



THE SPINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Life is an experience and so much is happening in the world. Unfortunately, one can only really understand a fraction of what is happening everywhere. However, one can always read it; one can always learn and absorb this love for information and awareness.

When most people think about reading, they will imagine books with nothing but a jumble of meaningless letters, colourless and lifeless. This boring, monotonous absorption of information does not fully utilise the estimated 10 million colours the human brain is capable of perceiving. Which brings me to the question, "Why not take advantage of the power of the human eye and its love for aesthetics?"

We realize that layouts and designs need to be created to allow readers to immerse themselves. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so combining both would surely give us even more meaning, invoke feelings and promote experience.

Our team at The Spine spent weeks redesigning and rethinking the design and creating standards for the journalists and graphics team to work on. Carefully selecting fonts that are ergonomic and easy to read for sighted people, and ensuring that each page itself is a unique experience.

This may be our first issue, but while The Spine is still young, we hope you enjoy the experience that we tried to tailor for you.

-Suleiman Mashini

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LOCAL NEWS

EVENTS

Alia Kawar

If you can't wait to get into the Holiday Spirit... The TAJ Christmas Carnival is just for you.. Visit the first indoor Christmas Carnival at TAJ Lifestyle to experience everything you love about Christmas in one magical place! Hop on the TAJ Kiddie Train and enjoy the coolest indoor entertainment for the whole family with a Christmas Carousel, Ferris Wheel, Snow Globe, Reindeer Rodeo, Gingerbread House and Christmas bazaar!

Location: TAJ Mall

Date: 9/12/2014 – 5/2/2015



If you're an Artist and you want to expand your knowledge of local art, the Phantasmagoria exhibition for Mohammad Awwad is where you need to be. "Mohammad Awwad makes sense, through dreamlike imagery, of such contentious issues such as power and politics, the environment and culture."

Location: 18 Omar Bin Khattab Street, 1st Circle (next to Books@Cafe)

Date: 3rd December-31st



Awwad, Mohammad. Phantasmagoria. Digital image. N.p., 2014. Web.

Don't miss the Arsheef: An exhibition by Warshe. This exhibition gives you an insight into the past and present as it displays an archive of old Arabic newspapers, magazines, and vinyls all released between the 50s and 70s. Transported from dusty shelves behind closed doors to posters on walls and audio/ visual art.. So if you're looking to go back a few decades, this exhibition is just for you.

Date: 16/12/2014-31/12/2014

Location:13 Nadeem Al-Mallah st., Jabal Al-Weibdeh, Amman, Jordan 11183

Time: 6:30 PM



Alkadhi, Ayad. 10 Minutes with Ayad Alkadhi. Digital image. N.p., n.d. Web.

If you're an Activist, You can't miss the "Hopes for Women in Education" on Saturday December 20th. Get ready for a poetic night by four Arab women who have come together to help raise money for charity.

Location: Kempiniski Amman Hotel

Date: December 20th

Tickets: 40 JDs & Night includes a 4-course meal.

P.s. For all those attending and wanting to reserve seats, please RSVP by sending an email to info@hopesforwomen.org with subject line: "Charity Event RSVP" - please note the number of seats you want to reserve!



Poets for Education. Digital image. Jordan Sun. N.p., n.d. Web.

If you're an Athlete don't forget to participate in Rafat Al-Qaisi Modern Tennis Academy at ABS for the Winter 2015 Season. This event is just what you need to accomplish your new year's resolution of staying fit and healthy. Also, this Tennis Academy will give you the chance to improve your tennis skills and work well with others.

Location: Amman Bacculaureate School

Date: January 11th –March 30th



**Announcing
The Winter 2015 Season
at ABS**



Jan 11 - Mar 30

Ages: 5 to 17

**For Registration &
Information**

0775555344



Winter Season. Digital image. ABS. N.p., n.d. Web.



Mashini, Suleiman. The Lights. Digital image. 500px. N.p., 14 July 2012. Web.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Alia Kwar

For many years Jordan has opened its borders to refugees from neighboring countries and has been a host country for both Iraqi refugees and Palestinians in the past decades, and has been very hospitable in accepting them and constantly aiding them throughout all of their struggles and in hopefully overcoming their past issues of leaving their homes and becoming stranded in a country that will take time to actually call home. In the past few years, Jordan has also agreed to host a large number of Syrian refugees due to their country's ongoing civil war, between the supporters of President Bashar Al Asad and the rebels that oppose his government and his rule accusing him of being a tyrant, a person that's unaware of his surroundings and how to properly rule his country and he's being accused of neglecting humanitarian needs and being rather self-centered.

However, the growing issue is that Jordan is widely known for its limited natural resources, consistently high unemployment rates, and its budget is substantially dependent on foreign aid. These factors have both limited its capacity to take in refugee populations and led to growing public protests and calls for reform from the people. Although not signatory to the Refugee Convention, the Jordanian government remains open to working with international actors inside its borders to address humanitarian concerns. This however has created a rather controversial issue that needs to be discussed and up till now there hasn't been a definite answer on what's going to happen next and how is it going to be carried on from there. Should the Jordanian government ban the entry of other Syrian refugees and limit their supply or should the Jordanian government sacrifice its resources and act as the typical Arab neighbouring country and be open to all consequences as that's what the people are expecting to happen and in order to avoid all comments of other countries.



Addario, Lysney. Syrian Refugee Crisis. Digital image. NY Times. Web.

In October 2014, more than 600,000 Syrian refugees had registered in Jordan after escaping violence in their home country. This large number of refugees has been a cause of concern within the government and within the people themselves. Starting in July 2012, Jordan opened a large refugee camp for up to 150,000 people in response to the overwhelming number of arrivals and the difficulty of providing services to what had been a widely dispersed population. Since then, a second large-scale camp has been established, as well as a smaller one run by the United Arab Emirates. camps have opened since then in Jordan and all of these camps have witnessed a heavy overflow in the number of refugees, leading to a decrease in the supplies available, and a call for more assistance to avoid this major problem.

