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School Gets in 'Spirit of the Union' for UAE's 40th Anniversary Celebrations



(Clockwise from top left: Ms. Holmes with a falcon. ... Dozens enthralled by a Girls Advisory flash mob spelling out "UAE." ... Kathrin Harb (Grade 11), Kairine Maharajh (Grade 12) and Emilia Repo (Grade 11) dressed up. ... Seniors Sultan Al Suwaidi, Ahmed Al Ketbi and Hamdan Al Nahyan with a saluke. / Photos courtesy Ms. Smith.



By Khalifa Al-Fahim (Grade 12)
Cosmopolitan Co-Editor

This year's National Day represented the 40th anniversary of the birth of the country.

The UAE is a small country with many international people who may not know local traditions.

As a result, at school, the Emirati students showed their love for the country and left a story for future generations, with celebrations on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 30, two days before the official National Day December 2.

Hundreds of students and teachers enjoyed the event, with many people were wearing the national outfit,

riding camels and holding falcons.

On National Day, there was Emirati food like harees (wheat with meat) fareed (meat and vegetable stew), machboos (rice, onion and meat) and balaleet (pasta dish).

At the assemblies, students did the national dance, students read Arabic poems and showed a PowerPoint slide show about the UAE created by high school advisories. Art teachers Ms. Ramirez and Ms. Smith displayed their class' feminist reinterpretation of the UAE falcon logo.

Emirati senior Sultan Al Suwaidi said before the event:

"We must make this day a really fun day and have a better National

Day this year," he said. "It's a chance to tell the new students and teachers what UAE is all about and make them feel like it's another home for them."

Emirati senior Ahmed Khalid also enjoyed celebrating the holiday, saying: "I enjoy national day as much as any emirates citizen, I love the dances they do and all the reckless driving and spraying that goes around."

The administration also enjoyed this year's National Day, and coordinated Advisories to create National Day videos like last year.

"I want to crystallize the essence of the Emirates and have it experi-

enced in one day," said Mr. Morley, boys assistant principal. "Today has been a great day and I bet that all the students and faculty members enjoyed themselves."

The country's father, HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, always admired his people, donating AED 10 billion to cover debts and gave away 2,500 pieces of land across Abu Dhabi for housing.

"The leaders of our country are the best at what they do, they are the only ones in the world who support their people the way they do," said senior Mohammed Al Junabi.

Second Annual 30-Hr Famine for Charity Raises Nearly AED 10,000 for Somalia

By Rana Alsaadi (Grade 12)
What's Up?! Editor

Senior Nick Overkamp stood on stage in front of the nearly 100 starving students and staff, who would fast for 12 hours straight as part of a charity sleepover in late November.

"There are many, many people starving in Somalia's famine," he said in the opening speech at the school's second annual 30-Hour Famine on November 24. "Their hunger is probably way greater than ours, and that's why we want to help out."

The Famine raised awareness and more than AED 8,000 for Somalia, as the country is suffering from a devastating drought over the summer. The United Nations said Somalia is the worst humanitarian disaster in the world, with roughly 4 million people in crisis and 750,000 people at risk of death.

The event was coordinated by humanities teacher Ms. Fleming and IB students (including senior Mohamed Shaker, Student Council co-president), and the money went to Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization. Last year's 30-Hour Famine raised AED 30,000 for Pakistani flood relief.

"For a long time now Somalia has been going through hardships," said Shaker. "I think it is a shame that something as horrible as the famine has to happen for the rest to start doing something about it."

This year organizers said they emphasized raising awareness during the event, with students trying to build shelters using recycled newspapers and senior Meeneshwer Madhu organized a Project Runway with students making dresses out of toilet paper.



Organizers had committees for food, sports, entertainment and administration. Arne Augustin returned for the second year to perform a magic show.

"The 2011 famine was a great event," said Ms. Fleming. "The IB students who organized it did an even better job this year. The IB students have really taken ownership of it and did the majority of the organizing."

Ms. Fleming also thanked the Admin for their continued support and the nearly 20 teachers who came out on a Thursday night and American Thanksgiving.

English teacher Mr. Luukkonen enjoyed attending the Famine. "The students were great, and I think everyone really had a good time," he said.

Despite it falling on American Thanksgiving, he said the event was useful in reflecting on the holiday. "[T]hat we're thankful for the things God has given us, and how we might be able to spread food, shelter, clothing, and education to others," Mr. Luukkonen said. "[T]he very same things we have been blessed with."

Students who attended the event had to raise a minimum of AED 100. Xenia Williams (Grade 11) was the top fundraiser with AED 2,150. "I am aware of the people that are less fortunate, therefore I feel good knowing that the money goes to a good cause," she said.



Above: Students built a shelter out of newspapers. / Photo courtesy Ms. Fleming. ... Below: Students and staff as part of Project Runway: Toilet Paper. / Photo courtesy Mr. Baron.

Girls B'ball Teams Expect ISAC Finals Return



By Aisha AlHajeri (Grade 12)
We Are the Lions! Co-Editor

On the first girls varsity and JV basketball home games of the year on November 24, the JV girls pulled off a close 15-14 win against the Universal American School of Dubai (UASD), then they high-fived and cheered on the varsity team, who would also defeat UASD with a close score of 31-28.

This sense of camaraderie – with mostly returning players to both teams and that they are practicing together – has led to impressive early results.

Both teams have 2-1 records, and are working hard to repeat last season's success when the varsity team racked up their third straight ISAC championship and the JV team won second place.

The returning varsity players said they will continue to improve while teaching their skills to the JV team and the new players.

Varsity coach Ms. Sambola said, "During practice the returners show great leadership in explaining rules and techniques to each other."

