Bozeman

Bozeman is a city that most inhabitants of this earth have never heard of. It’s a city in southern Montana in the Rocky Mountains. Its population is less than 60,000 and it’s a holiday hideaway for politicians, celebrities and adventurers that enjoy fly fishing, hiking, rock climbing and skiing, among other outdoor activities.

Interestingly, when I was invited to have a meeting there – I discovered that Bozeman is the city with the second highest number of billionaires in America. As I have given up on Zoom and believe strongly in face-to-face interaction; I flew to Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport - which is located in Belgrade, Montana, about 10 miles northwest of Bozeman.

Disembarking from the aircraft, there was snow everywhere and I was hit with a cold wind and -30 degrees temperature. A coat, scarf, hat, and gloves did nothing to save me from shuddering as I walked down the steps into the waiting bus. I started doubting the wisdom of my coming here in December. As it was a one-day affair, I bit the bullet.

Leaving the airport in good time for my schedule, I was contemplating my meeting with a gentleman who like me was working to support medical research in the field of cerebral palsy (CP) in children, a horrible disease.

I arrived on time to meet Roger Birchwood, a well-known venture capitalist and philanthropist. Roger was in jeans, sneakers and a long sleeve cable knit crewneck sweater. The meeting was at his home, and we sat in the living room near a beautiful fireplace with burning logs.

Roger, who must be in his early 50s, had Anita (his personal assistant) at his side with a batch of documents and she was studiously taking notes of our conversation. Anita, of Asian origin, was wearing a fashionable ski outfit...less for skiing but more to go with the surroundings.

After we concluded the meeting and decided Roger would approach a number of global research institutions to investigate a more serious and effective path forward regarding CP, he invited me to lunch at what he called a “unique” restaurant. I accepted.
As we drove towards a mountain cliff, I noticed a protruded building sticking out with a huge glass dome surrounding it. Roger, driving a 4x4, went in a circular route and we arrived at the entrance. I literally shivered walking ten steps to the bright, warm, and beautiful view the restaurant afforded its patrons. The manager greeted Roger warmly and took him to apparently his usual table close to the glass window and dome which was breathtaking. I sat mesmerized by the view. I used my cell phone to take a picture as Roger sat down and immediately a waiter arrived to take our order for drinks. Roger, having British ancestry, recommended warm winter Pimm’s punch which I accepted although I would have rather had a hot tea with honey.

Looking across from our table I recognized the CEO of a major US tech company sitting with a very well-known retired marine who served in the White House some years ago and a lady whose face I knew but I could not determine who she was. Roger enlightened me - the lady was a well-known Congresswoman serving her sixth term in Congress. She was sitting closer to me, and I could observe her profile and sense a quiet heated discussion between her and the ramrod retired marine, whilst the tech CEO was interestingly smiling.

We ordered our food. Roger asked for bison and fries. He must have noticed my eyebrows jump and he smiled. Roger suggested an elk burger, but I declined and asked for a huckleberry salad. As we were finishing our meal and ordering coffee, I noticed the Congresswoman wiping away what I thought was tears and in an involuntary motion she pushed her handbag off the table causing her empty water glass to crash and split in many pieces.

I immediately got up to help and retrieve her handbag. Roger who apparently knew everyone jumped up to assist. The restaurant’s staff and manager, in a fire drill manner, cleaned up the mess in no time. Moments later we were all introduced and sharing Roger’s table with coffee all around. The marine who I had recognized, but had never met, looked at me and said, “What is the reaction to Bibi Netanyahu’s election?” I responded that I had met Netanyahu several times in global forums and listened to his policies and frankly have little faith in his interest in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I confidently added that Bibi’s interest is in developing relations with all the Arab countries and bypassing five million Palestinians under occupation and that he already started the process with Jared Kushner’s help during the Trump administration which became known as the Abraham Accords.

I changed the subject, asking the CEO of the tech company “Is there a threat from the Biden administration to further regulate or break up some of the tech giants?”, and asked him how he sees the disruption of supply chains and deglobalization?

His face became serious and as he took a long sip from his coffee, he said the Biden administration will try but not succeed. “Sadly”, he added, “politics is disrupting tech progress and supply chain problems are already complicating many industries and will cause economic and financial chaos. As for deglobalization with Russia, North Korea, and China as our enemies, the fact is human beings globally pay the price.” He picked up his cup again, but it was empty. He placed it down and said, “We must find a formula to live together on this earth for the better of humanity rather than thump on our chest that we can beat everyone up.”