Personally, I think that, as Jordanians, we should aim to work together with other UN and related organisations and come up with specific frameworks to deal with the number of refugees by creating new friendly conditions to ensure that there will be no overflow of any kind. This would therefore not impact our supply and demand and we would learn how to properly compensate resources and how to compromise in order to ensure that all the people are getting their necessary rights and that none are compromised due to national issues. The UN has been working endlessly in order to try to come to agreements and deals with the countries that have whole-heartedly opened their arms and welcomed them in, and these agreements include working through frameworks in order to achieve specific goals in the near future and to try to create a way for the Syrians to have access to rights that range from education, services and health. As citizens of the world we need to support those of us who have been unfortunate and have been forced to leave their homes for one reason or another and to offer them all that rests in our capabilities and I'm sure that if there's a will there will always be a way.





INTERNATIONAL NEWS

HOW SONY PICTURES WAS SUPPOSEDLY HACKED BY NORTH KOREA

Editorial

Samira Shabsogh

Apparently, the Sony execs, mainly white males in their 40's, earn a minimum of \$1 million each year. Keep in mind that the company spent approximately half a million dollars this past year in severance costs used to terminate employees. This information, and more, was leaked during the recent Sony Hack scandal by a group of self-proclaimed online vigilantes called Guardians of Peace, however the intent behind this act remains mysterious.

Let's get down to business, to defeat the Huns. Just joking. How on earth is North Korea involved with this hack? Well, the truth is, an anonymous source made a comment saying that North Korea is probably behind the hack. The reason? This is in retaliation to Sony's not yet released movie, The Interview, in which Seth Rogan and James Franco attempt to kill the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Un. I personally don't think that state sanctioned attacks would be accompanied by a red skeleton, but to each their own.

We've been here before with nation-state attributions. Anonymous sources told Bloomberg earlier this year that investigators were looking at the Russian government as the possible culprit behind a hack of JP Morgan Chase. The possible motive in that case was retaliation for sanctions against the Kremlin over military actions against Ukraine. Bloomberg eventually walked back from the story to admit that cybercriminals were more likely the culprits. And in 2012, US officials blamed Iran for an attack called Shamoon that erased data on thousands of computers at Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil company. No proof was offered to back the claim, but glitches in the malware used for the attack showed it was less likely a sophisticated nation-state attack than a hacktivist assault against the oil conglomerate's policies.

How, why, or when the attack occurred remains unclear. Various celebrities were dissed, SSN's were released, and many pieces of sensitive and valuable information were leaked. What remains to be true is that this group, the GOP, is out for revenge. The question is, who are they after?



Hacked by #GOP. Digital image. Ubergizmo. N.p., 24 Nov. 2014. Web.



LET'S TALK ABOUT FERGUSON

Samira Shabsogh

I've been personally following the news stories regarding Michael Brown's shooting in Ferguson, Missouri for quite some time now. Most people have heard of it, yet they have dismissed it as a case of minorities have felt that this is in fact under-privileged and biased news. The story has gained an increased amount of publicity in the past week due to the recent judgment regarding Darren Wilson, the officer who shot the 18-year-old Brown, as well as the recent shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice. In an attempt to construct a balanced argument, I just want to lay down the facts. I will not offer my own personal opinion, though it may be obvious, in order to reduce bias.

Michael Brown definitely stole cigars. Not that it matters, considering stealing one pack of cigarettes is not a justified reason for a police officer to shoot at someone. Brown also had Marijuana in his system. This doesn't really matter either seeing as it's medically reported that it stays in your system for up to 40 days after consumption.

Wilson shot and killed Brown on August 9th. Brown was unarmed and died 150 feet away from the police vehicle, where the confrontation took place. Six shots were fired, at least two of which were at close range. Two shots hit Brown in the head, but none hit him from behind. This is contrary to a popular myth that says Brown was killed 35 feet from the police vehicle and was shot from behind as he was running away.

If you'd like to take a look at the witness interview results, please read the chart to the right. Witnesses are not always considered to be fully credible, so be cautious.

What can be concluded is that the actus reus, or guilty act for all of you law hopefuls, is murder. The mens rea, guilty mind or intent, is as yet unclear.

Both parties were described as never being troublesome. Brown was called a "gentle giant" in high school and Wilson was called an "average Joe."

Much of the investigation is ambiguous, and most of it can be arguably biased or half truthful. Unfortunately, this situation resulted in the death of a teenager. While being hailed a hero by some, Wilson's reputation in the international community is forever smudged. Some say that Wilson had a right to shoot, which according to Missouri law is technically true if you discount some of the key eyewitnesses, but he most certainly did not have the right to shoot and to kill.

But why is this story so popular? Many say it is a classic case of White shooter vs Black victim. It resonates with so many people of colour that despite "official" equality, white supremacy still heavily exists. Wilson never filed an incident report. At a Ferguson protest, a protestor was shot in the head with a real bullet. The violence in Ferguson is atrocious by all means and standards, and unfortunately it isn't stopping.

