forget those professors; they will remember the ones who posed a challenge.”

*Harvey C. Mansfield,
professor of government,
Harvard University, 2001*



A study conducted in 2003 by Stuart Rojstaczer, Duke University professor, indicates that grade point averages (GPAs) in the United States are rising at a rate of about 0.15 points every decade. “If things go on at that rate,” he noted in an article published in *The Washington Post*, “practically everybody on campus will be getting all A’s before mid-century,

except for the occasional self-destructive student who doesn’t hand in assignments or take exams — if exams are even given.”

Generally, grade distribution should follow a normal distribution curve, with a C grade being the average and an A grade awarded to a smaller number of top performers. Grade inflation, on the other hand, is defined as a trend of the dominance of the A and the diminishing of the C grade. This trend began in the 1960s, subsided in the 1970s and returned strongly and

vibrantly in the 1980s and 1990s. D’s and F’s combined now constitute only 2 percent of all grades given at prominent universities such as Duke and Harvard, Rojstaczer noted.

In addition, a 1999 study conducted by Duke University’s biostatistician Valens Johnson showed a positive correlation between grading schemes and student evaluations of their professors, with the easy graders receiving the best evaluations and the highest class enrollment.

“Faculty have begun to fear poor

student evaluations and possibly shortened careers. Consequently, some have caved in, giving A's to too many students," said Ralph Berenger, assistant professor in journalism and mass communication at AUC and head of the University Senate's Student Affairs Committee (SAC), which is looking at ways of combating this international trend at AUC.

Berenger defines grade inflation as a gradual rise in students' mean GPA without a corresponding increase in work. "It is a cause for concern because it debases the currency of a college diploma," he said. "When too many A's are given, the A loses its value and the institution is looked upon as a place where anyone can get high grades."

A study by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has shown that grade inflation is a problem in nearly all US universities, including the Ivy League. The study found that 50 percent of students at Columbia University are on the dean's honor list and that nearly 70 percent of Harvard students are getting a B+ or better, compared with 15 percent in 1950. In addition, 50 percent of the grades at Harvard are either A or A-, rising dramatically from 22 percent in 1966.

Fifty years ago, Berenger explained, the average GPA at American universities was a C, and students accepted it as an indication of average performance. An A meant that the student was a top achiever who stood apart from others. But with today's grade-oriented students, a C means to them that the professor is employing a tough and unfair grading system.

"C is an endangered species now, D

and F are nearly extinct, B and B- are regarded as shameful and A and A- have come to constitute the majority of grades in some classes," Berenger said, attributing the phenomenon to what he calls the consumer-based university education theory.

"Education has now become a commodity that is run the way you run a business. You operate on the notion that the customer — the student — is always right. Students and parents demand a return on their educational investments, and professors feel obliged to give them what they want," he said.

At AUC, research conducted by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research found that the average undergraduate GPA rose from 2.9 in 1993 to over 3.1 in 2003, and for graduate students, it rose from 3.37 to 3.55 in the same period. The toughest graders, the SAC report noted, were in the freshman Writing Program, followed by political science, mathematics and Arabic studies. Music, electronics engineering and business administration gave the highest grades.

The report showed that AUC's grade distribution was nearly the same as grades given to students at US universities. In fact, GPAs might be inflating faster in the United States than at AUC.

Grade inflation creates unrealistic expectations on the part of students. "People feel entitled to a grade," said Berenger. "They expect to get an A or a B whether or not they earned it."

Sharing Berenger's viewpoint is Kurt Wiesenfeld, physics professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He indicated in *Newsweek* that "in the last few years, some students have developed a disgruntled consumer approach ... Many, when pressed about why they deserve a better grade, admit they don't deserve one but would like

one anyway."

To address the problem, Berenger noted, there has to be widespread awareness, especially among professors who may be unconsciously contributing to the problem. Many schools in the United States are now monitoring grade inflation on a regular basis. AUC has begun to do the same, with plans to monitor grading patterns and share the information with departments. In addition, courses with nearly duplicate content are being eliminated and professors are required to regularly vary their course material and examinations.

But the key to combating grade inflation lies with faculty members and administrators, Berenger asserted. They have to set specific course objectives and performance standards and grade their students according to those standards. If too many students are getting A's in classes, instructors should raise the standards of their instruction and grading expectations.

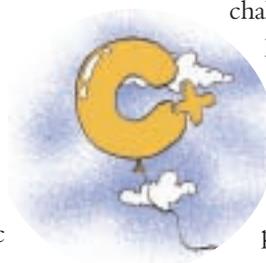
"Faculty members should set their standards high in order to keep challenging students,"

Berenger said. "They should teach them what they ought to be taught, clearly state their grading policies and

expectations in the syllabi, induce rigor in the classroom and keep raising the quality bar in order to motivate students to perform at their highest levels."

More importantly, students should be educated on their value-added experience at the university. They should understand that they are being educated to think and learn; not just receive good grades, he added.

By Dalia Al Nimr

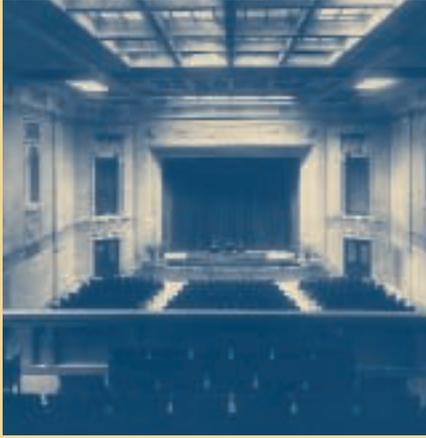


What's in a Name?

By Lamyia Tawfik



**A look back at the names on campus
and the stories behind them**



80-year-old Ewart Hall

In 1925, a visitor to AUC made an important decision. Escorted by Wendell Cleland, then head of the Division of Extension, she asked him what AUC needed the most? A few hours later she offered a gift of \$100,000 for the construction of a 1150-seat auditorium. She did have two special requests: she wanted to remain anonymous, and she wanted the auditorium to be named after her grandfather William Dana Ewart, who had in the past visited Egypt for health reasons. Construction began in June 1926 and the final touches were completed in April 1928.

Ewart Hall, as it came to be known, has housed musical and theatrical events including Egypt's renowned singer Om Kalthum and AUC's own Osiris Singers. Every Egyptian president has attended an event at the hall, and in the 1970s, when the Cairo Opera house burned down, it became the home of the Egyptian opera and ballet.

