

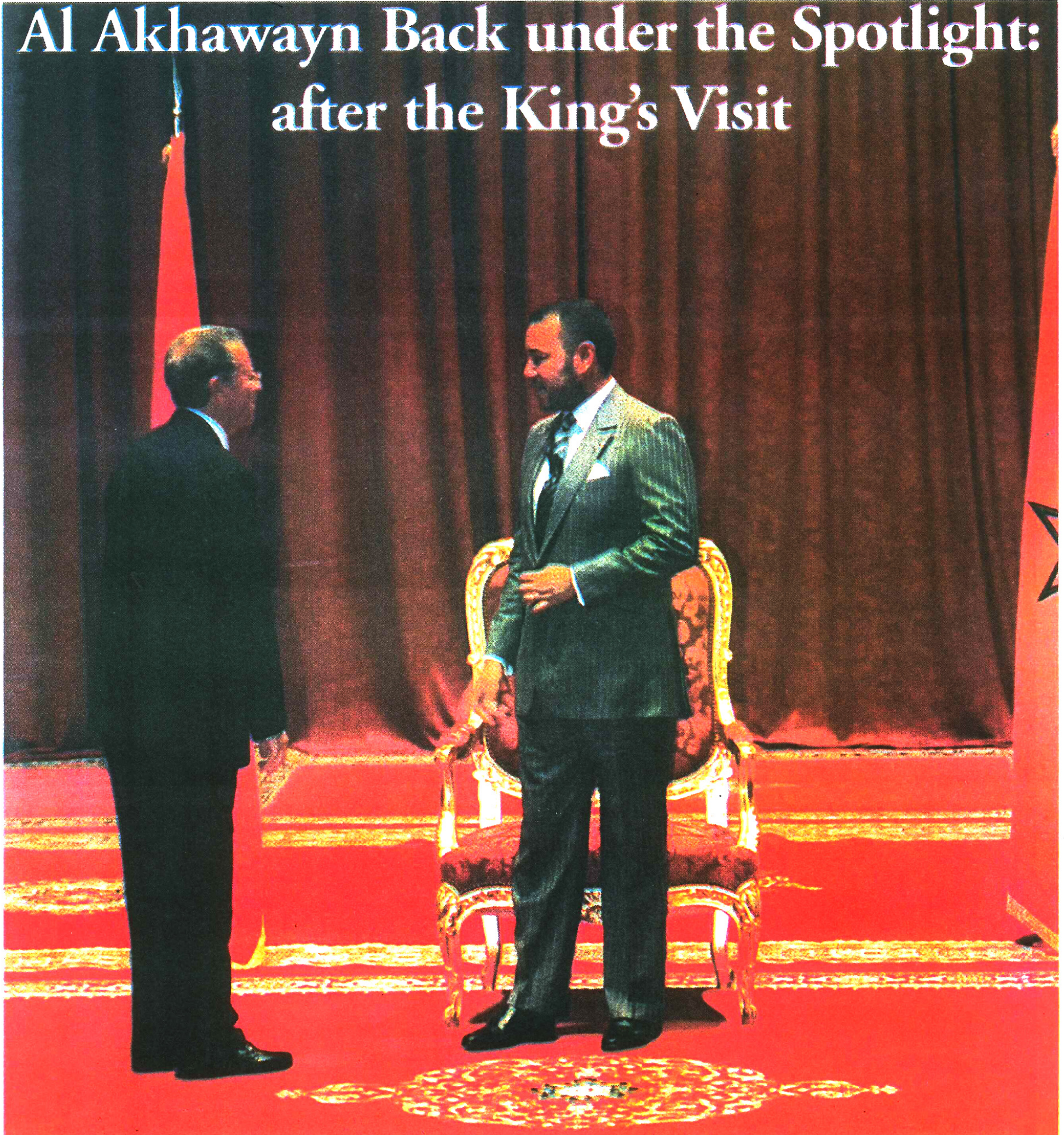


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September

Al Akhawayn Back under the Spotlight: after the King's Visit



The Orientation Program : The Usual Success

The Royal Visit to AUI: An Honor

Brahim A. OUZINEB

Being meters away from His Majesty does not happen everyday. This filled me with a feeling of awe. It was an occasion to see the docile aura of the university altered and everybody prepared to welcome a very very special guest.

Rumours spread that the King, Mohammed VI, had been in Ifrane for days but no news about a visit to AUI got to the campus. The whole community was hoping he would pay a visit to our university.

Luckily, we got the happy news and His Majesty would come to inaugurate the Mohamed VI Library and the Diplomatic Academy. The whole university was happy to work on this major and historic event. Flags were hung everywhere and everybody worked themselves to the bones to show not only to His Majesty but to the whole country that our university still enjoys its status of a leading institution. As the president put it in the reception organized to thank all those who contributed to the success of the visit, "We had everything ready for the visit, all what was left is the final touch and everybody had a hand in that." Once the King arrived, he was welcomed with a deluge of smiles and spirit. The mixture of students, security agents, gardeners and cleaning women made a nice design. They all lined all the way from building 17 to Mohammed VI library to cheer



His Majesty and wish Him a long prosperous life. One thing that people in building



17 did not appreciate was the excessive security measures after they were compelled to stay in until the inauguration was over.

In building 17, his Majesty would

honor some community members as our King listened to the president giving a little synopsis of nearly ten years of the university's existence. Despite its young age, the university and its students' achievements were remarkable said the president Mr Benmokhtar before His Majesty in a full building 17. Staff, neatly selected students and faculty were allowed in after being checked and double checked. Though some exchange students would have liked to hear His Majesty's voice after waiting for three hours and being scrutinized by the security agents. This said everyone was full of emotion and happiness to host H. M. in our university.

Needless to reiterate the high standing of our library demonstrated by its recent collection and its connection to renowned data bases and His Majesty's decision to give it his name is the clear proof of that. The library has over 400 national and international journals that wait to be read. Its acquisition rate is quick and competitive as the interview with its Director Mr Lotfi in the Spring Issue illustrates. It has reached now 65000 volumes of quality. All in all, this name obliges the library staff to be more productive and effective.

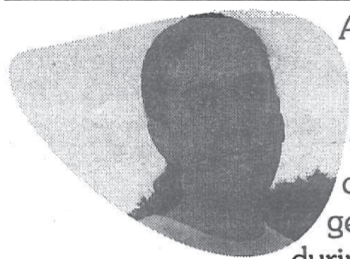
As for the Diplomatic Academy, it is an idea that was long thought about as a culmination of the active cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our university.

Once everything finished, everybody got the chance to tell his own story with His Majesty. Some got to kiss his hands, others happened to cross his look while others got to talk to him. We deeply thank his Majesty for allotting us a great semester start and surely now everyone has a psychological boost to work harder. The tenth anniversary of the university will gain in glory.



The Royal Guidance and vision had always lighted the way for AUI

MAHA ZARKI



At the beginning, I was impressed with the huge setting and felt a little bit lost. However, the Orientation leaders made us feel at home with their valuable advice. The orientation was tiresome and we get a lot of information to bear in mind during our stay at Al Akhawayn. It is as well

interesting to join clubs and participate in different activities. I did not assist to the Zaouiya thing because I do not like cous-cous. The orientation has been beneficial because it is hard to find your way at the beginning of the semester. As for the housing, I found problems with my room but now I am on the first floor. Thanks

INAS MSAIDI



With all the tests and the interview we had here, I did not feel really like a new element in the university. This does not mean that I was not affected by the fact of being away from the family and changing a whole way of life. Worse is my feeling of estrangement as I do not know a

lot of people and do not know where the majority of services are. This said, the orientation was essential to gather a lot of information and we learnt a lot especially in the student activities office. As for the period of orientation, it is very loaded and not enough to grasp all the information given to us. On top of this, class begins on Monday. It would be better to divide the orientation period into steps that would go throughout the semester. Concerning the problems I faced up to now, we found a real problem with the advisor as Humanities students since we wanted to drop some courses but we found him/her nowhere.

ASMAE RACHDI, MBA



The orientation is a very good idea that has to be expanded. Sometimes, the program is not respected and make us wait for a long time. Three days is enough for the orientation. The problem that I face here is estrangement because I am a bit shy and not really sociable.

Rachid Hadre thanking the Orientation Leaders

On behalf of Alakhawayn University, the president has officially expressed his sincere recognition and gratitude to all faculty, staff and volunteer students (Orientation Leaders) for their valuable constant support and assistance whenever called upon.

