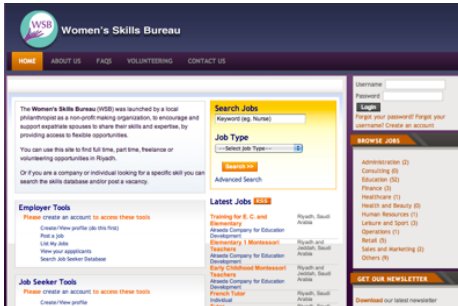




www.wsb-ksa.com



## Welcome to WSB's Magazine - December 2012

WSB was set up to help expat spouses in KSA find flexible work opportunities. It is a non-profit organisation run by volunteers. Its website (wsb-ksa.com) is the only one in KSA to link expat spouses with potential local employers. For more info contact us on [info@wsb-ksa.com](mailto:info@wsb-ksa.com) or visit our Facebook page [facebook.com/WSBRiyadh](https://www.facebook.com/WSBRiyadh)

## WSB VACANCIES

The Women's Skills Bureau is growing...  
And we have ambitious plans for 2013.

We are looking for volunteers to join our team,  
In particular, specialists in the following 5 fields:

\*\*\*

Marketing  
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Advertising/Sales

\*\*\*

Work is mostly from home and with flexible hours  
10 to 20 hours a month commitment

To apply and for more info email [info@wsb-ksa.com](mailto:info@wsb-ksa.com)

# Inspiring Women in Riyadh, by Leanne Mills

## Thuraia Yahia



**Nationality:** Somalian

**Married/children:** Single, no children

**Moved to KSA in:** 1986

### ***How did you come to be in Saudi Arabia?***

My father brought us to Riyadh as a family when I was a child as he secured work here. I attended a government school, not an international school, and then had to complete my university studies outside the Kingdom in the UAE and Sudan. I returned to Riyadh in 2006 with a degree in Computer Science.

### ***What are your main occupations in Riyadh?***

I work full time for global law firm Squire Sanders. I'm a paralegal and the business development coordinator for Riyadh and the Middle East. I also assist with a number of other day-to-day operational issues. I work from 9am until around 6pm and, on a Thursday, I work from home or the office depending on workload. Outside of-work activities include learning new languages, like Spanish, which gives me the opportunity to meet a mix of individuals from very different backgrounds, and networking! I LOVE meeting new people.

### ***How did you get there?***

I had to be practical as, in 2006, there were no jobs for women in mobile programs and networks, which was my specialty. The best job I could find with a telecom company in Riyadh at that time was a call centre, answering phones. Through a recruitment agency I found out about a local law firm that needed juniors and I applied. It specialized in intellectual property (IP), patents, copyrights and trademarks. I did a lot of data entry, drafting of letters and legal secretary duties and spent time learning about IP, attending conferences and undertaking training in the UAE, Jordan and Qatar. The experience I gained helped me develop my skills as a

paralegal. After four years I felt I had learned everything I could about the IP area of law and I wanted to broaden my horizons, so I applied to Squire Sanders.

### ***Talk us through a typical day***

Time is the critical factor in any law firm and Squire Sanders is no different. I work closely with the 15 lawyers and partners as a paralegal, drafting client letters and assisting on cases. For business development, I report to the team in London. I get involved in business planning and I love the interaction I have with people as we develop imaginative ways to bring in new business from the region.

When coordinating marketing materials for the Middle East clients, I receive support for graphics and communications from the Leeds and Birmingham offices of Squire Sanders in the UK.

This week a BBC film team from Dubai came to shoot some interviews in our office at Futuro Tower. They interviewed the senior partners, filmed the new office space we have created especially for women and reported on our intention of hiring more women.

We have a good working relationship with many business associations here in Riyadh, and I manage the sponsorship of local activities, conferences and delegations.

### ***Where were you and what were you doing before moving here?***

I left Riyadh for University in 2001 and spent two years in the UAE and then two years in Sudan. As part of my degree work experience in my final year, I worked as a volunteer with the UN. I spent time in Chad and in South Sudan, where there was a lot of conflict, working as an IT technician and assisting with communications connectivity.

I came back to Riyadh in 2006 a new person. I had grown used to the freedoms I experienced in other countries and I found it hard to readjust to the limitations and conservative nature of life here.

### ***What do you most enjoy about living/working here?***

The diversity. I continue to be surprised by how multi-cultural Riyadh has become compared to the last two decades. I see a group of people in a coffee shop and I am amazed at how many different nationalities are represented in that one group.

I enjoy knowing people from different nations who all have their own, unique experiences to share about life in their country. I speak Arabic and English so I am able to communicate easily, and my own life experiences allow me to relate easily to people across a broad cultural spectrum.

*continued on next page*

# Inspiring Women in Riyadh *cont'd*

## ***What changes have you witnessed over the years?***

Women are more included in everyday life now and are more educated than ever before. I think that many people aren't aware that this country is less 'male driven' than it seems on the surface. Women have jobs in senior roles and the city of Riyadh is definitely less conservative than it used to be.

I think the catalysts for these changes have been the media and education. Through TV and the internet, women have seen how others live in the world. When I graduated, there were four women to every man in the graduation ceremony; that may be skewed by the number of expat women studying, but still, more and more women have an education and know their rights today.

## ***What have been the challenges?***

The lack of independence is one. I am quite capable of doing many things from an administrative perspective, such as representing myself before governmental authorities, yet I am not allowed to manage the process myself. Also, the difference between my attitude and that of my family is a challenge. Like others of the younger generation (I'm 29), I have embraced the small freedoms and I'm more modern in my thinking than my parents who are very conservative. This can lead to difficulties and lack of privacy. The way I communicate with men professionally is also a challenge. As a woman, I am able to multi-task, I am focused and I have high energy in the workplace. Over the years I have managed to develop my antenna and be more flexible in the way I communicate with different men. To some I will send an email; some I am happy to call and discuss issues directly; and others I choose not to communicate with at all. I am receptive to a fleeting look, silence or an undertone in a voice, and I know how to react appropriately.

