



THE
SPINE

Adventures

Kilimanjaro and Cambodia

Jordanian Seasons

Choosing the Perfect Camera

Being the New Kid

What is CrossFit?

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Cover Photo shot at the Baranco Wall, Mount Kilimanjaro by Suleiman Mashini, 2015



THE SPINE MAGAZINE



THESPINEABS



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Editor's Letter

Dear Reader,

We've had a summer of relaxation (Well, for us seniors it was mainly work) and coming back to school everything looks the same but feels somewhat different. In the halls of the IB we see the faces of the new juniors who still haven't been crushed by the IB, new members in The Spine meeting room, and in some cases we ourselves are new.

Some of us have had the opportunity to climb to the highest point in Africa: Mount Kilimanjaro, while others spent two weeks performing community service and learning wilderness skills in Cambodia. Of course, even you must have had an expedition of your own in the summer, be it a family trip or a hike. To commemorate all those who can't stay at one place for longer than a moment, the goers, the explorers, and the doers; we've chosen this issue's theme to be "Adventure".

To be true to the theme, we've included tips and tricks for the novice adventurer, from backpack tips to

camera advice, as well as articles about the Kilimanjaro and Cambodia expeditions. I would also like to note that every adventurer should be open to meeting new people; I would like to Welcome Janine Hadidi, Elea Taffet and Mika Taffet to The Spine family, and I would like to thank all The Spine Oldies for their hard work in making this issue happen.

The summer might be over and hoodie season may have begun, but we still have at least five months of school ahead of us. The seniors will spend most of these months prepping for their externals and I hope we will all find an unforgettable adventure to be part of during our final academic year. This is starting to feel like a farewell letter, but I assure you dear reader that this is only the beginning.

Kind Regards,

Suleiman Mashini
Editor of The Spine

Welcome to this issue of The Spine! As always, I'm amazed at the work completed by the Spine team, both staff writers and freelancers. It is a real honour to be working with them and seeing what they produce each term.

There have been some changes to our team this year, as we've welcomed new members Elea, Janine and Mika and grudgingly let Alia switch from staff writer to freelance. Editor Sam keeps insisting that this is his last issue, but I'm just not going to let him leave! We've also seen Sanad take over as an Editor, a role that suits him down to the ground, bossy as he is!

Inside this fantastic issue we're taking you with us on our adventures around the globe. Take a peek into the annual Theatre trip and the Cambodia and Tanzania expeditions, get advice about which camera suits you best, take a peek into life as a twin and much more!

All that's left for me to say now is I hope you enjoy this issue of The Spine, and please remember the door is always open for new talent if you'd like to join us as a staff writer or freelancer, after all we only have this year to find a sarcastic upstart to write and edit content as well as a replacement for Oun. Not really sure what he does, but he tells me it's important...

TTFN
Miss Gill
xoxo

Discovering Arabs

Written by: Elea Taffet

Having lived in Arab countries for the last six years, I have come to understand some 'Arab Truths.'

Firstly, when you go into a relatively quiet area, and you suddenly hear loud voices, you know it's Arabs. When Arabs casually talk and have a conversation between themselves, it sounds like they will be at each other's throats in seconds. As a non-Arab, it all seems a little shouty and can be a bit scary.

Now, once you get your head around the fact that your Arab friends aren't about to kill each other any time they have a conversation, you need to know about the language itself. There are so many words Arabs use when they're speaking in English that are essentially add-ons from the Arabic language. The word I hear the most from Arabs is "yallah". I had no idea what that meant when I first heard it and I was so confused about why it was being said so much. There is also "habibti" and "yanee", as well as "hala" and "khalas". I now realise that these are just words all Arabs say, and after a while you get used to it. These words are used so often that they are also usually the first Arabic words picked up by foreigners. Just go and speak to any non-local person and see for yourself.

There are two main things in Jordan that bother me a lot. One of them is driving 'skills'. The cars seem to move along the lane separators as if drivers are taught to drive on them and have learned to think that the white lines on the road are pathways, instead of being lane separators. Cars block the roads, people are always cutting you off, and don't even get me started on roundabouts. I feel like Arabs have a completely different set of rules than the rest of the world! The worst driving culprits though, are the taxis. This is where the real issues come into play, and not just for other road users - as a passenger in a taxi you are essentially playing Russian Roulette. Will there be seatbelts? Will the driver understand the concept of indicators? Will you get to your destination on time AND in one piece? At times it feels like a short summary of how Arabs drive is 'close your eyes and hope

for the best'.

The other thing is queues. It seems, like with driving, Arabs were never taught how to wait in line. If there is a line, and people are waiting for their turn either Arabs don't see the line, or they just don't acknowledge it. Either way, they don't wait in line with others, they cut in front of people in order to get their way and go faster. I've mainly found this when I'm at the airport. The queues to enter the country are extremely long, especially coming in or out of Dubai. We usually wait around at least forty-five minutes for passport control, and every time, there is an Arab that tries (and usually succeeds) to go before everyone else.

There are some really good things about Arabs though; first and foremost - food. They never stop feeding you. Under any circumstances. If you have ever been invited to an Arab home, whether it is for a meal, or just to hang out with a friend there are always tons and tons of food. It's incredible! Even if you aren't hungry, you still end up eating because first of all they basically force feed you. Second of all let's be honest, the food is pretty amazing. Here's a tip: if you are ever hungry just get yourself invited out by an Arab and you're good to go.

Another amazing aspect of Arabs is that they are very welcoming, especially towards foreigners. When I first arrived in Jordan, everyone was saying "Welcome to Jordan!". Arabs, unlike the French, make an effort to speak in English in order for the foreigners to understand them and to be able to communicate with them. If you go to France for example, you have to speak French (especially in Paris), and since foreigners usually don't have a French accent, the French are very unaccepting. They are very closed people, and don't like to speak to foreigners. Arabs, on the other hand, are very open to new people and traditions, and even if they have just met you, they will act like they have been your friend for a very long time. What can I say - I'm looking forward to seeing what I discover next!

