

THE NEW STAR

independent student newspaper

ISSUE 5

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HAPPY

*Valentine's
Day* 

Pictures are taken from Pinterest

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Valentine's Day

Love's sweet scent drifts through the air
As the night sky sparkles with care,
The stars shine so bright, it's so clear
A night full of love and sincere.

Our hearts beat as one, no question
For us, it's love without exception.
The night is alive with joy and love
A night perfect for us, a gift from above.

The love I feel for you is strong,
My heart aches for you all day long.
My dearest Valentine, I feel the same
Let me be your love and you are my flame.

Our love is so pure and so true,
It's a love that will never be through.
Your beauty fills my heart with delight,
You're the only one, you make it so right.

On this day, I give to you
My heart, my soul, and my love are so true.
Happy Valentine's Day, my one and only
My love for you will never be lonely.

Ahmad Ahmad Zai
SFW-120



MY FAVORITE WINTER ACTIVITY

Winter in Kyrgyzstan is a great time for skiing or snowboarding. I know many people who have tried winter sports for the first time this year and those who have been skiing confidently for 10-15 years. All of them are united by the love of active recreation in winter. After all, what else is needed in a period of heavy snowfall? To move down from a high mountain so that the wind blows over your face, a feeling of adrenaline in the blood from speed, and inner exultation from the great pleasure that is felt with every touch of the surface of skis or snowboard with snow.

Probably it is impossible to say that skiers and snowboarders are distinguished by something. It's just that everyone chooses the equipment they like. There is a silly stereotype that snowboarding is a more masculine sport, but this is not the case. I've seen a lot of beautiful girls who skated just as well, if not better, than guys. Therefore, this is just a wonderful choice of winter sport for anyone.

I am skiing. My parents took me to the ski base for the first time when I was 11. I used to ski with children's plastic skis. In general, they are not even real. They were terribly slippery. It was almost impossible

to stand on them, and I was falling all the time. But I really liked skiing at that time. I don't remember the exact reason. Maybe because I liked to ride or because my parents always cooked us something on the grill after skiing. Now I know that it is because I associate this sport with a moment of complete freedom. My recent trip with my friends allowed me to go down the mountain on which there was fresh untouched snow. It was probably one of my best descents during which I so wanted the mountain to increase in height and this road did not end...

Therefore, I advise everyone to try this sport! I'm more than sure that most people will like it.

Aizada Sulaimankulova
ES-119

Любви удача

Я открыла наконец то письмо,
Написанное мне тобою.
Правда, читать всё было нелегко
Ожидала я боли, не скрою.

Однако в миг всё повернулось,
Как будто солнце засияло.
Твоё слово сердца коснулось,
Мне немного щекотно стало.

Удивительно, как можно?
В одном лишь слове счастье было.
«Тебя люблю, это точно» -
Прошепчу я в ответ осторожно.

Вместо «нет» читаю «люблю».
Внутри меня ликует мир,
Проснулась даже вся вселенная,
Что усыпить обратно не хватит сил.

Asel Dzhovozova
SFW-120



“As you move outside of your comfort zone, what was once the unknown and frightening becomes your new normal” (a quote from Canadian writer Robin Sharma). This quote speaks to my mindset before leaving the United States to study abroad at AUCA as a junior this spring. I was eager to leave Swarthmore College (a small liberal arts college), come to Bishkek, and continue to grow academically, professionally, and socially, yet I was still worried about the unknowns I would soon face.

I grew up in a suburban/rural area in Pennsylvania, US., but was born in Moscow, Russia, to a Ukrainian/Russian mother and a Burundian father. This study abroad adventure was my first time leaving the US since moving there when I was two years old. My parents speak Russian fluently, and I grew up speaking the language at home. So, I decided to pursue Russian (along with economics) in college.

I never thought or believed that the first urban environment I would live in would be Bishkek. Although part of my reason for being here is to improve my Russian, it is not in any way my sole intention. After learning about AUCA from a professor at Swarthmore, I felt inspired to research Kyrgyzstan's history, culture, traditions, and people. While my friends from the US were excited to brag about their upcoming study abroad experiences in the United Kingdom, France, or Spain, I was excited to tell them about Kyrgyzstan.

It has been just about a month since I arrived, and luckily, each day is starting to feel more normal than the last. Since my family immigrated to the US, I never thought of ourselves as a “typical” American family, which has helped me acclimate to life in Bishkek. When applying for Bard Abroad's program, the information made conditions seem worse than they indeed were. Almost all of the same products and services I use in the US are available here. And being a car enthusiast, I was anxious to see all the different cars here compared to the states. I am also pleasantly surprised at the language diversity and knowledge present at AUCA. In the US and



at Swarthmore, bilingual or trilingual students are not very common, but this is not a rarity at AUCA. I love hearing the mixture of languages in the air as I walk the halls.