At first I intended this to be a

Witness interviews from the Michael Brown shooting investigation

WITNESS	Date	Did MB charge at police car or police officer?	Did MB reach into or otherwise directly interact with police car?	Did DW fire gun repeatedly at MB while MB was down?	Did MB put his hands at his waist?	Did MB face DW when fired upon?	Was MB running away from DW when fired upon?	Was MB kneeling when fired upon?	Did MB put hands up when fired upon?	How many shots were fired?
OFFICER DARREN WILSON	8/19/2014	✓	✓	NA	✓	✓	NA	NA	NA	"multiple"
Witness 10	8/11/2014	✓	✓	NA	✓	NA	NA	NA	✗	NA
Witness 12 No. 1	8/9/2014	NA	✓	✗	NA	✓	✓	✗	NA	9 or 10
Witness 12 No. 2*	8/9/2014	NA	NA	✗	NA	✓	✓	✗	NA	5 or 6
Witness 12 No. 3*	8/13/2014	NA	✓	✗	NA	✓	✓	✗	-	8
Witness 14 No. 1	8/5/2014	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	8
Witness 14 No. 2*	9/24/2014	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	NA
Witness 16	UNDAIED	NA	✓	NA	NA	NA	✓	NA	✓	at least 3
Witness 16 No. 2*	8/9/2014	✗	NA	✗	NA	✓	✓	✗	✓	at least 7
Witness 22	8/9/2014	NA	NA	NA	✓	NA	NA	✓	✓	at least 5
Witness 25	8/9/2014	NA	NA	NA	NA	✓	✓	✓	NA	at least 5
Witness 30	8/13/2014	✓	NA	NA	✓	NA	✓	NA	✗	5 or 6
Witness 32	8/9/2014	NA	✓	NA	NA	✓	NA	NA	NA	at least 4
Witness 34	9/3/2014	✓	✓	NA	NA	NA	✗	-	-	4
Witness 35	8/13/2014	✓	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	✓	✓	8
Witness 37	8/18/2014	NA	✓	✓	NA	✗	✓	NA	✓	10
Witness 38	8/14/2014	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	7 or 8
Witness 41 No. 1	8/26/2014	NA	NA	✓	NA	✓	NA	✓	✓	9
Witness 41 No. 2*	8/26/2014	-	-	✓	NA	✓	NA	✓	✓	9
Witness 42	8/16/2014	NA	NA	✓	NA	✓	✓	NA	✓	-
Witness 43	8/9/2014	-	✓	NA	NA	NA	✓	NA	NA	5 or 6
Witness 44	8/14/2014	✓	-	NA	NA	✓	✗	NA	✓	7 or 8
Witness 44 No. 2	9/25/2014	✓	✓	✗	NA	✓	✗	NA	✓	NA
Witness 45	8/16/2014	✗	✗	✓	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	10 OR 11
Witness 46	8/15/2014	✗	✗	✓	NA	✗	✓	✓	✓	5 OR 6
Witness 48 No. 1	8/14/2014	NA	NA	NA	NA	✓	✗	NA	✓	9
Witness 48 No. 2*	8/14/2014	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Witness 57 Interview 2	11/6/2014	NA	✗	-	-	-	✓	NA	-	5 OR 6
Witness 64 Interview 2	11/11/2014	-	NA	NA	✓	✓	✓	NA	✓	NA

In the chart above, ✗ indicates a negative response. ✓ indicates an affirmative response. NA indicates that there was no response or no question for that fact. The dash (-) indicates the witness did not know the answer to a question. * indicates multiple interviews with a single witness are represented on the chart.



THE SUEZ STRIKES BACK

Sanad Tabbaa

The Middle East has been the focus media attention of the media ever since the Arab Spring started, and now it remains so with the rise of the Islamic State. The chaotic and arbitrary nature of the events happening in the region should not be underestimated and many important stories managed to fly under the radar or only make a very mild appearance including, but not limited to, the rise of El-Sisi as Egypt's president. The eligibility and suitability of El-Sisi as the president has been much disputed and it is not my place to comment (and not only because my Egyptian grandmother would kill me). What cannot be disputed though is his plan to continue many of Egypt's half-finished megaprojects and internally finance an entirely new Suez Canal parallel to the old one which will be financed with no foreign funds whatsoever.

Those who doubt, or are ignorant, of the Suez's importance should note that it is the shortest and safest link between the East and West. Countless ships regularly use the Suez to transport goods from the Southern Hemisphere to Asia, Europe and most of the Northern Hemisphere in general due to its unique geographical location between the Mediterranean and Red Seas and it also comes with the definite added bonus of being totally safe from maritime threats such as storms and Somali Pirates. This canal is crucial in an age where approximately 80% of trade is transported through waterways and was once important enough (in around 1953) to very nearly spark a nuclear war between the USSR and USA during the Cold War when Britain attempted to forcefully regain control of the Suez following its nationalization by then Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nasser. Current Egyptian president Al-Sisi has started constructing another Suez parallel to the old one (which had traversed its 100 year anniversary in 1969).

The Suez is not only strategically important as a link between the opposite hemispheres of the



Suez Canal. Digital image. Wiki Commons. N.p., n.d. Web.

globe, it is also somewhat of a cultural monument. While many criticize Jamal Abdul Nasser's other decisions as president, most Egyptians (including my politically radical grandmother) hail his nationalisation of the Suez both for its crucial role in cementing Egypt as a sovereign nation free of outside influence and because many Egyptians died in the construction of the canal. Adding to that the fact that many Egyptians also perished in guarding the Suez during the Suez Canal Crisis of '53 and the wars with Israel in which the Suez was an important asset (the Suez was lost in the war of '67 and regained in '73 which gave the Suez even more importance in the eyes of the people). The people of Egypt have a connection with the Suez that most other nations do not share, especially with their waterways and trade routes. It was this connection that inspired the overwhelming increase in popularity that Al-Sisi experienced after announcing the plan to build the waterway.