What is CrossFit?

Written By: Suleiman Mashini

Its 6 AM, and I'm not sure why I'm up this early. I'm starting to regret this decision, "Why did I even sign up for this?" I mutter to myself. I walk up 5 flights of stairs and there I am, standing in front of a door with a huge hazard sign plastered on it. I open the door and my barely open eyes are blinded by the florescent lights, the sound of grunting and screaming pierce my ears. There are sweat, blood, and tear stains all over the rubber floor. This is CrossFit.

To the non-CrossFitter, we may seem to be a group of fitness elitists who take pride in the fact that we completed our WOD (Workout of the Day). The truth is that we are actually a group of fitness elitists who take pride in the fact that we completed our WOD AND can do 50 goblet squats.

CrossFit is the current fitness craze which focuses on quick bursts of energy and pushing your body to the limit. Each day, you'll be assigned a specific workout which will work different muscle groups through more "natural" exercises like flipping tires across a room (I'm not joking). It sells itself as a quick, difficult and most rewarding type of sport a person can join, and I frankly agree with it.

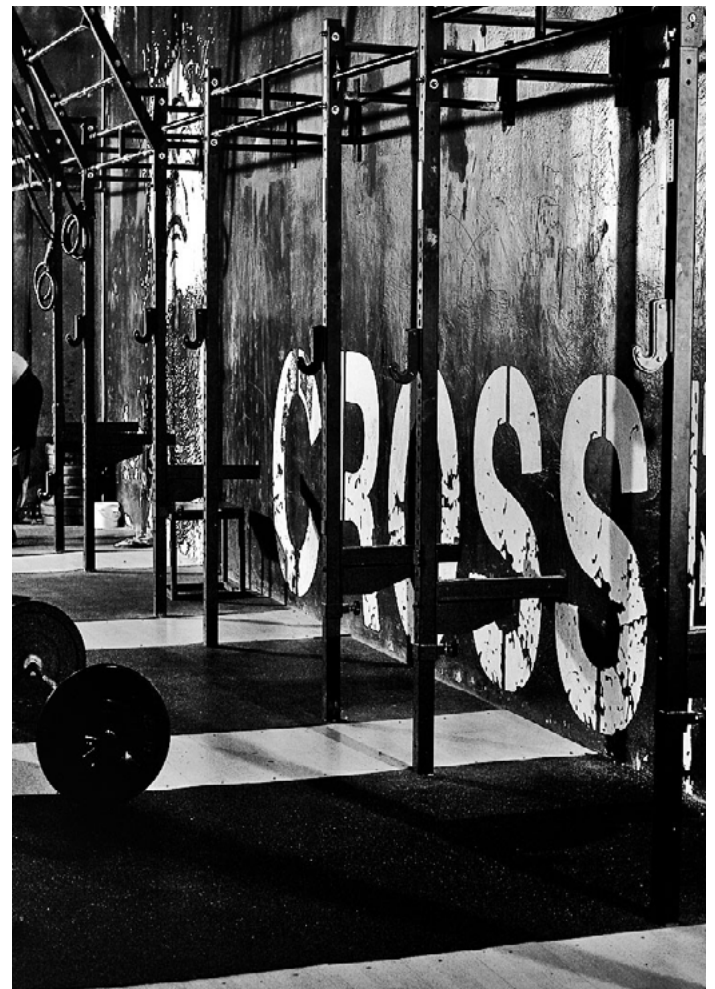
CrossFit is a cult, the members become a fitness family that support/ secretly compete with each other. We commend the first person to finish their workout and cheer on the last. It makes sports enjoyable, and removes the fear and anxiety many feel at the gym. However, unlike most cults and clubs e.g. fight club, the first rule of CrossFit is that people must know that you do CrossFit. This cult turns you into an arrogant and douchey fitness maniac who can't stop talking about how they were the first person to finish their timed WOD. The cult also encourages teamwork if by teamwork you mean either succeed or live with the guilt of dragging your partner down with you to last place. Which is very encouraging!

Even if your friends don't do CrossFit they will know everything about CrossFit from you. And as you continue to brag about your fitness achievement you will realise that your friends have increasing concern

for your wellbeing. They are probably starting a support group/circle for you since they don't understand the level of greatness you've achieved from it.

The structure of a CrossFit workout is simple, Warm up (usually 10 minutes), WOD (the bulk of the workout), and a Cool Down (10 minutes max, usually stretching), and of course embedded inside it all is the punishment system also known as burpees, every CrossFitters worst nightmare. Burpees are an exercise that can destroy you and leave you dead for the rest of your workout, but without which you would probably cheat the workout since the other 3 components can be considered pure torture as well.

Sadly, I never passed the initiation process of CrossFit (I blame the serious respiratory infection half way through the training program), but CrossFit still has a special place in my heart and if you see me in the school halls squatting you will know why.



IB Isn't as Hard as you Think

Written by: Sanad Tabbaa

IB isn't that hard, you're just complaining. Why, because you're a complainer. Oh, you meant about the IB. According to people like Sam, it just straight up isn't hard. Whether this is because Sam is insane or you're all just merely incompetent. See if you people were superhumans or took subjects that were easy to pass, you wouldn't be having the time you're having right now. Pffft, rigorous system my eye. It's just because you're bad at managing your time and subject choice.

I mean honestly. If you vaguely gangsterlike, slow rapping, white boy losers had even a smidgeon of time management ability, this could be avoided altogether but now all I'm hearing is "ooooooh we have a 4000 word essay that determines 3 of our final IB points" and "ooooooh why are our final grades based on internals that are vague in instruction and difficult to do and only have one draft" and my least favourite one "ooooooooooooooh why are the internals for our six subjects all due at the same time, and at the same time as our extended essay" and etcetera. The fact of the matter is that IB isn't hard, you're just idiots.

