The American University in New Cairo
An Update on the Status of New Campus Development

The plan for a new, modern AUC, expected to be complete in 2006, has been in the works for some time. The project began in September 1997 when the University began preliminary site surveys, and the AUC community has since been working diligently toward its goal. After speaking to Dr. Hussein El-Sharkawy, who heads the New Campus Development Office, I began to feel some of the excitement that inevitably accompanies the anticipation of anything “new and improved.”

The ultimate realization of AUC’s modernization comes in the form a new campus on a 250-acre site in New Cairo, a developing suburb southeast of downtown Cairo already attracting prominent (Continued on page 7)

Ramadan Keeping Up With The Times

Magic lanterns of all shapes and sizes light up instantly as bright melodies flood downtown streets, signifying to all that Ramadan is here.

Where once children carried lanterns with candies and oil wicks, the new fangled tawaneses of modern Cairo belt out cheerful songs and hang from kiosks, a telling reminder of how Ramadan has changed with the times. Mohamed Attala, a 68-year-old beggar, recalls a childhood where he would knock on his neighbors’ doors and ask for “jamish” or candy.

“I’m really old and I miss the good old days when Cairo was safe and children could buy their oil lamps and knock on neighbors’ doors late into the night,” Attala said. “I always collected the most sweets and we would sing songs like Wahawey ya Wahawey

The origin of the lanterns is shrouded in mystery and old wives tales. According to (Continued on page 6)
PRESIDENT GERHART RESIGNS TO FOCUS ON HIS HEALTH

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
Office of the President

Message to the AUC Community from President John D. Gerhart
Wednesday, March 6, 2002

Dear Members of the AUC Community,

It is with great regret that I announce my resignation from the Presidency of the American University in Cairo, effective August 31, 2002. As you know, I am facing a health problem and I will need all my energy and strength to meet this over the coming years. Moreover, the University needs time to begin the search for a new President. By announcing my departure six months in advance, and while I am in good health, I hope that I can facilitate a stable transition.

As you all know, Gail and I lived in Egypt from 1980 to 1985 when I worked for the Ford Foundation and she taught Political Science at AUC. We loved both the country and its people. However, we had no idea what a wonderful, warm, welcome we would receive within the University, including from its Trustees, faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and friends. The past four years have been a totally satisfying and fulfilling experience for us, far more than we expected or probably deserved. We will be back forth to Egypt during the spring semester, and in fact hope to be resident in Cairo most of the time.

In the year ahead, I plan to continue working on fund-raising for the new campus of AUC. As I said last September, everyone has a purpose in life and ours is to build a world-class university in the Middle East. AUC is already 83 years old. Its roots are deep and strong, and it will continue to serve Egypt and the region in the century to come. In a time of strife and anxiety, it is a haven of scholarship and tranquility, a truly bi-cultural institution in an increasingly interdependent world. As such, it continues to merit our devotion and support. Gail and I are both deeply grateful to all of you who have sent us such wonderful messages of friendship. We look forward to thanking you in person in the months ahead.

With warmest gratitude,

John D. Gerhart

AUC MOURNS GLOBAL VICTIMS

COURTESY OF THE CARAVAN
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2001
ISSUE 1, VOL. B2

Following the recent events in the United States, a memorial service held in the fountain area of the Main campus on Sept. 18 left many students in amazement.

Ian Straughn, an organizer of this gathering and a graduate student of Islamic Architecture in the Arabic Language Institute, said, "Our biggest concern is that we use this opportunity to take the focus away from the US and focus on the violence, terror and grief that so many people have been suffering everywhere including Palestine, Bosnia, Iraq, Sudan."

As the agenda of the gathering came to an end, a group of students, not part of the organizers of this sit-in, gathered on the stage and sang the American national anthem.

The gathering was a short one with Provost Tim Sullivan opening with a speech and then several students reading quotes from Nobel Peace Prize winners such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Attendees lit candles and sat for two minutes of silence.

The sit-in ended with a student singing "Amazing Grace."

Dr. Sullivan said this was an entirely student-organized event.

"There was not much publicity but the turn out was very good." The students began planning the gathering on Sunday and the administration strongly supported it.

Ahmed Farag, an organizer of this gathering said, "I joined the organizers in this event in order to emphasize that we want peace around the world and to prove that it is not Muslim people who are terrorists."