## ***Have you used the WSB website and if so how?***

I look at the website to view the list of events and see what is happening around Riyadh. I love receiving the newsletter too. I also recommend the website to my friends because many have told me that they've applied for jobs and have been turned down because the position could not be taken by a woman. I point them to the WSB site and tell them that the jobs advertised there are specifically for women – it's such a great service!

## ***What are your plans for the future?***

I'm very excited about visiting Somalia next month. Not only because it's the first time I've been since I left the country in 1986, but also because I have long term plans to return to Somalia more often and to play my part in driving change there.

I firmly believe that to bring about change it has to start inside us. I want Somalis to stop dying in boats as they try to leave the country and instead I want them to have hope.

To help them, I plan to get involved in long-term investment programs to finance infrastructure projects that create jobs. The educated Somalis who fled the civil war to other nations are now needed to inspire and educate the people inside Somalia, but also take part in changing the way the rest of the world sees Somalia.

## ***What are you reading at the moment?***

I'm reading a novel called *Chicago* by Alaa Al Aswany, who was also the author of *The Yacoubian Building* which was an international best seller and a movie. *Chicago* is available in Arabic and English, but I've decided to read it in Arabic. It's about a group of Egyptians who are doing their postgraduate studies at the University of Illinois in Chicago. The novel shows the racism in Chicago, the conflict between the Arab and Western culture after 9/11 and the corruption in the Egyptian regime.

## ***What are your favourite places in Riyadh?***

There are so many places to go to. I love the desert, but also other cities too. Abha is a city in the south of the Kingdom and is worth a visit. It's so green! This is a link to some photos on TripAdvisor.

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotos-g298542-Abha\\_Asir\\_Province.html#21954196](http://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotos-g298542-Abha_Asir_Province.html#21954196)

I also recommend visiting Farasan Island. It is 1300km from Riyadh, but it's an unspoilt gem in Saudi. I've shared another TripAdvisor link here

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g293991-d1023178-Reviews-Farasan\\_Islands-Saudi\\_Arabia.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g293991-d1023178-Reviews-Farasan_Islands-Saudi_Arabia.html)

If you receive an invitation to the 'Edge of the World' then go! You should never say no – it's spectacular!

## ***And your favourite restaurant?***

I love Lebanese food and my favourite restaurant is Karam Beirut, on Tahlia Street (next to Chili's). Also, the Tea Garden on Tahlia Street is great for coffee and snacks. They have a terrace with patio heaters for when it gets colder. I meet my girlfriends there for tea and talk. If you are a sushi fan, then you should try Tokyo Restaurant.

## ***Any tips for newcomers?***

If you are asked to a Saudi wedding, then you must accept; it's such an experience.

The weather affects what you can do in Saudi, but that is no excuse to close doors and stay at home. Get out and explore. From November to April the weather is beautiful. Take lots of walks in the sunshine and find restaurants and cafes with terraces where you can sit and soak up the refreshing winter temperatures. And network, network, network!

*Leanne Mills is a professional writer who recently published her first book on strategic communications in business.*

*Leanne has just arrived in Riyadh and runs [www.writeability.com.au](http://www.writeability.com.au), the virtual copywriting agency that she founded in Australia in 2009.*

## Vacancies

### PART TIME jobs

- Private Art Tutor
- Babycare/Nanny for Expat family
- Accountant for Beauty salon
- Marketing/PR volunteer for the WSB

### FULL TIME jobs

- Montessori KG teachers
- Physics teacher
- Legal Secretary for IP Law Firm in Jeddah

For full list of latest jobs go to  
[www.wsb-ksa.com](http://www.wsb-ksa.com)

For more info and website support email [info@wsb-admin.com](mailto:info@wsb-admin.com)

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# What's on in Riyadh

If you are organising an event and would like to be listed, please email [info@wsb-ksa.com](mailto:info@wsb-ksa.com)

## **Weekly: Dinning at Al-Faisaliah Rosewood Hotel**

Sat - Arabic Night, Middle Eastern Cuisine

Sun – Night of the Raj , Indian Cuisine

Mon – Lime, Coconut & Lemongrass, Thai Cuisine

Tue – Chocolate & Chili, Central American Cuisine

Wed – S. Eastern Spice Bazaar, SE Asian Cuisine

Thur – Moroccan Souk, North African Cuisine

## **Now til 31 Dec: C&R “Short Story Writing Contest”**

Ages 8 – 12 yrs. Show your talent and imagination.

Choose a topic and write a short story in max of 4 word doc pages. 3 winners will be chosen 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013.

Deadline 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. Info at [events.contests@gmail.com](mailto:events.contests@gmail.com) . 0556603413.

## **Now til Mar 13 2013: Photo Comp “Islam is Global”**

**L’Art Pur Gallery, Takassussi**

Themes are Portrait, Architecture and Monuments, Still Life. Contact [thepureart@gmail.com](mailto:thepureart@gmail.com) for more info.

## **Now til 14 Dec: Pilgrims to Mekkah Photo Expo King Abdulaziz National Museum, Batha**

## **Now til 17 Dec: Unspoken Femininity Expo Maison BO-M Galleries.**

5 – 10.30pm. Free. Solo expo of artist Ahmed Hussain Alghamdi. For more info contact [info@maisonbo-m.com](mailto:info@maisonbo-m.com)

## **Coming in Dec: NU YU Gym Opening in December**

Stay up to date with the launch by emailing [info@nuyu-ksa.com](mailto:info@nuyu-ksa.com) . 01 281 4556 . [www.nuyu-ksa.com](http://www.nuyu-ksa.com)

## **Mon 3 – 5 Dec: Exposition Est & Ouest Residence de France, DQ**

10am – 12.30pm & 3.30 – 9pm. Under the patronage of the French Ambassador. For more info contact [info.culture@af-ksa.com](mailto:info.culture@af-ksa.com) . 0434 41 95

## **Tue 4 Dec: Young & Emerging Artists Exhibition Lam Art Gallery, Oruba St**

8pm. In Association with Al-Nahda Women’s Charitable Society. For more info contact [info@lamartgallery.com](mailto:info@lamartgallery.com)

## **Tue 4 Dec: EDEN talk and exhibition @ ACR Society ACR location**

Ladies only event. For more info please email [info@edenscorner.com](mailto:info@edenscorner.com) 0543768585.