The orientation leaders have always worked to assist both in regular events and on special occasions requiring a devoted and hardworking team (Orientation Registration, GAT and TOEFL exams, outreach campaigns, campus tours, etc.).

This time again, our heroes have delivered an outstanding performance and manifested a great sense of responsibility and commitment; both

during the Orientation Program of this semester and during the Royal Visit to the University on Monday 30th, August 2004. Our orientation leaders were there, day and night, helping with the various organizational and management aspects of the two events. They did all that voluntarily and with a sense of responsibility and true engagement towards the institution.



Indeed AUI has the right to pride itself for having such a dedicated and well-organized group of students.

Reiterating our thanks and gratitude to our orientation leaders and wishing them all the best, I invite them to keep up the good work.

New Comers: Are you Satisfied??

Obaira AFIFI

LAILA IKK



At the beginning I had problems but now it is going well.

Ichrak today is my first day and luckily my friend Laila is ushering me throughout the campus to show me round. The speeches were good and allowed us to familiarize a little bit with the new

environment. It also paved the way to an easy integration within a totally different system from the one we came from. The orientation is a possibility to concentrate on one's studies without ignoring extracurricula activities that allow one to make new acquaintances. I also liked the relationship between the administration and the students.

Basically, the four days orientation is not enough to know everything about the place. Besides it was stressful because the program was really loaded.

RASHAD



I felt very welcome. The Moroccan atmosphere is very nice and students are very hospitable and open to new ideas. They love the American culture and I love the Moroccan one so we are on good terms. The orientation program is very good yet there is something I blame

about it. It is the fact that the International students do not get the chance to interact with the new Moroccan students so it seems like exchange students hang out together instead with getting to talk to new students. What I enjoyed mostly is the outing to Hand in Hand event and the different cultural events down here at AUI. I am enjoying my stay here and no problems so far. Everyone is nice to me and I love that because I meet new friends everyday.

YOUSSEF ZATOUT



It was very good and I love the campus because we have everything we need.

We have also the orientation leaders who are nice and friendly. In fact, we could share with them any problem. The students could not concentrate on every single information

given to them during the orientation. The organizers should think of giving the new comers some rest after speeches. Most of the time, the new comers were angry because they are obliged to stay in the auditorium for hours and hours listening to different faces talking. In addition, The new comers cannot register and be oriented in three days. It will be better to have a week for registration and another week for orientation.

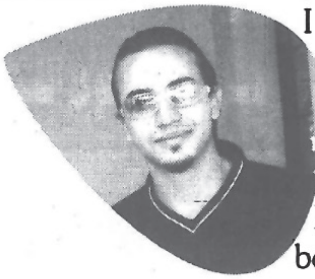
MOHAMMED LHASSANI



The orientation was good and people were organized but we had four stressful days. I feel comfortable now that I finish the orientation because it was exhausting. The duration of the orientation has to be at least a week.

Well, the problems that I faced so far is the first day on campus with no hot water to take a shower.

MEHDI GAOUANE



I have some friends who talked to me about it. The orientation program is good yet it has to be a bit organized. It would be great to extend the orientation to one week instead of three days. Maybe the food in the restaurant has to be more appealing.

EL YAZIDI AMINA



I feel very happy and proud to be here because of the prestige and status of the university in our country. Like all the other students, I felt terrible after the three days orientation for we had a lot of things to cover and memorize. Yet thanks to the orientation leaders helped us out in an efficient way. I do not see the use of all the speeches we get in auditorium four and from which we do not benefit anything. My own problem is being far from Ifrane so I find it hard to adapt to the new environment. Accordingly, I intend to join the Hand In Hand Association to get to know more people and serve the humanitarian cause. Up to now, the restaurant is the major problem here because we have to queue for a long time but we do not have the choice so ...

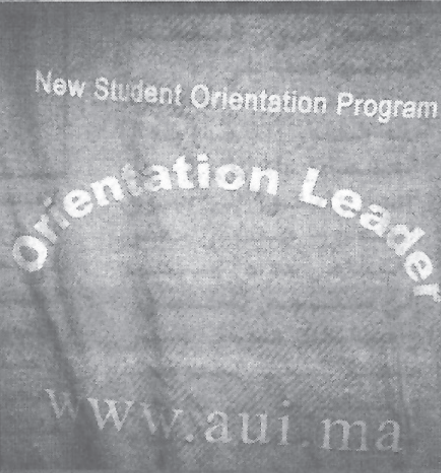
New Comers: Are you well led?

Brahim A. OUZINEB

We talked last semester about the necessity of training our orientation leaders so that they would the campus better. Time and again I met new comers who do not know where the ITS is. Nobody denies the role they play and the new comers ascertained that in the above interventions. Besides, they were not received this semester in a reception which would be good for their

Asking the orientation leaders to write about their club has proven much of a surprise to me. It seems that sitting down to jot down some ideas about the achievements of the club is a hard battle for our leaders.

No need to blame the orientation leaders and everybody knows they did their best to change a tiresome and boring program to no avail. If we want our new comers to know something about this university, we need to allow them time to understand all the load of data they get in three days. What would be perfect is to allow the orientation leaders to lead the orientation. This means to allow them to decide about everything. In so doing the orientation leaders would prove the values that they have. As a matter of fact, they achieved the needed professionalism and can really be trusted with major events. What if this event is the orientation in which they excel. Seriously speaking, the administration has to look into that. Talking about the period of orientation is a hackneyed issue and it seems like the restaurant a hate word for our administra-