Let's take one of the biggest subjects you knuckleheads keep badgering everyone about: Art. Art isn't hard. You know how to draw? Draw. How hard is that? Look at this drawing (Insert Stickman). There. Now I have a 7/7 in art. Y'know why? Because I'm clever, and more importantly, I'm cleverer than you. And if a theme's stressing you out just pick a theme like "blue" and paint canvases blue. It is that simple. You don't need to show profundity, reflection and an ability to experiment with different mediums, unless you're suicidal.

Another subject you sorry excuses for students are unable to shut up about is Math; specifically Math HL. What's so hard about Math HL? OOoOOOOOo the ghost of calculus is coming for me oOOOOOoOOoO. Stop whinging. If you didn't know it would be hard then you're stupid. If you knew it would be hard then why are you complaining? "Oh I don't understand how to calculate the derivation of the derivation for the piece-wise function that is half composed of a parabola and half of Satan's True Form". Shut. Up.

And all of this is compounded by your endless shrieking about TOK and EE. You've had, like, forever to do this 4000 word essay. I mean if you wrote 100 words a day you'd only need 40 days to do this essay. Just 40 days. TOK isn't even an issue. Just because they're an extra three marks that are seriously considered by universities doesn't mean they need to be seriously considered by you. The fact that any and all TOK presentations given last year under the instruction of Mr Oday are completely discarded means absolutely nothing. You have to stop complaining because IB is not actually that hard.

This system that bases virtually all your marks on one set of tests and this calendar which squashes all of your deadlines into one month is not difficult in the slightest. The fact that this is all coming when we are trying out for universities (that will likely affect the entirety of your life henceforth) is not at all stressful. The IB system is not tough.

(If it isn't evident, this is a satire article. It was proposed seriously by Sam)

Cambodia

Written By: Alia Kawar

In the last months of Grade 11, you will begin worrying about your finals, start thinking about your internals and one more thing that has little to do with academics.

You will have to decide which destination you would like to go to for your HYA Gold award expedition. Although there are three choices, I would say two of them are trips of a lifetime. Tanzania and Cambodia are breathtaking and exciting places that are far from our comfort zones. But unfortunately, I can only talk about my experience in Cambodia since that was the trip, after weeks and weeks of negotiating, writing lists of pros and cons and discussing with my family and friends, the location I chose. And I could probably say it was the right choice for me.

If I could describe the Cambodia trip in two words it would be challenging and diverse. From the moment we stepped off the plane and arrived at the first location; Siem Reap, we could immediately feel the nature and deep history of this land. The airport symbolized what we were going to see throughout this journey as the sculptures of Buddha are presented in the main entrance of the airport. With the peculiar looking bugs flying around our heads, we looked at each

other, knowing that this trip was not going to be the usual type of vacation.

The trip consisted of moving from hotel to hotel in three cities; Siem Reap, the capital, Phnom Penh and the beachside Kep. These eclectic geographical locations exposed us to different types of habitats and cultural differences, all in just two weeks.

The first location, Siem Reap was where we completed our community and service project, where we painted three-world map Murals in different areas in a local school. Weeks of preparation before coming to Cambodia and creating the stencils really helped in allowing us to work efficiently and collaboratively. We were all shocked that we completed these murals in only 2 days. And we were so happy that we even got time to play with the students at the school once we were done.

Once Community and Service was done it was time for site seeing. As an art student I truly enjoyed the experience and immersed myself in every detail I saw on the temples in Angkor Watt. I tried my best to capture the beauty of its unique style and patterns.





The second location, Phnom Penh, was more of a busy city filled with many cars and Tuks Tuks leaving very little space to walk. Even the Night markets were extremely busy, it was here we bought the traditional, colorful elephant pants. By the end of the trip we all looked like typical tourists.

But this was where we saw the Killing Fields and saw the tragedy of Cambodia's past. At the Killing Fields we got the opportunity to see the remaining results left by the Khmer Rouge Genocide, where families and children were killed in mass murder. Towards the end of the trip we talked to actual survivors who until this day have numerous bullets embedded in their skin but still hold tightly onto the will and bravery to continue on with their lives and inspire others.

The final location, Kep was where the real adventure would start, it also happened to be the place where we would begin our HYA gold award expedition. We faced a lot of red ants, iguanas and spiders but I think it was the place that made us stronger. By that point, we had already adapted to the humid weather, insects

and then eaten crabs and seafood for dinner at the local Crab Market.

3/7/2015: "After two long and challenging weeks our HYA Gold Award trip in Cambodia has come to an end. This trip has truly opened all of our eyes on how much the people of Cambodia have gone through throughout the years and specifically the suffering they went through during the Civil War that has given Cambodia a new name 'The Kingdom of Wounds.'" (An extract from my journal during the trip)

I have come to conclude that Cambodia, home of the great Khmer civilization is one of the most fascinating and enriched countries in Southeast Asia. Its youthful optimism of the emerging country is inspiring for us to do the same. I've learnt that it doesn't matter what type of challenge you face, what matters is what you keep in your mind that makes you overcome it. If you are willing to be open and allow yourself to embrace all this new knowledge, history, culture and art, then you definitely cannot miss the opportunity of going to this beautiful country.

The Theatre and Visual Arts Trip

Written By: Bana Biltaji

Nothing could possibly be better than bringing together a bunch of thespians and the Theatre trip never ceases to amaze, and this year was no different. Working on the student travel booklet alongside my theatre buddy Janine Hadidi, we got a preview of the itinerary that was filled to the brim with awesome workshops to attend and lovely plays to see, well before anyone else, so we were excited from the word go!

During the trip, we missed our lovely theatre teacher Miss Janeann and though we had wished so deeply for her to be alongside us the trip supervisors Mr. Russell (for Theatre) and Miss Kim-Marie (for Visual Arts) were eager to take great care of us...and they did! Especially when it came to cheeky subway runs. Mr. Russell transformed into a drama teacher after every play and we were all blown away by his analytical deconstruction of what we had watched each night.

We watched a great variety of plays. We would go from watching an adaptation of the modern novel “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time” on a futuristic type box stage, to viewing Shakespeare’s “Richard II” in the Globe Theatre. By a count of votes the top three plays we attended had to be “Matilda the Musical”, “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time” and the thrilling “Woman in Black”.