## **Wed 5<sup>th</sup> at 8pm/Thurs 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 3 and 8pm Riyadh Choral Society, Seasonal Concert**

For tickets email [rscsboxoffice@gmail.com](mailto:rscsboxoffice@gmail.com)

## **Thur 6 Dec: Breast Cancer Support Group Kingdom Hospital, Training Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

11 – 12.30pm. All meetings in English, Q&A sessions, refreshments and a friendly atmosphere. For more info contact Dr Jennifer Sambar 050 538 6902. Ayesha Chaudri 050 908 1014

## **Fri 7 Dec: Festive Family Fun Day Arabian Homes Compound**

3pm. Vendors, food, bouncy castle and SANTA. Register 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec [baradareception@arabian-homes.com](mailto:baradareception@arabian-homes.com)

## **8<sup>th</sup> Dec: A Shopping Adventure, ACR event**

9am to 11.30am, members SR35, non members SR50 To book go to [www.acrsa.com](http://www.acrsa.com), deadline 5<sup>th</sup> December

## **Sun 9 Dec: Ishbilia Seasonal Coffee morning Ishbilia Compound (formerly Jadawel)**

9 – 12pm. Vendors, gifts, Christmas spirit, music and socializing. To register email [bernie\\_recreation@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bernie_recreation@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Mon 10 Dec: PSU Architecture & Interior Design Exh Art & Design Society Gallery**

7.30 – 9.30pm. FREE. Exhibition by Prince Sultan University Students . Register at [artdesignsocietyksa@gmail.com](mailto:artdesignsocietyksa@gmail.com)

## **Mon 10 Dec: Une piece de theatre: La Soeur du Grec Maison des Francais event @ French Residence**

8pm. For more info contact [mdfriadh@yahoo.com](mailto:mdfriadh@yahoo.com)

## **Mon 10 - 13 Dec: THE OUTLET Fashion Sale Al-Nahda Philanthropic Society for Women**

4 – 10pm Dec 10<sup>th</sup>: Opening night. 100 SAR entry fee 10 – 1pm & 4 – 10pm Dec 11, 12, & 13<sup>th</sup> . Free entry. High end Women and kids wear. educational toys, home accessories, furniture. For more info contact [info@outletevent.com](mailto:info@outletevent.com) . 0590065980

## **Mon 10 Dec: Beauty, Wellbeing & Lifestyle Expo Ladies4Networking in assoc with Aternatifs @ Miessence – Alternatifs Center, Takassussi**

9 – 12pm . 50 SAR entry. Breakfast, many prizes, vendors and goodies to give away. Free workshops and classes. For more info contact

## **Tue 11 Dec: Candlelight Holiday Reception ACR event @ Quincy House**

6.30 – 10.30pm. Non-members 220 SAR. On sale at USERA Gift shop til 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. For more info contact 053 311 9113 or 053 311 9112.

..... Continued on next page

These events are subject to the organisers’ membership and registration rules, therefore any interest to participate or attend must be directed to the contact source stipulated in the event listing.

# What's on in Riyadh

If you are organising an event and would like to be listed, please email [info@wsb-ksa.com](mailto:info@wsb-ksa.com)

## Wed 12 Dec: Creative Hub Meetup

SFX Studios, Olaya Road

8pm. Free entry.

Presentation on design and visual effects

For info contact 053 7229964, [info@tonynaqvi.co.uk](mailto:info@tonynaqvi.co.uk)

## Thur 13 Dec: Haya Tours: Almajmaa

8 – 4pm. Day trip. For more info contact

[hayatour@gmail.com](mailto:hayatour@gmail.com). 050 416 6323

## Thur 13 Dec: ABG Black Tie Formal US Embassy

7pm – Midnight. Tickets 275 SAR. Tickets on sale @  
USERA Gift Shop from Sun 4 Nov – Sun 9 Dec 9.30 –  
3,30pm. And Goodship Lollipop, Thaila Street. For more  
info email [abgr.riyadh@gmail.com](mailto:abgr.riyadh@gmail.com)

## 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Dec: Eden Jewellery Christmas Gifts Special

Open house, 10am to 10pm

RSVP at [info@Edenscorner.com](mailto:info@Edenscorner.com) or 0543768585

## Tue 18 Dec: Haya Tours: Arabian Horse Center

8.30 – 11.30am. City Tour. For more info contact

[hayatour@gmail.com](mailto:hayatour@gmail.com). 050 416 6323

## Thur 20-22 Dec: Haya Tours: Madain Saleh

Overnight Trip. For more info contact

[hayatour@gmail.com](mailto:hayatour@gmail.com). 050 416 6323

## Thur 27 – 28 Dec: Haya Tours: Al Qassim

Overnight Trip. For more info contact

[hayatour@gmail.com](mailto:hayatour@gmail.com). 050 416 6323

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10 Dec 2012 4 – 10 pm Entrance Fee SR100  
11-12-13 Dec 2012 Free Entrance  
10 – 1 pm & 4-10 pm

Location: Al-Nahda Philanthropic Society for Women

\*Part of the proceeds will go to Al-Nahda Philanthropic Society

For more information  
[info@doutletevent.com](mailto:info@doutletevent.com)  
059 006 5980



# Regular Activities & Events in Riyadh

## **Kingdom Coffee Morning/Bazaar Kingdom City Compound**

Every first Monday of the month (except January, July, August and September)  
9 -12 pm, no entry charge, for info contact 275 0 275

## **Tune Music Center**

Music classes for all ages  
Taala Compound. For more info contact [Info@tunemusiccentre.com](mailto:Info@tunemusiccentre.com) or call 01-2256729 / 050-4125987

## **Riyadh International Quilt Guild**

A great place to learn new skills, find out about local resources and share information.  
Every fourth Sunday of the month 7.00 - 9.00pm Sept – May  
Annual membership is SR 150.

