ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS DEPARTMENT

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WORK & PROGRESS

A YEAR IN REVIEW
Dawning of a New Age

A letter from our Editor in Chief - Asma Al Yousef

It is with great feelings of surreal awe that residents of the Kingdom wake up to new changes almost every week; from women taking the wheel to the Kingdom being open to curious visitors. As far as the intrigue of Arabia is concerned, many are enjoying desert dunes and social sunsets. The 2030 vision is more than just advancement in infrastructure. It seems that 2030 is here and we are all basking in its magnificence.

This edition of the English Magazine is a Year in Review of change and possibilities, kindling the flame of everything new. This month we are focusing on, well, everything; from quaint cafes to essentials for travel. We want to showcase the University as the cornerstone of possibility, and to celebrate our students, educators and the people in their offices out of the classroom that worked in their positions with passion. The shared language is more than just communication. It’s about finding your own voice and sparking interest in art, literature, media, and the pioneers of today.
Your Monthly Magazine
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The Skillful Barista

Fahad Abu Melha talks to English Magazine about Coffee, Elephants and Good Energy.

Fahad Melha is a student at King Saud University’s Common First Year- Science Faculty. 5 Elephants Café- My part-time passion.

I became interested in coffee culture for a number of reasons. Mainly because we are all so busy with our daily lives, but always stop and find time for coffee. In Saudi Arabia, cafés have sprung up in almost every corner; each with its own unique offering of what great coffee is.
What do you like most about coffee in general?
Fahad: I am really getting into latte art. It has intrigued me since the start of Instagram. Now, I try my hand at creating interesting art. The movement of the foam on the top of the cup and how it gets shaped is also very calming.

What makes a barista?
Fahad: A barista is someone who knows what it takes to make a fine cup of coffee. Mainly, to suit the tastes of many different palettes. I like to call myself a junior barista because I have a lot to learn. The journey to becoming better is also fun and allows me to enjoy my job.

What else about coffee gets you excited?
Fahad: I like that people enjoy different styles and looks of their coffee. I met someone recently that said his latte had to have beige warm colours on the top for him to enjoy it. I think coffee is the most interesting thing as it gets people together and is enjoyed by millions of people around the globe.

That’s a good view on coffee. So can you take us through a day in the life of a Jr. Barista?
Fahad: I work usually in the evenings. Being a student, I really enjoy balancing my student life with my work life. Working at 5 Elephants gets me excited, so it isn’t really a job. I start in the afternoons, and assist with orders and try my best to serve customers with a smile. When we get orders for coffees with cream or lattes; I practice making fun shapes to impress our customers. I love how it lights up their face to see that we’ve taken the time to make their experience more personal.

Do you have any advice for someone who also would like to work part-time as a barista?
Fahad: If you have a passion for it, go for it. It will challenge you in ways you didn’t expect. Finding the perfect balance of sweetness and the rich, bitterness of coffee is a science. The bliss point for every customer is different. So, it’s all about finding that balance. It is very therapeutic and selfless.

Anything else you’d like to add?
Fahad: Come to 5 Elephants to experience our good energy, and even better coffee.
A Saudi Youth Perspective

H.R.H. PRINCE TURKI BIN ABDULAZIZ BIN NASSER BIN ABDULAZIZ ALSAUD
We are blessed in Saudi Arabia to be witnessing a new golden era under the leadership and guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin AbdulAziz, and his trusted son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. We are now a nation that is promoting and encouraging its youth to achieve greatness and, as a young Saudi myself, I have never been as sure that the future is in safe hands, Allah willing.

It is an established fact that the age of petroleum is coming to an end. For far too long, we have ignored this issue. We could have continued with “business as usual” for quite a while longer only to suffer the most severe consequences later. It will be a challenge to diversify our economy, rid ourselves of our dependency on oil and gas and move towards a knowledge-based society- but this task has to be undertaken. It saddens me to say that my country, which has such enormous potential, has lagged behind in so many areas for so many years. However, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman says: “No longer”! I am with him and so is my generation.

There is much work to be done. Among the most important tasks is to encourage and support more women to join the workforce. It is estimated that, currently, only 20 percent of women are employed. This is such a waste of talent and potential that could be otherwise used to advance the country. Current developments such as; women driving again on Saudi roads – as they did in the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s- will contribute to this goal.