“Matilda” was indeed a riveting performance which made our hearts swell. Towards the end it made some of us shed a few tears. I say some of us - for me ‘a few’ was not an option, and I full on cried until my running make-up made me look like Gollum. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time was one of those shows that made you feel every single emotion you have in your heart as well as emotions you never knew existed! You felt sympathy for the main character then you felt empowered along with him as he progressed on his journey especially when regarding the obstacles he faced as a side effect of Asperger’s. “Women in Black” took a lot of us back to the school production of “The 39 Steps”, it was set in roughly the same timeframe and only two actors played all the roles...Except for the role of that creepy woman in black who appeared every once in a while making

people jump onto each other’s laps ‘Scooby-doo and Shaggy’ style. It was a thrilling play that seemed to have actors who milked every fibre of tension in the universe to produce a seemingly simplistic play that made the hairs on the back of our neck stand. I must say, it was equally entertaining to hear my peers scream “Mama” or straight up throw themselves out of their seats in terror.

In addition to the amazing performances, we attended some incredible workshops, including a puppet workshop with an actress we had watched performing in “War Horse”, a storytelling workshop and the ISTA TaPS workshop which was a greatly entertaining and informative three days of theatre based knowledge. We learned about the art of Bu-Toh and Kyogen through teachers in our master classes, we also divided into ensembles to apply our knowledge.

This trip was a definite success! Several people have come up to me saying it was the best trip they’ve ever been on. We got to know our friends better - I for one think knowing that my London roomie believes the sound of dogs barking is a perfectly normal alarm tone has vastly improved my life.

The final and most important point, however, is thanks to our guide Mr. Jeff, for being the biggest buzzkill ever.



Being the New Kid

Written by: Mika Taffet

Oh no. I have to go to school. WHAT AM I GONNNA DO? This is the first day of school, and I'm just getting out of the car. I take my bag, and walk down, with the rest of the people going to school. I slowly approach a group of people, and almost immediately they open up and talk.

So I introduce myself, and I meet someone new who helps me get to the Theatre. Once there, he talks to me about the school, who certain people are, etc. When we have to go to mentoring someone else takes me there. We have a break, I find the one person I know and he introduces me to others. All of these things going on, and I still don't know my way around school. The worst part, is that Jordanians in Dubai told me: "Oh you're gonna have a terrible time, you're gonna hate it". So I'm still slightly worried and stay alert. But I guess I have to trust these guys, they don't seem that bad. I calm down and have lunch, and they invite me to hang out thursday. WOW! What a surprise! Me? But I've only been here a few hours! Looks like I already have a group of friends, and I think to myself, "maybe this place won't be too bad after all".

A week and a half later, I still barely know people's names, and am invited to go out for burgers, which turns to a small gathering. The following week, invited to another gathering, and thus it followed, going out regularly, and making friends and growing my knowledge of the people. As it turns out, Jordan is not that bad, and certainly not as bad I'd been told.

Something that really helped was having another non local that was also new, because

we had many things in common, even though his hair makes it look like he stayed in a wind tunnel for a few hours before coming to school. I am now comfortable in the school, know where to go, know most people, yet still have a hard time with some names. All of this was due to my golden rule of integrating places, since this is my 9th school, which is stay confident at all times, and if someone tries to push you around, who cares if it's your first day in a new place, push back and always keep your head up.





Backpackers Guide

Written By: Janine Hadidi

So you say you want to travel the world, now do you? Well I predict you are one of two things: You are either an extremely curious person who appreciates different cultures and people, or you're absolutely insane. Either way, as someone that gets a kick out of spontaneity (and defying the expected) I applaud you!

Backpacking is amongst the most enriching experiences you will ever have; imagine yourself strolling your way through parks and streets, experiencing new smells, and bonding with other backpackers over 20 day-old socks. You will be astonished by the journeys you will undergo and the stories you will tell when you come back home. So say no more, go ahead and tie a picnic blanket onto your mom's favorite fishing rod and get going!

But before that, let's get something straight; if you do decide to go through with this adventure know that for the most part you are going to be on your own. You will have to carry everything on your back, (with barely any bookings at hostels to preserve your things). Remember you will always be on the lam, meaning your so-called "picnic sac" will need to include more than one thing to survive.

The cardinal rule for backpacking is **KEEP IT LIGHT**. You might be reading this headline and wondering where you might place your brand new electronic devices with all their peripheral plugs requiring masses and masses of space, not to mention bundles of purses and shoes, but, I've got newsflash for you: you will not make it! Planning on getting such heavy object is like planning your own execution. Remember when it comes to backpacking the only stable home you will ever have will be in your head! Might as well fill that up with memories and adventures, rather than how you're going to fit all your stuff in a bag for the trip, nevermind all the incredible artifacts and souvenirs you will pick on the way. Plus your mind should also be focused on how you're going to steal bread from hostels you are going to "casually visit"....

Although a specific designation on the number of things you need to get cannot be determined without precise planning for the trip (including the location or

duration) you will need to prepare for the conditions and circumstances you're going to face. That means getting a few pieces of clothing in accordance to the weather and conditions, cooking equipment, blankets, a towel, tent equipment if the location is fit for camping, and objects to help protect you from atmospheric circumstances and conditions. I mean I don't know about you, but if I was nearly going to be annihilated and frozen to death by an avalanche I would say some ski gear would come in handy right?

Second cardinal rule is to **NEVER** pack anything valuable. This is your chance to get out of your comfort zone and keep moving, losing something valuable will only make you more and more tense about your travels, and you will most definitely miss the purpose of your entire trip. The entire reason behind the experience is to learn the minimalistic life, making do with what you have. There's also a risk that if you lose something valuable you might spend your days searching for it instead of getting on what you are going to do.