After the victories against UASD, the varsity had an impressive 26-16 victory against the American Academy for Girls in Dubai (AAG) on December 4 and a tough 31-19 loss to arch rival the American Community School (ACS) on December 5.

Meanwhile JV had a lopsided 64-14 loss to Dubai American Academy (DAA) on December 4 but got revenge with a huge 30-13 victory against DIA

on December 5.

"Our defense was pretty weak when we played DIA," said JV guard/forward Carol Abdul Samad (Grade 11), one of the team's leading scorers along with Carlotta Saenger (Grade 10). "But it clearly went through a drastic improvement when we won AAG the next day."

JV coach Ms. Dickman said the team did very well. "[E]specially because some of them are completely new to the sport. But they still managed to successfully out-hustle their rivals up and down the court."

Rigorous practices – running "suicides," "ladders" (sprinting up and down the court), layup and free throw drills – have helped the players regain their fitness and agility.

"Our coaches have been making us run like crazy, but all that conditioning is helping us outrun our opponents on the court," said varsity center Menat El Abd (Grade 12).

The girls have a long season ahead of them, but said their intense practices, tight-knit bond and positive attitudes should help them win their ISAC tournaments later in Kuwait during March.

"Overall, our matches were pretty tough," said Dorian Van Heerden (Grade 12), varsity guard/forward and one of the team's leading scorers along with Leila Seffar (Grade 11).

"Once we get into better shape, we'll be able to take on any school, including ACS later in the season."

Pink Ribbons Raise AED 5,000 for Breast Cancer Research



Seniors Reem Lari, Dorien van Heerden, Claudia Oswald, Farida Nassar, Janeeta Abbasi, Delia Smith, Steffanie Sanders, Aisha AlHajeri, junior Carol Abdul-Samad and senior Menat El Abd on the soccer field. / Photos courtesy Lamees AlMakkawy.

By Lamees Al-Makkawy (Grade 12)

When hundreds of students pinned little pink ribbons on their shirts in late October, it was not only about looking pretty in pink – it was to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Organized by Student Council, the event raised nearly AED 5,000 to support breast cancer research. "We spent a whole week working on ribbons during advisory, recess, and lunch" said Sheikha Al Meraikhi (Grade 12), Student Council vice president. "It was tiring, but the cause is worth the effort."

Breast cancer is the most common cancer for women globally, as well as the main cause of death from cancer for women, according to the awareness website Worldwide Breast Cancer. In 2010, almost 1.5 million people were told the devastating words of "you have breast cancer."

In the UAE, the average age for women to be diagnosed with breast cancer is 10 years less than that of Europe, due to different diets and less care regarding

health and fitness, according to "Time Out Dubai." In the UAE, girls as young as 17 have also been diagnosed with this disease.

This disease was common for some families of the school community, as girls' assistant principal Mrs. Jones has three family members who had breast cancer – and beat it.

"This disease is personally important to me," said Mrs. Jones, "I am so thankful for all the people who were a part of this event and donated money. We should do this every year."

Senior Delia Smith said, "Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a great way to ensure that people understand the disease and how to improve the knowledge of it."

So, how can we decrease breast cancer deaths?

Roughly 400,000 lives could be saved every year through more awareness of what the disease actually is, and young women can detect symptoms through monthly check-ups and if necessary immediate treatment, according to Worldwide Breast Cancer.



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Letters to the Editor

The Express welcomes letters to the editor. Send email to Mr. Baron at sbaron@aisa.sch.ae, and write "Letter to the Editor" in the subject. Students need full name and grade. Teachers include your subject. Letters may be shortened for space.

Longtime Secretary Ms. Susan Leaves for NYU-AD

By Kairine Maharajh (Grade 12)
AISA's Voice Co-Editor

After more than eight years of hard work and dedication, the school community said farewell to long time secretary Ms. Susan Van Hoogstraten in late October.

Ms. Van Hoogstraten, who often went by the easier-to-pronounce "Ms. Susan," held various positions at school, including the secondary school secretary, and assistant to the IB coordinator and guidance counselor.

"Ms. Susan was a positive contribution to the AISA community," said Mr. Morley, the boys assistant principal. "She was happy, upbeat, enthusiastic and always getting up to mischief- she really loved school and her work."

Before moving to Abu Dhabi, Ms. Van Hoogstraten's only school experience had been in her home country of South Africa, where she helped out with her sister-in-law's day care.

Now she is working at New York University-Abu Dhabi, where she is the executive assistant in the IT department. But it is her time at AISA that she cherishes the most.

"This was the longest (time in a school) and best time of my life,"

said Ms. Van Hoogstraten in an email. "Every day still, I miss the interaction with the students."

Many students are similarly sad about her departure. "Ms. Susan had always been of great assistance to me especially during the hard times in my first year," said Nick Overkamp (grade 12). "I certainly do miss her."

Though there was a small staff going-away party for her on Halloween, her last day, students said more should have been done.

"She deserved to have some kind of assembly to thank her before she left," said Sheikha Al Meraikhi, Student Council Vice President. "I had no idea she was leaving. If I did, I would've tried to make that happen."

Ms. Van Hoogstraten said she enjoys her new job at NYU-AD, but said it is stressful adapting to a different environment and meeting a lot of new people. "I am learning a lot fast and challenge is always good for the soul," she said.

But students will get a chance to say goodbye, as she is returning for the graduation of her son, Kevin Van Hoogstraten (Grade 12).

"I am not too bothered by it (his mother's departure)," he said. "Like



Secretary Ms. Susan Van Hoogstraten spent more than eight years at school. / File photo.

other students, I miss having my mother on campus but she will be back for graduation."