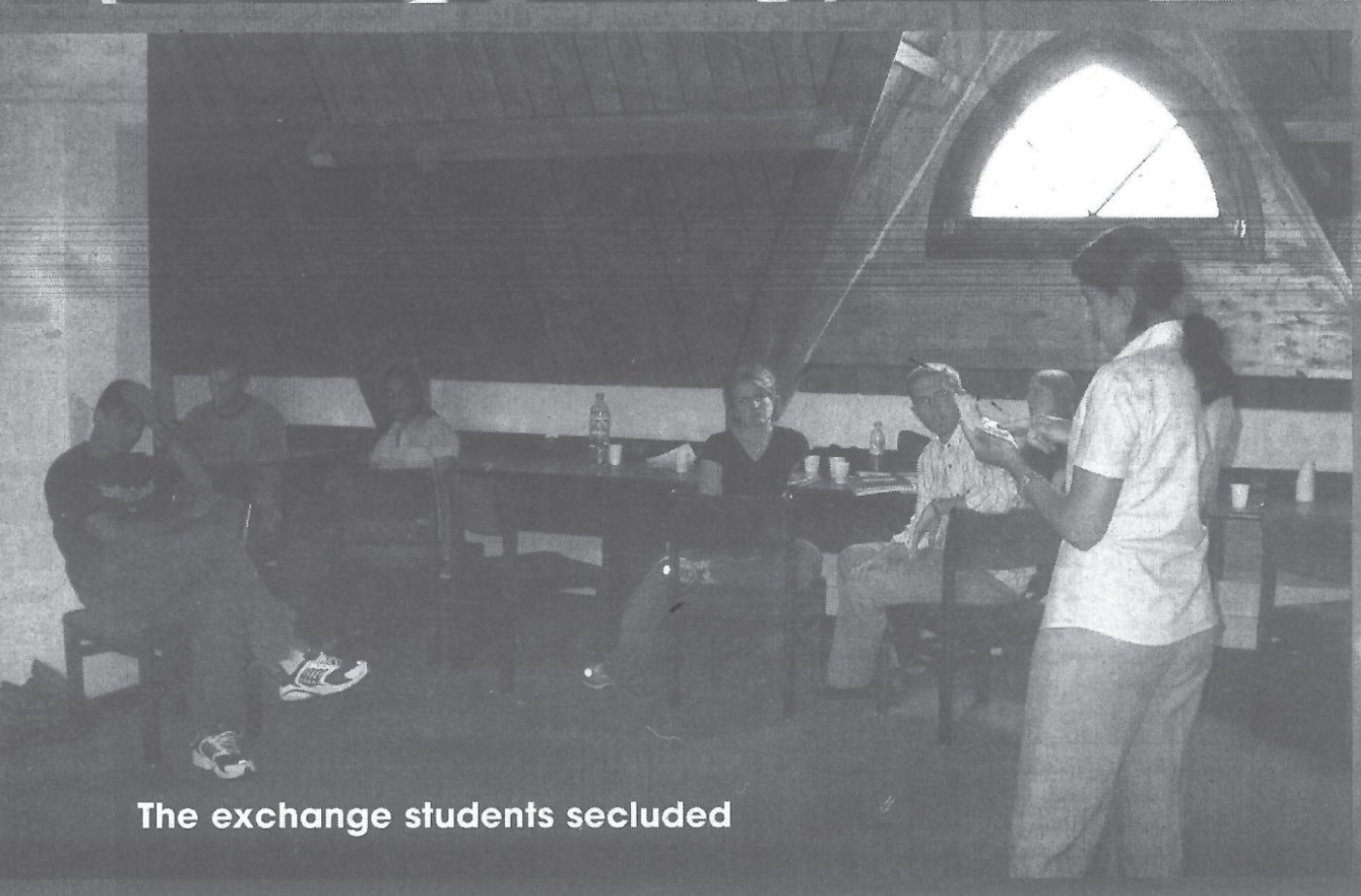
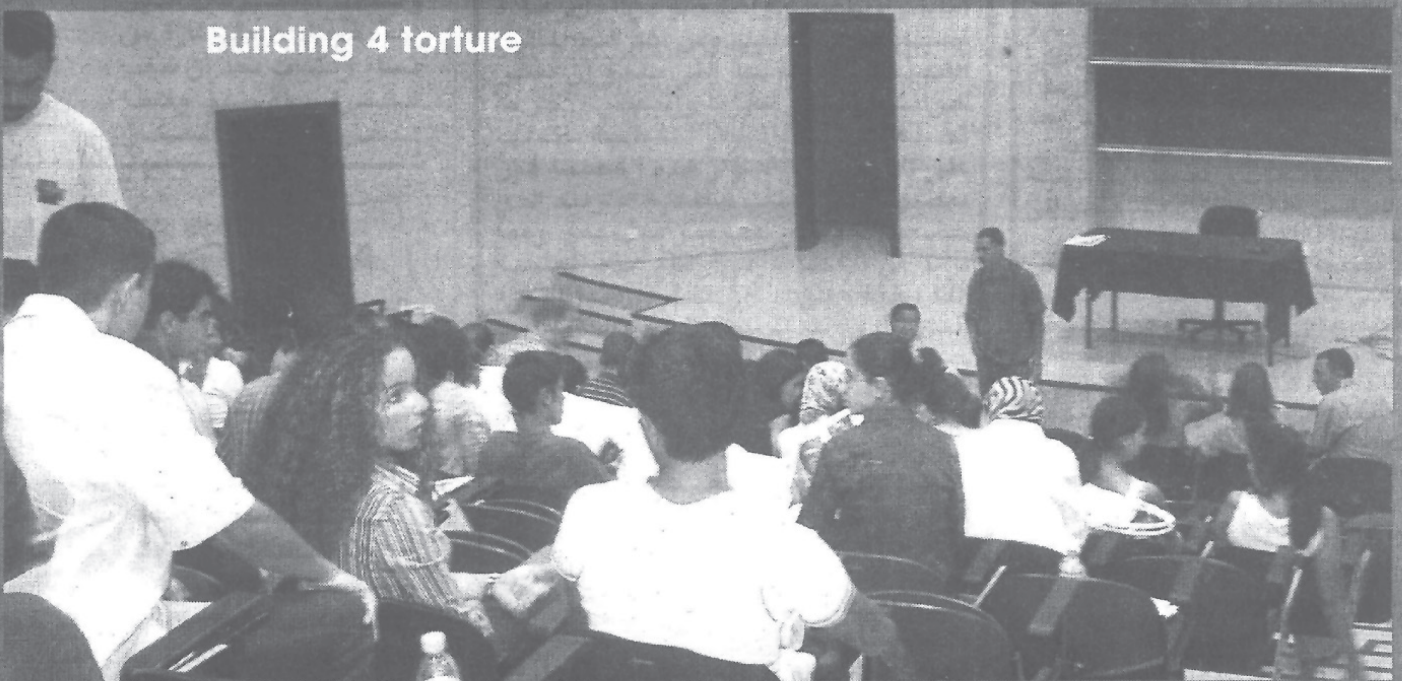


tion.

A new comer has to go through stages of frustration during the day. S/he has to wake up early and go to building 4 at 8 only to leave at 2. If we want to breed stressed new comers, it works to perfection. Two weeks after the orientation period, the new comers cannot find their way round the

campus.

The exchange students had a special orientation and were assigned old orientation leaders who would host them and assist them in their stay here. This did not please some who would prefer to be mixed with the Moroccan students instead of being stuck in the upper floor of the library.



The exchange students secluded

A Memorable Experience

Zineb CHRAIBI

When I look into the sky, I remember all the new things I have learnt during the summer in the International School of Young Astronomers (ISYA). It was a great and memorable experience. All I regret is its end. It was very exciting to be with different people from all over the world. There were around 20 nationalities among students and lecturers. It was amazing! During 3 weeks I really forgot the world around me. I forgot the wars, violence, hatred and of course unemployment. I was completely absorbed by the fascinating world of the sky, stars and planets. It is true that I learnt a lot about astronomy but even more about tolerance and human relationships. The students were very enthusiastic about astronomy. Most of them were seeking a Ph. D. thesis. The lecturers were so brilliant and devoted to astronomy and science but they were incredibly modest. It felt like a big family.

The opening ceremony was on Friday, July 2nd, 2004. It was a good opportunity to meet the people who organized this summer school, some professors and the foreign students. It is exciting to see new faces from different backgrounds especially in AUI where all the faces are the same either in the University or in downtown Ifrane. The collective lunch was a good idea, the meal was delicious in the VIP restaurant compared to the students'. The day after, we started the lectures. There were very interesting but hard especially for us, Al Akhawayn students. The labs were more stimulating and fun since we were using new software used to analyze astronomical data. Also, we were working under Linux so it was a good time for practice. Some professors have really marked me with their remarkable way of teaching and behavior towards students. We did not feel

that hierarchy between students and professors. There was no mannerism. The lecturers were really cool!

Sundays were the most awaited since we were spending the day outside Ifrane. We went to Fez in the first Sunday, July the 4th. We saw some places where they make and sell traditional items 100% handmade.



There were gorgeous but extremely expensive. It was very hot but the lunch was tasty and the place was very nice. We could see the whole old Medina from the palace. It was the best chance to know each other more. The afternoon was the time for shopping for some and visiting other old areas for others. We felt lucky to have a nice and spacious house; many other people could not afford even a roof. Late in the afternoon, we went back to Ifrane. We were really exhausted but it did not prevent us from meeting in the restaurant and continue our discussions.

The week after was overloaded with lectures but what was special were the observations we did at night. It

The day after, we started the lectures. There were very interesting but hard especially for us, Al Akhawayn students. The labs were more stimulating and fun since we were using new software used to analyze astronomical data

was the first time for me to see and use a real telescope. Fortunately, the weather was stable and the sky was clear and fabulous. We could see Jupiter with its four moons, the Milky Way and millions of stars. We were all discussing the summer sky and its constellations, the planets, the stars, etc. It was a fruitful and enjoyable

The food was excellent and we felt really at ease there. Also, we celebrated Dr. Gebaldy's birthday. She was extremely happy with the surprise. It was really fun. Then, we went to Volubilis. Even if it was very hot there, it is a huge place where we could breathe fresh air and feel serenity and peace of mind.

night in the stars lights, just talking about Astronomy and looking at different and wonderful objects. We all agreed on the fact that Ifrane sky is one of the best in the world.

In Friday 9th July, we had the first farewell dinner. It was hard to say goodbye to one of the best teachers I have ever met, Dr. Ribas. He gave us three lectures and he was mainly responsible for the Lab, the software installations, etc. He taught us many valuable things not only about astronomy but also humbleness and tolerance. He was a real gentleman. Another professor was leaving too. I liked his spontaneity and endurance to give his presentations in English even if he faced many difficulties with the language.

The day after, we went to Meknes. We arrived at around 8:30 pm. We visited many places like old mosques from the time of Moulay Ismail. Then, we went to have lunch in a beautiful palace.