I found that strange coming from the CEO but before I could comment the Congresswoman interjected saying, “It’s really a very sad state of affairs. Instead of dealing, “she added, “with homeless people, food deprived people, health issues, poverty and education we are fueling a war, supporting LGBTQ education in schools, having parliaments around the world passing gender bills to allow for sex change for children at 12 years old, legitimizing harmful drugs, failing to bring global cooperation to deal with pandemics…” She sighed and then said, “it is not enough that we pressure other countries to emulate our democracy which is not perfect and criticize them for their human rights whilst we had Abu Gharib, destroyed Iraq and Afghanistan, sanctioned Cuba and Iran for decades, have Native Americans living on reservations and maintain the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp.”

Tears were streaming down the Congresswoman’s face... “I am a very strong woman and love my country for which I have devoted my life, but I care and worry about the path we are following for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.”

I tried to slowly shift in my seat as Roger and the marine engaged with the Congresswoman who now was smiling, as a birthday cake appeared in front of her, and she blew out the candles and thanked the CEO who was apparently hosting her and the marine.

I had a flight to catch. I thanked Roger and wished all a happy holiday and a great 2023 and took my car to the airport. Deep in thought I was once again pondering on the lack of global leadership and smiling to myself that visiting Bozeman may require a lot of booze consumption to stay sane.

Shafik Gabr

April 2023

Issue 69
FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES

YOUSSEF EL TOUHKY, 2016 FELLOW

2016 Gabr Fellow Youssef El Toukhy, an MBA candidate at Oxford, met the former President of Colombia Ivan Duque at the Blavatnik school of Government.

During the meeting, former President Duque also shared his deep admiration for Mr. Gabr and the Gabr Fellowship. He shared stories from his participation in COP27 in Sharm El-Shiekh. Youssef invited President Duque to hold a talk at the Oxford Business School about how he supported entrepreneurship during his presidency in Colombia. The talk will be part of a conference that is organized by the government relations club which Youssef co-chairs at the business school.

BASMA FAHIM AND SAMER KIROLOS, 2015 AND 2022 FELLOWS

2015 and 2022 Gabr Fellows Basma Fahim and Samer Kirolos represented the Shafik Gabr Foundation in the 11th Annual AmCham MENA Regional Council Conference “Accelerating Green Investments in the MENA Region: U.S. and Regional Partnerships for Growth”.

RJ JOHNSON, 2018 FELLOW

2018 Gabr Fellow RJ Johnson was appointed by Shreveport City Council to become their Director of Council Affairs. This is a newly created role, where RJ will be responsible for external and constituent relations on behalf of the council.

RJ is also the National Vice Chair of United Nations Association of the United States of America and is serving his third term on the National Council and serves on the UNA-USA Executive Committee.

KATIE HAGAN, 2022 FELLOW

2022 Fellow Katie Hagan spoke as a panelist at the U.S. Superyacht Association “Inspire Initiative” on March 25th at the Palm Beach International Boat Show. The event included 200+ people, a sold-out event. The guests and other speakers included US Olympian Dara Torres and Captain Sandy Yawn.

The U.S. Superyacht Association (USSA) is a non-profit trade association whose mission is to promote and support the U.S. Superyacht industry and its members worldwide through advocacy, marketing and education.
CHARLES TRUXAL, 2018 FELLOW

2018 Gabr Fellow Charles Truxal started a new job as the Legislative Director for Congressman Morgan Luttrell (TX-08).

Prior to this, Charles worked as Legislative Director for Congressman Scott Franklin (FL-18) and as Military Legislative Assistant for Senator Marco Rubio (FL).

INTERVIEW WITH....

YOUSSEF EL TOUHKY, 2016 GABR FELLOW

Youssef Eltoukhy is an MBA Candidate at Oxford Saïd Business school. He is also the co-chair of the government relations Club at SBS. Before joining Oxford, he was a project lead in Synopsys semiconductor company in Cairo. Youssef is a member of several international networks, such as the Gabr Fellowship, Fulbright, and US exchange alumni. He has been awarded the Al-Qalaa scholarship to pursue his MBA at Oxford's Saïd Business School.

1) What are the 3 most important takeaways of your 2016 Gabr Fellowship experience?
   - Networking is about making friends more than transactional connections.
   - Our influence goes beyond nationalities, wealth, or occupation. It's more about being a global citizen.
   - Understanding cultural differences is more of an art than just a different language. Only by mastering this art, we can build trust.

2) Would you visit the US again?
   - I visited the US after the Fellowship where I have been warmly welcomed by our American Fellows and friends. Looking forward for more visits this year!

3) What 3 things can make Egypt-US bilateral relations stronger?
   - Focus on Egypt's influence in the Middle East with the ongoing unrest in the region.
   - Egypt being a hub for Silicon Valley giants to invest in local engineering talent.
   - Young leadership in the two countries.