On the subject of extremely minimalistic lifestyle; Backpackers tend to live on tight budgets. Part of that budget is dedicated to transportation from one place to the other, although some would argue that most backpackers choose to walk trails on foot, resulting in numerous blisters and bruises on their legs and feet but I assure you there is a method to their madness...

Walking or cycling instead of flying or taking cabs are amongst the most effective ways to save money! So challenge yourself and walk that extra mile...or those extra 20 actually. Remember this is all about maintaining a minimalistic lifestyle all throughout, so making use of the tight budget will pay off in the long run during your nomadic endeavors!

In conclusion I would just like to remind all readers to take backpacking with a grain of salt. Who knows, it might actually be an extraordinary experience that you will end up pursuing for the rest of your life. Take a step away from the ordinary and try to stray away from what you see right in front of you. I guarantee you will be broke by the time its over, but you will certainly be richer in experience and passion.

Choosing The Perfect Camera for Your Adventurous Endeavors

Written by: Janine Hadidi

Extra, Extra! Read all about it! A lonely gizmo in need of a partner!: Qualities include the ability to focus, the ability to augment and dwindle objects when convenient, and most distinguishably the ability to find beauty in nearly anything! To the lucky potential partners, I assure you, this gizmo will be your number one companion, following you with every inspirational moment, and every free sensation. It will be your motivation to get out of that door, only to get you back in with a new vivacity for life and adventure, carrying thousands of stories untold.

Well, I see no need to prolong your curiosity any more, this mind-blowing gizmo is none other than a camera. Though it may come in a multitude of forms, shapes, and sizes, this instrument is most definitely key to adventure and action! As cameras grow more and more developed, they never seem to fail in capturing dynamic characters and cultures, marvelous landscapes, and endless trails. Soon enough, your camera may transform into the silver lining of most adventures you undergo, because without them, who's to say you actually went trekking in the Himalayas and witnessed your first Yeti anyway?

Although the rules of composition for this instrument may seem complex, I assure you, once you get the hang of it, you and your partner in crime will master the art of Adventure Photography.

The most important step to initiating your adventurous photography endeavor is selecting a camera. Sure, the first camera that may come to mind is a the standard digital single-lens reflex camera, or the dSLR (you might recognize big dSLR brands like Nikon and Canon), I would like to urge readers to try and keep an open mind about the different options to choose from aside from the standard marketable cameras in the media. Plus, would you really rather spend hundreds upon hundreds for a camera that would not enhance the quality of your photographs, but rather restrain you from taking the pictures you really want to take?

For that particular reason, camera shopping cannot be done in hasty manner. If not done correctly and in accordance to the type of adventures to be experienced, or if you have no idea of what you're searching for, you'll be bamboozled by camera sales clerks everywhere, and done for from the beginning.

The first, and most common, type of the camera is (but of course) the well oiled machine inside our pocket all the time; our cellphones. Although it may not be the ideal camera capable of capturing every ounce of depth and light, mobile cellphones are by far one of the most lightweight cameras an

adventure photographer could dream of. As they progress more and more, their features become more and more vital to the adventure photographer, and thus more convenient for such experiences.

Now lets suppose you're looking for a more precise, developed camera with better focal length, you on the other hand might make use of point and shoot digital cameras. Though they might seem outdated, digital cameras contain one of the most effective instruments for capturing landscape and detail. Not to mention the drastic change in prices for those traveling with little to no budget on the run!

Well maybe we need to take a step back and think for a second. What could be the appropriate solution in the occurrence of a Yeti blocking your view as you attempt to capture landscapes in the Himalays? Maybe in this case, you could pull out another type of camera, one that fits between SLRs, and point and shoot cameras, the Bridge Camera. This camera manually controls shutter speed, color balance, and metering. With large sensors, one fixed lens, and the accurate facilitation of the frame from different angles, the Bridge Camera will most definitely specifically come in handy in long hikes and trails.

Other modern cameras commonly used for adventurous travels include the GoPro Hero as it fixates its purpose on action photography, chiefly known for its durable nature and size. So if you're thinking of skydiving, rafting, or scuba diving any time soon make sure to grab your go pro and make a run for it!

And for the most prominent of all cameras, the DSLR camera. Now very common, the SLR camera contains distinct interchangeable lenses and up to an extremely vivid 5D frame sensor. Adventure Photographers that have used the digital full frame DSLR have reported incredibly quick processing speeds, long exposure, and great low-light presentation. The interchangeable lenses also allow different lenses to be attached at the photographer's convenience, with enhanced focal length, and the ability to focus on subjects in the front, whilst paying special attention to background of images.

Alright, time to seize the moment and get going on your adventures! Time to start deciding on what kind of camera you would benefit from most for your prospective adventures. Contrary to what others may say, you don't need to spend a fortune for a camera that simply doesn't suit your plans and adventures, remember it's better to abstain from being brand conscious and go for what is best for you.

Kilimanjaro

Written By: Sanad Tabbaa

Kilimanjaro will destroy you. Actually, that's a bit unfair to say. Kilimanjaro will either pulverise you like an inattentive cat on Amman's streets or it will *make you* (into what is up to you). This is because Kilimanjaro is an entirely different experience to anything that is not a 5900 meter mountain. It is rough, it is scary, and it is something I will try to narrate you through.



Although the first two days are fairly standard hiking days, the third day is the killer since after the third day you will no longer be able to breathe. This isn't a threat or a crack at the asthmatics, it's a fact. Walking and talking is no longer an option. Walking and drinking water at the same time is no longer possible. Walking and holding your breath is idiotic, but also undoable. And you will always be walking. The reason that multitasking with walking will be effectively impossible is because above 3000m you will no longer have enough oxygen per breath to do these things. Your lungs have limited capacity for air and the amount of air is the same, but the air you're filling your lungs with simply has less usable stuff in it. You're breathing normally but it feels like you're out of breath, so to compensate your body breathes faster and harder which leaves you in the situation of an obese American who has been separated from his scooter: breathing heavily without apparent cause. To fix this you'll do two things: walk slower and acclimatise. I personally tried not to walk fast enough to stop breathing comfortably from my nose and it worked out great for me. Acclimatisation

on the other hand is more complex.