In the 1927 ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone, then AUC President Charles Watson said that the new hall would "place at the disposal of Egypt the best that American experience and experimentation can afford."

AUC's history is filled with similar examples of people who have decided to give to AUC and place their names or the name of someone they wish to

honor on buildings, rooms, scholarships and even chairs. Ewart Hall itself was later renovated in 1992 through gifts from alumni whose names adorn its chairs.

Thorne Fountain

The fountain on the outside wall of the AUC library is seen everyday by most AUCians, yet only a few know the story behind it. It was built through a gift to AUC by Miriam Thorne, former AUC trustee and wife of the late Landon Thorne Jr., former Board of Trustees (BOT) chairman.

The Thorne Fountain is a replica of an Ottoman fountain in the Islamic museum and is made of white Italian marble surrounded by an expanse of black marble with a border of colored stone that is an adaptation of an inlaid Mamluke panel.

The unveiling of the fountain took



Landon Thorne III speaks at the 1983 dedication of the Thorne Fountain

place more than two decades ago, in 1983 during which Thorne's son Landon Thorne III said: "One of the qualities my father had was a sense of the rightness of things — of form and symmetry. This Egyptian fountain belongs here, and he would have appreciated it."

Howard Theater

For decades, AUC's theater students rehearsed and auditioned their performances at what became known as Howard's Theater, inaugurated in the spring of 1956.

The C.Worth Howard Student Drama Workshop was initially a large classroom that was remodeled through alumni donations raised in honor of C.Worth Howard, the former dean of the faculty of arts and sciences who served at AUC from 1925 to 1957.

In his last year in office, Howard sent a letter to what he called AUC's "inner circle" of trustees, former staff members, graduates and old students that said: "In leaving AUC I have many regrets about breaking close ties, which have meant so very much to me, yet I am happy in a rich experience of many years. It was 32 years ago last month that I landed in Port Said, eager and hopeful. What a privilege to share in AUC's development, in the interests and concerns of hundreds of young people of the Middle East and in the community affairs of an exciting cosmopolitan city!"

Jameel Center

In 1968, Yousef Jameel graduated from AUC with a bachelor's degree in economics. He later developed a Toyota distributorship for his family that became one of the most successful



Yousef Abdul Latif Jameel (center) at the Jameel Center's groundbreaking ceremony



The Jameel Center in its construction phase

Saudi businesses and a part of a large family corporation.

The success of the business prompted his father to donate \$5 million, which was the largest gift that AUC had ever received at the time. The donation was used to build the Abdul Latif Jameel Center for Middle East Management

Studies. Located on AUC's Greek Campus, the center was inaugurated in 1989, only two years after its groundbreaking ceremony.

"We owe a lot to AUC. If Yousef hadn't received his education there, our family couldn't do what we're doing today," the late Sheikh Abdul Latif Jameel told Charles Hedlund, then chairman of the BOT.

Hill House

The Hill House, which celebrated its 50th birthday last year, was named after William Bancroft Hill and his wife Elise Weyerhaeuser Hill. William Hill served on AUC's BOT for almost 25 years, including 20 years as chairman.

The Weyerhaeuser family, who donated \$1.5 million for the original construction of the building in 1953, also financed the remodeling of Hill House in 1984.

During the 1953 dedication program,

much of what Douglas Horton, chairman of the BOT at the time, said is still true today. He described AUC as "not only a company of scholars; it is a company of scholars dedicated to making and keeping the world a better neighborhood."

Hill House started as a student dormitory when it was first opened and later became AUC's main library in 1959, holding 60,000 volumes at the time. It was remodeled in 1984 to be a student and alumni center.

"This building is an affirmation of American faith in the future of Egypt," said John Badeau, former AUC president, at the dedication ceremony.

Armenian Classroom

As testimony to the strong ties that the Armenian community in the Middle East has with AUC, Leon Iskhanian '52 and Avedis Tchakedjian '33 launched a fundraising campaign in 1989 among the Armenian community. The campaign was to result in the remodeling of a main campus classroom in a style reflective of Armenian architectural design.

The classroom, located next to Howard Theater, has on its wall the Armenian proverb: "To acquire wisdom and guidance, learn the knowledge of the intellect." The Armenian alphabet is also displayed on one of the wooden panel walls of the classroom. The room has a plaque with the names of its patrons.



Students working at AUC's former library located at the Hill House building

Looking Ahead

While the current campus has countless examples of alumni and friends who have shared in its development, AUC's new campus will continue to honor this heritage. Through a wide array of naming opportunities, the new campus will offer alumni and friends the opportunity to be a part of the same tradition that brought Hill House, Ewart Hall and the Armenian classroom. In addition to naming buildings, courtyards and facilities, there are possibilities for named professorships, scholarships, garden benches, trees and bricks on the Alumni Wall.

For more on naming opportunities on the new campus please visit:
www.aucegypt.edu/support/campaign/naming.html

Phonetasia

Computer science students are recognized for their invention of a cellular phone communication interface

Three young computer science students surprised themselves and their professors by an invention that brought them into the mobile phone limelight.

The invention was Phonetasia, a unified communication interface for peer-to-peer communications between Symbian Operating System phones. Phonetasia was a joint graduation project completed by Mashaal Al Sabah '04, Tamer Soliman '04 and Sameh Galal '04, who all received their computer science degrees last spring.

"At first they were quite reluctant to take on this project, but I prodded them to do some research before deciding, and they felt that the challenge was worth it," said Mohy Mahmoud, the computer science professor supervising the project.

Stemming from their compassion with fellow developers who have to deal with several technologies of communication such as infrared, Bluetooth and TCP/IP, the group created Phonetasia, a middleware that hides the Symbian operating system

implementation of the connectivity protocols from the developers' application. In other words, Phonetasia is a tool that can aid the development of software to communicate between mobile phones that use the Symbian operating system. Symbian is a software licensing company that develops and supplies operating systems for mobile phones.

"The aim is to facilitate communication between mobile phones," said Mahmoud, explaining that the purpose was to develop a 'black box' structure that saves developers' time from dealing with the protocols directly.

Explaining the potential of Phonetasia, Galal said that the possibilities are countless. "It could be used for playing games, sharing contacts and entire phonebooks and overall improving peer-to-peer file sharing," he said.

Dubbing the project as a "real success story," Galal said that carrying out the project required "patience and attention to quality and detail." The students submitted their project to Symbian, the world's leading mobile phone operating system developer, and it was published on the company's Web site.