Another week has started and new lecturers came to give us new material. Some of them were fun, others were serene but they were all passionate by science. The observations were mainly organized by the students. Some of them started to show more interest in networking than astronomy since they started to feel tired after the overloaded day. Another farewell dinner was planned for Friday 16th. No one was expecting the departure of Dr. Guinan who was planning to stay till the end of the ISYA but he was obliged to leave because of unforeseen reasons. He was like a father for many of us. He was giving us precious advice not only for Astronomy but also for our lives. It was tough to meet such nice people and to be separated with them afterwards. But an old proverb says that the number of separations a person undergoes shows his/her experience in life.

Best Pupils Campus Stay

Mr Abdellilah BENDKIA

First Group: 12,13, 14 July 2004

Second Group: 15, 16, 17 July 2004

The project targeted seventy pupils among the highest achievers who will be taking the Baccalauréat (12th grade) in June 2005. Invitations were sent out to the sixteen academies of education spread out over Morocco, the five French Mission lycées, and fifteen private lycées located in the main cities. The participants came in two groups. The first group attended the session of 12, 13, 14 July 2004. The other group attended the second session of 15, 16, 17 July 2004.

The purpose of the project was to:

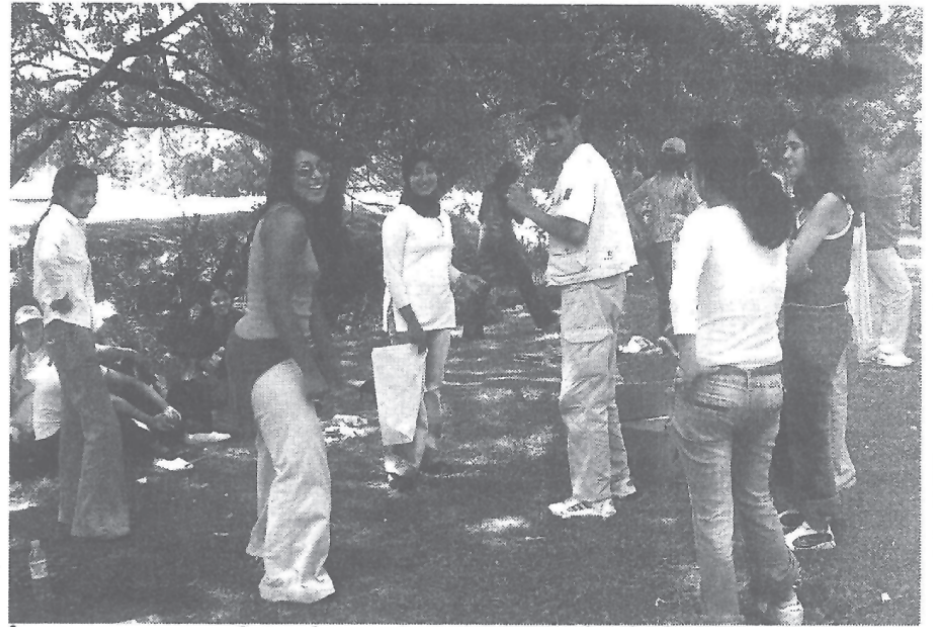
- gather on campus for three days a representative sample of the highest achievers who will be studying for the Baccalauréat diploma during the upcoming school year, and who may have

- started to think about where to go for their University studies;
- Give these pupils the opportunity to discover Al Akhawayn University as a pole of excellence, as a pioneer in adopting the American system of education, and as an ideal setting for promoting personal growth, universal values of peace and tolerance among the nations of the world;
- Give them a fore-taste of what studies are like at Al Akhawayn University, the programs available, and the incentives that the university offers to the high achievers who apply for admission (merit-based scholarships)

The program of the tree-day stay consisted of the following:

- ¢ orientation session
- ¢ campus tour
- ¢ AUI presentation
- ¢ day activities (see details below)
- ¢ excursion
- ¢ evening activities

For the day activities, the pupils were divided into



four groups and took part in the following activities:

- ¢ introduction to multi-media resources of the library
- ¢ internet
- ¢ computer use
- ¢ communication activities in English

Thanks to the support of a good number of administrators, faculty, staff, a number of American students attending the summer Arabic Program, and judging from the pupils' impressions, the project was very successful. The second

group had the opportunity to express their views by completing an evaluation sheet. The investment was worthwhile and future editions are highly recommended.

There is no doubt that the high level of satisfaction among the participants will have a positive impact on the participants' own perceptions about AUI and that the beneficiaries will in turn vehicle a good image to their families and friends.

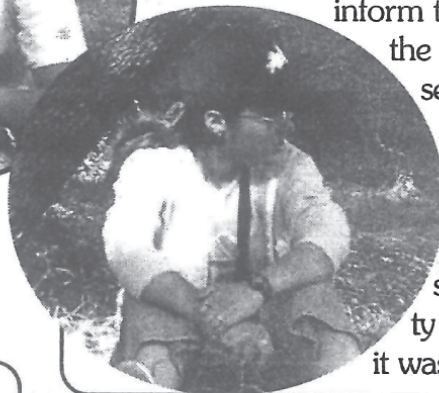
Hicham Khechai from Casa:

I was in France preparing for my baccalauréate when I got the call of the university. I was so surprised and happy to hear about that initiative taken by an institution of the level of AUI especially that it is known as a school for affluent people. Once here, I realized that it is a school that trains leaders and encourages studious pupils. As for the program, it was good and I liked most free access to internet and the classes of computer. It was a valuable occasion to meet brilliant students coming from all round Morocco.



Btissam El Ghazi from Layoune:

Well, I am satisfied with my residence at AUI despite its shortness. I discovered and saw many extraordinary things which I wished and imagined before coming here. I was very happy when I received the invitation. I called the whole family to inform them about the good news. I stopped the vacation and everything to come and see what this university, about which I heard a lot, looks like in reality. During the training I learned a lot of things. For the facilities in the university, they are really of a good quality. I heard some students complain about the quality of the food. As far as I am concerned, it was excellent.



Aissaoui Ouissal from Settat

Yeah ... I like the spirit that pervades the place. It is encouraging to study. The good weather and all the facilities provided by the university are really excellent especially the activities which would enrich the knowledge of students away from classes. The training we benefited from is very substantial. It gave us an idea of the program of the university and I would like to thank all those who helped in its success. As for the library, it is very rich and the staff in there are very helpful. Well the period of our stay is short but we would have preferred joint activities with AUI students and exchange to practice our English and learn more. What I did not like as well is the campus tour that was scheduled two days after our arrival in stead of the first day. That done, we would have had enough chance to know where everything is here on campus.



Reda Kabbaj from Casa:

When I got the call, I was so surprised and I love the atmosphere here. What I regret is scheduling this visit to AUI at this particular time because the students are not here. Therefore, we get only one version of the truth about the university. In fact, since we arrived, everybody talked about positive things about the institution and we would like to know the other side of the coin. The major advantage that we would enjoy at this university apart from the sport facilities is the access to the web. It is rare to find a university with these computers in Morocco. As for the food, it is not like the one we eat at home which is normal. What matters is that we find something to eat.



Our students were impressive in The E-Gov Workshop

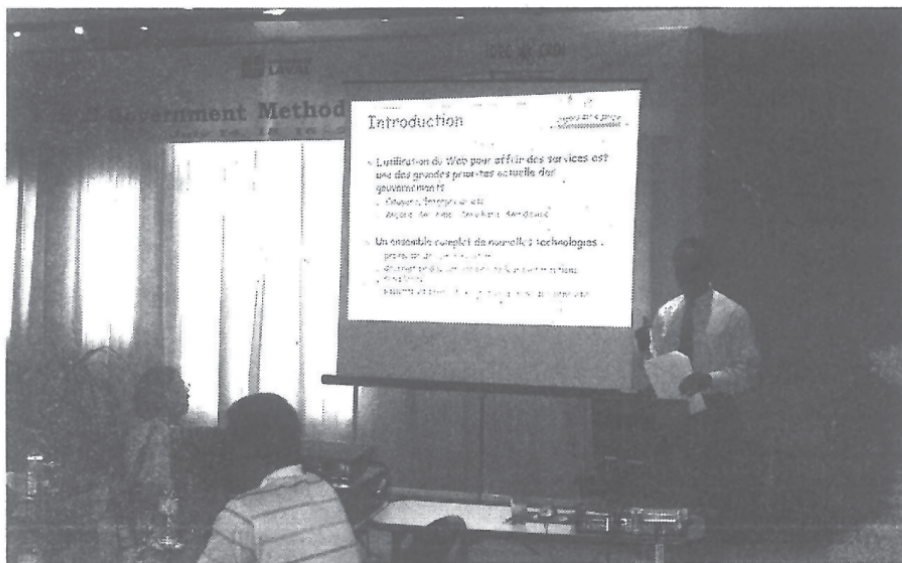
Brahim A. OUZINEB

The AUI News: Can you explain in simple terms what E-Gov means

Dr Kettani:

The abbreviation e-Gov stands for electronic government and it refers to an information system (a software), designed, implemented and supported by a public administration to enhance services rendered to citizens. e-Gov comprises four basic axes:

1. G2C: Information systems



Technologies, platforms and architectures for eGov systems

By Houda Chakiri and Mamadou Koné (Directeur du Département d'informatique, Université Laval, Québec, Canada)

and communication infrastructure that is dedicated to better serve citizens (example: automating the birth certificate or residency certificate request processes);

2. G2E: Information systems and communication infrastructure that is dedicated to better serve government employees (example: automating the leave of absence process for employees);

3. G2B: Information systems and communication infrastructure that is dedicated to better serve Businesses (example: automating part of the different processes needed to launch a new enterprise);

4. G2G: Information systems and communication infrastructure that is dedicated to better interconnect and exchange data/information/services between governmental services in-

the benefit of citizens, employees and businesses (example: connect and synchronise the customs office database and the ministry of interior database in order not to let a guilty individual leave the country).

The AUI News: Do you think that our citizens are ready to accept that new facility?

Dr Kettani:

This question reminds me a similar one that we use to ask 10 years ago about ATMs and the readiness of the Moroccan

individuals to use them. As you can observe nowadays, the use of ATM has become a banal action and nobody is actually still doubting of the usefulness of such devices in order to make our life easier.

I don't think the problem is related to the readiness of our citizens but it is much more related to the usability, the appropriateness and the suitability of the developed eGov systems with respect to the real needs of citizens.

The AUI News: Why choosing Ifrane as a starting point for the program?

Dr kettani:

In the year 2002, we have had a very limited fund from the British Embassy in Rabat in order to develop a prototype of an eGov system for a Moroccan

city. With this serious limitation in the budget, Ifrane was an ideal candidate for us since it is just next door to our university, it has only several thousands of inhabitants and we had (and we still have) some good point of contacts to both the 'Palais de ville' and the 'la prefecture'.

The AUI News: Did you get any encouragement from the government to secure a better running of the program? (Financially speaking)

Dr kettani:

The governor of ElHajeb has shown a strong support to our project and did commit to give a yearly allocation of 200.000Dhs to our research team to develop and deploy an eGov system to the city of ElHajeb. Also, the British embassy has already funded a part of the Ifrane eGov project.

Otherwise, we are still waiting for reactions of other high Moroccan officers in the government.

The AUI News: Bearing in mind the bureaucracy in our administrative system, how would that system be beneficial to businessmen?

Dr kettani:

It has been shown around the world that eGov systems, if well done, simplify tasks, speed up the processing delays, increase the transparency of procedures, contribute to more accountability, give equal opportunities to everyone, allow for a better availability of information. All these facts (or anyone of them) will definitely have a direct impact on investors because most their claims is related to one of these facts or another.

The AUI News: Why didn't the gov apply such a system a long time ago at least to fight the ills of our administration and cut costs?

Dr kettani:

Let me ask you from my side why the government is still wait-

ing?

There is much to do in order to achieve the famous eMAROC vision (that was supposed to be effective on 2002!) of the late SEPTI (Secrétariat d'Etat auprès du Premier ministre chargé des Technologies de l'Information) and then by its successor the DEPTI (Département d'Etat auprès du Premier ministre chargé des Technologies de l'Information). Except the change in the nomination, the same problems remain and persist and they must be dealt with urgently as things are evolving very quickly elsewhere and we are more and more suffering from the digital divide.

I believe that a serious restructuring and remodelling of the official eGov vision in Morocco is needed. We need real champions and leaderships that take this matter as seriously as it is and that understand that eGov is about enabling the technology and making it at the disposal of the society (and I mean the mass) with respect to its cultural, economical and political characteristics in order to enhance the governance and to better serve citizens.

The AUI News: What assures the success of such a project?

Dr kettani:

We do have some good assets such as:

- Engagement and involvement of politicians, employees and the citizens of Fez;
- Absolute support of the university at all levels;
- Encouragement of our academic and industrial partners in Canada;
- Continuous support of the IDRC (International Development Research Centre of Canada) who is funding the project;
- Political conjuncture where there is a clear will at the top level to reform the public administration;

- A fabulous team that work hard with intelligence and skills to achieve the aims of the project;
- A good patrimony of leanings acquired by our team from the previous experiences.

Based on my experience in the Ifrane eGov project, I am confident, that this project will have a significant impact on the development of eGov systems in Morocco.

The AUI News: How would you assure permanent service (Boudoin)?

Dr kettani:

The Wilaya of Fez and the Mairie have both committed to dedicate a full time employee to maintain the system after its delivery.

The AUI News: Would the system have a berber interface?

Dr kettani:

I think this might be a very good idea to enhance the usability and the acceptability of the eGov systems in Morocco in general. In our project, we are seriously exploring

Mr Ahmed Arafa, the Wali of Fez



this possibility and we have not yet made a final decision.

At the end of this interview, I would seize this opportunity to thank all the eGov pro-

ject team and in particular Houda Chakiri and Asmae ElMahdi for their total devotion.

Youssef : Rest in Peace

Kawtar JALILI

It was around 8:30 p.m. on a Tuesday July 13 that the earthly journey of our friend and colleague Youssef Chbani was destined to come to an end in a tragic accident. Before his name came to join the long list of the victims of irresponsible and reckless driving, Youssef, May God have Mercy on his soul, had a brilliant future to look forward to. He was a son, a brother and a friend. He got his baccalaureate from Lycée Lyautey in Casablanca, then he spent one year at the Sorbonne before he joined AUI and the SBA school. Youssef was also a deep sea lover, a member of the organization of cultural

exchange, and a fan of the AUI soccer club, to mention some of his hobbies.

What was meant to be a lovely trip to Imouzer among good friends suddenly transformed into a nightmare in a matter of seconds. At the top of the road, a tractor that was pulling a chariot of cereals had stopped in the middle of the road, with no lights and no signs of its presence. The quick reflex of the driver was able to prevent a head-on collision, but was unfortunately unable to prevent the unpreventable. Two more cars that came after them went straight into the chariot.

The sad news was too severe and grave for the family to fathom. The students who went to share their feelings with the family reported a state of understandable shock and sorrow for the loss of a young promising man whose life was

nipped in the bud. On the part of the AUI community, a spontaneous reaction of sympathy and solidarity was visible at all levels from students to university officials and staff. The university expressed its deepest condolences by the President Benmokhtar and a delegation that went to Casablanca headed by Mr. Belfekih,

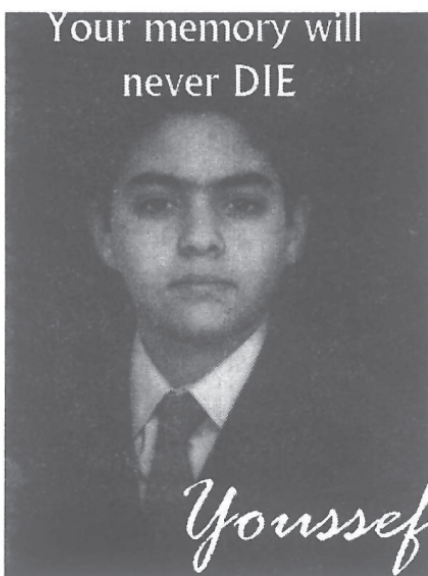
and on campus a one minute silence was observed at lunch time the following day. The President also personally contacted the delegation of construction and public works offering to work together for the elimination of similar tragedies. A call that also goes to AUI student community known for initiating clubs and organizations for humani-

tarian and community purposes.

Two months after the tragedy, Youssef's family is understandably still haven't overcome the misfortune. Added to this is the a sour feeling that the family members still have concerning some insensitivities. The family still expects a real action to be undertaken by the university and the local authorities. Other aspects of tactlessness are the fact that Youssef's name is still being called in some classes and is apparently still on the official lists. However, it is more the feeling that Youssef's passing away is a classified file, and that the whole tragedy has been forgotten too quickly that hurts even more.