Acclimatisation basically means your body is getting used to the altitude and making do with what it's got. To do this you are going to be walking to high altitudes (up to 4600m) and sleeping at 3000m. Your body responds to this uphill-downhill torture by learning how to breathe while high (pun intended). It is also to prevent something that is playfully called Mountain Sickness, which actually means vomiting, hallucinating and possibly dying. Vomiting you may have to deal with on the summit night however the other two are less likely symptoms; you'll most likely get a bad headache, maybe a stomach ache and nausea and if you're really unlucky you'll get constipated. The cure for which is a lovely little medicine called a suppository; little because it has to fit where the sun doesn't shine.



The medicines you will need with you are: blister plasters, Band-Aids, antiseptic, Panadol, Motilium and something Cold and Flu related. Nothing else, this stuff is a weight issue as is and the doctor who'll be with you will have stuff for anything else. If you have something severe like an allergic reaction to being alive you shouldn't be on the mountain. That being said any minor thing you had before the mountain can snowball. For example the guy who plans the trips for the school, Tim -The Phantom- Fenton, had summited the mountain five times already before accompanying us but had to leave the mountain before base camp because a common cold he had before getting on

That's another thing: there's no sure way to know if you're going to summit Kilimanjaro. Perseverance and physical fitness will get you to a point (both of which are essential) but the possibility remains that the mountain straight up doesn't like you. Take Mr Ashford. Mr Ashford is fit. Not "I lift the 150kgs at the gym with no troubles" kind of fit, I mean the "I can carry Adnan Joudi by his belt buckle and throw him into the wall if I feel like it" kind of fit. Mr Ash's perseverance is also legendary; don't take my word for it, ask the Sports Science people. Mr Ash did not make it up the mountain. His body was unable to deal with the lack of oxygen and he got mountain sickness. My point is that there is no "I'll definitely get up". You might try your best and still fail.

While we're being depressing let's discuss the toilets. The toilets will be holes in the ground which connect to a tunnel of human waste. If you thought interior plumbing would get to the mountain, I'm sorry to say you're a moron. The squatting will do wonders for your legs...who am I kidding, it smells heinous and looks atrocious and there is one toilet with a seat in the entire seven day journey and you will not sit on it unless you feel like contracting cholera. While on the subject of things done in the bathroom, you will not have any showers. They'll give you a bucket of warm water at the end of the day and if you're stupid enough to do something like try to wash your hair and/or body with it you deserve to catch hypothermia. Guys, you will grow beards and have awful hair. Girls, when you braid your hair you will look like 'Orange Is The New Black' rejects.

While we're talking about basic human functions, think of food. You'll probably imagine things like sushi and steak and burgers and Chilli House. You will have none of those. You will have bread and Maggi soup. It will be the most delicious Maggi soup you will ever consume but being Maggi, it isn't competing with much. You need energy and the guides know this, so they will feed you the purest energy they can without sticking a power cable inside your mouth. It will not be mouth-watering and at times you will force yourself to eat (even if you lose your appetite, this is crucial) but the stale chicken and foul porridge will give you the energy you need to climb a mountain. Also you'll lose weight guaranteed.

At the end of it all it seems like this mountain is more trouble than it's worth but it actually isn't. It is a lot of trouble, it is an ocean of difficulty and the summit night is at the centre of that difficulty (which I can't help you with except by saying take sugary snacks and keep drinking your water or it'll freeze). But even with frozen water at 4:00 AM and oceans of Maggi soup, the mountain will remain worth it. Even if it weren't for the fact that this is a bonding experience like no other, even if the scenery wasn't stunning enough to move grown men to tears, the feeling of fulfilment you will have at the end of it all the feeling that you have actually accomplished something real, is beyond euphoria.



Having a GYN/OBS For a Dad

Written by: Suleiman Mashini

Yes, unlike your father who is probably a business man, government leader, stay at home dad or engineer, my father is a gynecologist. And when you grow up with someone with such a profession there are certain pros and cons that are brought along.

Pros:

1. You are basically a doctor yourself.

Yes, I know how to deal with fractured people, and prescribe medication to all you lost souls, and no you do not use antibiotics to treat a virus.

2. Blood is so casual to you.

I've watched countless surgeries, collected my own blood sample for fun at my dad's clinic, and find happiness in cutting people open.

3. You know how to perform a subcuticular stitch.

Of course, every child of a doctor is genetically disposed to being able to perform this exuberant and stylish plastic suture.

4. You never had the talk. Your dad's work basically is the talk.

No explanation needed.

6. You know the name of every medication in existence.

Zithromax, Analeptics, Amoxil, Taxol, I know them all.

7. You know how to use the Hitachi Ultrasound.

I'm qualified enough to be a gynecologist in the black market.

Cons:

1. You can never fake being sick.

Unless you're willing to gag yourself, you can never deceive a trained medical professional.

2. Everyone tells me how my father "birthed" them.

I still don't know how I'm supposed to reply to these statements while walking down the Spine.

3. You can only skip school if your temperature is 40+.

Doctors have seen it all, a runny nose won't cut it. Maybe a broken arm?

4. You either become a doctor, or you could be an utter disappointment.

Fortunetaly, I'm one of the few who do not face this dilemma.

5. Opening the wrong tab on safari.

In the world of medicine, no case is the same, so sometimes doctors will need to turn to online sources for help. So the unlucky child who opened YouTube will probably regret opening YouTube.

6. University will be awful for you.

You're not used to the check-up system since the transit to the doctor was walking to the living room.

7. Weight Gain

Each patient insists on my dad taking some gift chocolate back home. He doesn't eat it though, I do.

Things IB Teachers Say...

Written by: Oun Nuqul

Well you're an IB student, you should be able to ...

You don't have that much work.

It's not memorizing, you just need to understand.

It's not understanding, you need to memorize it.

Math HL is not more important than my subject.

I have other students to correct for too.