Abu Laban said, "If the students were notified of this gathering ahead of time, it could've been a bigger event and we would have helped the American students feel safe with stronger support."
Making News, Making Adjustments
Caravan Intern Teaches Journalism

Frank Cho
Intern, Caravan

Up on the walls of my office, I’ve pinned up the front and back pages of this semester’s Caravan. They serve partly as decoration, but mainly as a way to evaluate and monitor the progress of the newspaper. There are 13 issues up there and they chronicle not only the ‘maturation’ of the Caravan, but also act as a calendar marking my stay here in Cairo.

The first issue came out shortly after the 9/11 attacks and, packed with spelling mistakes, it’s a telling reminder of that week’s rush to present some sort of appropriate response to such an overwhelming situation. But aside from the shared visceral shock of that day’s events, the fact that the general reaction of the student staff was so jarringly different than mine made it even more imperative for me, as their adviser, to relate to their understanding of the world.

My involvement with the Middle East stems largely from my academic background in archaeology and ancient history. But having worked at excavations in the region nearly every summer since my freshman year of college, I feel personally invested in the modern Middle East. The decision to live and work in Cairo was a way to maintain my relationship with archaeology while at the same time being immersed in what is probably the most important city in the Arab World.

To look at it from afar, the Arab world often seems like a homogenous entity defined mainly by religion and language. Certainly insofar as the Western media seems to be concerned, Yemen might as well be identical to Morocco.

By taking this job as adviser to a student newspaper, I had a vague hope to help rectify what I saw as the chronic misrepresentation of the Arab world in the West by teaching students how to use Western conventions of journalism to gain attention and support for their voice.

My understanding of the Arab media, which is hobbled by my inability to read Arabic and therefore limited to what is available in English, is that it is not taken seriously by the west primarily because the presentation of any given issue is so blatantly partisan and skewed that it becomes impossible to distinguish fact from opinion or even propaganda. What I wanted to emphasize to the students was that if they wanted the concerns of the Arab world to be taken to heart by the west, they would have to adopt the Western convention of presenting objective and balanced coverage irrespective of the depth of their personal feelings.

But having said that, I have realized, over the course of 13 weeks, that it is likewise imperative for me to find some way to express myself in such a way that I am able to strike a chord in the minds of the students. I find that it is difficult, not only because of the language barrier, but also because it necessitates a set of intellectual and social conventions that are hard to gain access to, hard to learn and hard to personally adapt. Ultimately, I believe that it is in the meeting point of our mutual efforts to communicate to one another that some sort of ‘true’ understanding is to be found.

Cairo Eclectic
Rare Books Intern Reveals Rare Opportunities in Cairo

Negar Azimi
Intern, Rare Books Library

Coming to Cairo nearly did not happen for me. As late as July, I was vacillating between opportunities in South Africa (where I had spent the last two summers conducting research), Tehran, and Paris. All of these locales are fabulous and stimulating, of course, and each posed an attractive opportunity to pursue my interests in the realm of refugees and human rights, medicine and journalism.

In the end, I am not sure what exactly pushed me to Cairo. Honestly, I think it was mere chance, or perhaps my obsession with chanteuse Natacha Atlas (who lives in Cairo). But what a chance, as Cairo has proven to be an incredible city in which I am immersed in every manner of stimulating work that I adore. Indeed, I cannot imagine this year to have taken any other shape.

Through the intern program, I serve as curator of the Van Leo photographic collection at the Rare Books and Special Collections Library (seemingly at odds with aforementioned interests). Van Leo is Egypt’s original pioneer of glamour-as-genre in photography. The subjects presented in his prints, both unknowns and famous faces, exude an inimitable glamour in the tradition of the Hollywood film stars that he so adored. Van Leo’s technical prowess, combined with an eye for the artistic detail that was otherwise latent, provided for a shot that was inevitably unexpected, subtle, and always glamorous. It was particularly during the Second World War that Van Leo settled into his artistic niche, photographing British and American army officers, French cabaret dancers, South African theatrical actors, not to mention the usual sprinkling of pashas and socialite icons representative of a Cairene society that has since vanished. Taha Hussein, Samia Gamal, Doria Shafik, Omar Sharif and Rushdie Abaza, among myriad others amidst Egypt’s artistic and literary glitterati, were all captured by Van Leo’s lens in signature fashion.