Saudi youth make up 70 percent of the country’s population. Over the last ten years, they have studied at some of the world’s best universities. They have gained practical skills and experience working in many leading international companies operating both inside and outside the Kingdom. I know of their eagerness to implement their skills and knowledge at home. Now, they will have this opportunity. We live in exciting times. What we always knew was possible is becoming a reality. Our country can now be rightfully called a global hub for creativity and innovation. I believe in my generation. They are our most valuable resource.
In the past, rarely a week went by without international coverage of the Kingdom. What’s different now is that even the most critical news outlets are starting to report the huge advances that are taking place. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has taken the world by surprise with initiatives such as the much-anticipated Aramco IPO and mega-projects such as Neom. Such projects, unparalleled in their size, will ensure that we won’t be left behind in a post-oil era.

We have been fortunate to have had decisive leadership at the right time. If we look at what we have achieved so far. Despite the shortcomings of the past, the future holds great promise and it is the talented and capable youth of Saudi Arabia who will leave their mark in the history books.

Anyone who has visited Saudi Arabia recently will have noticed the changes that are taking place in almost every aspect of life. What can stop us? Well, as our Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said: “only death!”

“I am with him and so is my generation.”

H.R.H. Prince Turki Bin Abdulaziz Bin Nasser Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
The final weeks of the first semester have brought with it the last round of exam invigilation. This made way for Professional Development (PD) workshops that anyone from the ELSD can offer to give by simply submitting the proposal form to the PD unit.

This December, Mr. Yusuf Mataar conducted the first workshop titled “Student Academic Needs and Lesson Planning”. While Mr. Mahdi Qadi, presented on “The Importance of Reflective Practices among Teachers”. Both workshops drew on theory garnered from the presenters' current graduate studies in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and/or applied linguistics.

A clear-cut Power Point presentation served to delineate the specifics of both topics that seemed to coincide nicely. This revolved around being introspective by self-assessing one’s teaching performance. “How can I make myself better?” becomes the paramount question in a successful self-evaluation on the lifelong path to honing, consistently, one’s teaching skill set.

Both presenters made it a point to have their audience think critically and reflectively about the classes taught during the semester. The asking of non-rhetorical questions to gauge their (the teachers in attendance) understanding toward the concepts highlighted to the success of becoming competent in one’s profession. Teachers are encouraged to deliver [and attend] workshops that will add value to not only their own didactic acumen, but also to that of their colleagues.

For a deeper insight into the theory of reflective practices, check out The Reflective Practitioner, available wherever books are sold.
Design excellence comes in many shapes and forms. Whether we admire the design of a travel mug or a sofa chair, it takes creativity and science to make the finished product. As the grains of sand swiftly pass through an hourglass, someone is working on a new design. The enchanted love many have for all things Arabian mixed with oriental hues goes back centuries. If you ever heard stories of desert pilgrims carrying hope and ornaments on their voyages into mysterious and magical lands, you know the aesthetic I’m talking about.

One business in Saudi Arabia has successfully wrapped and encapsulated the magic of Arabia. Through design offerings and decor that have intrigued visitors for decades. The store has a large following and is known to rival the definition of modern contemporary. Embassy staff and foreign nationals frequent the store to take back with them a piece of Arabia. From large trusses that hold comfortable chairs to artwork embellished around masterful sketches of a time passed; the store is intoxicatingly beautiful. The eyes journey around the curated walls will leave the beholder lost for words. Not only have we dedicated a full page to showcase the offerings of Desert Designs, but we were fortunate to get to know the family behind the success.

Raneen Bukhari’s parents opened the business in Khobar when many expats were just arriving to work in the Kingdom. We asked her a few questions to get to know the family behind the brand.
Tell us, where did it all start and when?
Raneen: My parents started this venture in 1990. It was an interesting time and somehow the momentum kept picking up after that.

Who is Raneen, and what inspires her?
Raneen: Well, I am the daughter of Qamar Ahmed and Farid Bukhari. Two wonderfully creative and brave individuals who paved the way for me to be inspired by all things beautiful.

What initiated this niche offering?
Raneen: My mother and father saw the need for attention to Saudi heritage. There was a lack of care and knowledge in those times. We have great joy seeing how much love and appreciation is finally being given to the heritage of this country, tangible and intangible.