4) Did the program in Egypt and the US bring new knowledge to you?
   - As I come from a scientific background, the program was an eye opener to me on what’s happening behind closed doors in governments, the House of Representatives or Parliament, military, think tanks, financial institutions and more.

5) How would you describe the Gabr Fellowship program in three words?
   - Eye-opening, lifelong, family.
The Gabr Fellowship is Changing Perspectives Through Citizen Diplomacy

2014 Gabr Fellows at the Giza Pyramids

Article by Basma El Baz, 2015 Gabr Fellow

Every new world incident proves to us – people in the Middle East – how far from the truth our depiction in the western media is, and by consequence, in the eyes of the average American or European citizen, which in turn means that any voting for a president with an unjust Middle East Policy would pass smoothly as we’ve witnessed in the past. Politician-to-politician initiatives can sometimes work, but what’s more important are the citizen diplomacy initiatives, and that’s what the Egyptian businessman and philanthropist Shafik Gabr did when he created the Gabr Fellowship.

The Fellowship brings together a diverse group of young leaders from various fields, including business, academia, and the arts, for a two-week cultural exchange program that includes visits to different countries in the Middle East and the United States. During the program, Fellows participate in workshops, lectures, and discussions on various topics related to the Middle East, such as politics, culture, and history.

I am one of the Egyptian Fellows myself, but I was curious to know if the Fellowship changed how Americans viewed the Middle East. The Fellows who participated in this interview weighed in with their opinions and proved the impact of the Fellowship.

Kevin Dewar, who works as a Head of Growth at FanBants, a pioneering African fantasy sport, told me how he felt the similarities between the Egyptian and American people: "When I walked the streets of Cairo, I saw lively streets filled with enterprising merchants, families and people eager to improve their station in life. In America, many of us are taught to believe some of these are uniquely American qualities, which is false. The welcoming nature and vitality of the people of Egypt inspired me. My view of the Middle East changed in as much as it allowed me to better empathize with the Egyptian people and have a more holistic view of how we’re all connected."
Jeremy Pesner, a technology policy analyst, echoed the same idea: "The experience of getting to know so many Egyptians helped me to understand just how significant a role it plays in the region... but while Egypt does have some unique social and political concerns, at the end of the day, most of what the people and government want is the same as us - good jobs, plenty of opportunity and secure futures. So, we're ultimately more alike than different."

In some ways, the Fellowship was a crash-course about Middle East affairs in general and Egypt in particular, something that helped Fellows get a better context about the region. Leah Moschella, Senior Director of Partnerships at Wadhwani Foundation, said, "The Gabr Fellowship, and the fellows that I met, encouraged me to explore the modern complexity of Middle Eastern society, politics, civics, and industry. Additionally, it enabled me to de-center the US in my understanding and rather consider the complex relationship among countries and economies within the region, with Africa, Europe, and Asia."

Moschella's experience in the fellowship and her many travels in the MENA region allows her to be some sort of an ambassador of the region vis-à-vis someone, for example, who's never had a conversation with an Arab person, "I do believe that I can have more informed conversations with family and friends. I am able to create direct connections with individuals living in the region and share personal stories. Many of my friends and colleagues work in education, and it has been helpful to connect US-based educators to resources and people to share direct experiences with US classrooms."

The Fellowship also changed many Fellows' perspectives regarding the impact of American foreign policy on the region. DeWar explained this concept: "I'm now more aware of the impact US elected officials can have on people abroad. The US media can often desensitize us to the impact of our policies. Hearing from Egyptian leaders about how our policies affected life in Egypt, and seeing it with my own two eyes, added a level of gravity that, frankly, was absent from my thinking before the Gabr Fellowship."

The interactions with the Egyptian fellows and people in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and Luxor were the most memorable for almost all the American fellows I interviewed. I believe such genuine connections were in themselves crash-courses about the country and its people, and perhaps the interaction of fellow Judson Moore, who works as Senior Product Manager at SoSafe for cyber security awareness, with an Egyptian seller describes this best: "I was negotiating the prices of souvenirs with the owner of a bazaar in Luxor when I told him that we had a deal on the condition that he would invite me for tea. He was quite surprised by my request but was joyed to do it. I spent about an hour sitting and talking with him and his assistant about the state of affairs in Egypt. He more or less validated everything that all the VIPs I met during my 2 two weeks of the Fellowship have said."
The Shafik Gabr Foundation is pleased to announce that it has partnered with the Middle East Institute on their 76th Annual Gala Dinner.

