

St. Somewhere Times

A Howling, Scowling Success!

Paul and I were designated the part place when we moved into our apartment with the rooftop garden. Halloween has a rich tradition at AJSE, believe it or not. (Mostly due to the party planning committee!) The invitations went out at the beginning of October, the imported bottles were collected, and the decorations started showing up at our apartment as the month went on. I haven't been a part of such SCARY planning for Halloween in years!

Costumes were planned so far in advance that tailors were hired to make the unique costumes. Teachers contacted any and all of their contacts from the Western world for Halloween decorations. Some of the group costumes were practicing routines a full two weeks prior to the festival. All of us had to work on a modified timeline for ordering food and drinks due to Ramadan starting halfway through October. There was so much build-up for this party!

Tuesday was the beginning of the decorations. The pumpkins were ordered and delivered so they had to be carved. The Walker family came over as the pumpkin committee. Maria and Julia personally gutted out and prepped all twenty of the strange shaped vegetables. (They grow more like a gourd, with a long stem growing up from the rounded form of the bottom.) Bob, Crystal, Dave, and a whole group of party planners came over the night before to cut up veggies



Here are the Top Ten Hits of the Party...

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| 10. | 97 Guests showed up for the festival |
| 9. | No less than 12 People planned the party |
| 8. | 20 Jack-O-Lanterns were carved and lit |
| 7. | 30 Bottles of Imported goodies (considering a limit of 4 when you arrive in country) |
| 6. | A group of 4 Egyptian Police (with a presentation of their formation skills) |
| 5. | Five actors from the TV hit "F.A.M.E" |
| 4. | The Egyptian Spice Girls made their debut with a presentation of "I Want an Egyptian Man" |
| 3. | NO damage was reported |
| 2. | Except for one or two stragglers, the guests were all out by 4:00am. |
| 1. | Spooky Fun was had by ALL |

Brunch at The Four Seasons Hotel

There are so many things to do in Cairo that keep expatriates feeling at home. The brunch at the Four

Seasons is one of those experiences!

Thanks to Crystal and a few other planning teachers, a bus was scheduled to pick up teachers from Maadi and from Heliopolis around 10:00. The group ended up numbering around thirty people! We were all there to gorge ourselves silly. The spread was amazing.

Ramadan at the School

One of the Five Pillars of the Islamic Faith is a period of fasting. One of my students explained Ramadan as "a time when those of us, that are fortunate enough to eat, endure a period of fasting to remember those without food". She went on to explain how her father slaughters several cows and gives meat out to throngs of waiting Egyptians. This is very real!

I had read about the festival, taught my students in the States about it (around Christmas time), and thought it was always around Christmas time. I should have read more attentively. As I write this article, we have witnessed three weeks of Ramadan and are heading into the final stretch. It has been a rich cultural experience to witness. I know many of my family and friends have heard of Ramadan but know very little about it. Here are a few highlights.

- ☒ Ramadan is a month long fast*
- ☒ Families eat large feasts during the evening and some even before they begin the day*
- ☒ It is not uncommon for our students to fall asleep during class because they have been up very late*
- ☒ We were out of school by 2:00 every day and held no after school activities*
- ☒ There was a prayer room set aside for lunch period. Prayers were led in a fashion similar to a mosque.*
- ☒ As non-Muslims, we were asked not to eat or talk about food in front of the students*
- ☒ Christian students still had a lunch time in the cafeteria, other students played or prayed*
- ☒ It is an Honor for many elementary students to participate in the fast*
- ☒ Fasting means, nothing passes the lips between the dawn call to prayer and the evening call to prayer*
- ☒ Fasting students did not even have a drink of water after PE classes (Grant modified the PE classes to be less strenuous)*
- ☒ I had one student who made the "at least once in a lifetime" pilgrimage to Mecca during Ramadan*
- ☒ IF you don't know about Islam, pick up a book or surf the net and LEARN about it. FASCINATING*

What title would you give this Photo?



"Kiss Me You Fool" , "Oooh, That's Some Good Shisha", or something more appropriate for an important dinner.

That's All Folks!!