Youssef's memory should not be forgotten. In fact, surely Youssef would have wanted us to transform the sad event into a positive momentum that would help reduce the number of victims of recklessness and stupidity on the roads of Morocco, a country that still retains one of the world's highest records of road accidents.

Other aspects of tactlessness are the fact that Youssef's name is still being called in some classes and is apparently still on the official lists.



Between the Mosque and the Crescent Moon: A Fulbrighter's Reflections on Morocco

Every morning as I was walking to my office in the library I would pass by the mosque. At night I would look out the window and see both the lights from the mosque and sometimes, a beautiful crescent moon on the other side of the sky. Knowing that the crescent is a symbol for Islam I came to think of myself living between these great powerful symbols of religion and culture so different from my own. After a while, on the morning walks, I tried to anticipate what I would say when someone asked me about my Fulbright. In this short narrative I will try to summarize my thoughts, experiences, and impressions of the six months that I spent in Morocco at Al Akhawayn University.

It is important to start by expressing my gratitude to Daoud Casewit and Saadia Naski at the Moroccan American Education Commission (MACE), and to Dean Ahmed Driouchi from the School of Business at Al Akhawayn University. Without their help and sponsorship I would not have been privileged to visit Morocco. Next, I want to thank my friends and colleagues at Al Akhawayn especially: Adel Kamane; Rajae Saidi; Moha Abdelkrim, Ibnou El Khayat; Abdessamad Fatmi; Abdelhamid Lotfi; Yasmine Bahaji; Ibtissama Sebti and her husband Lacen Geche; Abdelali Zahi; Marina Sala Casals; Amina Lahbabi; Maria Musi Gomez; Mazin Al Janabi; Daizal Samad; Robert Richie; Kay Henderson; Nasser Assem; Yusuf Agha; Brahim Ouzineb; Ben Cox; Jean Crombois; Fatima El Ouadi; Abdelaziz Aboussaid; Aziz Rami Sejai; Kamal Abdelillah; Jack Kalpakian; Andrew Canterbury; and Ghizlane Tbeur; Mounia Hadana; Hind Ait moudden; Hanane Bousellama; Kamal Belhachmi; Lahcen Dada; for helping make the time that I spent there productive and enjoyable. Thank you all, and my sincere thanks to many other people helped in count-

less ways.

Morocco is a traditional country, and has an old culture that is both relationship oriented and somewhat resistant to change. We are living in the global age where change is constant and far reaching. The tensions created by the manda-

tation to new global mandates will make or break Morocco's economic and social aspirations. Would it not have been wonderful to see Morocco host the World Cup?!

Whenever I talked to people I always detected a strong sense of nationalism and



Gary Anders, Ph.D

te to change all aspects of the society in order to better fit within the global economic system are evident in Morocco. From the recruitment of Al Qaida terrorists to the distain for the Mudawwana reforms it is clear that change is being strongly resisted. Yet, from the ubiquitous television satellite dishes and the wide-scale use of cellular telephones it seems that the technological and consumer driven elements of change have achieved a much higher level of acceptance than the notion that men and women can be treated equally in employment, legal status, and the right to self-determination. So over the next 20 years the issue of adap-

real concern for their country. There is no blasé indifference about Morocco to Moroccans. Yet, so many of the bright, talented people have made the decision to go abroad to find jobs. Given that the money remitted by overseas Moroccans is a major source of income, there does not seem to be much incentive to change the current situation. But how can a country truly develop when its best human resources are exported?

Everywhere in Morocco the level of unemployment and underemployment is very high, therefore I was not surprised to learn how difficult it is for colle-

ge graduates to find good jobs. If that was not bad enough the salaries are low and young people must continue to rely upon their families until they have the financial resources to afford their own apartment. Usually this means until they get married. Even then, for many young Moroccan women, the independence that young people have in the U.S. is rarely possible. Only through social change, increased foreign investment and job promoting government policies will there be workable solutions to these problems.

Al Akhawayn is a good university that seeks an international reputation. It recruits top quality students and faculty, but unfortunately suffers from isolation because of the location and harsh weather. It had been some time since I lived in a small town and experienced the cold and weather of winter. This may be a superficial impression, but it seemed that there were many cliques among both the faculty and students. I had expected more of an academic community but found that most people reluctant to even talk with me. If I had it to do over again I would have made more of an effort to learn French. At my age taking up new languages is very hard and Arabic would have been impossible. Thanks to my friend, Moha, who I saw every day at the Executive Education Center did I manage to memorize some phrases, and more importantly learn something about the culture. Frequently over coffee he would draw me into a conversation and give me some insight into Berber history. I appreciated those coffee breaks and his help and getting oriented to the university.

The occasional movie (when everything worked) provided some welcome diversion, and the visiting guests like the Nobel Prize winner, Joseph Stiglitz, were phenomenal. The various club sponsored events were enlivening, but it was

disappointing that there were not more on-going activities throughout the semester. My favorite event was the conference on *Images of Islam and the West* because it gave many of us an opportunity to talk about the events taking place in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East, and to express our feeling about some very sensitive subjects.

Since the war and occupation of Iraq there has been a strong backlash towards U.S. policies. Many moderate members of the Islamic community have developed a sense of outrage at what they see as an unjust war and support for U.S. policies that result in countless numbers of innocent deaths.

Some of the Al Akhawayn professors and students expressed this to me and I often found myself in a difficult position of trying to defend the United States while at the same time harboring my own doubts about the way things have unfolded. Many times during my travels in Morocco and in Egypt (where I spent the spring break with my daughter) I was asked where I was from. Reluctant to say the U.S. at first I told the questioner—Canada.

In the night market in Aswan, a shopkeeper looked at me and winked. He said that "It must be Canada Dry." Afterwards, despite the State Department advisories I told anyone who asked that I was an American. In every instance that followed I was told that I was welcome. Moroccans might not like George W. Bush, but they gave me the benefit of the doubt.

Yet, from the ubiquitous television satellite dishes and the wide-scale use of cellular telephones it seems that the technological and consumer driven elements of change have achieved a much higher level of acceptance than the notion that men and women can be treated equally in employment, legal status, and the right to self-determination.

The Institute for Economic and Prospective Studies has only been in existence a few short years, but in that time it has been responsible for a substantial body of research and publications. It was my pleasure to have the opportunity to work with Dean Ahmed Driouchi and El Mustapha Azelmad. Together we have crafted a paper that will soon be published in the *Journal of Technology Transfer*, and we have other

manuscripts that we hope to publish in high quality academic journals. In addition to participating in the ISEAPS annual board meeting where I had the chance to meet many prominent academics, and representatives of international organizations like the World Bank, Dr. Driouchi included me in the IEAPS community meetings in Safi and Essaouira. For this I am deeply grateful because it helped understand the depth of his efforts to promote local economic development, and gave me the chance to meet the people that are working on these important projects.

Being without my wife for the first four and a half months was one of the hardest things I have done in some time. Next month we will celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary, and even though we have been apart for extended periods over the years, this time the separation was acutely painful. Thanks to the Internet and the IT staff at Al Akhawayn especially Abdelali Zahi, who worked night and day to solve recurring technical problems, I was able to stay in touch with my friends and family.

One of the most important things during my stay was the exercise class that I taught and the time that I spent working out and playing ping pong with the gym staff. On those cold wet evenings when there was nothing else to do I found tremendous comfort in my visits to the gym. Adel Kamane and his staff were like a second family to me and in addition to helping me get in shape they were always friendly and welcoming.

As a result of my experiences in Morocco I have come to be more appreciative of what I have been blessed with in job opportunities, standard of living, and quality of life. Conversely, I came to really appreciate the Moroccan approach to life, and their deep inter-personal relationships and hospitality. Thanks to the times that I spent as a guest in Amine Bentelab's and Adel Kamane's and other peoples homes I glimpsed into the Moroccan inner world. Never before had I eaten so many delightful dishes, talked until the wee hours of the morning, slept late, and made spontaneous visits to sight see or visit relatives. Their world is far richer in non-material wealth that I could have imagined and the time that I spent with you made me a better person. Hamdullah . . .