Though many seniors said they wish she had stayed through their final year, Ms. Van Hoogstraten leaves them with this advice:

"Embrace change. Look forward to challenges and meet them head on, smiling! always look on the bright side of life."

MS Students Learn About Emirati Artists at Exhibit

By Hamdan Al-Nahyan (Grade 12)

Nearly 100 middle school students learned about Emirati artists on a fabulous field trip to the "Emirati Expressions" exhibit at Manarat Saadiyat in November.

The Grade 8 students were exposed to 10 Emirati artists practicing in the medium of photography: Afra Al Daheri, Afra Bin Daher, Alia Al Shamsi, Ammar Al Attar, Fatima Al Yousef, Hadeyeh Badri, Lateefa Bint Maktoum, Maitaha Demithan, Mira Obaid Al Qaseer and Salem Al Qassimi, according to the Abu Dhabi Art Fair.

"Emirati Expressions will showcase Emirati identity through an exhibition of photographs by Emirati artists, as well as by guest photographers especially invited to work with the artists and the public to explore an Emirati identity that is inherently global," according to the exhibition website.

Below is an edited transcript of an email interview with middle school Art teacher Mr. McGrady, who chaperoned the trip, and my thought in parentheses:

Mr. McGrady: This whole exhibit was in conjunction with the Art class curriculum. [...] It really relates to the curriculum as part of the art appreciation portion of Art studies.

(I guess it makes sense then, as the students would certainly have a chance to observe different kinds of artwork, techniques etc.)



American photographer Stephen Shore at Emirati Expressions. / Photo courtesy Art in the City.

Mr. McGrady: They walked around and visited the exhibition. They had a chance to experience the incredible work of Art of the Emirates.

(I think this is fabulous, as students should develop an appreciate all different kinds of art projects. Well, I would like to thank you for sharing this information with me. I am sure that the students have learnt a lot.)

MS Students Learn About Precious Water Resources

By Ahmed Al-Ketbi (Grade 12)

AISA's Voice Co-Editor

More than 50 middle school students enjoyed learning about how water is so precious to our planet and life, at a field trip to the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage in November.

The more than 65 seventh grade students went to the exhibition on two trips. The exhibition, in partnership with the American Museum of Natural History and at the Qasr Al Hosn Exhibition Center, opened on September 19, 2011 and runs until January 5.

It sheds light on the challenges faced by people for the sustainable

management of this vital, but limited, resource and its uses, and works hard to have an impact on people's culture to promote the preservation of natural resources, according to the exhibition website

The exhibit combines art and technology to grab the attention of the visitors, especially youth. With interactive stations, a 68-inch globe illuminated with maps of the world and video touch screens.

"This exhibition brings to light the importance of preserving water since Abu Dhabi city has one the highest rates of personal consumption in the world," said Dr. Sami el-Masri, Deputy Director General for Arts, Cul-

ture and Heritage and Director of Strategic Planning & Development.

"It presents the theme of water in its local context as central to the evolution of a desert settlement. This theme underpins the inscription of Al Ain cultural sites on the World Heritage list of UNESCO."

Seventh grade student Eissa Al Khouri said, "I really enjoyed the trip and was fascinated in seeing all the hard work they put up for the students in showing us how water plays a big role in our daily lives and how could we put some effort in preserving it for the future."

Admin Corner: Recharge Over Break for Spring Workload

By Mr. Godley, Secondary Principal

I have been reading a lot of research lately that focuses on student workload, homework, balance and achievement.

When you take these issues and layer in the effects of exponentially changing technology and social networking you are sure to be confused and wonder what the right direction is for our school.

For me, being a part of the educational shift and being able to make changes that offer our students and teachers a way to improve and be a part of this significant

shift is a passion.

It is why my job is not really a job, but just part of who I am. While we continue to sort out the best direction for our school, I do know a few things:

1. Students at AISA are well prepared for future study here in the Emirates and elsewhere around the world.
2. While students experience stress as a result of workload and academic pressures, I believe that the stress is a healthy level at most times and this results in a healthy and positive student body (which

we surely have).

3. At the end of this week we have a gift of 3 weeks where we are able to disconnect, recharge and recreate.

I challenge you to do the things that make you happy and fulfill you as a person. Spend time with family, read a good book or two, relax with friends and spend some time reflecting on life and what your goals are for the next year. Remember, there are a lot of people who don't ever get a 3 week break. On this break, I challenge you seize the day! Carpe Diem.

Gr 9 Students Enjoy Dubai Trip



Grade 9 boys pose by the Burj Khalifa. / Photo courtesy Mr. Godley.

By Mahynoor Mohamed (Grade 12)

Grade nine students and staff enjoyed a trip to Dubai where they saw the Burj Khalifa and the Dubai Mall's Aquarium and Underwater Zoo in late October.

On the trip, the more than 100 students had a private tour of the world's tallest skyscraper, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the aquarium.

The administration, including Mrs. Jones, the girls' assistant principal, and Mr. Morley, the boys' assistant principal, orga-

nized the trip. "The purpose was to have some fun," said Mr. Morley.

"It was an opportunity for the year group to spend some fun time together."

Two trips were held: one for the girls on October 25, and one for the boys on October 30. Mrs. Jones and Mr. Morley were joined by secondary school principal Mr. Godley, Humanities teacher Mr. Hansard and guidance counselor Mr. Chalmers.

Students had a lot of fun during the trip.

"We had so much fun at the new Kardashians Millions of Milkshakes café," in the Dubai Mall, said Farah Hashim. "The trip

brought us closer together."

Another student, Taimaa Shoukih said, "It was a really nice experience to see Burj Khalifa especially because some of our favorite teachers went with us."