"It's truly an honor to have our work recognized by Symbian. Only top-notch professionals have their work published with them," said Galal, who is still at AUC working on his second major in electronics engineering. He added that his work with Symbian and the development of Phonetasia earned him a summer internship in developing Series 60 applications at the Nokia Research Center in Helsinki, Finland last summer.

Meanwhile, Al Sabah, a resident of Qatar, is preparing for her master's degree in computer science, and Soliman has started work as a software engineer at IBM Egypt.

By Lamya Tawfik



Tamer Soliman, Mashaal Al Sabah and Sameh Galal

Of Steel & Spice

By Dalia Al Nimr
Photos by Ahmad El-Nemr

A mechanical engineer by training, Dina Sarhan '89 has brought kinetics to the kitchen in the process of discovering her true calling



When Dina Sarhan '89 looks back at her first attempts at cooking as a newlywed, she laughs wholeheartedly. "I was a terrible cook. I didn't even know how to peel a potato," she said. Today, Sarhan owns and teaches at Dina Sarhan Culinary Solutions, the first institute in the Middle East to provide cuisine consulting and training, as well as hands-on cooking classes.

While her current career may seem like a vast leap from her degree and training as a mechanical engineer, for Sarhan, it was engineering that helped mold her into a successful entrepreneur in the culinary arts industry.

"To me, a kitchen is just like a science laboratory and cooking is just another experimental science," she said. "Your kitchen is full of apparatus: devices to heat and cool; tools to mix, cut, grind and measure out ingredients and materials that you react together — the food ingredients. Every time you follow a recipe you are conducting an experiment ... Good cooks will use their experience to vary the temperature or the proportions of the ingredients for the next attempt to come out better."

Emphasizing that majoring in a specific field does not confine you to one career, Sarhan noted that college should not be looked upon only as a place to learn about a particular discipline and get a good job. "College does more than that," she said. "It lays the groundwork for you to be a well-rounded individual and equips you with skills and knowledge that you will find useful in your everyday life. I don't regret having

studied engineering because I feel it shaped the way I approach cooking as a science.”

For Sarhan, her science background is an asset, making her “more concerned with answering fundamental cookery questions about things mostly taken for granted.” Explaining how she “uses science to control and improve techniques” and “re-thinks conventional ways to perfect cooking methods,” Sarhan described the “science of food” as being about “the chemical and physical transformations and reactions happening in every aspect of cooking and baking on a molecular level.” Ultimately, Sarhan’s goal is to “perfect techniques and flavors” and then “simplify all of this complex technical information into very clear and concise everyday language for my students.”

Sarhan’s story with cooking began more than a decade ago, when she was quickly employed after graduation as a mechanical engineer at Carrier air conditioning company. Her performance was top-notch and she was sent for intensive training in the United States, quickly becoming involved in the firm’s consultancy operations. At that high point in her career, Sarhan got married to fellow mechanical engineering graduate Amr El Husseini ’90 and traveled with him to Australia, where he was going to pursue graduate studies and seek international management work experience.

“It was difficult for me to leave my job then, but I wanted to be with my husband,” she said. Sarhan did not know that what awaited her in Australia was the groundwork for a career that she came to love with

Pouring the Marketing Mix



Al-Husseiny (center) in a meeting at Citibank

Coming from a family of engineers, it was inevitable that Ahmed Al-Husseiny ’97 major in construction engineering. His love of math, combined with his desire to become a successful engineer, made the choice easy.

During his university years, Al-Husseiny was an active student, maintaining a 3.8 grade point average and juggling a bundle of extracurricular activities that included the Model United Nations, the Model Arab League and AIESEC. Immersing himself in the engineering field, he also headed the student-run Construction Engineering Association and was his major’s representative at the Student Union. In addition, he served as an intern at engineering corporations for three summers.

“I enjoyed my studies and had no doubt in my mind that I was going to work in engineering,” he said.

It was not until his senior year in college, when he came across two marketing and business courses at Procter and Gamble (P & G), that Al-Husseiny’s mindset changed.

“The courses caught my attention, and I enrolled in them for the sake of learning,” he said, not knowing at the time that he was setting foot in a door that would change his life forever.

After graduation, Al-Husseiny joined P & G as a marketing executive and stayed there for three years. Working on how to market products for clients, Al-Husseiny knew that he was destined to be in the field of business, not engineering. “I developed a love of marketing and was constantly challenged by the creativity and problem-solving skills the job entailed,” he said.

And that is where engineering came into play.

“Engineering develops your line of thought,” Al-Husseiny said. “It teaches you how to structure your thinking, be accurate and make logical assumptions. And AUC did not just teach me construction engineering; it taught me personal skills that I migrated with, and that’s how I became successful. It was at the university that I developed my analytical skills and improved my ability to communicate with others, be creative and depend on myself.”

Set on his new career path, Al-Husseiny acquired an MBA from London and returned to Egypt, where he worked for three years at Citibank in the marketing and sales departments.

“I was learning a great deal,” he said. “The job taught me management and how to handle and motivate a team. It also built up my communication and coordination skills.”

Currently, Al-Husseiny works in a management consultancy firm in the United Arab Emirates.

“I am always looking for stimulating and challenging experiences, but everywhere I go, I feel it’s the personal skills that I acquired at the university that have made a big difference in my life,” he said.

From Mechanics to Multimedia



Farrag's company received numerous awards for its multimedia products

Entering the office of Maged Farrag '93 in Dokki, one can't help but notice the wall filled with awards and certificates of merit that his company has earned over the years. Fifteen years ago, when Farrag was a mechanical engineering student at AUC, he did not envision himself as head of a multimedia company.

"I felt that engineering was not for me, but could not lay my hands on what it is I wanted to do. All I knew was that I wanted to work in a job that I like and have a passion for," he said.

As a top performer in the thanawiyya amma, Farrag's family wanted him to become a doctor or engineer. "It was typical that high grades meant medical or engineering school. I didn't have anything else in mind and I wanted to enter AUC, so I majored in mechanical engineering," he said.

From his first year in college, Farrag knew he was not going to work as an engineer. Though he was not sure of

his career destination, he found himself interested in computer applications. Working with his classmates on engineering projects, Farrag would always volunteer to do the computer side of things, using specialized engineering software.

After graduation, Farrag's interest in computers flourished, and he teamed up with one of his friends to start up a multimedia company. Acquiring on-the-job training, he eventually established his own company, Mega Media, which is currently one of the biggest companies in Egypt in the production of multimedia CDs, the set up of corporate Web sites, as well as the design of brochures, flyers and logos. One of his company's most prominent projects is in coordination with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Center for the Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage, whereby Egypt's cultural and architectural legacy is documented using multimedia technology.