You don't need tutors, you just need to focus in class and review it all at home.

I'm not going to explain it again if you weren't listening.

Arabic B isn't a walk in the park, you need to work just as much as A students.

You aren't under too much pressure, you just need to manage your time better.

Well if you got some more sleep this wouldn't be a problem.

I don't need to give you a red card before a warning letter.

You really should consider switching to SL.

Being a Twin

Written By: Elea Taffet and Mika Taffet

When people discover that we are twins, they have a look of amazement. They all say the same thing: “Oh my god!, I wish I had a twin!”. But to be honest, it’s not as good as it sounds. There are many big differences between us and that creates big conflicts and a massive rivalry.

We always have the same arguments, and fight about everything. It gets on our parents’ nerves, and every time we try to tell on each other, they just answer sarcastically, probably because they just want to abandon us on the side of the road by now. We fight about the smallest things, even things like who gets to ride shotgun, who gets the good chair at the dinner table, or even who has to stop downloading things because the internet is being slowed down.

People always ask us where the other person is, as if we have our own twin tracking device. I mean, do you know where your siblings or parents are at all times? Do you people even think twice? The worst part is when another twin asks you where your twin is, like what? Really? Do I ask you where your twin is? I mean seriously people, we are NOT the same person. It may seem hard to get your head around this, but make a small effort.

In some instances, it might be nice, like when we say the same thing at the same time, or when we get the same idea. We once even had the same dream each from our own perspective on the same night. There are so many other downsides to having a twin. Just because we are twins, people also think that we have the same opinion on everything, that we think the same thing, or even have the same taste. This really does not happen. We are more or less opposite people. Like Jerry Smith said, “I may be a twin, but I am one of a kind”. The old Mac vs. Windows argument is very present, and we never order the same thing, we like different music, movies, books, series and so on.

We never really act the same way (we have different reactions to everything) and that creates a huge rivalry that just pushes us to be better in this or that. Some might say that this is good, because it pushes us to be

better and to do our best all the time, but honestly, it’s just exhausting.

And always remember...

“A good neighbor will babysit. A great neighbor will babysit twins”. -Anonymous



The acting duo Scarlett & Hunter Johansson

Jordanian Seasons

Written by: Sanad Tabbaa

The title 'Jordanian Seasons' is a bit of a misnomer since realistically we only have one season that is more suited to describing a skateboard tournament than climate: EXTREME. It's either freakishly nice, or inhumanly horrible. The ratio of nice to miserable is usually 13:60 (for every 13 nice days we have two months of being metaphorically beaten to death by an angry cloud), or to put it in more understandable words: God hates us. Usually around March He feels sorry for us or something and gives us our 65 nice days in one go, but for the other 300 we live in a meteorologist's nightmare.

Like the movie of a similar name, for this article we will focus on the 300; partially because for half the year dressing like the Spartans seems like a viable option to avoid the heat. Jordanian heat makes you think that if Hell exists, it's got to be around this temperature. A situation made no better by the fact that summer is usually the time when the desert decides that it has taken enough abuse and strikes back with a dusty and moderately annoying vengeance. The final result of this concoction of misery is approximately 130 days where you feel as though you've been tarred and feathered, except instead of tar and feathers it's sweat and dust. 130 days where you mysteriously feel sticky for no apparent reason as though you've been lathered in Pepsi and dried with the essence of hatred. However, it is good to remember that the existence of air conditioning and swimming pools have been a cushion to our agony. There is no true way to combat winter.

Jordanian cold isn't like cold everywhere else. Jordanian cold is desert cold: windy and arid. Our type of cold cannot be insulated against because it penetrates deep into the bone and regards clothing the same way most Arabs regard expiration dates; with disdain. Jordanian cold is like my grandmother, both emotionally and physically; physically in that it seems she lost the power of homeostasis a while back, emotionally in that her frigidity can physically lower the temperature of a room.

Jordanian cold is usually as dry as Sam's personality but that's not to say it gets any better on the rare occasions that it does rain. This is because of the 90/10 principle. With 10 minutes of precipitation 90% of Jordan freaks out. The sort of care and deftness usually reserved for terrorist negotiations is afforded every single time it rains. We drive as though we're playing "The Ground is Lava" with the pedals. To foreigners it must seem as though there's been a serious accident on every single road in Jordan. I swear it's as if every Jordanian in the country has the same condition as the Wicked Witch of the West. And rain is only a half issue. True fear comes with snow.

Some people fear snakes, some fear spiders, but Jordanians fear snow. To us snow is the icy manifestation of the ghosts of our ancestors come to claim our souls for all eternity. Snow is the 5th Crusade and it will kill us all. Therefore it is important to treat snow with respect and simply not touch it until the bulldozers arrive to rid us of the White Death. To put it in short: water is evil.



Ask Alice & Alex!



Welcome to Alex & Alice, the Spine's resident Q&A experts!

1. Gimmie an example of when it's acceptable to tell someone to shut up.

Alice: Anytime if it's said nicely!

Alex: Funerals.

2. Books or Movies?

Alice: Depends! I love to watch movies, but sometimes I need my imagination to do the work in peace.

Alex: There is only one fundamental difference between books and movies. Books burn better. Books all the way.

3. Best movie of all time?

Alice: I can't choose! I'll go with Beauty and the Beast for the moment, though.

Alex: Blood Sister: One Tough Nun.

4. What do you think of Adele's new album?

Alice: Haven't listened to it! Not my type of music. I listen to more upbeat things. I'm sure she's cool though!

Alex: I don't listen to anything not produced by Disney Channel.

5. Why are people so interested in politics?

Alice: I'm as confused as you are. My only stance on politics is just don't be mean? It's that easy?

Alex: It's chaotic enough to essentially be Keeping Up With The Americans at this point.

6. Long distance relationships or nah?

Alice: Only if you think it can work out! It has for many, but hasn't for others. But I very much believe it can work, depending on the couple.

Alex: I haven't felt the touch of a human being since my mother abandoned me in the hospital so I wouldn't know much about relationships.