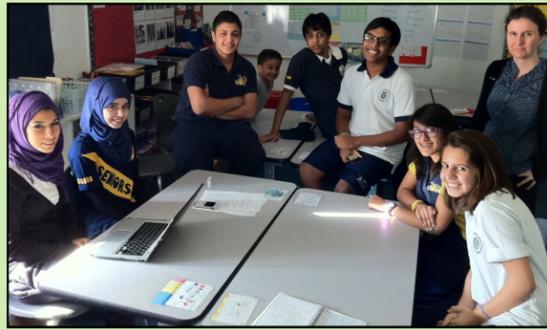
She continued: "It was a great trip! I think the school should take the rest of middle school and high school there as a trip."

Mr. Morley also enjoyed the trip. "The Burj Khalifa is hugely impressive," he said. "Dubai Mall was also a lot of fun."

There school is planning a similar trip for Grade 10 students in mid-December according to Mr. Morley.

Eco Club Calls on Admin to Enforce Canteen Bottled Water Ban

After Raising Lunch Prices by AED 2, Canteen Contractor Pockets Extra Cash While Still Selling Banned Bottled Water



Eco Club members at an after-school meeting, (from left to right) Mahynoor Mohamed, Bayan Kiwan, Khaled Al Hammadi, Saif Al Mazrouei, Meenshwer Madhu, Carme Rohani, Dana Aghabi and Ms. Mongrain, installed bird feeders / Photos courtesy Mariam Al-Hammadi.

By Mariam Al-Hammadi (Grade 12)

Eco Club continues its second year by hoping to enforce the bottled water ban in the canteen, making a more sustainable school.

Eco Club which was founded last year as part of the Sustainable Schools initiative organized by Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi.

The Eco Club team worked with the Admin and canteen contractor to stop selling bottled water in exchange for higher meal prices.

This year, meal prices increased by AED 2, but the canteen continues to sell bottled water! "AISA uses a large number of plastic water bottles. Banning the plastic bottles will make a big difference," said member Salma Youssef (Grade 10).

Eco Club is pressing the Ad-

ministration to end the selling of bottled water.

"We are still working on it," said Dr. Jones, school director. "I hope to hear an answer when we return from the break so people can know about the change."

Banning bottled water in the canteen is just one of the club's many activities. Last year, Eco Club advisor Ms Livingston worked with Environmental Science teacher Ms. Fairbairn to start waste audits, recycling bins, can drives and a trash clean-up.

The club also reached students with a logo context, t-shirts and reusable water bottles. Ms. Livingston said, "I have full faith that the Eco Club will grow."

This year's advisor Ms. Mongrain leads the 16 members in weekly discussions on environmental issues and making the school more sustainable.

Besides the bottled water ban, the club has installed three hand-made bird feeders on campus.

Also, four members attended a training on the Annual Environmental Competition organized by Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi.

After attending the training, members joined Environmental Science students to explain to them what they learned in the training.

The club also installed paper conservation stickers in the bathrooms, and is waiting for the results of a recent land audit, which is a calculation of the school's green area and different species of living things within our school.

"It is great to learn about the environment and show care towards it," said club member Dana Aghabi (Grade 10).



Union of the United Arab Emirates

By Mohamed Al Junaibi and Omar Al Marzouqi (Grade 12)

On February 18 1968, the first step to establishing the United Arab Emirates was when H.H Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (God Bless His Soul) went to a place called "Al Sameeh" which was located between Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Over there, he held a meeting with H.H Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum (God Bless His Soul) where they announced forming a union between the two emirates.

They sent an invitation to the rulers of other emirates in order to discuss matters concerning their country and they were able to resolve their problems when the British government announced their withdrawal from the United Arab Emirates.

On July 18, 1971, the rulers of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and Fujairah, held a meeting in Dubai and decided to establish



Ms. Smith and Ms. Ramirez with their Art students' version of the UAE logo.

a federal state named the United Arab Emirates.

On December 2, 1971, the United Arab Emirates was established and its constitution began from that moment.

On December 23, Ras Al Khaima requested to join the union and their request was approved a year later by the Supreme Councils and the federation of the UAE was complete.

This newly established country started pursuing their goal in developing all the areas. By pursuing their goal they were able to establish a brotherly relationship with other Arab and Islamic countries and a strong friendship with other countries in the world.

IB-1 Broadcast News Show Starts with a 'Roar'

By Tanya Tarazi (Grade 12)

Nearly 30 IB-1 students have created a new broadcast news show, with episodes every two weeks, featuring news about the school and Abu Dhabi.

The community service (CAS) project, called the "AISA Roar," keeps students updated on local and global news, builds school spirit, creates a legacy, and provides a new form of communication in the school, students wrote in the project proposal.

Every Monday and Tuesday, the directors, anchors, reporters and editors meet in Room 312 to discuss the upcoming events, schedules and due dates of each segment for the news show. Directors Kathrin Harb, Ankita Prajapat and Leila Seffar finalize assignments, while editors Farouk Abdul Karim and Stefan Krissmann decide where to film segments. Mrs. Jones serves as club advisor.

The first episode, broadcast on November 23, gave a recap of the Swim Team's inaugural season, a preview of basketball and soccer tryouts, pictures from the volleyball season, school news on kayaking, Halloween and Breast Cancer awareness, recapped the Abu Dhabi Film



The nearly 20-member staff of the AISA Roar, the school's new broadcast news show that's also an IB-1 CAS project. / Photo courtesy Stefan Krissman.

Festival and previewed the AISA vs ACS staff basketball game.

"I know how hard the students on the broadcasting committee are working," said Xenia Williams, who designed the lion logo. "I hope the rest of AISA appreciates what the committee is doing and hopefully it will facilitate the communication through our school."