My work as curator of the collection involves all aspects of preservation, exhibiting, and public relations. In January of 2002, we held an exhibit of Van Leo’s works at the Townhouse Gallery (an epic space) in Cairo, and I am currently discussing with two (Continued on page 10)
“So many memories remain with me from that time in my life, and I think that I decided that year to find a career that would allow me to live outside the United States.”

Sound familiar?

Like many of us, Frank Packard ‘81-82, the first ever Presidential Intern, remembers how his time at AUC strongly influenced the direction his life would take.

1981-1982
FRANK PACKARD
President’s Office

My experience at AUC was a wonderful memory that seems very close and alive to me after all these years. I learned a lot about myself and a lot about the world. I think it set me on a journey that continues to this day. So many memories remain with me from that time in my life, and I think that I decided that year to find a career that would allow me to live outside the United States. Here are a few random memories that come to me this morning:

The school year that I had the privilege of serving AUC was special in many ways, not least because I arrived in Cairo on September 15, 1981, three weeks before the assassination of President Sadat, and I left Cairo on June 6, 1982, the day that Israel invaded Lebanon. It was a particularly safe time for Americans to be in Cairo. I remember well the affection that Egyptians expressed to me, just because I was American, after Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter attended Sadat’s funeral.

I knew Amira Hassan well, and her family invited several students and me to join them for their New Year’s Eve party at their residence, after which we went to see the sunrise from the Great Pyramids. With the graduate language school I was lucky to visit the Sinai and to climb Mt. Sinai at dawn. The language school had many non-Americans, yet we were able to organize a game of football in the parking lot below the Monastery of St. Catherine. I was captain of Moses and the Elders. My friend Mark Turnage (who remains a good friend today) was captain of Aaron and the Golden Calves. My team lost badly, and I think that might be one reason that Moses spent so much time wandering in the wilderness!

After I returned from Cairo to the USA, I went to New York and found a job on Wall Street. This career has been quite varied, with four years in New York, six years in Tokyo and now almost nine years in Hong Kong. About a year ago, I left the world of giant banks and set up my own boutique advisory company. I assist young and growing companies in telecommunications, Internet and financial services with corporate finance and capital raising activities. Along the way, I met a nice Japanese woman and married her. We have a six-and-a-half year old daughter.

1988-1989
NATHAN MARTIN
Provost’s Office

I have been keeping busy since finishing my internship at AUC. I went on to receive a Master’s Degree from Johns Hopkins University in International Relations and for the past eight years have been working as a researcher on energy-efficiency policy and technology analyst for the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in Berkeley, California. In 1999, I took six months off to hike the 2,650 mile Pacific Crest Trail which runs near the crest of the Sierra and Cascade Mountain ranges in California, Oregon, and Washington states. I raised $3,000 for inner city youth. I am actively involved in the Jewish community in the San Francisco Bay area and work part-time as a Jewish educator.

1999-2000
DANICA LO
Caravan

I am currently working towards my Masters in Women’s Studies at Oxford University. Over breaks, I spend time in New York visiting with friends and modeling part time.
Music and Molokhia

Last week, OPIR held its annual iftar at the Maadi Hotel. "We’re just glad to be doing it again this year," said Mr. James Glynn, the OPIR director.

The members of OPIR, as well as some administrators, were welcomed by an incredible spread of food. "If I had known there would be this much food, I wouldn’t have eaten anything all day!" said Ryan Greene-Roesel, OPIR’s current intern.

The inviting comestibles offered were largely traditional Egyptian and Lebanese. One particular traditional Egyptian food, molokhia, was the subject of much excitement. Molokhia is a green, soup-like substance that is feared by most expats. However, both Mr. Glynn and Ms. Greene-Roesel had the courage to try it for the first time. They were surprised to find that they enjoyed it immensely.

"It’s kind of like spinach," remarked Ms. Greene-Roesel. "Yum!"

Rasha Radwan and Ola Anwar, two of Ms. Greene-Roesel’s co-workers, were thrilled with Ryan’s appreciation of the molokhia. "You can get it frozen and make it at home!" they told her.

Ms. Radwan continued to extol the virtues of molokhia for quite some time. "It is good for you, and kids love it!" she said.

The evening reached a peak of excitement when Mr. Glynn announced that Ms. Greene-Roesel would be entertaining everyone with some songs. Apparently, Ms. Greene-Roesel was unaware that she would be the featured entertainment because she blushed heavily and attempted to hide under the table.

"The provost is here!" she squealed, quite embarrassed that Dr. Tim Sullivan would witness the debacle.