7. To what extent is being a vegan awesome?

Alice: I think it's awesome they're thinking of the animals. Keep on keepin' on, vegans.

Alex: What is this? A TOK knowledge question? To no extent. You will die young.

8. Any guilty pleasures?

Alice: I love pet rats and ferrets. They're so cute!

Alex: I streak through bingo.

Ask Alice & Alex anything on SurveyMonkey!
(www.surveymonkey.com/s/D9NKXC7)



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The Spine Magazine

Undertale

Reviewed by: Celine Eses

UNDERTALE, “The friendly RPG where no one has to die”, is a turn based RPG bullet-hell game with a strong emphasis on humour released on September 15th 2015 for 10\$ by developer Toby Fox, who is relatively new to the game making community as this is his very first completed game.

In the world of UNDERTALE, you play as a child who has fallen down a hole onto a bed of golden flowers within the legendary Mountain Ebott, where rumour has it that once you climb it, you never come back. You venture into the Underground, the home of the monsters, which has been sealed with a strong magical barrier after a long and tiring war against the humans who had trapped them after their loss. Upon your arrival, you meet a friendly golden flower before you embark on your journey to return to your world.

I absolutely refuse to go on any further, simply because I believe this story has to be played totally blind to get the full experience.

UNDERTALE introduces a mechanic in the RPG genre in which you have the option to either FIGHT or SPARE the monsters you come across on your journey. Either you kill these potentially innocent creatures, or you act in a way where the monsters lose the will to fight you. Regardless, after you make a move, there is a defending segment. But what you wish to do is entirely up to YOU, dear player. Will you be a pacifist and befriend all of the colourful characters you come across? Or will you kill anything that comes across you, like in regular RPG games?

I’ve seen the moral choice mechanic done within other games, but frankly, I’ve NEVER seen any of them done quite as well done as UNDERTALE. Because here’s what the game understands: if you have a choice based game, you make those choices matter. And those choices have consequences.

The entire game’s artwork is minimal and pixelated, with graphics reminiscent of the NES. Though it’s limited, the environments are still great to explore. My favourite is the Waterfall environment, where mostly hues of blue, gray and black are used to give the setting a sense of wonder and mystery. The masterful score also adds to the atmosphere, since Fox is primarily a musician, it is used excellently to give off different emotions and atmospheres to the players in a fantastic manner.



Something I would like to mention about this game is that the fourth wall is paper thin. Some characters know exactly what you’re trying to do. The game REMEMBERS things you’ve done, even if you reset to a previous save file. Resetting won’t save you from your mistakes, and neither will restarting the entire game.

It knows.

It knows everything you did to those characters. Why are you toying with the boss monsters lives? Don’t you think those minor monsters have families?

You’re the real monster here.

I’ll be honest: I’m finding it difficult to find a flaw with this game. If you know me, I can find flaws in even my absolute favourite pieces of media. But...if I had to nitpick, it’d be that it’s probably not for people who aren’t a fan of RPG games or the type of humour it has (which is hard to describe). If you don’t play games for stories, especially since this one is heavily story based, then ...I’d say UNDERTALE isn’t for you.

UNDERTALE is a magical experience that’s all to your own. This is your adventure: you choose what happens. The fate of the Underground, the fate of all of the monsters...it’s all on your shoulders.

Do you think you’re above the consequences?

The Road to El Dorado

Reviewed by: Celine Eses

The Road to El Dorado is a 2D animated comedy/buddy adventure Dreamworks film directed by Eric Bergeron and Don Paul released in 2000. The movie's based on an old legend about a city of gold with endless riches which has inspired many tall tales and bounty hunts.

The movie starts with two con artists named Tulio and Miguel who win a map to the legendary city of El Dorado in a game of chance; however, it is discovered that they cheated with loaded dice and they are forced to escape using a boat and follow the map. When they arrive in El Dorado they are mistaken for gods. Soon they discover the city's mounds of gold and attempt to blend in and learn about the city's culture to keep the walls up for their largest con yet: with the help of a local named Chel, they attempt to rob El Dorado of all of its gold. Without spoiling the film, I suppose the different reactions and decisions the two con artists take upon the arrival in El Dorado are a bit cliché at first, but then the film takes a bit of a U-Turn from what you'd expect. The vast majority of the film is written in a slightly lacklustre way, but it is made up for with a adventurous and light-hearted vibe.

There are times I wish Dreamworks of today would return to 2D animation, because this film follows in the footsteps of the animated beauties the studio produced such as Sinbad(2003, Gillmore Ronson) and Prince of Egypt(1998, Chapman Hickner Wells). The mood of certain scenes is portrayed excellently through the colour palettes chosen as well as in the contrasting palettes from scene to scene. There is a grand feeling that the movie garners with its environments and large monsters throughout, showing just how large and expansive El Dorado can be. However, with the character animation, I felt as if perhaps it should have had more snappy movements and better timing when it came to the comedy, because it felt surprisingly...too smooth. It didn't have the fast paced timing you'd see in comedic animation such as Tom and Jerry. It didn't look right to me in certain moments,

but instead it's just very pretty to look at. Again, it's excellent animation, but it perhaps could have done with some more timing tricks as well as more snappy movements to match the humour.

The comedy is hard to pinpoint...There are bullseyes and there are total misses. A lot of the jokes are based around the oddness of Aztec culture, such as their unnecessary want to sacrifice absolutely everything in sight. My absolute favorite jokes however, are the ones that bounce off of Tulio and Miguel, simply because their banter is amusing to watch. It's not knee-slapping funny, but it's amusing.

All in all, I came into this movie expecting a bit more than what I truly got. I did get the large scale animation that I always expect from Dreamworks, but the movie wasn't exactly perfect perhaps not even great. I'd recommend you watch it if you're craving a nice adventure with great colours and some amusing lines. One thing I can guarantee though, is that you'll definitely have "It's Tough To be a God" stuck in your head for weeks after. Whether that's a good thing or not is up to you.