Senior Menat El Abd enjoyed the first episode: "This project is a good addition to the school

and I'm looking forward to watching their future broadcasts as the first one went better than expected."

During the process, students encountered challenges with timing, equipment and editing, but are better prepared for their next segments on the 30-Hour Famine and National Day.

"We thought it went well for a first one as we worked hard on it," said Seffar. "Hopefully our next one is much better!"



'It's Shazam!': Fairytale Dreams Do Come True at HS Play, Spoof of Cinderella



(Clockwise, from top left) Tanya Tarazi (center) wonders who will take care of the llamas, with her evil step-siblings Farida Nassar as Alberta (left) and Aisha AlHajeri as Fabio. ... Cast takes a bow. ... Sallie Hildebrand as the Substitute Fairy Godmother arriving at the Fairy Godmother HQ, with Steffanie Sanders as Boss and Emilia Repo as the secretary Hortense. ... Quosain Memon as Prince Charmfull imagining being a llama farmer, with Diala Ghneim as Queen Shania and Shamil Saeed as King Vladimir. ... Kairine Maharajh as the Messenger, reading a decree to the evil step-family. / Photos courtesy Mrs. Hornby and Mr. Baron.



By Teguh Zulian (Grade 12)

More than 100 people enjoyed the second annual high school play, a spoof of Cinderella, in late November.

The cast of mostly seniors performed and worked on the stage and set crews for "Cinderella and the Substitute Fairy Godmother," a comedic twist on the Cinderella fairy tale featuring characters from different fairy tales.

The play, directed by high school Drama teacher Mr. Gallichan, was held on November 23 at the Jordani Association.

Students, staff and returning

school graduates enjoyed the two shows. "It had many hilarious moments, which I loved." Senior Kebure Assefa. "Many of the students in it shined through, and I'm glad to have seen it, another great work by Mr. Gallichan."

Senior Tanya Tarazi, who played Cinderella, was nervous about acting in front of the packed crowd. But once she got up on stage, she and the rest of the actors got into character and rode the crowds cheering and laughs.

"I love acting as the star which gave me a better experience," she said. "It was a better production as

we had better props and costumes, it was more organized with staffs."

Additional characters, seniors unless otherwise noted, included original fairy godmother Esperanto (junior Kathrin Harb), substitute fairy godmother Lucretia (junior Sallie Hildebrand) and her Boss (Steffanie Sanders) and secretary Hortense (junior Emilia Repo); royal family Prince Charmfull (Quosain Memon), King Vladimir (Shamil Saeed), Queen Shania (junior Diala Ghneim); evil step-family Alberta (Farida Nassar), Fabio (Aisha AlHajeri) and Fabreeze (Lamees Al Makkawy); Big Bad Wolf Merwin

(junior Laith Hamid) and the Three Little Pigs (Afi Baaqi, Jordan Murray and Aria Pavlic); Prince's almost-co-queen Noxima (Menat El Abd), Pinocchio (Saif Al Mazrouei), Rumpelstiltskin (Khalid Al Mubarak) and the Messenger (Kairine Maharajh).

Behind the scenes, the stage crew (led by seniors Will Smith, Omar Khalil myself, Ms. Hornby and Mr. Baron) helped make the play successful. Changing the scenes (designed by Ms. Ramirez's Art students), working the sound effects (under Ms. Van Rensburg), lights (sophomore Stefan Krissman and

senior Akshaay Hendricks), make up (Ms. Hernandez and Sarah Sheikh Ali) and props (senior Maitha Al Mansoori).

Senior Steffanie Sanders, who played the fairy godmother boss, praised the stage crew's hard work: "They were really helpful in ensuring that the performance ran smoothly, the actors and actress relied on them more than people would think."

Seniors are sure to remember this play, their last one, and if you're lucky you'll be able to see them perform again in the upcoming talent show in the spring!

Thousands Rock Out to F1 Yas Island Concerts



By Greg Brown (Grade 12)
The Scene Co-Editor

During the F1 races on Yas Island in early November, students enjoyed concerts from pop star Britney Spears, rock bands Incubus and The Cult and former Beatles icon Sir Paul McCartney.

The line up kicked off with a disappointing show from Britney Spears, who played a songs from her "Femme Fatal" tour such as "One more time," "Toxic," "Hold It Against Me" and "Womanizer."

"Even when my moralistic musician ethos was trying to convince me not to enjoy the song because it's a pre-recorded track, you can't help yourself," said Kelly Crane, a reporter for "Gulf News."

The following night, The Cult electrified the crowd with Iron Maiden-like riffs and Black Sab-

bath-sounding vocals playing hits including "Wild Flower", "Sun King" and "Spiritwalker."

"Sanctuary," the band's closer, also seemed to raise spirits, but by then — as the vocalist himself noted — The Cult were ready to hand over to Incubus," said Orlando Crowcroft, editor for *Gulf News*.

Incubus then took the stage but the crowd didn't come alive, even with them opening with hits "Nice To Know You" and "Pardon Me."

"The crowd felt almost entirely static for Incubus, and the distinct lack of screaming teenage girls — a staple of the Incubus shows of old — didn't do much to lighten the atmosphere," said Orlando Crowcroft, an editor at *Gulf News*.

F1 ended with McCart-

ney, who played for two-and-a-half hours and practically had to be dragged off the stage. The crowd was an interesting mix of clear Beatle fans and others who merely had a ticket.

Nevertheless, he had all of them jiving to a mix of Beatles numbers and some of Sir Paul McCartney own originals. He played Beatles hits such as "Baby You Can Drive My Car," "Back in the USSR" and "Blackbird."