Something less welcoming, however, was the weather conditions upon my arrival. Within days, the temperature dropped to around -25°C at night and did not rise above freezing during the day for weeks. I love the winter and snow, but these were the coldest winter conditions I have ever experienced.

Fortunately, so many other positive and welcoming things kept me warm. Trying local cuisine (Laghman is a favorite so far) and traveling to museums, operas, performances, and mountains has been breathtaking, like nothing I've experienced before. The mountainous views at Ala-Archa National Park and Chunkurchak ski base illuminated my first impressions of Kyrgyzstan. And this positivity translates to the people I've met, where almost everyone — including at AUCA — has been kind and approachable.

I'm learning so much every day, and I can't wait to share my adventures with the world. I'm thankful for the support system I've been able to build thus far, including my host family, peers, and faculty at AUCA. Although much of the future is still unknown, I'm excited for what's to come; I'm confident the people, connections, and experiences will last a lifetime! One commitment I continue to remind myself of and will end with here is to live in the moment, one day at a time.

Remy Kanegene
Exchange student



VOX POP:

What is Love?

Taalaibek kyzy Aidai, PSY-121

"Love is being strong enough to keep your heart open. It's about embracing the flaws of this life, without losing belief in its beauty. One guards the heart from pain by building walls, but it can shut it from receiving affection as well. So love is the biggest courage."

Leah Johnson, PSY-122

"I define love as being in deep emotional connection, inspiring motivation to keep each other alive per the evolutionary definition. I sort of believe it to be a motivation for having complete respect for someone else in your life, wanting to take care of them and for them to take care of you, receiving love, and getting it back. It's a constant of sorts. You have to have more than love to maintain a relationship. In your family or your romantic relationships, you have to love them unconditionally."



Uulzhan Bekturova, LAS-HR 119

For me, love is a power that strengthens and inspires you despite facing all difficulties. When you're having many problems, feeling stressed, sad, and unmotivated, the mere sight of the person you love can make you forget everything wrong in your life. Love makes you ready for anything that comes your way. Love is selflessness; you do things for someone without expecting anything in return, simply to make your beloved happier. Love is expressed through words and actions, and the eyes are the windows to the soul that can never lie. Although it is possible to deceive with actions, the eyes will always reveal true emotions and feelings of love!

Атабеков Темирбек, AMI- 121

Любовь зачастую воспринимается как что-то детское. И пусть это так. Но держится эта любовь на чем-то недетском - доверии. Доверие - сложная концепция, она жжет, очень сильно. Поэтому человек хочет кому-то довериться. Антиномично, но доверяют они себе подобным, людям. Иногда это доверие не достигает адресата, человек страдает, ему больно - это безответная любовь. Порой, доверие все же ценится человеком до тех пор, пока он не подумает о фальши в отношении себя. И как

только эта мысль явится, то это неизбежно приводит к ещё большей боли - это притворная любовь. Что же если доверие принимается, оно взаимно. Мыслей о притворстве нет, что тогда? Это сказочная любовь.

Но можно ли так любить? Так доверять? Все мы хотим хэппи-энд, но живём в реальности. "Исход всех встреч людей зависят от них самих".



Tashmatov Tokhirzhon, SFW-121

I would define love as a beautiful and complex emotion that transcends all boundaries and knows no bounds. It is a warm embrace that envelops the soul, filling it with a sense of peace, comfort, and security. Love is the gentle touch of a hand, the comforting words whispered in your ear, and the smile that brightens up your day. Love is the laughter shared between two people, the memories made together, and the joy of growing old side by side. It is the sun that shines on your life, illuminating every moment and bringing a sense of happiness and contentment. Love is a complex and multi-faceted feeling, and for me, it encompasses the warmth, comfort, and security that come from being close to someone.

IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY WEEK IN UNIVERSITY LIFE

Our world is diverse and rich in all kinds of colors. Each country's culture is unique and allows us to get acquainted with the flavor of different ethnic groups. In order to broaden our horizons and learn about the interesting aspects of each country, AUCA is holding Diversity Week. This year 2023, it took place from January 31 to February 3. During these 4 days, 11 delegations actively showcased aspects of their culture. They shared their country's national food, showed what games people play, and put on a great show filled with national dance and music. After listening to all this, one wonders, "Why is it so important to have such weeks in educational institutions?" Let's try to parse and understand the purpose and idea of such a week.

First, Diversity Week reminds us that every eth-

nic group is unique, and each of our differences serves a social function. Cultures have different and unusual perspectives on things. Their views may differ, but that does not mean that anyone's opinion carries less weight in society. Because we are all so diverse, the world we live in today never ceases to amaze us with new and interesting information. Our ability to learn from one another increases with our diversity.