"I like combining text, graphics, video and sound to produce something original and useful. I am drawn to the multimedia industry because it is a dynamic and ever-changing field. It is interesting and there is always something new to challenge you," Farrag said, adding that he plans to pursue graduate studies abroad in the field of multimedia.

But he is quick to point out that his years in engineering were not wasted. "The most valuable asset I acquired from engineering is the skill of problem-solving. Engineering, with all its practical applications, sets you on top of things in a way that you can manage, learn and adapt to new fields," he said.

"To me, a kitchen is just like a science laboratory and cooking is just another experimental science ... Every time you follow a recipe you are conducting an experiment."

a passion — culinary arts.

Hardly having entered the kitchen with her mother, Sarhan felt nervous in Australia. "Here I was in a foreign country with no one to guide me on how to cook," she said.

Watching cooking programs on television, Sarhan was determined to learn how to cook. "I wanted to learn and learn it right," she said. Sarhan went to the local library and checked out all the books in the cooking section. At home, she read each book from cover to cover, taking extensive notes and making sketches in her notebook. As time passed, she developed confidence and expertise in the kitchen.

During her three years in Australia, and until this day, Sarhan cooked something different everyday. "When a dish failed, I would not give up and tried it using a new recipe. I enjoyed what I was doing and felt it was deeply satisfying, therapeutic and rewarding to watch and to explore my culinary transformations turn into delicious food."

Giving up her initial plans to pursue a master's in engineering, Sarhan carved a path for herself in the cooking arena. She studied catering business management at



the institute of Technical and Further Education in Sydney, an affiliate of Le Cordon Bleu in France. "I knew how to cook by then, but I wanted to focus on and study the business side of it," she said. "I wanted to know how to set up a business in the world of commercial and retail food production."

Alongside her education, Sarhan also sought work experience in some of Sydney's most prestigious restaurants, working in front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house areas.

"I was learning all the happenings behind-the-scenes so as to be

"I enjoyed what I was doing and felt it was deeply satisfying, therapeutic and rewarding to watch and to explore my culinary transformations turn into delicious food."

prepared for my own business when the time is right," she said.

When it was time to leave Australia and come back to Egypt, the first thing Sarhan packed was her

cookbooks. "I would not let go of them," she said.

Upon her return, Sarhan did not want to just open up a restaurant; she wanted to do something more unique and serviceable. "In Australia, there were many recreational cooking schools for amateurs and chefs. Egypt was void of such schools, and I had a dream of starting one in my country."

Making her dream a reality, Sarhan advertised for cooking classes and got a large number of responses. "It shows just how much the field is in demand," she said.

Sarhan designed her own



curriculum for amateurs with more than 30 different courses. She operated her first classes from home, teaching three people at a time in her own kitchen. As the business prospered and expanded its scope into professional food consulting and training, she moved to their Heliopolis facility equipped with two purpose-built kitchens: one for amateurs and the other for professional training, as well as product development and testing. Sarhan has also begun to give cooking classes on Egyptian TV.

Sarhan's passion for cooking is contagious, passed on not only to her students but also to her family. Her children, 9-year-old Nour and 6-year-old Tamara, are dropped off from school everyday at their mother's cooking school, where they sometimes help her prepare lunch by chopping the vegetables and helping her make salad. In addition, Nour and Tamara conduct their own classes in the summer with children

aged 7-11. Under Sarhan's supervision, the children make pizzas, pastas, cookies and pies.

"They have a lot of fun, and it creates awareness for them that kitchens can be dangerous as much as they are fun. In these classes, if I am not there, the place would be swarming with sauce and melted cheese," Sarhan said.

The children, little chefs in the making, now prepare their own breakfast and sometimes pack their lunchbox for school. "Because they make their own snacks and sandwiches, I'm always sure they'll eat it. It also develops in them a sense of accomplishment," she said.

El Hussein, Sarhan's partner in life and in business, has always been keen about cooking. An expert in the telecommunications and electromechanical industries for the past 15 years, El Hussein will soon join Sarhan full time.

Having done professional food training in Sydney, he is no stranger

"In Australia, there were many recreational cooking schools for amateurs and chefs. Egypt was void of such schools, and I had a dream of starting one in my country."

to the food scene and will be serving as an instructor to demonstrate his specialty dishes to food lovers. El Hussein will also be handling their future expansion plans in the Middle East. Working together as a team, the couple hopes to demonstrate through their classes that cooking can be fun for women and men.

As for Sarhan, she is up to something new everyday in her test kitchens, from Mexican and Chinese dishes to Italian and fusion cooking. Inspired by her vast training and experience in the field, she creates innovative dishes and techniques all the time but acknowledges that she is still learning.

"Food, like everything else, is always evolving, whether it's new ingredients and techniques, the latest in tools and equipment or the ever-changing food trends," she said.

And that's the best part for Sarhan — there is something new to do and learn everyday.

Diplomats Reunited

In a day of nostalgia and reminiscence about the university, more than 50 alumni working in the foreign service and diplomatic fields, accompanied by their spouses, came together for a reunion on AUC's Main Campus. Sharing professional and personal experiences and renewing long-time ties, many of the graduates found the event a good chance to meet old friends, make new ones and reconnect with colleagues.

"Though many of us work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we usually meet on a touch-and-go basis at airports or in hallways. The reunion is an excellent idea and a positive step that should be nurtured into an annual event," said Obaida El Dandarawy '97, third secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Heba Mostafa '00, '03, deputy assistant at the ministry, valued the event because it allowed her to return to her alma mater. "I am happy to meet with my friends from college and excited to be back at AUC — a university that prepared me not only for diplomacy, but for life."

Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ahmed About Gheit was the event's keynote speaker and guest of honor. Addressing the graduates, he praised their competitiveness and motivation.

"Looking at all of you, I feel how much this institution has contributed to the strength of the Egyptian foreign service," he said. "AUC has added great people to our field, including Nabil Fahmy, Egypt's ambassador to the United States. I see lots of Nabil Fahmys in the faces surrounding me today."



De-clash of Civilizations

By Dalia Al Nimr
Photos by Thomas Hartwell

**Videoconferencing technology
traverses thousands of miles and
bridges the cultural divide**

Throughout the fall semester AUC students had the rare opportunity to meet face-to-face every week with fellow students from New York University (NYU), and they never bought a single plane ticket.