A powerful piece of filmmaking

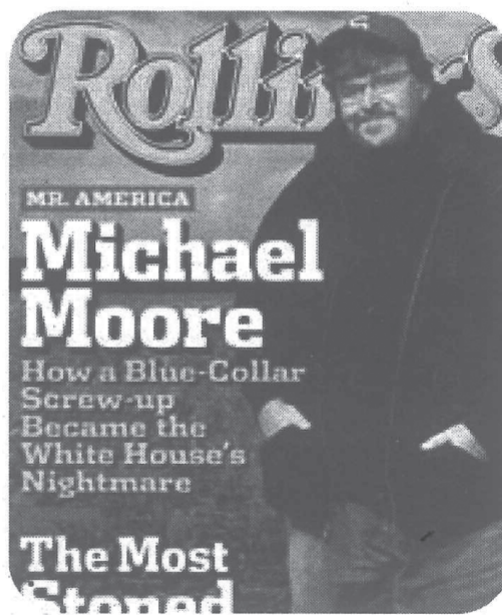
Nadia KHOMRI

Michael Moore's latest film *Fahrenheit 9/11* is probably the most commercially successful documentary ever made. It essentially traces why the US has become a target for terrorism. Essentially addressed to the American citizens, its central message to them is that they are being lied to.

What about the title? It has been borrowed (or stolen) from *Fahrenheit 451*, a 1953 masterpiece novel by Ray Bradbury, which

depicts a futuristic society where firemen burn homes and libraries in order to destroy books and ideas. *Fahrenheit 451* takes its title from the temperature at which books (or paper) burn. Moore has called *Fahrenheit 9/11* the "temperature at which freedom burns"

What is remarkable about *Fahrenheit 9/11* is not Moore's politics, but his power of persuasion. By choosing the electoral period in the United States, his primary goal was to provide evidence that



President Bush is an "incompetent moron" and that "his administration is corrupted." But to anyone who follows

international news, there is nothing new about these charges. In other terms, everything in Moore's film is a reflexion of the news that were reported in magazines, papers and audio-visual media. Michael

Moore knew how to put it all together in a powerful piece of filmmaking. By making an appro-

priate use of TV archives, confidential files and evidence, he proceeded into a selective editing and manipulation of Bush's words, making from *Fahrenheit 9/11* a hate letter to President Bush, which succeeded in supporting the anti Bush audience beliefs and then provoking a huge debate between democrats and republicans.

The inevitable question now is: Will this clever assembler of huge accusations and his film *Fahrenheit 9/11* get a president fired?

The 2nd Edition of AUI Tennis Open: Success Confirmed

Ahmed LAAROUSSI



For the second time in row Al Akhawayn University in Ifran had the pleasure to host the AUI Tennis Open from the 25th to 29th of August 2004 that attracted more than 80 players from different regions of Morocco. The first national tournament on hard courts that has seen the light thanks to the efforts of the Moroccan tennis figure Mr. Adil Kamane, the athletic director at AUI, and the administrative assistance of Rajae Saidi, succeeded to organize the following categories even though the limited number of courts avail-

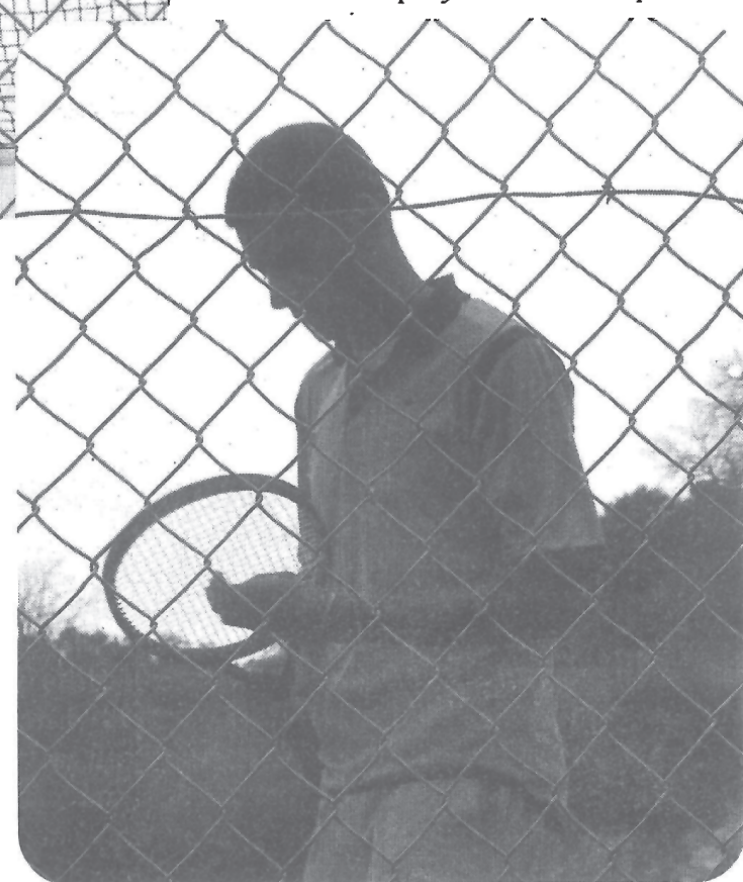
able at the campus, and the lack of sponsors:

Unranked players men and women
3rd division men and women
2nd division women

The success of the previous edition in 2003 had a very good impact on this year's edition since the best players in Morocco in the categories cited above participated in the draws. Looking for new feelings, many players were interested to test their abilities and performances on hard courts knowing that no other club in Morocco offers this opportunity. As usual, the AUI communi-

ty had the chance to visualize some talented players in the circuit, unfortunately only few tennis lovers were at the rendez-vous.

Many players and their parents showed a lot



of interest to the university and its programs. The tournament represented a good occasion to promote the university; especially that Al Akhawayn University

offers a unique opportunity to potential students to practice their favorite sport in parallel to their studies. Also, the tournament made known the sport scholarship programs offered by the university, knowing that it is a premiere in Morocco. In that sense, a campus tour was organized for players and parents

during which flyers about the university were given to them.

Prize money by 41300 Dhs that we would like to increase next year Tennis Open prize money to 80000 Dhs by including men's first and 2nd division. As Matter of fact, by including new draws the popularity of the tournament will increase nationally, which will give the university notoriety all over Morocco. Certainly, the bigger the ambitions the larger the resources needed, therefore new courts should be built to be able to support such demand especially for the growing popularity of tennis among the AUI community.

The following results of AUI tennis Players could be explained by various reasons among them the rupture in trainings before the start of the tournament:

Lahlou Meriem: Semifinal 2nd division women
Yamani Khalil : semi finalist unranked men
Opab fouad : 2nd round 3rd division men
Ahmed Lalami Laaroussi: 1st round 3rd division men
Younes Nadir: 1st round 3rd division men
Benghoulam Reda: 3rd round unranked men
Aadlouni Lamia: 1st round 2nd division women

Women Unranked
Champion: Naimi Hassna (ACSA) Casablanca.
Runner Up: Saber Souad (RUC, Casablanca)
Semi Final : Saidi Rajae & Kanit Houda

Men unranked
Champion : Rami Omar (CSA) Casablanca
Runner Up : Seffar Mehdi (RIAD) Rabat
Semi Final : El Yamani Khalil & Azize jezli