For further details, please email: [RiyadhQuiltGuild@gmail.com](mailto:RiyadhQuiltGuild@gmail.com) Or visit Web: <http://riyadhquiltguild.blogspot.com>

## **Haya Tours**

For regular day and weekend trips around Riyadh and the Kingdom  
Get a Schedule. Contact Salwa on [info@hayatour.com](mailto:info@hayatour.com) or call +966 504 166 323, Tel/Fax: +966 1 4507167

## **Classic Culture Tours**

For regular day and weekend trips around Riyadh, Kingdom and abroad  
Get a Schedule. Contact Cora on [c3classicculture@yahoo.com](mailto:c3classicculture@yahoo.com)

## **Falcons Kids Swim Team**

### **NOW RECRUITING ages 5-16**

Training all year round at Fal Compound indoor pool. Email Ghada for more info  
[gmmorsy@yahoo.com](mailto:gmmorsy@yahoo.com) or [mjcrodrigues@yahoo.com](mailto:mjcrodrigues@yahoo.com)

## **Go Karting**

Reem International Circuit 5pm - 12 am. Every Thur and Fri.  
For more info call 0569082900

## **Aquagym Classes**

### **Saturdays 8.30 – 9.30am**

Kingdom Compound  
For info and to sign up contact Marie Cousin at [recreation@kingdom-city.com](mailto:recreation@kingdom-city.com)

## **Swiss Ball Classes**

### **Mondays 8.30 – 9.30am**

Kingdom Compound.  
For info and to sign up contact Marie Cousin at [recreation@kingdom-city.com](mailto:recreation@kingdom-city.com)

## **Zumba Classes**

Various days, times, compound locations throughout the week.  
Contact Catalina [zumbacat11@gmail.com](mailto:zumbacat11@gmail.com). See Facebook page Zumba Riyadh for more info.

## **Salsa Dance Classes**

Fal Compound. 7pm usually every Tuesday. SR 20.  
Contact [riyadhsalseros@gmail.com](mailto:riyadhsalseros@gmail.com)

## **Yoga levels 1 & 2, Mat Pilates Classes**

Evening and morning classes available.  
For info contact Sarah Bohairy [prana.shakti.yoga.riyadh@gmail.com](mailto:prana.shakti.yoga.riyadh@gmail.com)

## **Yoga Classes**

Fal Compound. Sun & Wed, 8.30 – 9.30pm. Ladies only.  
For more info contact Sarah 0545555284 [sarahshamra@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahshamra@hotmail.com)

# Health & Nutrition, by Evelyne Fallows

## Small changes to a healthier diet

### **How can I break my sugar addiction?**

That is a tough one...since sugar is added to every processed food item. Read the labels, you'll be shocked! Sugar is everywhere (in cheese spreads, soda drinks, bread, even in fish and meat dishes...). But there are ways to break this addiction and here are a few steps:

**Step 1**, be aware of sugar content. Use a glycemic index chart to help you. Stay away from any food with an index superior to 50.

**Step 2**, read the labels. Ingredients are listed by weight. If sugar comes among the top 3 ingredients, skip that product or limit its consumption. It means the sugar content is too high.

**Step 3**, beware of hidden sugar that comes under different names (dextrose, glucose...). About 40 types of sugar are used in highly processed food to sweeten pretty much everything. Be particularly careful with HFCS (High Fructose Corn Syrup) as it is added to other types of sugar.

**Step 4**, have 3 balanced meals a day to maintain blood sugar and avoid sugar cravings.

**Step 5**, stay away from sodas, even "light" and everything light or low fat come to think of it (except dairy products)!

**Step 6**, avoid artificial sweeteners.

**Step 7**, find out if your sugar cravings are linked to anxiety or stress. If that's the case, try to relax by meditating or practicing yoga, reading, walking...and remember, this is going to be an ongoing battle so be gentle to yourself!

### **How can I avoid gaining weight during my expat life?**

That question baffles me. Most women I meet here are struggling with weight gain after coming to Saudi. Yet most of them have time (as they don't work), helpers (to look after the kids and the house), access to a gym, a pool, group classes and personal trainers...even women gyms are booming now and healthy diet meals can be delivered to your house. So what gives? It

comes down to smart choices and willpower. A balanced diet and exercise won't hurt either...

Sure the challenge is finding opportunities to workout, especially outdoors, since Saudi life (customs and climate) don't allow women to do so easily. But there are ways, even in Riyadh. Sure the abaya is conveniently hiding those extra kilos, but a good habit of wearing fitted clothes instead of gym outfits or baggy shorts and weighing yourself regularly would help. Sure there are many parties, lunches, coffee mornings etc but don't run to the buffet and eat too much too fast. Making wise choices like staying away from the cakes and cookies is a good start. The buffet offers plenty? Chose between carbs, a drink or dessert but do not indulge in all. Limit your outings if you're afraid you might be tempted to overeat. If you go overboard one day, do some detox the next. Ask your driver to drop you a little further away and walk! Stay away from fast food outlets and if you have to eat out, make healthy choices. Why not seize the opportunity of living an expat life to make some long lasting changes?

### **How do I avoid yo-yo dieting?**

Yo-yo dieting (or weight cycling) is the repeated pattern of losing body weight then gaining it back through episodes of diets. Each cycle, the weight loss or gain can be anywhere ranging from 2kg to 20kg or more. Diets don't work long term but this type of diet is particularly harmful to your body since it affects your muscle mass and your metabolism. Crash diets do not burn your fat but break down your lean muscle mass to get the needed nutrients. Your metabolism will slow down, go into starvation mode and it will be much harder to lose more weight. That is the famous plateau many dieters experience and it is so frustrating!