Thanks to videoconferencing technology, it is now possible for students on opposite ends of the globe to communicate as if they are sitting in one classroom. Employing the use of video cameras, microphones and monitors, a class in Egypt can “meet” with a class in the United States without any of them leaving home.

Two large screens are set up in each room, through which students are able to see themselves in one and see the other students in the other. A sound system with echo-effect cancellation is

also established for students to carry on their conversation as if they are physically present in the same place.

And the process is not without its protocol. Though it may differ from class to class and from instructor to instructor, students on each side generally come prepared with questions on a pre-determined topic, and discussion flows from these questions. Sharing experiences and listening to each other’s viewpoints, the students form effective relationships and learn to appreciate cultural differences.

At AUC, the dialoguing initiative started two years ago and has since become a fundamental educational tool. Through a seminar course, Cross Cultural Perceptions and Representations, AUC students meet

on a weekly basis with universities in the United States to discuss topics of interest and learn about themselves and American culture.

Last spring there was one dialoguing class at AUC that met with eight different universities in the United States. This fall there were two classes, each dialoguing with a single university. The first class, taught by Michael Lattanzi, assistant political science professor, dialogued with NYU on socio-political issues in the Middle East. The second, taught by Malak Rouchdy, assistant sociology professor, dialogued with Yale University on gender issues. The aim of both classes was to bridge cultures and create lines of communication between AUC students and their American peers.





For many students, the experience was transforming.

“It was a phenomenal course! I was challenged as an American, as a feminist, as an academic and as a global individual,” said Della Sentilles, an English literature sophomore at Yale.

For Nada Samra, an Egyptian AUC student who was raised in Boston, the course was a path to discovering her roots. “It got me thinking about my identity and touched me on a personal level,” the political science senior said. “I expected it to be a good course, but not this rewarding.”

Before the course, Samra felt “bitter” that some Arab women are treated and portrayed negatively and that many of them are “complacent” about that. But her perspective changed through the

course readings and dialogues.

“I now know that, throughout history, many women in the Middle East have stood up to demand their rights and didn’t succumb to male abuse. More importantly, I’ve learned to accept and appreciate different cultures and traditions and not judge or stereotype people. On the whole, I’ve become more open-minded and respectful of different opinions.”

Janan Delgado, an AUC political science sophomore, went through a similar identity reconstruction. “Being a Muslim from Ecuador, I always felt caught between East and West. I didn’t know where I belong and wanted to find out my identity, my place in the world. This course taught me a lot about myself and made me realize that

there is always room to learn and discover new things about ourselves and other people,” she said.

For many students, dialoguing was a path to understanding people whom they had long perceived as different and foreign. “I always had the notion that the ‘West’ connotes materialism, secularism and a liberal attitude. But, when dialoguing with the NYU students, their sensitivity and religiosity shattered this stereotype for me ... I now refrain from using terms such as East and West; people are different and generalizations cannot be made,” said Yara Shokr, an AUC journalism and mass communication senior.

“Often I found myself disagreeing with students from NYU and agreeing with AUC students,” said Amy

Robinson, an NYU senior studying international education development. “The students at AUC seemed quite similar to our class because they all came from diverse backgrounds and were open-minded yet highly opinionated. Overall, this course has taught me that there is not an Eastern and Western line of thought or way of reacting to situations.”

Agreeing, Sentilles said, “I no longer lump the Middle East into a big group where everyone is a Muslim and people are oppressed.”

That is what many of the AUC students found out as well. “It was interesting to see how amongst ourselves as an AUC class, we disagreed a lot and didn’t have a united stance on any one topic,” Shokr said.

The dialogues also gave students the chance to hone their communication skills. With each dialoguing session, students from both sides learned how to convey their feelings and attitudes in ways that would not offend the other side. At the beginning, Robinson explained, everyone was being “overly

admit that Israel is the main contributor to the horrible situation in Palestine, but I was surprised to see that some of them didn’t feel any guilt toward siding with Israel,” said Karim El Dessouky, an AUC economics student.

When one of the NYU students got angry and stepped out of class during that discussion, many of the AUC students considered it an offense. “It is just not acceptable,” said Basel El Thalathiny, an AUC mechanical engineering senior. “You should defend your opinion, not leave. That made me



For Chandra Morrison, a junior at NYU majoring in multicultural studies, the dialogues were her first interaction with Middle Eastern people. “Before taking this course, I didn’t know much about the Middle East, Arabs or Muslims, but through the dialogues, I definitely feel I can relate to people my age in the Middle East,” she said.

Morrison also came to realize that, contrary to what the US media portrays, there “doesn’t exist a standard Middle East or Middle Easterner; within one region, there can be an incredible amount of diversity.”

polite.” However, as the class progressed, people were “more inclined to express their true opinions, especially if claims made by others offended them,” Robinson said.

But even though both sides exhibited tolerance and understanding of one another, there were some discussions in which communication was charged with emotion and people held on to their preconceptions. This was particularly true when discussing 9/11, the Palestinian-Israeli struggle and female oppression.

“I thought the NYU students would

more convinced of my stance.”

For many of the American students, the dialoguing session on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict may not have changed their opinions on the issue, but it was definitely an eye-opener.

“I got a better idea of the passion and complexity of the conflict,” said Morrison. “I don’t know if I have a more defined opinion about it, but it feels more real now and I can better understand how much it actually affects people in the region.”

Sharing the same viewpoint was Maureen Belluscio, a political science

and journalism junior at NYU. “I always thought I understood the conflict, but I only really understood what was written on paper: how many were dead, when the conflict began, why people support one side over the other. But in our dialoguing session, I witnessed and was acquainted with — for the first time — the truly powerful emotions behind the reasoning and behind the conflict.”

When it came to discussing 9/11, there were mixed reactions, especially when some AUC students said that

did not feel the same way.

“It really hurt me to hear [that] from some of the AUC students,” said Belluscio. “I understand the concept of the Twin Towers being a symbol of globalization and all of the negative things that the United States sometimes represents, but the symbol could never be separated from the tragedy.”

As for women’s liberation, the classes were a fertile ground for discussion.

“My perspective on veiling, after hearing Janan talk about the way in which it can be used as a tool to

political science senior. “There were so many things left unsaid.”

Morrison agreed: “Sometimes at the end of class, I felt that we hadn’t gotten past the first level of the subject.”

For some of the American students, the course left them with an urge to visit the Middle East and interact with its people. “I would really like to learn more about the history, languages and culture of the region and hopefully travel there. I now feel I could connect to a lot of the Cairo students — like they could be one of my friends here in



even though they sympathized with people dying, they felt that 9/11 made people in the West understand what the Middle East constantly deals with. They felt it sent a strong signal to the US government that it could not continue its aggressive foreign policy.