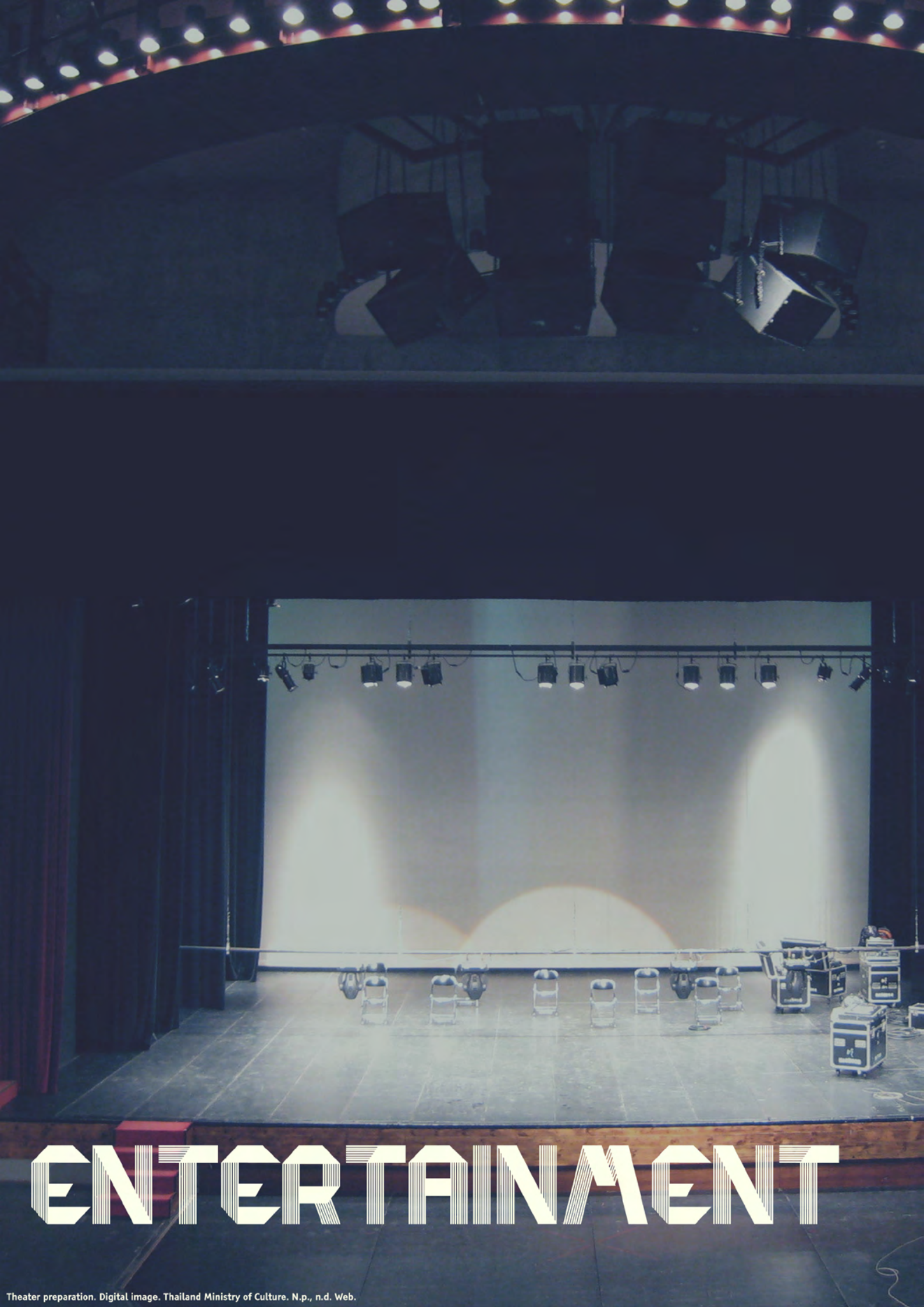
In August of 2014 Al-Sisi announced the plans for the construction of the new canal and announced that no foreign entities would be welcome to participate in the funding for the new Suez. The president then revealed that the funding for the new Suez would come from Egyptian banks and corporations only, but the surprising main offer was that Egyptian citizens, at home or abroad, would be welcome to purchase shares of the new

Suez. The offer that Egyptians received was \$10 for citizens living in Egypt, \$1 for students and \$100 for Egyptians living abroad. The funding required was over \$4 billion for the first new canal (out of six) and the necessary funds were expected to take a good period of time to collect. It took six days. The public bought shares at an alarming rate that only reinforced the Suez's position as a cultural monument and Al-Sisi's already booming popularity, as well as the belief that former military men can also be politicians, and good ones too.

The finished canal project (which entails six canals) is expected to produce a whopping one million new jobs and boasts an added "Technological Valley" in Ismailia, an undertaking nearly as ambitious as the Millennium Goals except that it actually has a chance to succeed. The finished canal project will expand the number of ships that the Suez can take from 49 to 97, nearly a double and is expected to see canal revenues increase by 259% from the current \$5 billion. The first canal has received all necessary funding and construction has begun on it. It alone is expected to increase Suez revenue by \$1 billion annually; however the completed project is said to require a further \$8 billion in funding for completion. Following the successful funding Al-Sisi proclaimed that the first canal will be finished by August of 2015 due to "deteriorating security conditions".



Suez Canal Southbound Voyage. Digital image. Youtube. N.p., n.d. Web.



ENTERTAINMENT

THE COMIC BOOK CRAZE

SANAD TABBAA

CURRENTLY WE'RE EXPERIENCING WHAT ONE COULD ONLY BE CALLED A COMIC BOOK CRAZE. COMIC BOOKS HAVE ACTUALLY TRANSCENDED THE PAGE AND MIGRATED TO ALL FORMS OF CONTEMPORARY MEDIA. WHEREAS ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO ONE WOULD BE RIDICULED FOR WEARING A SUPERHERO SHIRT IN PUBLIC, TODAY IT'S ACCEPTED, MAYBE EVEN ENCOURAGED. FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, THE PREVIOUSLY DORKY ACTIVITY OF READING AND KNOWING ABOUT COMIC BOOKS IS LESS DORKY AND MORE EXPECTED OF TODAY'S YOUTH AND THE CULPRIT FOR THIS RESURGENCE OF THE POPULARITY OF COMICS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO CINEMA AND THE INTERNET.