Here are a few ideas to help you stay away from yo-yo dieting:

- Eat a little bit of everything but control the portions
- Avoid sugar and carbs at night
- Limit sodas, coffee drinks etc
- Avoid processed food
- Exercise to build a stronger and lean muscle mass, that in turn will boost your metabolism and help you burn more calories
- Get a nutritionist's help

*Written by Evelyne Fallows  
Certified Personal Trainer  
Health and Wellness Coach  
evelyne\_fallows@yahoo.com*



# Out and About, by Tiffany Wacaser

## Al-Shura Council

It is an oft-heard complaint that in Riyadh there is little to do. When the excitement of shopping dims, what are one's options? I've found Haya Tours to offer some interesting tours for exploring the sites and culture of Riyadh. One of the more unusual tours I have taken is a trip to the Majlis Al-Shura Council, the consultative assembly in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is classified as an absolute monarchy which means that King Abdullah has the supreme authority over the country but must comply with Sharia law as well as the Qur'an. The Majlis Al-Shura Councils operates as a consultative council to the king. For most expats, this form of government is very different from the governments of their home countries. I found it very enlightening to tour the Majlis Al-Shura Council and learn more how this council operates and functions within the government.

We went to the Al Yamamah Palace in Riyadh, a beautiful and lavishly decorated building where we were met by one of the women working in the building. She ushered us to a comfortable room where we watched a video about the Majlis Al-Shura Council. We were shown around the building, allowed to take pictures in some of the rooms, and even sat in the desks reserved for council members. I enjoyed a walk through a long hall chronicling the history of the Majlis Al-Shura Council since its beginning in 1927.



There were several interesting photographs spanning the 90 years of history, along with documents written in flowing Arabic. We toured a beautiful library filled with thousands of volumes of books devoted to law, science, and history. The last stop of the tour took us to glass-partitioned balcony where we watched a portion of the council proceedings and our presence

was acknowledged by the council members.

While the Majlis Al-Shura Council cannot pass laws it can and does suggest laws to the king, has the authority to interpret laws, and examines annual reports. King Abdullah appoints members to the



council and chooses men from around Saudi Arabia who represent three major groups, business, religious, and bureaucracy. Council members are well-educated and well-respected in their communities both inside and outside the Kingdom. Currently 70% of the 150 council members hold PhDs. When selected by the king council members must serve one term of four years and a maximum of three terms, with the option to decline further service after their first term. During their service on the council, members are expected to attend council sessions twice a week with additional meetings for any of the twelve committees on which they sit. Council members are paid half their salary from their outside employment while the government provides the other half.

A new term will begin shortly and with it will come a big change. In 2011 King Abdullah announced that women may be included in the council. It is anticipated that thirty women will be called to council positions in 2013. During our tour, the guide wasn't able to provide details for how these women will be incorporated into the council, whether they will sit behind glass-partitioned walls or sit with their male colleagues, if the council will expand to 180 members or if it will remain at 150 members. Nevertheless, this presents an interesting development in Saudi Arabia's history and will surely have an impact on the larger Saudi culture.

*Tiffany Wacaser is the mother to four boys and one girl, wife to an amazing scientist, creator of scrapbooks, a lover of books and music, and a budding traveler. Tiffany blogs about her life in Saudi Arabia on a blog [www.beiqemaze.blogspot.com](http://www.beiqemaze.blogspot.com)*

## Restaurant Review, by Jan Thompson

### Assaraya Turkish Restaurant



**ADDRESS** Mid 200's Thalatheen (Chocolate) Street, south side, opposite Patchi  
**CUISINE** Turkish food  
**SUIT** Groups, Couples, Families (child friendly), Singles  
**STYLE** Casual and relaxed, busy and can be noisy, but popular noisy  
**COST** Lunch 2 adults SAR 150

Easily identified and clearly signed, parking can be a problem. Entering the family section there is a nature space decorated with stuffed animals and artificial

plants, not quite my style.

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Now for the food, it is fresh, hot and plentiful. Almost before you sit, the most delicious fresh flat Turkish bread is delivered. It is hot, smells divine and best eaten with fingers by breaking a piece off; dipped into hummus, it's even better. Portions are large; try not to fill up on the bread leave room for the other menu items.

The menu is from the Ottoman kitchen, their baba ghanoush is soft and smoky, lots of grill options and the shawarmas are outstanding; also try the clay pot dishes infact I have like everything I have ordered.

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## Book Review, by Gargi Habib

### Muhammad – A Biography of the Prophet by Karen Armstrong



Ever since the World Trade Centre was hit on that clear morning on September 9, 2011, a sort of free for all has been declared on Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), the Prophet to millions of Muslims around the world. Starting from the American Pastor Terry Jones making many objectionable remarks about him, to the cartoons, and ending with the film on YouTube which resulted in so many people dying throughout the Arab world.

But who was Prophet Muhammad and why do Muslims around the world revere him so much?

To be fair, I can see how he can come across as an incongruous figure to people of other religions (I refuse to use the word 'westerners', as Karen Armstrong uses. Here is my disagreement with her, it's not as if all 'Westerners' are Christian or all so-called Easterners understand Islam). To a Christian or a Buddhist it might seem like here is a very strange prophet indeed - he did not practise exclusion from material life, did not perform miracles, he married, had children, fought wars, ruled a kingdom, wept tears and fell in love like any mortal. And **that** is the key to understanding the Prophet Muhammad - he wasn't divine. He was a human being like you and me. And *yet* he was chosen by Allah to send His message to the world.

Of course one of the reasons was that God did not want him to become a figure of religious devotion. The other reason why the Prophet was chosen by God to live a full life and put in every possible circumstance, including many awkward situations which probably were very contrary to what we are given to understand about his gentle and fair nature, was that how he acted then became a sort of referring point for Muslims for all times. Whether adoption, marriage, divorce, war, love, children -

the prophet was put through every possible scenarios so that a Muslim when in any quandary can refer back to the tradition or Hadith. Sort of take his advice long after his death.