Tell us about the design process for any of the items we see?
Raneen: Qamar Ahmed is the co-founder and head designer. She has a group of young, energetic Saudis who help her create-together with a great team of carpenters in Al Khobar, who do all the skilled work.

We’ve heard so much about your store. What do you think it is that makes people come back year after year?
Raneen: Our quality, attention to detail, fair pricing (fair for our customers and our suppliers), and constant change. It also helps that we do bespoke design. Custom pieces tailored to the preferences of our customer.

What is your team like?
Raneen: Our core team is the family; my mother and father, me, my brothers and my aunt. Then we have a team of enthusiastic people from Saudi and abroad who bring it all together. Comprised of carvers, painters, tailors, carpenters, and more.

What advice can you give to a student who wants to follow in your footsteps?
Raneen: Work before you graduate, and start early. Work in anything and everything. Graduate with a closer idea of what it is you like to continue to do!
The Fascinating Calendars of the World

By Hassan Nitami

By definition, a calendar means dividing time into cycles. The Sumerians, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians were the first to divide the time into a year, a month and a week. Historically, calendars have been associated with important events, either to keep timing of the agricultural crops or that of religious celebrations.

The Gregorian calendar is the most common and prevalent calendar today. Adopted by the Western world as well as the majority of the rest of the world. The year is divided into 12 months of irregular length, and 365-366 days.

The Hijri calendar (or the Islamic calendar) depends on the moon’s circulation around the earth, and the year is divided into 12 months and 354-355 days; 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar. It is mostly used in Gulf countries, but other Muslim countries use it for religious rather than civil purposes. The Hijri calendar began when the Prophet (PBUH) migrated from Mecca to Madinah. This year is 1440 according to the Hijri calendar.

The Chinese calendar incorporates both the cycle of the moon and the sun. Unlike most other calendars, years have names that are repeated every 60 years with a 12-year cycle. Each year is related to an animal sign. This year is 4716 according to the Chinese calendar. However, the Chinese only use it for cultural events and traditional holidays.

There are other prominent calendars such as the Ethiopian calendar. It is closely related to the Coptic calendar. It has 13 months but the last month has only six days, and is seven to eight days behind the Gregorian calendar. It is the year 2011 according to the Ethiopian calendar.

Regardless of how many world calendars are used today, they remain a way to define time for the sake of uniformity.
King Saud University was honoured to welcome teachers of different disciplines from the Ministry of Education (MOE) during the summer semester. The teachers were chosen to take part in an engaging English program.

It was a four-week program which covered English teaching, incorporated with fun activities for the visiting teachers. Guests of the program were gifted their own KSU bags, together with planned activities and in-contact sessions to enhance their language acquisition.

The program allowed teachers to go back to their classrooms equipped with better methodologies and English ability.
Launch of the Ministry of Education Summer Program

Major English events were held every Sunday
Janadriya

Festival

Winter in Arabia. It sounds as whimsical as it is.

The cold that seeps through our doors reminds us of the blistering heat that we felt only a few weeks ago. Thoughts of wrapped farwas with a bright orange fire waving its flames on the desert camp floor come to mind.

We love winter. It symbolizes cozy family togetherness and hot beverages that warm the comfort. That’s why we are so glad the Janadriyah Festival is here. Whether it’s tasting food from different provinces or watching traditionally fashioned dances that are almost too good to miss. There are loads of children’s activities, camel rides, and souvenirs to buy. Stop by at the organic honey stalls or the leather sandal maker. The festival does not disappoint.

Go on this adventure and hashtag your images with #ksulovesfestivals. You could win vouchers from exclusive stores. Use your twitter or Instagram account to hashtag your pics and videos.

National Festival of Heritage and Culture (Al Janadria 33) from the 20th December 2018, to 5th of January 2019.
We sometimes forget the basics when travelling. These essential items can get you through a long layover or an unexpected loss of luggage.

Toothbrush and a small tube of toothpaste
Small roll-on deodorant
Power bank (charged)
Travel towel (slightly larger than a facelot)
Dry Shampoo (travel can)
Hairbrush/accessories
Travel prayer mat
Money (keep some notes in your hand luggage)
Make-up if necessary
Band-Aids (at least 5)
A small snack (biscuits or trail mix)
Razor
Small moisturiser with SPF
Diarrhoea treatment
Paracetamol