“I agree with the AUC students,” Robinson said. “While I do take pride in my country, I feel that the American government seemed to think that America was untouchable and was therefore conducting its foreign policy in an inappropriate manner.”

However, other American students

liberate rather than oppress, has convinced me that it is not a sign of male domination,” said Robinson.

For Dalia Adel, an AUC economics senior, discussing the issue of women’s freedom in the Middle East was a step in the right direction. “The West sees the veil as anti-modern, but we see it as a normal part of our lives. You can’t change perceptions but could at least close gaps,” she said.

With so many multifaceted issues to discuss, class time was not enough.

“I feel that we never reached an agreement,” said Abeer Ziadeh, an AUC

New York,” said Morrison.

For Sentilles, the course was a motivation for her to conduct an in-depth study about Egyptian women. In the summer, she plans to travel to Egypt and interview women about their conceptions of feminism, freedom and oppression. “I want to travel, see things, converse with people and put myself and my ideologies on the line,” she said. “This course has made me question and secure my faith in the possibility of transnational feminism and made me more aware of what it means to be a world citizen.”

Around the World

United States

Alumni meet in New York's Harvard Club and during the Middle East Studies Association conference in San Francisco



Nicholas Kristof (YAB '84), a columnist for *The New York Times* and former associate managing editor of *The Times*, was one of two alumni who received the Distinguished Alumni Award in New York.

An ambitious university student, Kristof graduated from Harvard in three years and shortly joined Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar, winning first-class honors in his study of law. Deciding against becoming a lawyer, Kristof pursued a career in journalism with a special interest in the Middle East. It was then that he realized that he must learn Arabic.

"There was a desperate need for Arab-speaking journalists," he said. Consequently, he joined AUC's Arabic Language Institute in 1983, and by the end of the academic year "was able to do interviews in Arabic and read the front page of *Al Ahram* newspaper." In addition to Arabic, Kristof also studied Chinese in Taipei.

Kristof joined *The New York Times* in October 1984, climbing up the ladder from an economics reporter to the newspaper's bureau chief in Hong Kong, Beijing and Tokyo. Throughout his career, Kristof traveled to more than 100 countries.

In 1990, Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn, also a journalist, won a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of

China's Tiananmen Square democracy movement. They were the first married couple to win a Pulitzer for journalism. Kristof was awarded

several other prizes, including the George Polk Award for foreign reporting and the Overseas Press Club Award for international reporting.

The second recipient of a Distinguished Alumni Award was **Yervant Terzian** '60, David C. Duncan Professor in the Physical Sciences at Cornell University for the past six years.

"My passion since I was a small boy was astronomy — the planets, the stars and the universe. At AUC, I was the only physics major when I graduated," he said.

With a bachelor's in physics from AUC, Terzian embarked on a career that made him one of the leading experts in his field. After obtaining his master's and doctorate degrees in astronomy from Indiana University, he worked as a research associate at Cornell University's Arcicibo Observatory in Puerto Rico. In 1977, he became an astronomy professor at Cornell, and in three years was promoted to chairman of the astronomy department— a position he held for 20 years. In 1996, he was appointed as director of the NASA New York State Space Grant.

Recipient of numerous honorary doctorates from different universities around the globe, Terzian holds many professional affiliations. He is a research professor with the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center and a member of the International Astronomical Union, the International Union of Radio Science, the American Astronomical Society and the Hellenic Astronomical Society.

In addition, Terzian was scientific editor of *The Astrophysical Journal* for 10 years and is author and co-author of more than 200 scientific publications and editor of more than six books.



Qatar



Lunch hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Alaa Deeb '89 (Nesreen Al-Refai '90)



Alumni reception hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Ahmad Samarah '94 (Nadia)



Parents dinner hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Fathi Samarah (Tahany)

At the alumni gathering in Qatar last December, four alumni received the Distinguished Alumni Volunteer Award. After obtaining her bachelor's in business administration, **Amany Bassily** '83 moved to Qatar, where she worked in the oil industry. In 1994, she shifted her career to banking and is now country credit manager of consumer banking at Standard Chartered Bank in Qatar.

A mother of four, Bassily maintains a busy schedule both at home and in the workplace. Nostalgic about her days at AUC, Bassily said, "I admit that all the successful achievements I made in my life were mainly due to the investment my parents put in my education at AUC. The award I received [from the university] was one of the most touching moments I had in my life."

The second award winner **Nesreen Al-Refai** '90 moved to Qatar in 1990

after marrying her classmate Alaa Deeb '89. They have been living there ever since with their two children, Nour and Kareem.

In Qatar, Al-Refai held challenging positions at international oil and gas companies. She currently works as a management assistant with Occidental Petroleum of Qatar. Her husband has also maintained a successful career in the oil industry and is now the managing director of Al-Mamoon Oil and Gas Field.

Magdi El Difrawi (MBA '72), also an award recipient, developed a solid foundation in management through his work with Egypt's Central Agency for Organization and Administration.

"The MBA was key to my success in every place I chose to work," El Difrawi said. "I left AUC with a degree as well as a wonderful wife, Jacqueline Maghraby, who was a faculty member

working at the library at the time."

El Difrawi and his wife traveled extensively, before settling in Qatar, where he taught at the University of Qatar. Today, he is the financial expert in Qatar's Ministry of Finance.

"I feel very grateful to AUC, this wonderful educational institution which gave me a lot. Receiving this award from my university is a moment I will always cherish," he said.

The fourth award winner in Qatar was **Samar Atassi** '87, '91. Her career began with Qatar National Navigation Company, where she worked as the finance manager's executive assistant. She then moved to Qatar National Bank, where she rose to corporate communications manager. Currently, she works as a marketing supervisor at Qatar Telecom.

Emphasizing the assets she acquired from the university, Atassi said, "AUC helped develop my love of teamwork and volunteerism. It gave me the freedom to express my opinions."



Seniors Celebrate

Celebrating years of hard work, the graduating class of 2004 came together in a special reception organized by the alumni office. Not only did the event give the seniors a chance to celebrate their graduation together, it also made them aware of the the services that would be available to them when they become alumni.

The Egyptian group, *El Mesaharaty*, performed at the event, which included Arabic folklore music and theater sketches, followed by dinner.