Secondly, Diversity Week helps people realize that even though we are all different, this is what allows us to unite. When people begin to share the charms of their culture, we see two people becoming friends, as well as nations uniting. Isn't it wonderful that the goal of our Diversity Week is to include everyone at our university? It lets people remember that the color of our skin, our languages, and our facial features are

different from one another, and they have no bearing on what kind of person you are.

Diversity Week is a week that is steeped in unity, friendship, and togetherness. Diversity - the concept of understanding that each individual is unique and that each of our differences shares a purpose in society. We are all different, and we can all learn from one another - open your heart to diversity and you may find personal enlightenment at the end.

Amalia Abubakirova
JMC-122



Diversity Week is a designated time when events and activities are held to celebrate and raise awareness about the importance of diversity in student life. Fortunately, we celebrate it every year at the AUCA. During this week, students, faculty, and staff come together to engage in discussions, and cultural events that promote understanding, tolerance, and inclusiveness. Diversity Week is an important aspect of a student's life because it helps to create a sense of community and promotes respect for differences in culture, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity. By participating in Diversity Week, students can broaden their perspectives, build empathy and learn to work collaboratively with people from different backgrounds. It ultimately prepares us for a diverse and interconnected world and how to be informed, active, and engaged citizens.

This year we celebrated it in four different ways. The first day was the presentation of all delegations, the second was games from around the world, the third was food, and the fourth, my favorite day, was a concert. For the final concert students per-

formed beautiful dances to represent their country to the AUCA community. The delegation I liked the most was the Afghan one, not because it is my own culture but because I liked the way they combined dances from three different ethnicities in Afghanistan. Also, the Afghan delegation performed a special dance to deliver the message #LetHerLearn to show the world what Afghan girls are going through. This performance itself demonstrated the importance of diversity week in a community like AUCA. They just danced to support Afghan girls from their home country.

I believe that diversity week is not all about showing off your culture and country to others. It is also an opportunity for everyone to work together as a united community. I am sure everyone enjoyed participating in such an exciting event at AUCA. Thanks to those who performed during the concert day and made an effort to make this week memorable for all AUCA community.

Sahiba Mehry
JMC-120



Farewell Kiss to SITORA SUFIJONOVA

"The best last two years I have ever spent in my life was my college time at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), which gave me an eye-opening experience through opportunities for personal and professional growth. Yet it still feels surreal that it is my last semester at the AUCA. Although I have been pursuing my undergraduate studies for only 2-years as a transfer student, I had a unique opportunity to gain profound knowledge in the field of European Studies and hands-on experience via internship and civic-oriented programs offered at the AUCA.

For instance, as a social activist and a global citizen, I had a chance to join several community services to contribute to the development of in-campus and outside-of-campus activities and programs. One of them is C5+1 Youth Council, while the other is Global Engagement Fellows. These two programs enriched my experiential background in civic engagement and enabled me to network with students coming from across the Central Asian region and beyond. One of the activities that sparked my interest in addressing common challenges faced within

Central Asian countries' communities, was the C5+1 Youth Council platform where I embarked on this journey upon my arrival in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. I feel beyond grateful to AUCA for not only enabling me to see the better version of myself through self-development daily, but also for kind professors, a community of like-minded students, and a better learning environment. I feel extremely satisfied to have chosen AUCA and I hope to cherish student life moments and experiences forever."

I first met Sitora during the regional debate tournament in Dushanbe. She came to me and introduced herself during the break. She gave me warm and kind vibes from the very beginning. Since I came from Khujand, we stayed in touch through social media. Later on, Sitora transferred to AUCA and our friendship have continued. She is a true inspiration and motivation for me. Her persistence, commitment, and hard work had always inspired me. I am blessed to have Sitora as a friend and non biological sister. We will be graduating together this year and I hope to have her as a colleague or partner one day. I wish Sitora all the best in her future endeavors and am sure that she will fulfill all her life goals. I will see you in the US soon Sita!

Nilufar Homidova
ICP-119



Even though we have not graduated yet, I already miss Sitora, her being such a wonderful, supportive, and close person to me at AUCA. Before meeting her personally, I knew her from social media as she is one of the leading faces among Tajik youth. I was so lucky to complete my internship with Sitora in the US Embassy. She was so kind and warm to host me in Dushanbe and present the beauty of Tajik hospitality. She still impresses me with her hard work, incredible achievements, desire to develop, and remarkable contribution to our community. Sitora is the one, on whom a person can trust and rely on. Also, whenever I see her, the charisma, sense of humor, and brightness that she possesses leave me so happy. Sitora, if you are reading this, just think of my white shoes and our joke about dirty streets; I am sure it brings a huge laugh to your face. Please continue to live your life with full energy, passion, and limitless happiness. I wish you the best of luck and I am sure you will always do great!

Tahmina Ustoeva
ICP-119



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