THE INTERNET HAS ONLY BEEN REALLY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR 20 ODD YEARS AND IN ITS EARLY DAYS IT WAS REGARDED AS SOMEWHAT OF AN ODDITY. THE MAIN USERS OF THE INTERNET WERE PIONEERING BUSINESSMEN AND GEEKS, THE LATTER BEING OUR FOCUS. GEEKS, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, DID GEEKY STUFF AND BY THE TIME THE INTERNET BEGAN TO BECOME IMPORTANT THE GEEKS HAD ALREADY HAD A HEAD START ON EVERYTHING INTERNET RELATED. FROM HERE WE GET A GENERATION OF YOUNG HUMANS (LATE 80'S AND EARLY 90'S KIDS) THAT HAVE BEGUN TO BE REARED ON THE INTERNET AND ARE, AS SUCH, EXPOSED TO A LOT OF GEEKY MATERIAL. AT THIS POINT YOU HAVE A GOOD PORTION OF A GENERATION OF PEOPLE AMONG WHOM YOU GET ACCEPTANCE OF GEEKINESS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THESE PEOPLE WILL BECOME A TARGET AUDIENCE. IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE MOVIE TO START THE CURRENT COMIC BOOK CRAZE WAS X-MEN. THE X-MEN MOVIE RELEASED IN 2000 WOULD BE RELEASED AROUND THE TIME THAT OUR INTERNET KIDS WOULD BE JUST OLD ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE THE COOLNESS OF WOLVERINE'S CLAWS AND THE "BLUENESS" OF MYSTIQUE. AND BEHOLD, YOU GET A GENERATION THAT ENJOY COMIC BOOK MOVIES IMMENSELY (AS SHOWN BY X-MEN'S BOX OFFICE SUCCESS), THE SUCCESS OF WHICH PROMPTS A PERIOD OF INTENSE COMIC BOOK CINEMA WHICH WILL BRANCH OUT LATER ON IN THE FUTURE. HOWEVER THIS ISN'T TO MEAN THAT COMICS, OR EVEN COMIC BOOK MOVIES, ARE CONTEMPORARY IN ANY WAY.

COMICS HAVE BEEN AROUND SINCE THE MID 30'S. THEY WERE TOLERATED UNTIL THE EXTREME POPULARITY OF SUPERMAN IN 1938 SKYROCKETED SUPERHEROES INTO THE SPOTLIGHT. THIS, THE TIME DURING AND THE TIME DIRECTLY FOLLOWING WWII IS KNOWN AS THE GOLDEN AGE. AFTER THIS PERIOD ENDED (ALONG WITH PRACTICALLY THE EXISTENCE OF COMICS) YOU GOT THE SILVER AGE WHICH SAW A REVAMP OF STYLES, CHIEF AMONG THESE WERE THE CREATIONS OF THE KING OF COMICS, STAN LEE, WHO CREATED A GENRE OF COMICS THAT INCLUDED HEROES WITH ACTUAL HUMAN FEELINGS AND WORRIES, WHICH GREW WILDLY POPULAR. STAN LEE CREATED THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THE HULK, THOR, IRON MAN, X-MEN AND SPIDER-MAN; HE ALSO

CO-CREATED DR. STRANGE AND DAREDEVIL AND REVIVED OLD HARACTERS INCLUDING CAPTAIN AMERICA. STAN LEE IS THE OLD DUDE IN EVERY MARVEL MOVIE AND HE DESERVES IT.

ON THE SUBJECT OF MOVIES, YOU MAY BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT THE FIRST CINEMATICALLY RELEASED COMIC BOOK MOVIE WAS IN 1978 AND IT WAS A SUPERMAN MOVIE WHICH ACTUALLY STARTED THE TREND OF MOVIES BASED ON COMIC BOOKS DUE TO ITS EXTREME POPULARITY. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE SUPERHERO MOVIES RELEASED IN THIS ERA (WHICH SPANNED FROM 1978-97) WILL BE KNOWN HENCEFORTH AS THE DC ERA BECAUSE THEY WERE COMPLETELY CONTROLLING THE COMIC FILM INDUSTRY. THIS ERA STARTED WITH SUPERMAN AND ENDED WITH BATMAN; SPECIFICALLY BATMAN AND ROBIN WHICH WAS A MOVIE SO BAD THAT IT IS REGARDED, EVEN IN THE FACE OF FILMS SUCH AS SHARKNADO, TO BE ONE OF THE WORST FILMS EVER MADE.

AT THIS POINT, IN '98, MARVEL MADE AN ACTUAL MOVIE WITH BLADE (WHICH WAS CLOSER TO DIE HARD THAN SPIDERMAN) BUT THEIR FIRST REAL COMIC FILM WOULD BE X-MEN. THIS EXTREME SUCCESS SPURRED A FILM FRENZY FOR SUPERHERO MOVIES THAT SLOWLY BUT SURELY PICKED UP SPEED LIKE CRAZY. YOU WENT FROM NO MARVEL MOVIES AT ALL TO FIVE FILMS IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS (ONLY ONE OF WHICH WAS A CRITICAL, BUT NOT FINANCIAL, FLOP) AND AT THIS POINT MARVEL POWERFULLY DOMINATED THE FILM SCENE; HOWEVER, THE REAL INSANITY BEGAN IN 2008 WITH THE SPAWNING OF NO LESS THAN TEN COMIC BOOK MOVIES. 2008 WAS THE YEAR IN WHICH WE ENTERED WHAT I LIKE TO CALL THE MODERN ERA. IT WAS EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CONTAINED THE FIRST TWO HINTS AT AN AVENGERS MOVIE (IN IRON MAN AND THE INCREDIBLE HULK) AND IT REBOOTED DC'S DYING FILM AGENCY WITH THE DARK KNIGHT, IT WAS ALSO ONE YEAR AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE BLOGGING WEBSITE TUMBLR AND COINCIDED WITH THE WIDESPREAD USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WHICH ALLOWED FOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THESE FILMS TO BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC. IT IS ALSO THE YEAR THAT I BELIEVE IS WHOLLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMIC BOOK AGE WE ARE EXPERIENCING NOW. THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THESE MOVIES IN PARTICULAR IS WHAT ALLOWED A GENRE THAT ONCE APPEALED TO A CLOSED COMMUNITY BECOME SO INCREDIBLY WELL KNOWN AND ADMIRER TODAY AND THE FACT THAT THESE MOVIES SUDDENLY APPEALED TO SUCH A WIDE AUDIENCE NOW MEANT THAT MANUFACTURERS WERE FREE TO GO NUTS WITH MERCHANDISING AND MILKING THE GENRE. AND AS WITH EVERY COW; SOMEDAY, IT WILL EITHER RUN DRY OR GIVE SOUR MILK AND WILL ULTIMATELY BE DITCHED.