McCartney finished with "Give Peace a Chance," written by former bandmate John Lennon, and crowd were like hippies scene from the 1970's. He ended with fireworks then returned for the stunning "Let it Be" then "Hey Jude."

(Clockwise from top left) Pop icon Britney Spears, Incubus rocking out and Sir Paul McCartney ending the F1 Concerts. / Photos courtesy Gulf News and The National.

Manga Club Returns with Exciting New Events

By Steffanie Sanders (Grade 12)
The Scene Co-Editor

Manga Club is back for a second year, and has exciting new projects to promote and draw Japanese comics and cartoons.

After being founded last year by graduates then-seniors Henda Al Sanadi and Grainne McClean, this year, Manga Club (officially MAJIC) is now being run by returning member Nahil Memon (Grade 12). Already the club's handful of students are planning events like anime movie night, karaoke night, the AISA Bazaar, and a card business.

"We're coming up with a lot of new projects and ideas for this year so we can hopefully get everyone involved," said Memon.

Earlier this year, club members produced an ad with an anime girl poster wearing a "Bali-rina" tutu to raise awareness about the club.

Currently the club is working on manga-inspired coloring books for the elementary school students.

But it does not stop there—the group has is also planning projects like the a "cosplay" (costume play) event, where stu-

dents would come to school dressed as their favorite character from a manga comic, video game, or TV show.

"I'm excited to see the effects of the changes that the club is making this year," said senior Reem Lari. "I can't wait to dress up!"

Last year, the club took manga drawing lessons in Dubai, and is planning another field trip this year. Since the club is mainly run by seniors, they are hoping for more freshman, sophomores, and juniors to continue join the club and run it in future years.

Anyone is welcome to join, and they are always looking for new, talented members!



Manga Club's ad on the stairwell, with a cartoon character wearing a 'Bali-rina' tutu.

December Deadlines for Universities Loom for Seniors



Emirati senior Reem Lari discusses her variety of university options with counselor Mr. Chalmers. / Photo courtesy Alia Youssef.

By Alia Youssef (Grade 11) Cosmopolitan Co-Editor

December finds seniors finishing up the university applications process -- writing essays, taking the last SATs and sending letters of recommendation.

To help students decide where to study, five universities visited the school in November : University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, American University of Washington, Notre Dame University in Lebanon and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan.

Canadian senior Ameilia Fox is one of them, returning home and applying to the University of British Columbia for kinesiology (a precursor to sports medicine/physical therapy).

"My family will be settling there next year so I will have a support system," she said. "I also have friends there, and also the area is small and friendly."

Fox said the application process was simple, : "The minimum requirements depending what you want to study is an average of 60%," she said. "All I had to do was fill out the ad-

mission and send in my transcripts."

But the application process is not as simple for senior Farida Nassar, who plans on majoring in marketing and minoring in communications.

"It's neither hard or easy, it's just annoying because you have to answer so many questions about yourself and get all the paperwork and essays put together," she said.

Meanwhile Emirati senior Reem Lari has been offered local scholarships because of her nationality. But she said she has not found a suitable one yet, waiting for one with International Relations.

Mr. Chalmers recommended that juniors should complete the Common Application by the end of this school year, and take the SAT and write their personal statement this summer.

"[S]tart the application process early," he said. "There are so many seniors still working on the eighth or ninth draft of their personal statement and can't apply yet because they still have not finalized it."

Learning Spanish & Latin Celebrations

Spanish Countries, A Land of Fiestas: All the Spanish-speaking countries celebrate their rich history, culture and cuisine.

IB students improved their vocabulary by celebrating the Day of the Dead from Mexico, and attended an exhibit of culture, arts, tourism and natural dress. At the latter, students joined traditional dances and admired the cultural displays.

Mexico is a country which is still rooted in its traditions. People of this amazing country have full faith in family values and hold on to their beliefs and traditions which were created centuries ago.

Creative forms of expression such as dance and music are a way of life for Mexicans

If you look at the Mexican history, you will find that for the people of Mexico, dances are performed not just for pleasure but to express one's feelings, thoughts and passions.

-Ms. Montenegro-Laughran, Spanish Teacher

Mexicans Honor Ancestors: The Day of the Dead consists of families celebrating the life of those have passed away. They do this by making an Altar, a decorative stand in memory of those passed away. On this stand there will be things that the dead person may have liked.

-Samantha Kettle (Grade 12)

Mexican Music: What I enjoy about Mexican music is that it's full

of life. It's also loud, energetic and cheerful. You could also dance to it.

-Farida Nassar (Grade 12)

Mexican Food: The food was amazing. Reading about food is much different than actually eating it. It helps with learning about cultures that we don't see every day.

-Delia Smith (Grade 12)



Remembrances: Skulls, or "calaveras, catrinas" in Spanish, are an essential object of Day of the Dead. It shows the remembrance of the passed-away beloved ones. It shows how other people remember their relatives and friends.

-Amira Anthonijsz (Grade 12)

Spanish and Music: Each country has unique, traditional songs that define their own heritage. The beauty of the Spanish language intertwined with such magnificent cultures gives the music its own "soul."

-Joumana Asfour (Grade 12)

On December 11, students enjoyed a Mexican ballet from Dr. Ymelda Widen, featuring traditional mariachi singing and a dance from Veracruz.

In the spring, be sure to attend our Latin Night: Mi Fiesta de Quinceanos," a traditional way to celebrate a girl's 15th birthday!



School Wins 2nd in Citywide F1 Traffic Safety Contest

By Salama Al-Khumaisi (Grade 11)

Seniors are proud of their second place "photo finish" after almost winning the F1 Safety Campaign video in November .