This is why Muhammad is called a prophet of our times. (Hindus might still be able to draw a straight line from Prophet Muhammad and their Lord Krishna.)

Karen Armstrong, as an ex-nun, a lapsed Christian and non-Muslim, is strangely a very appropriate person to write this biography. She understands very well how a religious figure can inspire and move people in their deepest sense and yet can see the Prophet objectively as a man and sift through the mythology that has surrounded him for best part of Islamic history.

In the first chapter Armstrong makes the reader realise that this obsession with vilifying the Prophet is far from recent. Tracing this struggle right back to the times when Islam was born, and on to the middle ages, the crusades and the Spanish Inquisition, she makes one realise the history behind it. Her argument that the present is merely another phase in the struggle that has been going for centuries is indeed quite interesting. Moving on she introduces us to the Prophet's times and the society he was born in. In the background of strife and constant inter-tribal warfare Muhammad's message was both mystic a radical shift towards political and social reform. He preached loyalty to God rather than tribe; reconciliation rather than retaliation; care for orphans and the poor; and in many ways, empowerment of women, which will be a surprise to some. The Qur'an gave women property rights and freed orphans from the obligation to marry their guardians: dramatic changes at a time when women were traded like camels.

This of course wasn't taken very well - Muhammad was chased out of Mecca and had to take refuge in Medina. In Medina, starts the part two of the Prophet's life. By the time he leaves he would have transformed from abandoned orphan to a very capable fighter and tactician. As Armstrong writes, he believed that warfare was sometimes inevitable and even necessary. This is why some passages in the Qur'an are rules for warfare. (Terrorist groups cite these selectively — or contort or violate them.)

Muhammad ultimately took back Mecca and reclaimed the Kabah, still the destination for the Muslim pilgrimage. Armstrong argues that he prevailed by compassion, wisdom and steadfast submission to God. This is the power of his story and the reason that more parents around the world name their children Muhammad than any other name.

# Outside of the malls, by Jan Thompson

## Nora Gardens



**ADDRESS** Tahalia Street 2<sup>nd</sup> block from Olaya Street right side of street  
**GENRE** Outdoor furniture, gardening supplies and elegant home accessories  
**SUIT** Anyone who wants to glamour up their garden and home

The exterior of the showroom has lots of interest and appeal with large dominating pieces and interesting outdoor design items. First time we drove past I wanted to go back and explore and touch the stock, already planning

just where some of the pieces might be a feature in my garden. The main building is white and square with lots of glass and sprinkled leaves on the exterior walls, visual clues to the interior products.

The interior is well set out with generous walking spaces and lots of light to fill the tall walls and high ceiling, all of which add appeal to the stock.

Colour is everywhere: white, green, splashes of purple, yellow and pink, all vying for your attention. Then you notice shiny beautiful packaging and their other high quality products: designer furniture, glass, candles, stone sculptures, vases, natural and synthetic plants, bbq accessories, ideal gifts for yourself or others. Brands include Osmen, Egizia, Flux, Vondom, Aquesse, Khmissa and Expormim; WOW all these goodies in one place!!

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Welcome to WSB's Monthly Newsletter February 2012

WSB was set up to help expat spouses in KSA find work and is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. It is the only one in the KSA to link most spouses with potential local employers.

**Find - Be Found Networking Event**

The Women's Skills Bureau hosted its first networking event at the Kingdom Club on the 15th of February 2012. The event attracted 40 expat spouses and was a great success. The event was held in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and provided an opportunity for expat spouses to meet and network with potential employers.

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# Parents' Agony Aunt, by Ruth Barrett-O'Sullivan

## 'The Third Culture Kids'

### **What is a Third Culture Kid or TCK?**

*The term TCK suggests that kids who spend a portion of their childhood outside of their own country belong to a separate "third" culture distinct from that of their home or host countries. The term also includes (but is not limited to) children of bi/multicultural parents, children of immigrants, children of refugees, children of minorities, children of international adoptees or 'domestic TCK's' children who have moved around the same country, rather than internationally.*

### **What does this mean?**

Usually, for children, there is a 'host culture' into which a second or third culture can be interwoven. Children take what they know or remember from their home culture and mix it with their host culture to make a third! This can blur a sense of background. Identity can be a challenge. A mobile upbringing can bring with it a sense of 'rootlessness'. Someone you know, someone you love is always coming or going. Separation and loss are familiar feelings.

'Where are you from?' is an innocent question; it's one of those proverbial 'ice-breakers'. It's a no brainer for many, a conversational opening as familiar as speaking about the weather. However, it can be a difficult question for third culture kids and expat kids too. Often there is no simple answer. Many kids have lived in different countries all their lives, they may have been born in Barcelona for example, have lived in London and Switzerland for a time and then moved to Saudi Arabia. Everyone has a story, a journey to tell. 'Home' is, of course, where your family live. But if that changes every few years then you can end up in a quandary. And so, 'where are you from?' goes from an innocent question to a history & geography lesson.

### **As a parent what can you do to help?**

Firstly, there is no 'normal' upbringing with this lifestyle. There are advantages and disadvantages to all lifestyles and cultures. Speak to your child about moving, keep them 'in the loop' so they know what is going on. Remind them they have friends all over the world, devise a system where they can keep in contact with email, Skype or even letter writing! It is a big event to get a real letter, the excitement of which can help a child settle as they solve the puzzle of letter writing and receiving post! Help them to stay in contact by visiting if possible. Explore places, make travelling adventurous. Getting children to keep a

journal or photo book with some notes can be a fulfilling memory log of who they have met and where they have been. This can be encouraging to review. Get children to speak about their travels or experiences in classes, get teachers to help make travel experiences relevant to lessons.

What is 'ordinary' to TCK's is not ordinary to others, it will help them appreciate the vastness of the world and their experiences.