POW!



SWEDEN VS ISRAEL

Sanad Tabbaa
Editorial

In October 2014, Sweden recognised Palestine as a state making it the first major European state to do so. This was an exceptionally powerful move given that, at the time Palestine was doing some serious lobbying with the UN in order to get Israel to get out of the West Bank within two years and the US was beginning to get disturbed at Israel's appalling human rights record, stating that if it continued with a recent, highly controversial, settlement building project along the Green Line it was liable to lose "even its closest allies". This is completely unprecedented and could be discussed for about three pages using some of the most interesting vetoes, votes and very alarming stories, but it's not the subject matter. The subject matter is the way the state of Israel responded. In a reply so smart-alecky and ridiculous I cannot believe a politician allowed himself being caught saying it, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman posted, on Facebook no less, that "the Swedish government must understand that relations in the Middle East are more complex than one of IKEA's flat-pack pieces of furniture."

Oh my goodness. I'm not sure Liberman understands that social media is, as the name suggests, social and that anything on the internet shall remain forever on the internet. Maybe he doesn't get that people have the gift of vision. Or that anybody who could POSSIBLY be offended can only speak Swedish. Regardless, he did what is possibly the most racist thing one can do to Swedes by assuming that Sweden is just one giant IKEA store. Yes, we understand that you can associate Sweden with those absolutely lovely meatballs that they serve in a furniture store that may or may not contain horse meat but as the Foreign

Minister of a country, you need to have some sort of self-control, but that's not even the best part.

The amazing thing is that the Swedish Foreign Minister actually replied, rather than gasp in horror at the silliness of the whole ordeal. Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström replied to Liberman by stating "I will be happy to send him a flat pack of IKEA furniture and he will also see that what you need to put it together is, first of all, a partner. And you also need to cooperate and you need a good manual and I think we have most of those elements". Look at the elegance of that statement. That is just beautiful. By treating Liberman like the child that he acted like, Wallström managed to deliver what could be called "the ultimate burn". She started it off cordially and slowly guided the Israeli Foreign Minister through it, subtly stating that as soon as Liberman could extract his head from his colon and cooperate, they could emerge from this ridiculousness with a good mutually beneficial deal and she just iced the cake with some passive aggressiveness. She also commented that the Israeli statement would be taken in good humour making her go full circle in the polite awesomeness that characterizes the Foreign Minister. In response to this Liberman continued acting like a child and probably angrily shook his fists and floundered around for a while before making the monumental decision to extract the Israeli Ambassador to Sweden, Isaac Bachman, from the Embassy.

Liberman was then reportedly considering "downgrading diplomatic relations with Sweden" as a further display of infantile rage. In response the Swedish again took it with good nature with Wallström basically saying that the state of Sweden wouldn't take it personally and commenting on the side that she knew that Israel has tried it before with "134 countries before [them]" and that

the diplomatic decision would not be shaken with Israel's threats and displays of anger and petty tomfoolery. She later stated that the decision was taken with the intent to advance peace in the Middle East (rap reference intended) and to make the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians more symmetrical adding that "We hope that we can make the parties a little less unequal, that we might inject some new dynamics into the suspended peace talks and also give hope to young people that there is an alternative to more violence and war and conflict in the Middle East."

To cap it off Israel buckled under the pressure of the Swedes extreme good-natured attitude and Liberman approved the return of the Ambassador on a symbolic day, the date of the UN vote on the partition of the British Mandate. It is assumed that it was made to be a final crack at the Swedes but proved to be just as weak as the previous ones, if not even weaker. While the Israelis probably harrumphed at "showing them Swedes and putting them back in their place", the Swedish Monarch, Carl Gustaf reinforced the Swedish decision of Palestinian recognition by sending the Palestinian President wishes of goodwill on the Palestinian Independence Day showing once and for all that the Swedes are without a smidgeon of doubt the coolest people on earth.



GEESE ARE EVIL

Editorial

Sanad Tabbaa

Lots of people will subject themselves to misery-inducing synthetic cotton pillows that feel like Styrofoam because they protest to the use of goose feathers and down in the pillows. Many will allow this to carry over to their choice of blanket/cover/quilt for themselves and, for some, even their children. Many are very, very against the eating of geese, goose eggs, pâté and foie-gras. Personally, I find these people to be without any sort of guidance for two reasons: 1) goose is damned delicious and (2) Geese, especially geese, deserve it because they are jerks.

To say that geese are jerks would be like saying that the ABS has lots of stairs. It is true, but also an understatement of the highest degree. Geese are not just jerks, geese have reached a new level, one that I cannot describe with words permitted in this publication. Geese deal with people the same way that psychotic teenagers deal with small furry animals: very painfully. If you've ever seen a video of a goose attacking a person you should know that it's not an isolated case. There are approximately 100 goose attacks on people annually from one genus of goose (the Canada Goose) alone. Y'know how many shark attacks there are WORLDWIDE every year? 75. 75 shark attacks worldwide from every kind of shark ever and 100 goose attacks from just Canadian Geese.