Seniors Aisha AlHajeri, Lamees Al Makkawy, Reem Lari, Meenshwer Madhu, Farida Nassar and Steffanie Sanders and created an impressive short video about how to drive carefully without speeding or texting while driving. Students won tickets to the Britney Spears F1 concert.

The comedic video compares "how you think you drive" to "how you actually drive" using the tricycle races at the recent Formula 1 Night, and includes interviews with students and staff about how they become distracted while driving and why they speed.

As AISA's students exhibited their inspirational video, they had on special t-shirts that were custom made to read "Be the BXST." The "B" represents the belt, and the "X" crosses out the "S and T" which are speeding and texting. This design was created by the group's fashion designer, Meenshwer Madhu.

Other schools and universities who competed were New York University, Zayed University, the Emirates Higher Institute of Technology, Cambridge High School and Abu Dhabi International School.

When asked how winning second place felt, Lari said excitedly: "The food was amazing. A lot of people were watching, and the environment was lively. Competition was hard. Unforgettable experience."



AISA F1 Formula One Traffic Safety: Be the BXST



The senior group of Aisha AlHajeri, Farida Nassar, Reem Lari, Steffanie Sanders and Lamees Al Makkawy won second place for their video "Be the BXST." Take a picture of the QR code to view the YouTube video.



Students Design Halloween Decorations at Rugby Event

By Noor Al-Mehairbi (Grade 11)

Dozens of IB and middle school students had a spooky evening of fun at the Saracens Rugby Team of Abu Dhabi's first annual Halloween event, held at the Al Ghazal golf club in late October.

"The Abu Dhabi Saracens wanted to introduce the club and their activities to junior sports enthusiasts of all ages," said Mrs. Jackson, the festival's organizer and mother of junior Jamie Jackson. "[The Saracens] encourage children and their parents to join in building Rugby in the UAE as well as a spirit of community as well as supporting various charities who approach us for help."

IB and middle school students such as Kathrin Harb, Yu Xin and Nahel Memon helped with decorations and artwork, including posters . "The support staff of Abu Dhabi Saracens was very grateful for the help that the students from AISA," said Mrs. Jackson.

IB-1 student Kathrin Harb was excited about taking part, as AISA students supervised exciting activities set up for the younger kids: fishing for prizes, throwing balls in a

hoop and throwing cream pies at witches.

"It was nice seeing the kids have fun playing the games organized in the event," said Harb. "It was a great success and we all enjoyed ourselves very much. I can't wait to do something like this again."

The Saracens are also forming a pep



squad and are looking for girls and boys with rhythm and a desire to be a cheer leader between the ages of 12 and 18 to become young Ambassadors of Saracens.

Junior Kathrin Harb (above, with a friend) helped make a variety of decorations.

Boys Basketball Teams Hope to Rebound After Close Early Losses

By Muhammad El-Amin (Grade 12)

The boys varsity and JV basketball teams have had rough starts, but are hoping for strong finishes.

The varsity team has put themselves in a 1-3 hole in the ECC conference, including a tough two-point loss to the American Community School (ACS) in December.

In the first two games, the boys were ahead by the end of the third quarter, but lost focus in the fourth quarter, according to Coach Mr. Pike. (Mr. Ingram is the other coach.)

"We need to learn how to eliminate mental mistakes, secure rebounds, and have more of a desire to win in the fourth quarter," said Mr. Pike.

However, Mr. Pike is optimistic that the team will fix their minor mistakes "Once we play through all four quarters we will be in very good shape," he said.

Senior Mike Al-Zoebie agreed with Mr. Pike. "All great teams have their downs and ups," he said. "As individuals we all have things to improve on, but as a team we've been losing because of a lack of

confidence and trust. As a team we've got promise, and with the help of our coaches and captains I believe we can achieve something special with our season starting with an ECC victory."

Meanwhile, the JV team was delayed in playing games because half of the team was sick. They lost their first game on Nov. 27 against Gems World Academy in Dubai, and their record is 1-2.

Still, returning center Tarek Tarazi (Grade 10) is optimistic for the season. "As a team we're coming together pretty well," he said. "We are starting to understand the importance of a team and what we need to do in order to win."

Coach Mr. Armstrong is also excited ready to have fun. "The team is getting better with each game," he said. "The boys are starting to work well with each other. When they do the little things right in basketball, good things happen."

Both teams are looking forward to strong finishes at the ISAC tournaments in Kuwait, the varsity one in late February-early March, and the JV one in mid-March.

Girls JV Soccer Expects Return to ISAC Finals

Varsity Slated to Play International Tournament in Malaysia

By Marcela Cuadra (Grade 12)

The girls' varsity soccer team hopes to win an international competition after winning two straight ISAC titles, while the JV team expects to return to the ISAC finals after last year's second place finish.

The varsity team has strong 2-0-1 record, winning the two last games, scoring 5-0 against the Universal American School in Dubai (UAS) and 7-0 against a tough NYU-Abu Dhabi university squad, while they also tied the British School (BSAK) 2-2.

"The girls play amazing individually, that's why as a team we have much more to show. I coached national teams before and I am proud of my team," said coach Mr. Chalmers. "This is definitely going to be a good season." (Ms. Levi is the other coach.)

Player are confident and content with the team that has been created; all of them have bonded a friendship that makes every challenging game easier to defeat.

"I am extremely happy to be in the team once again," said captain Danielle Cobrand (Grade 12). "We are full of energy and enthusiasm especially because we've won both last

games."

The coach's 30 years of experience in coaching soccer has helped improve players' skills.

"Practices at first were so hard in terms of the running, but I am so happy I am able to play in such a successful and fun team," said senior Jordan Murray. "The running at the end of the day was worth it. I'm glad I can be part of the soccer team on my senior year."