Listen to your children. You may have major issues organizing relocation but knowing that Santa will find the right place to drop presents can be a big deal for a six year old. Take as much time to find out what you can about a new host culture. If your children look different to those in the host culture, be ready for some curiosity and prepare your children for prying eyes and a minor celebrity status!

Schooling is a controversial issue for parents travelling all over the world. Do remember, being the new kid is never easy and if you don't speak the language fluently it can be even harder. Leave your child some space to settle down before you start asking them about grades and exams. Usually, three weeks is a good marker. Before you start school get a tour, bring your child on the tour so they get an idea of the layout of the area. Try to get the uniform (if it is school regulation) before your child begins, so they will visually, 'fit-in'. Get the timetable, planners and books required before starting if possible. Remember, being organized is a struggle for many young people. Make the first few days as easy as possible. Try to treat them to some 'indulge time', shopping or looking at a movie in the first few days. Schools are very busy environments and many can be easily overwhelmed if they don't get some time out. Extra-curricular activities are essential. For a child, having an interest and outlet outside of the academic environment can be the difference between making friends quickly or not. Make sure to get in contact with parent-groups, school mailing lists and so on to benefit from the opportunities open to your child.

### **What are the advantages of being a TCK?**

These are numerous! US President Barack Obama, who lived in Indonesia as a boy, highlighted many of the advantages of being a TCK. In a world where global vision is imperative, linguistic ability, diplomacy and understanding diversity are huge advantages, the TCK can be better equipped for life.

## Parents' Agony Aunt, by Ruth Barrett-O'Sullivan

Many adopt a 'fake it until you make it' attitude in their approach to life. This makes them successful at fitting in, because they have learnt how to do this in different cultures, often where they may not know the local language. Most TCK's are bi/multi lingual the benefits of which are innumerable. Most TCK's are open minded and generally social, making friends quickly. They often experience life at the extremes, being in contact with vastly different cultures, attitudes, politics, social norms and so on. Usually the happy outcome of this is an expanded world view.

*By Ruth Barrett-O'Sullivan  
M.A. H-dip in Education*

If you have questions regarding **schooling** or **parenting** please email them to Ruth on [hendandruth@yahoo.com](mailto:hendandruth@yahoo.com). She will do her best to answer them and we may (with your permission) publish anonymously some questions in the newsletter.

**Some useful websites for further information:**

[www.tckworld.com](http://www.tckworld.com), is a meeting place featuring numerous articles, stories, resources, interviews, and links of interest to anyone wishing to learn more about the experiences of various types of TCKs.

[www.transition-dynamics.com](http://www.transition-dynamics.com) is the site for a consultancy serving international companies and schools and individual expatriate families through cross-cultural training. It features articles and information on available services, including mail order publications and videos

[http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/living/livingabroad/living\\_in\\_saudi\\_arabia.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/living/livingabroad/living_in_saudi_arabia.shtml) is a site with links to information all about Saudi Arabia including business, education, embassies, cultural information and so on.

<http://www.internations.org/magazine> A 'one-stop shop' comprehensive guide for information relating to cultural issues, communicating abroad, working abroad, medical advice when travelling and so on.

<http://globallivingmagazine.com/> A potpourri of information on living abroad, for discerning tastes.

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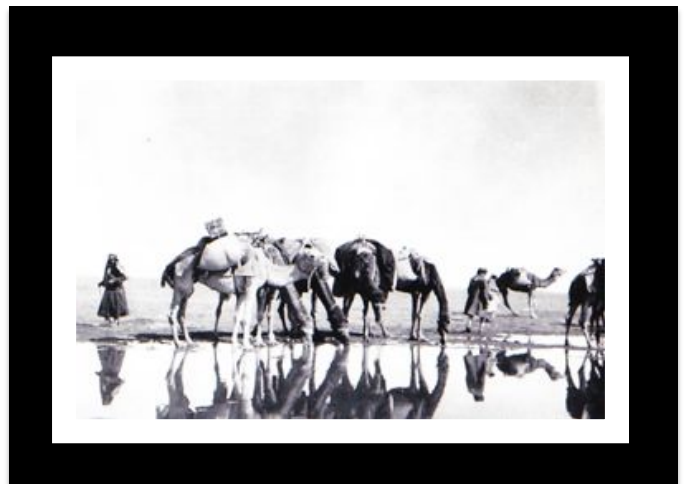
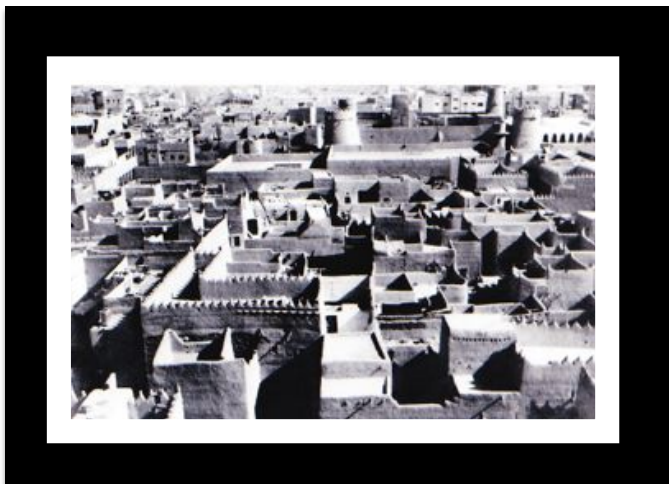
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We are a full service party shop. Everything for the smallest to the largest event!! We also import party merchandise and wholesale it. We were the first party shop in the Kingdom and still by far the best!!

Contact: Sally Kennedy

[www.goodship-lollipop.com](http://www.goodship-lollipop.com)

[sallykk53@hotmail.com](mailto:sallykk53@hotmail.com)

0096614659521

### **UNIPRESSE**

French magazines

Enabling people to receive directly at home French magazines, ranging from news, home decoration, culinary, travel, kids and much more.