This actually wouldn't be so bad if geese were completely harmless like chickens or angry 5th graders, but no. Goose attacks often result in broken bones and head injuries which is bad in of itself, were it not for the fact that geese specifically target children and the elderly in groups of large people. What makes this way worse is that geese have extreme resilience, are very territorial and possess some freaking Assassins Creed eagle-vision level of eyesight and have a knowledge of body language that rivals a master detective's. When in contact with a hostile goose the best advice is to hold your arms up, pray, maintain goose eye contact and back away slowly while never squinting your eyes or moving your torso or shoulders away from the goose, geese will see these as a sign of weakness and, seeing as they are total jerks, will accordingly attack. Sometimes even the proper precautions



Cooked Goose. Digital image. Caligula Vs. Nero. N.p., n.d. Web.

won't help. Many geese will not only attack, but continue chasing people until seriously injured or scared off. Don't believe me? The internet is littered with stories and videos of goose attacks ranging from a bite to "when I was still in diapers, my family took me on a picnic to a lake where a goose grabbed me by the head and slowly started pulling me into the water with the intention to drown me and would have succeeded, were it not for the fact that my father scared it off". If you don't even trust the internet ask a parent, grandparent or someone who grew up near a farm. They'll vouch for me: geese are really damn mean and they will attack. But when they don't attack you get the issue because geese go kamikaze.

A far larger problem than direct goose attack is that of the "sneaky kamikaze strike". This could just be sadistic pilots or geese that are stupid enough to fly over airports but the leading theory dictates that geese in fact do this on purpose. In order to maximise human suffering, geese will fly into the engines of a plane when it is at its most vulnerable, during takeoff and landing. Over a period of 18 years (1990-2008), kamikaze goose operations in North America have caused 1181 crash landings with 603 causing damage and 317 resulting in negative effects. Kamikaze geese in this period caused 59,000 hours of aircraft down

resulting in negative effects. Kamikaze geese in this period caused 59,000 hours of aircraft down time and an estimated \$50 million in costs which is about equal to the average Hulk rampage through New York City, except that the geese were directly responsible for a total of 18 deaths or serious injuries and 4 irreversibly damaged aircraft.

Anyway, in the face of a savage bird attack or kamikaze mission you can always remember that these are birds and we do eat them. Please, remember the 18 fallen over a period of 18 years and the countless horribly maimed victims of bird abuse who have been scarred for life from goose onslaught and reconsider buying a goose down jacket. Geese are not endangered. Geese are not beautiful or protected in any way. Geese are not good pets or an important part of the lake atmosphere. Geese are just mean as hell. Therefore I implore you to consider how awful geese are before reconsidering pâté because of a diet or, worse, animal rights. Geese have no rights. They traded them for intense reproductive skills and good eyesight. Please, eat the jerks, that will show them.





SCHOOL TIPS

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR DEADLINES

Samira Shabsogh

You juniors may be complaining about drowning in your work, but let's be clear: the real test is in your senior year. I personally have three IA's due next Sunday, my Arabic Written Task, my math exploration final draft, as well as my third Economics IA. Throw in a math test and the impending extended essay final draft deadline, and I've already lost about 20 hours of sleep, not counting the other day to day assignments & homework,, quizzes, posters and presentations. The truth is you have to learn how to manage your deadlines. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to do this. Should you prioritize your first draft assignments to save time later, or prioritize the final draft assignment, Even though most teachers will let you edit them later on? Should you study for a test, or work on an IA? Mind you, I will not be taking into account the external tests such as SAT, IELTS, BMAT/UKCAT and LNAT. These tips may not work for everyone, but they have helped me stay relatively sane this far.

The first thing you need to do is figure out which task needs the most work. For example, if you're not doing too well in English but are getting 7's in Economics, you should perhaps devote your time to your English WT and get that off your plate first, and then study for your Economics test. Likewise, if you're more or less done with your Biology lab report, spend time studying for your math test and edit the lab report ever so slightly when you take your breaks. Always finish the most difficult and most demanding tasks first, and then move on to the easier and lighter ones. A general tip I like is to work on IA's rather than focus on exams, because the only real exams that matter are your externals, and your IA's go toward your final mark. Of course, don't just blow off your exams. You should be at least somewhat comfortable with the material.

The second thing you should keep in mind is keeping track of time. I am guilty of procrastinating; I don't usually start studying or working on school things until about 7 on a good day, and usually at about 12 or 1 pm on the weekends. Set a starting time, for example 5 pm, and unplug yourself completely. If you get easily





distracted, turn off your phone and download an app like Self Control that lets you block specific sites for a set number of hours. If you use this app, the specified sites are blocked until the timer is up. I tried deleting the app when I found I had overestimated the time needed to write a certain IA, and the sites were still blocked until the time was up. I also tried changing the time on my laptop, and that didn't work either. Self Control is not for the faint hearted. Also, try to divide your work equally over a longer period of time instead of cramming at the last minute. I can't give you any tips as to how to do that because I don't know how to do it myself.

You should also keep in mind your temperament and attitude when you start doing whatever it is that you need to do. Even if you go in apathetic, that is better than starting with negative feelings and resentment. Yes, you stayed home on a Thursday to study or do whatever. Suck it up. Everyone does it at some point, and since you're home you might as well get some work done instead of moping over how everyone else went out. The truth is, more people sacrifice their Thursday outings than you think, and more often than you think too.

Now, instead of stressing about how you have X, Y and Z due next week, you really should take it easier. Some teachers will be understanding and give you a day extra, while others will just tell you to hand whatever you've done in. You should always hand in at least some work, as you'll get feedback for whatever you've done rather than no feedback and a strike(s). Just breathe. Believe it or not, your teachers want you to succeed. Don't take it easy, but if you don't understand something or need help go to your teacher and they will clear it up for you. If you need an extension, they might be able to help you. If the tips above are of no use, don't freak out. Just find your own way of coping. I'm not going to tell you to relax, because that's not the IB way, but just find your groove, if you will, and keep going.