Class Notes

'47

Leslie Martin would like to hear from her colleagues, who will be celebrating their 58th anniversary this year. She can be reached by e-mail at ljmartin@wam.umd.edu or at by regular mail at 5313 Iroquois Road, Bethesda, MD 20816, USA.

'51

Samira Dabbagh takes pride in being an AUC graduate and believes that the high-quality education she received at AUC helped her lead a successful diplomatic life with her husband, Ambassador Hassan Dabbagh. She moved from one country to another and adjusted to different cultures easily and confidently. Dabbagh plans to continue serving her alma mater through the scholarship fund and encouraging alumni and friends to support the university.

'57

Peter Estiban would like to wish his professors and colleagues majoring in chemistry a merry Christmas and happy new year. He is praying that the year brings peace and prosperity around the world, especially in the Middle East.

'76

Jehan El Mekkawy (MA) recently wrote four novels, including *The Descent of Queens*, which was published by the Egyptian General Organization for Books.

'85

Aya Maher (MA '02) is currently working as a business instructor at AUC's Center for Adult and Continuing Education. She is also

A Lifetime of Swimming to Success

Speaking fondly of what she calls her "synchro" family, **Sophie Sarwat** '70 has coached thousands of girls in synchronized swimming. In December 2004, she received the Excellence in Sport award from the International Olympic Committee for her lifelong commitment to sports and for establishing and nurturing synchronized swimming in Egypt.

An avid sports lover, Sarwat has taken part in swimming, diving, basketball, tennis and squash, but synchronized swimming is her passion. President and founder of the Synchro Friends Society, which seeks to preserve the sport, Sarwat said that the Olympics recognition is an honor.

"I'm recognized abroad because synchronized swimming is part of the Olympics now. However, it still hasn't realized its full potential in Egypt," she said.

Sarwat was a board member of the Egyptian Swimming Federation and chair of the Egyptian Technical Synchronized Swimming Committee

pursuing a doctorate in public administration. She has two sons, Mohamed, 14, and Omar, 10. Maher is a member of two non-governmental organizations working on community development: the Egyptian Women Association and ZKH for Holistic Human Development.

'87

Yasser Hassan (MBA '91) was promoted to managing director of Al Watany Bank of Egypt's Mohandessin branch and currently teaches part time at AUC.



Sarwat receiving the award

(TSSC). In addition, she was vice chair of the International TSSC and received both the silver and gold Federation Internationale Nation Amateur pins for her dedication to synchronized swimming. Sarwat has also served as an international judge, attended six Olympic games and lectured in many parts of the world.

Today, Sarwat plays bridge on the Egyptian ladies' national team and is a member of the Egyptian Association for Environment and Community Services.

"I can't play sports anymore but I love the challenge of competition. Bridge is a mental game that gives me that thrill," she said.

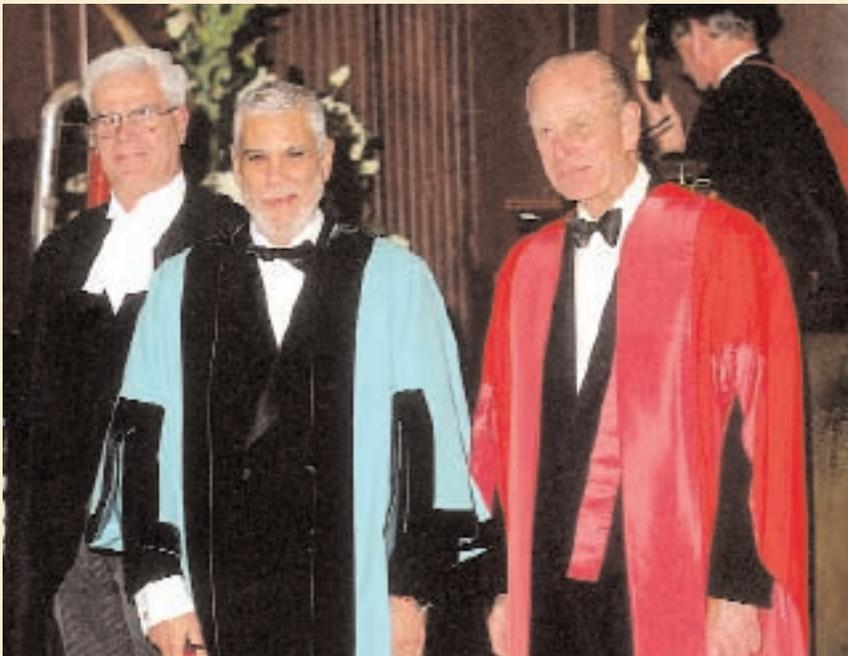
'89

Gihan Abdou is the owner of the Daniel Center for maternal and children clothing in Mohandessin, Egypt. Abdou and her sister Sherine '93 are both members of the Rotary Cairo Capital Club. The sisters recently took part in the Student Clothes Exhibition.

'91

Rania El Farouki has a 1-year-old baby girl, Maya and two boys; Adham, 13, and Selim, 9.

Committed to Fueling Higher Education



Yousef Abdul Latif Jameel and the chancellor of the University of Cambridge, The Duke of Edinburgh

Yousef Jameel '68 was recently honored by the University of Cambridge, which admitted Jameel as companion of the Guild of Cambridge Benefactors.

During the official ceremony, Jameel was praised as a "generous supporter of the high academic aims of this prestigious university."

One of AUC's most devoted alumni, Jameel is a well-known Saudi Arabian business leader and a visionary pioneer in several industries. Jameel built one of Saudi Arabia's most important and diversified corporations. After graduating from AUC with a bachelor's degree in economics, Jameel, the eldest son of an established Saudi Arabian businessman, the late Sheikh Abdul Latif Jameel, went to work for his father's Toyota auto agency. Under his leadership, the Jameel Company quickly grew to become the sole agent for Toyota in Saudi Arabia.

Today, Jameel's business endeavors have diversified into many fields. It is focused on high technology and innovation, actively supporting research and development teams in various universities worldwide.

A long-time supporter of higher education, Jameel's generous donations to AUC have been used to construct the 16-year-old Jameel Center on the Greek Campus, alongside other initiatives at the university. Jameel has also supported the School of Business, Economics and Communication and will provide funding for scientific research and education at AUC.

Explaining why he is committed to supporting educational institutions like AUC and Cambridge, Jameel said, "Education is key to the success of our future generations. Therefore, universities which have spearheaded high-quality educational programs should be supported whenever possible."