Contact: Veronique HOBLOS

[veroblos@hotmail.com](mailto:veroblos@hotmail.com), Cell phone : 053.283.79.62

### **USA Girl Scouts**

Volunteer Organization

We are the overseas arm of USA Girl Scouts.

Contact: Lisa Ouazzani 0543430955 or

[admin@girlscoutsriyadh.org](mailto:admin@girlscoutsriyadh.org)

### **Usman Awan Co**

IT Professional Services

IT Professional Services and Support, Offering Network and Desktop Support Services

Contact: Usman Awan

[www.usmanawan.com](http://www.usmanawan.com)

[usman@usmanawan.com](mailto:usman@usmanawan.com)

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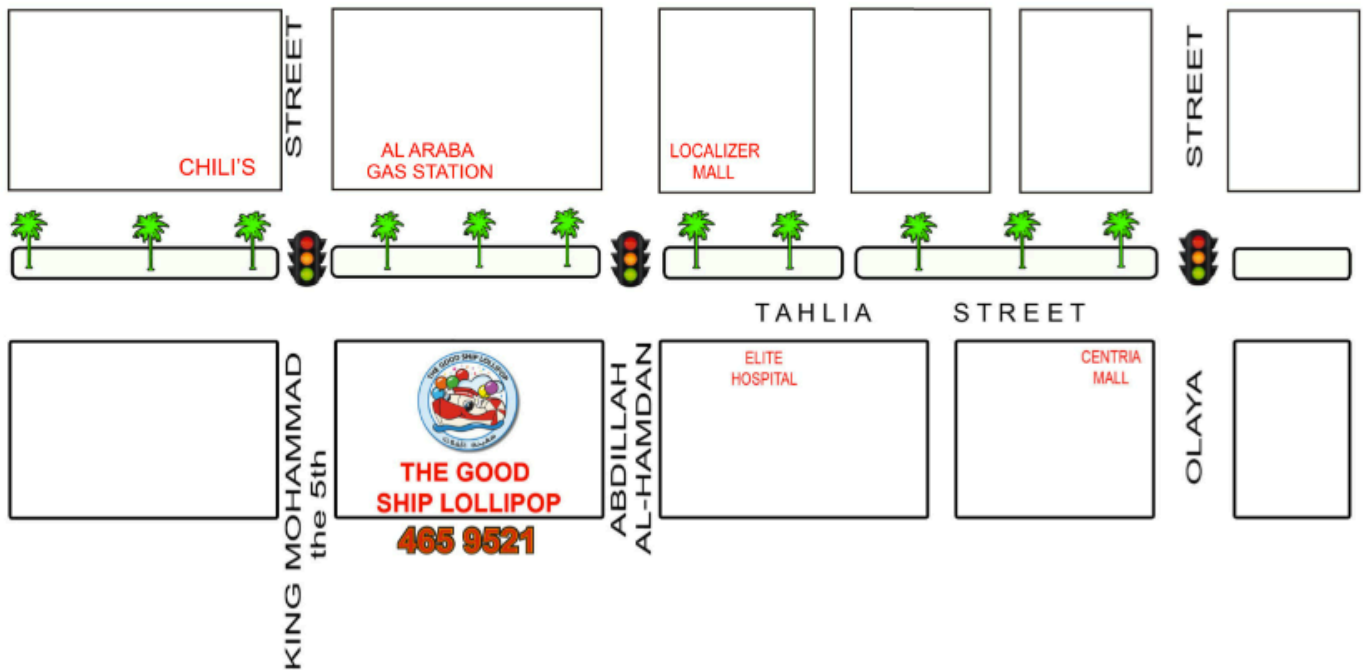


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# THE GOOD SHIP LOLLIPOP



## Community Groups in Riyadh

### The Corona Society

English speaking woman's group  
Contact: [coronainriyadh@hotmail.com](mailto:coronainriyadh@hotmail.com)

### Maison des Français

Events and activities for French speakers  
Contact: [mdfriyadh@yahoo.com](mailto:mdfriyadh@yahoo.com)

### Oasis Italia

Italian Cultural Association  
Contact: [oasitalia@gmail.com](mailto:oasitalia@gmail.com)

### ACR - The American Community of Riyadh

[www.acrsa.com](http://www.acrsa.com), [director@acrsa.com](mailto:director@acrsa.com)

### CCOR - The Canadian Community of Riyadh

[cwor.events@gmail.com](mailto:cwor.events@gmail.com)

### Dutch Club (De Nederlandse Vereniging)

[nvriyadh@gmail.com](mailto:nvriyadh@gmail.com), [www.nvriyadh.com](http://www.nvriyadh.com)

### Southern Cross Women's Association

Australia/New Zealand Women's Group  
Contact: [scwa.riyadh@gmail.com](mailto:scwa.riyadh@gmail.com)

### The Caledonian Society

Scottish Society, [www.riyadhcaledonian.com](http://www.riyadhcaledonian.com)

## Useful and Interesting Websites

[www.saudilife.net](http://www.saudilife.net)

[www.riyadhcity.com](http://www.riyadhcity.com)

[www.arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com)

[www.americanbedu.com](http://www.americanbedu.com)

[www.arriyadh.com/eng](http://www.arriyadh.com/eng)

[www.expatwomen.com](http://www.expatwomen.com)

[www.sufrati.com/saudi-arabian-dining](http://www.sufrati.com/saudi-arabian-dining)

[www.get2knowsaudi Arabia.com](http://www.get2knowsaudi Arabia.com)

[www.whileabroad.com/parenting](http://www.whileabroad.com/parenting)

[www.eyeofriyadh.com](http://www.eyeofriyadh.com)

[www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk](http://www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk)

[www.oasis-mag.blogspot.com](http://www.oasis-mag.blogspot.com)

### Facebook groups:

[www.facebook.com/groups/artdesignsocietyksa/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/artdesignsocietyksa/)

[www.facebook.com/groups/111213812303012/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/111213812303012/)

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