SCHOOL TIPS

Alia Kawar

It's almost Holiday time...and exam time.. The past few months flew by, and summer is a distant memory.

How can we stay focused when so many things are going on around us? I've been trying to figure it out.. Setting a few hours for study every day, trying not to check my phone every few minutes or surf the Internet is a real challenge.

So some tips that I have come up with will surely help you stay focused in school..

Tip #1: Less social Media: Perhaps we can set a certain time when we will be "connected" and only connect during that time during the school days. Let's say 7.00pm to 8.00pm during the school week. That would eliminate the need to keep checking your phone for notifications every five minutes.

Tip #2: Another extremely important tip is to sleep before midnight; Studies show that the brain needs those six to eight hours of sleep every night. Sleep deprivation can increase stroke risk. Adults who regularly slept fewer than six hours a night had four times the risk of stroke symptoms. Therefore it is important to set your priorities straight by making sure you have enough hours of sleep every night.

Tip #3: Make your own daily lists everyday: You can write down your homework starting from most important to least important and try your best to get them done. One way of encouraging yourself is by awarding yourself once you finish every task. Like cuddling with your dog, or eating a snack.



Irena, Tischenko. Opened Book. Digital image. Shutterstock. Web.

Tip#5: Don't Procrastinate: Deadlines are deadly. So a smart way to not procrastinate is to create your own deadlines for projects that are earlier than the actual one. Once you are given a deadline you would feel that it is far away but once the deadline is getting closer...you haven't done anything! So always try your best to manage your time to meet your deadlines.

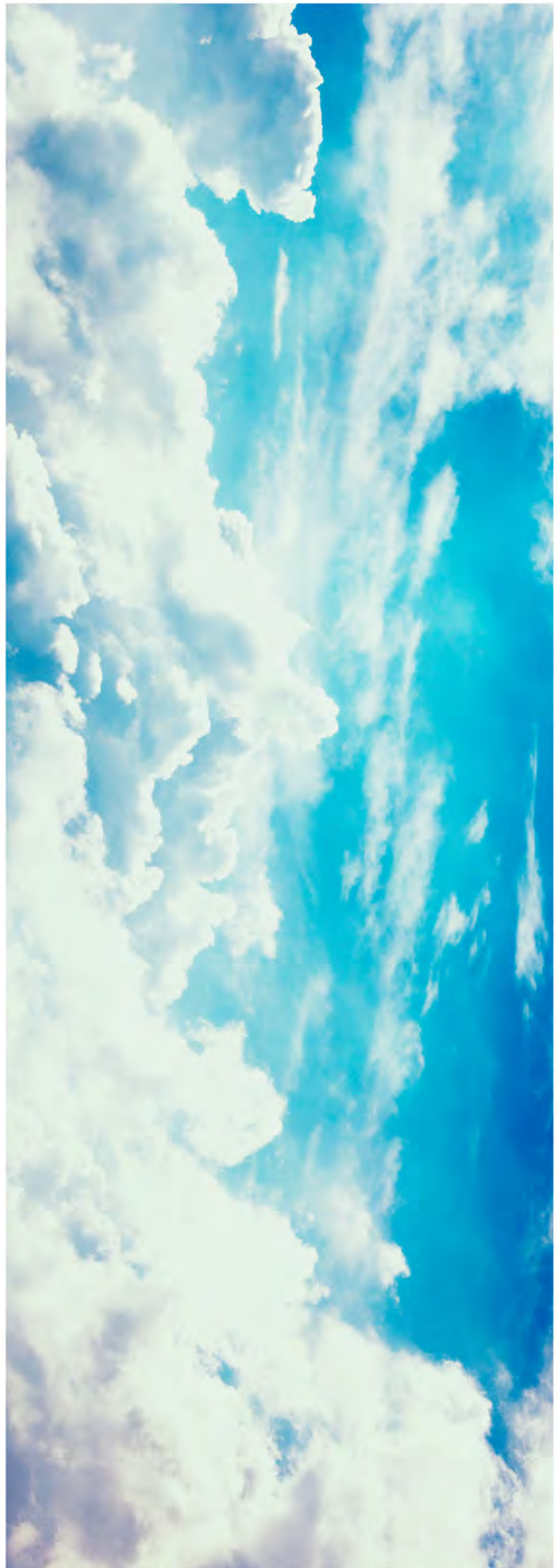
Tip#6: Take notes: Writing down notes in class while the teacher talks helps you remember crucial points that you might forget later. Also, when you are revising for an exam you would already have notes

Tip#7: Take Breaks: never be too harsh on yourself. Take 15 minute breaks after you feel you have achieved a particular homework or a large part of a project. Taking breaks is especially useful while studying for an exam because taking a break allows you to process the information you wrote down. Therefore it will be easier to remember while doing the test.

Tip#8: Exercise: Exercise and moving your body always helps your body and mind feel better. Exercise and other physical activity produce endorphins (chemicals in the brain that act as painkillers) and also improve the ability to sleep, which in turn reduce stress. Therefore it is extremely important for you to exercise and move. A great way of doing this is by participating in school teams.

Tip #9: Balanced Diet: Managing your day-to-day diet and making sure you are eating from all food groups, will give you more energy to focus in school. Your body and mind will also feel much better and healthier.

Tip #10: Enjoy your lessons: Students are known for always judging the lesson or teacher before the actual class starts. We all think that the lesson is going to be boring and all that we are learning is useless. However, if students change their mindsets and have a more positive attitude towards actually understanding the topics presented to them. This creates a good learning environment to be in, and therefore promotes better grades.





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