'92

Heba Shaaban (MA '04) moved to Dubai in June 2003 with her husband Omar Delawar. She has two girls Hoda, 4, and Hana, 9 months. Shaaban is currently working as a freelance translator with the UNFAO in Rome, Italy and has completed her master's degree in political science with a thesis titled, "Public Private Partnerships and the Experience of Alexandria, Egypt."

'96

Hala Mattar has been promoted to head of the science department at the International School of Choueifat, Cairo. Mattar was also blessed with a second baby boy, Karim, and her son Ahmed started kindergarten this year.

'97

Dhabiya Al-Mehairi (MA) has been appointed as the first female ambassador of the League of Arab States Mission in New Delhi, India.

'98

Julie Purcell was promoted to director of marketing at Kenny's Country Cheeses in Louisville, Kentucky in August 2004.

'01

Manal El-Meligy is married to Haitham El-Okda and has one daughter, Halla.

'03

Islam El Adaway recently published an article titled "Moral Technology" in the *Common Sense Intercollegiate Journal of Humanism and Free Thought*. It was also published in the Quodlibet Online Journal of *Christian Theology and Philosophy*. It focuses on the evolution of technology and its application in peace or in war and can be viewed online at <http://www.quodlibet.net>.

El Adaway is working as a contracts engineer and claims consultant for Nile Aster International.

'04

Mohamed Selim ranked third among student participants in the Ninth Arab-US Association for Communication Educators Conference. His winning paper was titled "The Internet in Egypt: Prospects and Challenges."

Special Programs

Michael Rodriguez (YAB '88) has returned to the field of international development after working for a decade in community and public health in the United States. He now serves as information technology projects director at John Snow Inc. in the international and health services divisions. He would like to get in touch with alumni interested in the international public health and development fields via e-mail mrodriguez@jsi.com.

Honoring Academic Excellence

Mahmoud Abdel-Fattah '05 received the Abdel Rahman El Sawy award during the Midyear Commencement. A mark of extraordinary achievement, the award is given to a student who has attained the highest grade point average in engineering and who has received a public school scholarship, granted to Egypt's most outstanding students. Abdel-Fattah was a Citibank Public School Scholarship recipient.



"I am very proud and pleased to have received the award," said Abdel-Fattah, who is currently studying for a master's in computer science under a fellowship from AUC.

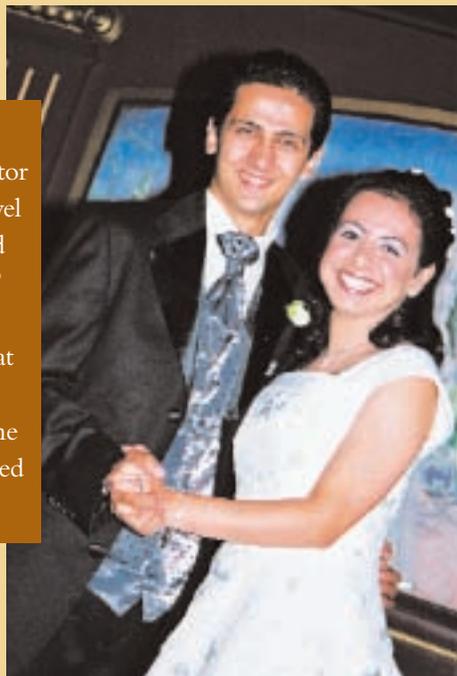
Actively engaged as a student, Abdel-Fattah has participated in a wide range of extracurricular activities at AUC, including the International Conference on Information Technology, the Arab Youth Development Congress, the Electronics Engineering Association

and the Association for Computing and Machinery (ACM) student chapter. He was also a member of the AUC team that ranked first in the latest ACM regional competition.

"These activities taught me organization skills, how to communicate with others and work in a team, how to initiate an idea and amend it through trial and error," he said. "I really appreciate my years at AUC. I now have clear goals and am open to new ideas, new fields and new cultures," he said.

Weddings

Eman Fouad '01, marketing coordinator at International Travel Center, was married to Sameh Sobhy, IT consultant and software developer at IT-Connection, in November 2002. The couple honeymooned in South Africa.



Mayada Wahsh '02 and Mohammad Abusaa '01 were married on July 30, 2004 at the Cairo Marriott Hotel. They traveled to the United States for their honeymoon and currently live in Florida.

Akher Kalam

When Marshall McLuhan predicted nearly 40 years ago that the world will become a global village, he was right. Electronic media — including television, the Internet and even mobile phones — allow for the quick transmission of information across the globe, sometimes faster than it takes for us to know of events in our own communities. The world has become one entity, interlinked through digitized media. Though McLuhan's hypothesis seemed far-fetched at the time, it is obvious today how the media play an integral role in our daily life.

Can you imagine starting off your day without checking the news on your favorite satellite channel or skimming through the newspaper headlines? If you missed that and woke up in a hurry, you would definitely tune to your favorite radio station in the car to catch up with events happening in your country and in distant continents. And the first thing you do when you reach the office is certainly to log on to the Internet to read through international news sites and check your e-mail, which many times contains global news bulletins and updates.

This all confirms McLuhan's hypothesis. However, the question that perplexes many people, and to which I stand oblivious, is that of universal media integrity. Do media systems have a universal code of ethics — a code that is widely accepted and universally applied by journalists worldwide? Journalists do, of course, abide by a code of ethics, but it seems to me that the standards of media ethics have deteriorated over the years.

The fundamental basis of journalism is to serve the public interest, helping people become informed, engaged citizens. That is achieved by imparting news to them in an objective manner. What's happening now, however, is that news is being mixed with opinions. News coverage is no

longer impartial and objective, but is many times interspersed with viewpoints and opinions — a big no in journalism. Media coverage of the same event differs from one channel to the other

and from one medium to the other even though the event is the same and the facts are the same. That is because every channel communicates news in a way that upholds its own political agenda.

For example, in the recent assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri, CNN's coverage pointed fingers at Syria, and Al-Jazeera was filled with theories about who would be the beneficiary from Al-Hariri's death. Same with President Hosni Mubarak's recent decision to amend the Egyptian constitution and allow for multi-candidate presidential elections. Egyptian national newspapers hailed the move and glorified Mubarak, whereas foreign media indicated that it is a step that should have been taken at least a decade ago.

The question of media integrity is essential to make McLuhan's hypothesis valid for all people. In my view, the global village lacks media sincerity, and thus the world is set on a path to be a diversified and scattered entity — one comprised of independent local villages.

Mohamed Selim '04, journalism and mass communication graduate student, is the vice president of AUC's Graduate Students Association.



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.