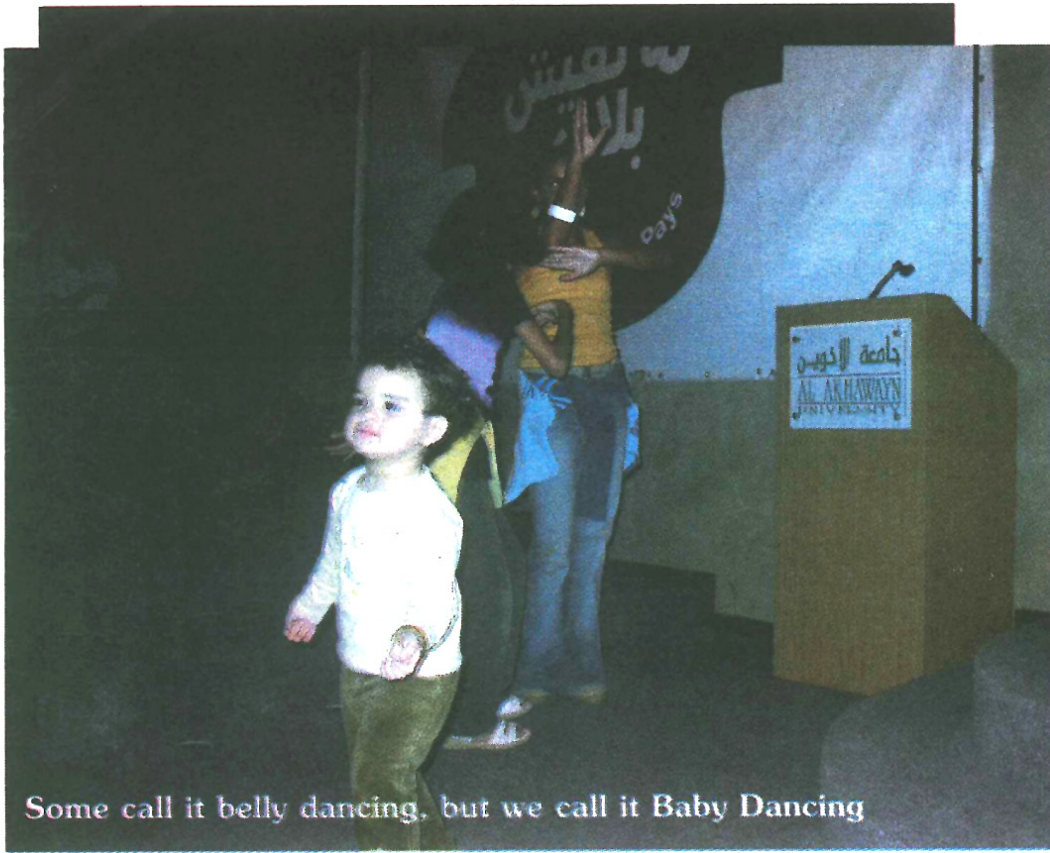
Men 3rd division
Champion: Kerj Ali (CSA) Casablanca
Runner Up : Laalej Hicham (TCM) Meknes
Semi Final: Alaoui Mehdi & Ennaciri Med

Women 2nd and 3rd division
Champion: Saber Nezha (RUC)
Runner Up: Haddad Meryem (RIAD) Rabat
Semi Final: Lahlou meryem & Alami F.Z.

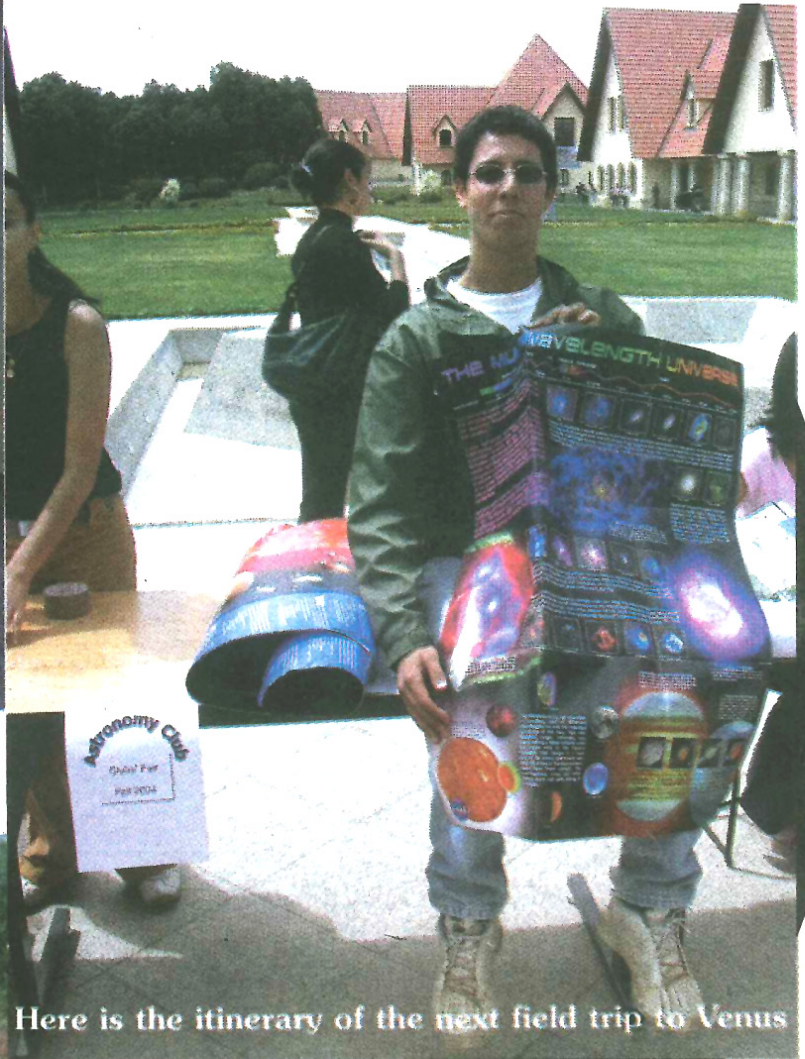
The Winners taking a picture with the president of the university



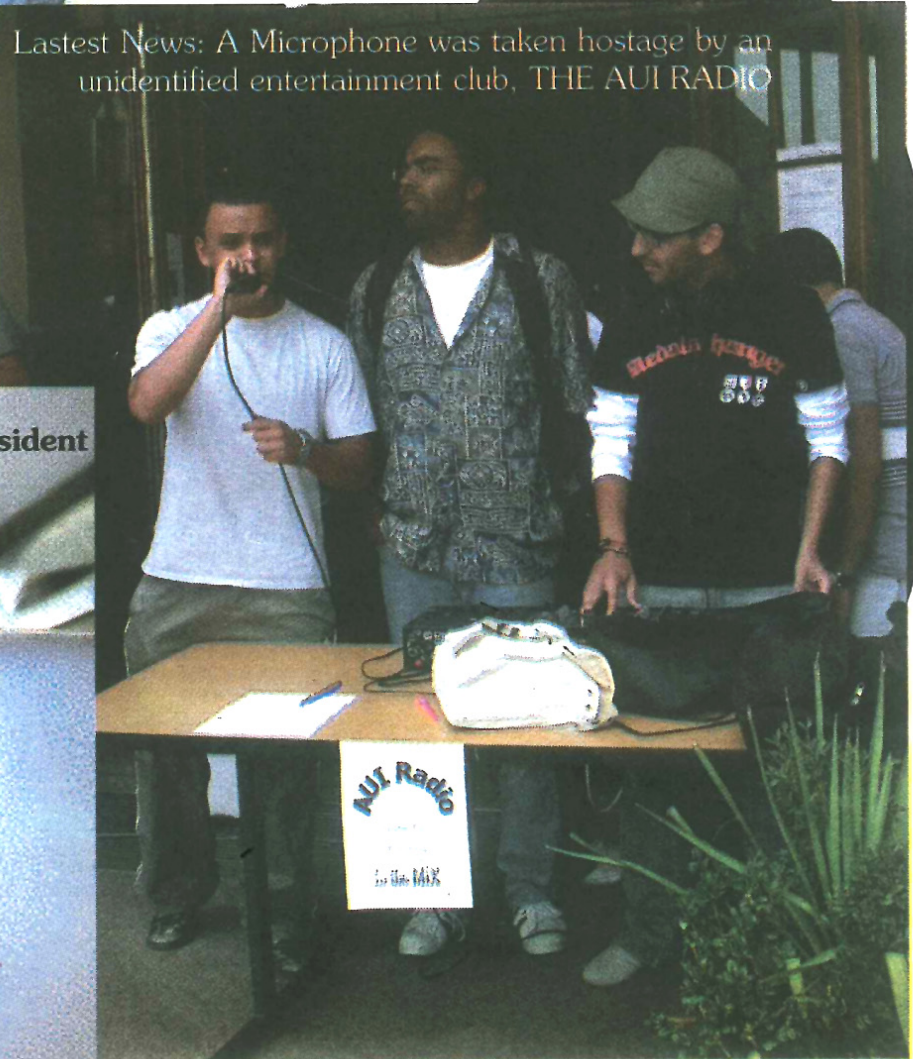
Comments by : Yassine Marjane



Some call it belly dancing, but we call it Baby Dancing



Here is the itinerary of the next field trip to Venus



Lastest News: A Microphone was taken hostage by an unidentified entertainment club, THE AUI RADIO



"Fin ghadi biya a khouya ,” Malick the new Hand in Hand president