Mr. Glynn ignored Ms. Greene-Roesel’s hesitation and prodded her to sing. There were a few moments of embarrassed silence and all eyes were on her.

The pressure was apparently enough to prod her into action. She sang two numbers; one was an excerpt from Fairouz’s Nassem aley al hawa and another was the old standard, Lamma bda.

The audience was quite receptive to Ms. Greene-Roesel’s attempt. "I was really impressed with the songs, especially considering that Ryan doesn’t speak Arabic," said Rasha Radwan after the fact.

Ola Anwar concurred, "Yes, I think Ryan had no idea what she was saying. If she had only known!"

Ms. Greene-Roesel was relieved to have it all over with. "I think I did an okay job, but I really should have wiggled my head more, like real Egyptian singers do," she said. Mr. Glynn apologized for embarrassing Ms. Greene-Roesel, and tried to soothe her frayed nerves. "Ryan, now that you have tried molokhia and sung in Arabic, you are well on your way to becoming an Egyptian!" he said.

Winter Session Active

For the first time in its history, AUC announced the beginning of a winter academic session from January 2 through January 29, 2002, according to Registrar, Hoda Hamed.

Hamed said that the idea came about when the university realized that its summer sessions lacked cultural and entertaining aspects. Thus, they rarely attracted any foreign students. Even AUCians would rather go for a summer abroad. So, AUC decided to make its winter session more fun than the summer session, similar to other American universities.

After adjusting the AUC calendar, the fall semester will end with fall semesters of many other American universities. This allows an opportunity to use the mid-year recess period to hold the winter session, without conflicting with the spring semester either at AUC or abroad.

The winter session provides an excellent means for AUC to market itself abroad, according to Hamed.

Hamed said that a course in marine biology would be offered. Through it, students would go on two field trips to Safaga on the Red Sea, where they could enjoy the sun, diving, and snorkelling, and put what they studied into practice.

This is the only course offered so far, Hamed said. The university will start with it in order to see how students will respond to this "different approach to teaching."

Hamed said the tuition of the session would be exactly the same as any regular semester. LE 1,400 will be added for the expenses of the two trips.

Currently, twenty-five students have registered for the course and five are on the waiting list. Hamed said they are all Egyptian AUCians, which is a negative thing; the primary goal of the program was to attract foreign students.

She explained that this course was not restricted to biology majors, but for any student who finished his or her freshman year and can swim. It could be counted as a natural science requirement in the hard core curricular.

Ahmed Mohamed, accounting graduating senior, said, "It is a wonderful idea; if I had time I would have enrolled!"

Sherif Abdelfatah, accounting senior, said "It is amazing, and I think it would have attracted many foreigners if it were not for the world events."
GENDER TRAINING IN EGYPT

One of the ongoing jobs of the Institute of Gender and Women’s Studies at AUC is to keep track of the continuous changes in Egypt with regards to the situation of gender and women’s rights. To this end, IGWS is planning a conference in March 2002 to take a look at a trend that has become popular within the last fifteen years in Egypt: gender training.

Essentially, gender training is a method frequently adopted by NGOs, ministries, and other groups concerned with development projects to teach those involved in these projects to be sensitive to issues of gender. This approach was designed to include women on an equal basis with men as participants and beneficiaries, and to redress gender disparities created or intensified by socio-cultural factors. This may be achieved by examining roles played by men and women, including issues such as the gender-based division of labor, productive and reproductive activities, and control over resources and benefits.

In theory, the participants in these conferences should be able to take what they have learned from gender training and apply it to the creation and implementation of development projects in Egypt. The Institute of Gender and Women’s Studies is now looking at whether or not the gender training practices put forth in these workshops are truly able to be applied on the project level. We are meeting with local gender trainers in Egypt and learning their experiences thus far with gender training and their assessments of what is working and what is not, and collecting their recommendations for future gender training activities.

IGWS is pursuing this topic because in the coming years, gender training will continue to be a pertinent issue in Egypt. This is especially due to the fact that gender training plays a large role in Egypt’s new five-year plan for national development for 2002-2007. Under this new plan, each of the twenty-six ministries in Egypt will be required to include an aspect of gender training and sensitization within their development projects and will be monitored to insure participation by the Institute of National Planning.

Below is an example of one of the preliminary exercises given out in a gender training conference to make people aware of how even language can be gendered.

