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Sunday, 26 December 2004

This issue of CCN is kindly sponsored by
Nandos Underwood
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Assalaamu-alaikum

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Editorial

Lamenting the discarded card

Whatever happened to the good old Eid greeting card with it's pretty sequined picture on the front and the painstakingly and meticulously hand-written message of good wishes that occasionally ended with a few crosses* on the inside? Well I'll tell you what has happened - it has been replaced by the 120 character text message that goes something like this:

Slmz 2 u & eid mbrk 4 tomr Hope u hav a gr8 time Cul8r rgds Mo

Maybe there is truth in the old adage that 'the more things change, the more they remain the same' – as some of our readers may well remember the days of the post office telegrams where similar economy of words and cryptographic skills were just as necessary.

The other recent innovation has been the e-mail instructing you to go to some web site or other to view a singing, dancing, flashing animated e-card that someone has sent you. While this may be a free service for your very generous and thoughtful sender it does come at a price to you, the poor unsuspecting viewer. And that price is a plethora of pop-up, scrolling messages selling you everything from surgical procedures that promise to enlarge parts of your body through to offers of finding you your perfect partner who, as things in these matters usually turn out, is the one living in an igloo in far-flung Lapland. Like the other saying goes – 'nothing for nothing, and very little for sixpence'!

I received two very elegant cards from England last Eid through snail mail, and to this day they still hang on my fridge door. The ephemeral SMSs and 123greeting.com e-mails languishing in my delete boxes don't seem to radiate the same degree of warmth and fuzziness that I get when I open my fridge door each time. Or maybe it's just the innate luddite in me trying really hard to break out.....

* For the benefit of our very young readers an X signified a kiss in the old days. You might recognise its more



Hugs & Kisses



expressive equivalents in the form of 'emoticons'
like.

and the

Volunteering Opportunities

For those who expressed an interest in inter-community involvement, here is an e-mail sent to one of our readers:

Are you interested in making a difference in your community? Volunteering Queensland is the peak body for volunteering in Queensland and is now recruiting their volunteer teams to be part of exciting new initiatives that build the capacity of the community.

You will have the opportunity to work with community organisations from all sectors in society and across the State. If you are interested in participating in new forms of volunteering and working with

an organisation that is constantly changing to meet the challenges both community organisations and volunteers face in today's society then you will enjoy the opportunities Volunteering Queensland has to offer you as volunteer team members.

*Volunteering Queensland invites you to an information session on **Monday 17 January 2005** to find out more about volunteering with this dynamic community organisation. At the information session you will be invited to apply for one of the many positions available. For an Information Pack please contact Volunteering Queensland on telephone 07 3002 7600 or email us at floormanager@volqld.org.au*

Hajj 2005

Handy Hajj Hints No. 3: First-timers may find it very useful to engage the services of a Muallim or Mutawwif, a knowledgeable professional who can guide them during Hajj.

From the Hajj Diaries (Continuation)



Outside the walls of the Haram, the floors of Medina command little sanctity from the shopkeepers who propel their refuse to land directly onto the streets or the perennial spitter whose jarring action usually starts with a spine chilling, gut-wrenching throttle followed by a revving of the throat that climaxes into a missile-like release that splutters and splatters indiscriminately onto tile, tarmac or tunic. Walking through the streets sometimes requires the dexterity and fleet footedness of a Mohammed Ali in his prime because if spittle were minefields there'd be many a hajji sporting a wooden leg or two by now.

Our bags are packed and we sit in the Hotel foyer waiting for the 11-seater which our guide has arranged to take us to Mecca in. My Palm 515 reminds me that it's the wife's birthday. I try to cover up the obvious absence of anything that remotely resembles a David Jones gift wrapped box by telling her that she could have no better present than to be in Medina on her birthday. She buys the line - but it takes no more than a few minutes before its religious import starts to wane. So we choose a necklace from one of the ubiquitous jewelers that seem to blanket sections of the Medinian landscape. One deliriously happy lady and another narrow escape!

We head off for Bir Ali - at the Meeqat - to change into our Ihraams and make our Niyyah. Ihraams intact (or so I thought – but more about that another time!), we set off for Mecca again. Along the way we pull-up at a service station where we are given each a box laden with generous quantities of biscuits, cakes, dates and zum zum bottles. This turns out to be a timely and most welcome gesture - a sort of Hajji Reviver initiative on the part of the King - to re-vitalize our flagging spirits, and it isn't long before we all break into a chorus of Labbaik with renewed gusto once again.

We have much to be grateful on this two hour trip. There are stories being told of a bus that passed this Meeqat border without stopping and it became incumbent on all eighty-odd passengers to pay the Dum on account of the driver's blunder; and another about a bus that took fifteen hours to get to the destination because the driver insisted on taking his eight-hour nap.