The JV team also has an impressive 3-1 record, with an incredible 11-0 blanking of UAS and a resounding 5-1 victory over Gems World Academy, along with a close 1-0 loss to the Dubai International Academy.

"We definitely have a great squad and can return to the ISAC finals," said coach Mr. Stoutt. "Individually we have great talent, and we're bringing together the team as a unit."

Freshmen Kayoon Kim (center



half) and co-captains Heidi Pavlic (goalkeeper) and Farida Rady (center midfielder) have been leading the team, according to the coach.

"We need to work together as a team better and improve our defense," said Mr. Stoutt. "This week's game against the rival American Community School (ACS) is going to test the team"

The school is hosting the JV tournament in late January, while the varsity team is potentially heading to Malaysia in March, though details are still being worked out.

"This season is exciting and full of good hopes, we are all looking forward to travel to Malaysia to bring home [a] trophy," said senior Claudia Oswald. "I personally cannot wait!"

2nd Annual F1 Night Revs Up the Fun with Races and Barbecue



Seniors pose under the balloon awning, boys raced tricycles in a heated match, students paired up for the three-legged race.

By Zayed Al-Nahyan (Grade 12)

We Are the Lions! Co-Editor

More than 100 students and staff revved up the fun at the second annual Formula 1 Night in early November, to celebrate the F1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix the weekend before.

"They staged a better organizing committee arranged the program better than last year," said Ahmed AL Rumaithy.

F1 Night, organized by Student Council, was held on Wednesday, November 2 from 6 pm until 9 pm.

But by 7 pm, the school grounds was full and the activities were going on in full swing. To energize the spectators a student-DJ was performing with full spirit.

Khaled Al Hashmi enjoyed the event. "It was a good experience for young students and raising awareness of school spirit," he said.

There were various games to entertain students, such as egg-on-spoon, potato sack, tricycle and three-legged races, plus a watermelon eating contest.

Apart from the entertainment, students gained knowledge about F1

racing and related activities, while enjoying food stalls serving juicy barbeques and beverages.

Students watched "Fast Five" aka "Fast and the Furious Five."

Mr. Morley said his favorite activity was the tricycle race.

"I liked watching seniors and juniors play, and I realized how old I've gotten," he said. "I also liked Mr. Godley's hot dogs."

"AISA has a lot of school spirit from the activities that happens at AISA; said senior Ahmed Khalid. "It was a [once-in-a] lifetime experience."

Boys Soccer Hope for 2nd Straight ISAC Titles

By Khalid Al-Mansoori (Grade 12)

The boys' varsity and JV soccer teams have high expectations this year after they both won the ISAC tournament last year.

Varsity coach Mr. Mangan said he expects the team do better at the ECC tournament this year and win as much as they can.

Players are expecting a top three finish at their potential tournament in Malaysia (in place of ISAC), and said they are not worried about the ECC competition.

Since the team has only four returning players from last year's team, Mr. Mangan focuses mainly on the tactics and positioning during practices.

"I'm raising their fighting spirit," said Mr. Mangan. "I want to improve their sense of teamwork and their individual role in the pitch."

After losing their first game to the Universal American School in Dubai (UAS) 5-3, they worked harder and won the next two games: a close 2-1 match against Abu Dhabi International School (AIS) and crushing Dubai International Academy (DIA) 4-0.

Right midfielder Fares Salamah (Grade 12) said the team is working well together. "We are learning how to play better as a team every day,"

he said.

For the JV team, last year was the first time that they had ever won the ISAC tournament. Now they are working hard to come in first place this year in ECC and repeat at ISAC.

Coach Mr. Rasmussen said he hopes to win as many games as possible, and to improve his players' skills on the field. Intense practices feature drills to improve communication between the players.

"The players do a great job motivating themselves, they are competitors and they want to win," said Mr. Rasmussen. "My job is to give them the tools to win."

Despite a 2-3 record, defender Omar Loutfi (Grade 10) said the team is doing well.

"My teammates are working together and helping each other improve in various ways like communication and passing," he said.

"When I'm with this team I feel confident and comfortable and wouldn't worry about upcoming games."



IB Students Learn About Nature While Kayaking in Abu Dhabi's Mangroves on 2nd Annual Trip



(Left to Right) IB-2 students went on two separate trips, in their return to the mangroves, while the IB-1 students experienced them for the first time.

By Sakhr Abdullah (Grade 12)

More than 50 IB students and staff enjoyed a the second annual fieldtrip of kayaking in Abu Dhabi's marvelous mangroves in October.

The trips, on October 19 and 20, were about two hours long and senior Samuel Jovanovic said that everyone who went seemed to enjoy it. A tour guide from travel company

Noukhada told them about the mangroves and the lives of the animals that live in that area.

IB Coordinator Mr. Ugalde, who chaperoned the trip along with Humanities teachers Ms. Fleming, Mr. Baron and Mr. McKenzie, enjoyed visiting the mangroves and meeting the IB students.

"It was a very delightful experience visiting the mangroves and I got to see a really beautiful

view about the city," he said. "It was a group bonding experience."

Mr. Ugalde, who often kayaked in his home country of Mexico, said it is easier kayaking here. "In Mexico the river was fast so it was a bit challenging to kayak," he said. "But in Abu Dhabi its very calm and the whether is very different, it's hot and less windy."

Jovanovic enjoyed his second time kayaking in the mangroves, after he had gone on last year's IB trip. "It was a smaller group this year's which we had more time to look around and it was less of a rush than last year's," he said.

"I found the mangroves a very interesting place and it is a really good experience, so I advice others to go to the mangroves."