- The doctor is not in _______ office; _______ will be back in half an hour.
- At birth, a child has only a fuzzy view of _______ surroundings, since _______ eyesight is not yet fully developed.
- The nurse bent down to pick up _______ pencil, and rubbed _______ tired eyes.
- The farmer looked out with pride over _______ rolling fields of wheat. _______ had worked hard for this moment.
- A person should always carefully consider all _______ options before taking an action, so that _______ won't make any serious mistake.
- "Sometimes" my emotions get the better of me, and I can't help being afraid," _______ said.
- After the Head of the delegation took _______ chair, the meeting began.

"The Institute for Gender and Women’s Studies (IGWS) is an interdisciplinary center for scholars, activists and policy-makers interested in gender issues in the Arab world, the Southern Mediterranean, Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran and Africa. Its primary function is to serve as a resource nexus, supporting research projects, educational programs, conferences, workshops, seminars and policy debates on gender and women’s issues."

—Cynthia Nelson, IGWS Director

RAMADAN

(Continued from page 1)

A prevailing legend, the Fatimid rulers decreed that colorful lights be strung along the dark streets of medieval cities to light processions and mark the beginning and end of fasting.

Others prefer a metaphorical significance for the lights. "I think the lantern symbolizes Ramadan’s eternal fire, for the poor and unfortunate children," said Mona Karot, and undeclared freshman.

"They still have the will to rejoice and play with their fawanees, not caring about their poverty or the probability of not satisfying their hunger." Irrespective of the origins of lanterns and folk songs, however, Ramadan is still an occasion centered on family and friends.

"Ramadan represents unity," said Aliaa Mossalem, business senior.

"It’s something that ties you to your family and friends in the sense that we are all sharing the same feelings whether or not it’s pleasure, hunger, fulfilment or relief."
New Campus Develops

(Continued from page 1)

corporations, schools and other institutions. The University chose to build a new campus in hopes that the university will be "on par with international institutions of similar enrollment." The planned community of New Cairo is being developed with the aim of attracting predominantly middle-to-high-income residents, replete with schools, cultural facilities, commercial enterprises, government agencies, hotels and recreational areas. The AUC campus will be at its center, while also occupying the point of highest elevation in New Cairo. According to Dr. El-Sharkawy, the campus itself is like a small city.

Accordingly, its development requires extensive planning. Thus far, an architectural engineering design team has been selected, and currently, the development office has conducted a series of workshops with the team as a means to facilitate and maintain open communication between the university and the team. The first phase of design—the schematic design phase—was completed in early February, just in time for the annual Board of Trustees meeting in Cairo. Further, Dr. El-Sharkawy indicated that the design should be entirely complete at the end of 2002, at which time AUC will be prepared to invite contractors for bidding. A construction manager (an American company, Fluor Daniel), however, has already been chosen to oversee and coordinate various aspects of the construction of the project.

But just because the design is not yet complete does not mean that the site is neglected until the end of the year. Dr. El-Sharkawy explains, "We intend to work on the site within a few months for grading and site prep."

With all the excitement surrounding the new project, it remains important to be patient. The focus is to formulate smart, well-developed plans that adhere to these goals: the new university must be spacious, technologically advanced and environmentally sensitive. To look at the preliminary layout drawings, it becomes immediately obvious that maximization of the interaction of students of different disciplines, faculty, staff and the community is also paramount in the design of the new campus.

In an extension of these goals, Dr. El-Sharkawy emphasized that the new campus idea grew out of a strong and demonstrated need. Accordingly, new campus aims to rectify several problems. As Dr. El-Sharkawy spells out the redresses, "It will provide facilities we lack now, including sports facilities and a proper student union, improve the quality of academic programs that suffer from congestion, bring the campus under one umbrella, and remove it from the pollution of the city."

As for the question of the old campus, Dr. El-Sharkawy asserts AUC will retain space downtown to continue to serve through CACE programs.

With the scheduled formal groundbreaking in February 2002, along with the extensive presentation organized for the Board, it is evident that this project is well underway. And if all goes according to plan, the new campus should be ready for use in June 2006.

From the Editor:

The Presidential Internship Program celebrated the 20th anniversary of its inception, and some of you had the pleasure to attend the reunion in Washington, D.C., that marked this occasion. Since 1981, the Program has expanded considerably. Whereas one intern once composed the entire program in the form of Mr. Frank Packard (from whom you heard in this issue of Internal Affairs) in the central position of the President's Office, today we are eight interns, distributed across every sector of the University.