The title of Hajji, someone once suggested, does not come easy. Like any qualifying examination there are compulsory sections that will earn you a pass mark (Arafat), a "choose one from" section (Hajj type), an oral section (Talbiyah) and most testing of all, the practical component. At the end, your final grade will be computed by your Examiner, who knows best.....

CCN's Continent Creep

Many of you might not be aware that the CCN is being read by friends and relatives in several parts of the world. Besides Southern Africa we have been made aware that it reaches places like Vancouver in Canada, Phoenix in Arizona, London and certain villages in India. It even gets to a dear old Manchunian in a little English hamlet where he tenders his council allotment of potatoes, carrots, gladiolas, courgettes, peas and shallots to while away the time between issues of CCN. If you happen to be from outside of Brisbane and its surrounds reading this it would be fantastic if you could send us an e-mail and let us know.

CresFit4Life

Pedometers count steps, and step counting is a great way to keep active. By entering your stride length and weight, the pedometer can calculate and display other interesting stats such as distance, calories burned, speed, elapsed time, steps per minute, and function as a stopwatch and alarm. Some have fancy features such as talking, playing music or reading your heart rate.

Remember you're never ever too SICK to become a

CresFit4Life-er



See you and the family at Kangaroo Point on Sundays at 7.30 am!

Morning Has Broken?



Yusuf Islam has made the British Christmas charts at number two with a single duet with Ronan Keating. The pair recorded a version of his 1970 song Father and Son, which was a hit for Keating's former band Boyzone in 1995. The duet marks the culmination of a quiet comeback to the music scene for Islam. In 2003, Yusuf Islam re-recorded Peace Train as an anti-war message (you can see a Flash video of this live recording made at the Market Theatre, Johannesburg under the Audio and Video section at <http://www.mountainoflight.com/>).

Also, read Yusuf Islam's responses to the following questions posed to him in an interview at <http://www.mountainoflight.com/>

1. How do you think your participation will be received by the Muslim community, especially those adherents who believe in the express prohibition of musical instruments?
2. In your recent essay, Music: A Question of Faith or Da'wah?, you wrote about how your music has helped many people and positively influenced their lives. Is that your overriding motivation for writing new songs and perhaps revisiting some of your earlier material?

Win a Nandos Voucher

The first e-mail drawn out of CCN's inbox with the correct literal meaning of the SMS symbol:

(@>->

wins a Nandos Underwood FAMILY FEAST voucher to the value of \$29.95.

The competition is open to all CCN readers and detractors (and not just the Editor and his family and his close relatives). The fact you might be reading this newsletter in an Internet Café while holidaying in some exotic location overseas should not deter you from entering – that's the beauty of this medium – it knows no borders!

Entries close on New Year's eve 31 December (at the stroke of midnight) so don't be chicken! Send an e-mail to your team@crescentsofbrisbane.org and have a peri-peri happy new year. *

The winner will be notified by e-mail and the answer will be posted in the next issue of CCN (wtmb).

* No, you don't have to write in and complain! We are fully aware of how excruciatingly lame and feeble our puns are - but this IS the silly season, you know!

Letters to the Editor

Thank you for the Newsletters. I have lived in Australia since the age of 4 and have never thought differently of volunteering, either for the Scouts or local community groups. There are so many wonderful experiences and people to meet. I am glad that you are encouraging members of the wider Muslim community to interact and share with others; what better way to learn and teach others in the ways of a Muslim!

If anyone is interested in volunteering to the Guide Dogs Association for the Blind of Queensland, we would welcome enquiries. In particular, sighted guides to walk with vision impaired and blind athletes in next years' Bridge to Brisbane Walk/Run (there are a number of blind athletes who are keen to run the event!). I am also looking for a couple of experienced cyclists, who may be interested in riding tandem cycles with blind cyclists. Salaams for now. I will be undertaking the journey for Hajj next week – insha-allah.

Bashir Ebrahim

Manager Rehabilitation Services

Guide Dogs Queensland

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Website: www.guidedogsqld.com.au

Editor: From the responses we have been getting thus far it has been a real eye-opener to discover the very commendable work people in our community are already engaged in, and this, in particular, is a glowing example of just that. It would appear that there are many unsung heroes in our community, and if CCN helps create greater awareness of their efforts, and acts as a catalyst for others to emulate, then



it will have served its role well in at least one regard. A big  to all of you out there. You do the community proud!

A Word From This Week's Sponsor



in

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Brand new Shiny Store
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Contact CCN

If you have any news that you think might be of benefit to the Crescents Community then please e-mail your team@crescentsofbrisbane.org.

If there is someone you know who would like to subscribe to CCN please encourage them to send an e-mail to your team@crescentsofbrisbane.org with the words "Subscribe Me" in the subject line.

The CCN Archives

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