Today, as the intern in the President's Office, I am charged with the responsibility of compiling and publishing a newsletter whose intended audience are some 175 intern alumni, and additionally required to maintain the intern alumni database. My insolent teenage personality occasionally repossesses me and I cannot but ask the question, "What is the point?"

I understand that it is nice to remember special people and events in your past, and to be conveniently informed of events in Cairo and AUC in a neat little package like that we brought you. And, indeed, that is the point of maintaining any alumni database and newsletter—the mere nicety of it all. But, of course, that is not the entire point. Another important aspect of keeping records and producing publications aimed at alumni is networking.

You may think it is only natural that I, obviously a part of the youngest intern group, would think of such a thing. And if you believe that an alumni network necessarily means that only the younger group would benefit from the older, then perhaps you are justified. But if I am accused of opportunism, I retort, "Ageism!"

Learning about our differences from our common (and not-at-all-common) Intern Coordinator, Ms. Rowaida Saad-El-Din, and from having the good fortune to meet some of you, I have realized that although we are an astoundingly varied group, there is something about us that is the same in a very basic way. I know it doesn't have to be stated, but indulge me: whether for vastly different or somewhat similar reasons, we did all choose to come to Cairo.
WHO'S WHO
Interns
2001-2002
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<td>Kristin Mendoza</td>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>Yale University</td>
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<td>JoEllen Saeki</td>
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<td>Saint Anselm College</td>
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INTERN ALUMNI

(Continued from page 7)

That said, I think that we can all benefit from a more interactive alumni network. First and foremost, the contact list in our office must be more comprehensive. (This is a good time to flip to Page 9 and check out the names with asterisks by them). In addition to obtaining some information from all of you, we need to obtain all information from some of you. And since former Presidential Interns are invariably scattered across the globe, it seems appropriate and wise to take advantage of the resource available through the World Wide Web. Once we have your email addresses, we embark on a downhill journey.

My vision for the future, then, is the day when we know more of our fellow interns, their location, occupation, and interests so that we can share more intimately with those of similar background or goals via the Internet. If a former intern, for instance, knows where I am from, where I went to school, and in which field I work, then I would be glad to answer any and all questions regarding either subject. And vice versa, and the circle of love continues.

As aforementioned, the first step is to have every intern’s email address. Please email Ms. Saad-EI-Din, and me, if only for the sake of updating your records. I will let you know what information we have and what we are missing. Additionally, I would be delighted to hear comments and suggestions, as this more interactive network is just another embryonic idea. I don’t know how feasible a working alumni network is, whether web-based or not, and in the form of a mentor program or not. I look forward to your input.

—Kristin Mendoza

ECLECTIC

(Continued from page 3)

French Cultural Centres the possibility for future exhibits. It is my hope that by the end of the year, we will get his fabulous work to L’Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and other international spaces. Nevertheless, the absolute best aspect of this work is growing close with Van Leo himself, with whom I have access to an incredible personnage and an icon of 20th century Egypt.

In addition to my work with the collection, I have the good fortune of having the premier scholar on refugee studies in Cairo, Dr. Barbara Harrell-Bond of Oxford. Dr. Harrell-Bond has been a distinguished visiting professor at AUC for the past two years, and has proven the focal point of innumerable initiatives in the realm of forced migration in the Middle East since her entrance on the scene. Thus, every afternoon, under the direction of Dr. Harrell-Bond, I work at the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights Refugee Legal Aid Office. Here, we provide legal advice to refugees seeking protection from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I engage in all steps of the process, from recording testimonies as to refugee plights in their country of origin, drafting legal arguments, and accompanying refugees to their interviews at the UN. Needless to say, our services are badly needed as Cairo has more refugees than any other metropolitan locale in the world, particularly thanks to a legacy of Sudan’s 19-year civil war. Nevertheless, our clients also hail from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, DRC, and Rwanda, among other countries of origin.

Finally, Cairo is an ideal context from which I may pursue journalism. In fact, there is a distinct dearth of English language writers, and thus, the Cairo Times, Al-Ahram Weekly, among other specialty publications are eager to take on stringers. Here, I have managed to find a place writing particularly on refugee and health issues.

I have dwelted about professional opportunities availed to me in Cairo. Needless to say, this a fabulously dynamic city with an opportunity for any conceivable interest. Cairo is, in the end, what you make of it.