The award ceremony was held on March 16, 2023, at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C., and was followed by a fireside chat moderated by Mr. David M. Rubenstein, Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of The Carlyle Group. The MEI honored H.E. Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, Managing Director and Group CEO of the Mubadala Investment Company, with its Distinguished Global Leadership Award.

The Middle East Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan think tank and cultural center in Washington, D.C., founded in 1946. It seeks to increase knowledge of the Middle East among the United States citizens and promote a better understanding between the people of these two areas. Therefore, its goals and missions closely align with those of the Shafik Gabr Foundation – a shared mission of promoting peace, prosperity, and partnership between the people of the United States and the people of the Middle East.

The Shafik Gabr Foundation, as a long-term collaborator with the Middle East Institute, sponsored a Gold Table at the Gala. The Foundation hosted at its table Lt. Gen. Michael T. Plehn, President of the National Defense University, Dr. Lara Saleh, and Gabr Fellows Christina Fallon (2013 Gabr Fellow), Elizabeth Dent (2015 Gabr Fellow), John Ryan (2016 Gabr Fellow), Thomas Hanna (2016 Gabr Fellow), Hunter King (2017 Gabr Fellow), and Jeremy Pesner (2022 Gabr Fellow).
As the Gabr Fellows enter into leadership roles—in business, diplomacy, government, finance, and more—they will continue to grapple with significant challenges, magnified by an increased pace in technological advancement, the potential for ramped up global inequalities, and changes in governance and economic structures. To better understand the pulse of the Gabr Fellowship community and to begin to articulate substantive dialogue, the Foundation polls the Fellows each month on the key issues facing their respective countries and the global community at large.

1.) Do you think Egypt and Turkey’s relations will be restored before the end of 2023?

- Yes - 47%
- No - 17%
- I don’t know - 36%

2.) China recently brokered the Iran-Saudi pact. Do you think China can be a positive asset in brokering a potential Russia – Ukraine peace?

- Yes - 32%
- No - 62%
- I don’t know - 6%

3.) Are you worried about the potential negative ramifications of new AI systems such as Chat GPT?

- Yes - 66%
- No - 28%
- I don’t know - 6%

4.) Do you think President Biden should run for re-election in 2024?

- Yes - 28%
- No - 72%
- I don’t know - 0%

Stay tuned for next month’s 'questions of the month' where the Gabr Fellows’ take on current events, as our community of future leaders consider the most pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.
New AI systems such as ChatGPT, the overhauled Microsoft Bing search engine, and the reportedly soon-to-arrive GPT-4 have utterly captured public imagination. ChatGPT is the fastest-growing online application, ever, and it's no wonder why. Type in some text, and instead of getting back web links, you get well-formed, conversational responses on whatever topic you selected—an undeniably seductive vision.

But the public, and the tech giants, aren't the only ones who have become enthralled with the Big Data–driven technology known as the large language model. Bad actors have taken note of the technology as well. At the extreme end, there's Andrew Torba, the CEO of the far-right social network Gab, who said recently that his company is actively developing AI tools to “uphold a Christian worldview” and fight “the censorship tools of the Regime.” But even users who aren't motivated by ideology will have their impact. Clarkesworld, a publisher of sci-fi short stories, temporarily stopped taking submissions last month, because it was being spammed by AI-generated stories—the result of influencers promoting ways to use the technology to “get rich quick,” the magazine’s editor told The Guardian.

This is a moment of immense peril: Tech companies are rushing ahead to roll out buzzy new AI products, even after the problems with those products have been well documented for years and years. I am a cognitive scientist focused on applying what I’ve learned about the human mind to the study of artificial intelligence. I’ve also founded a couple AI companies myself, and I’m considering founding another. Way back in 2001, I wrote a book called The Algebraic Mind in which I detailed then how neural networks, a kind of vaguely brainlike technology undergirding some AI products, tended to overgeneralize, applying individual characteristics to larger groups. If I told an AI back then that my aunt Esther had won the lottery, it might have concluded that all aunts, or all Esthers, had also won the lottery.

Technology has advanced quite a bit since then, but the general problem persists. In fact, the mainstreaming of the technology, and the scale of the data it’s drawing on, has made it worse in many ways. Forget Aunt Esther: In November, Galactica, a large language model released by Meta—and quickly pulled offline—reportedly claimed that Elon Musk had died in a Tesla car crash in 2018. Once again, AI appears to have overgeneralized a concept that was true on an individual level (someone died in a Tesla car crash in 2018) and applied it erroneously to another individual who happens to share some personal attributes, such as gender, state of residence at the time, and a tie to the car manufacturer.

This kind of error, which has come to be known as a “hallucination,” is rampant. Whatever the reason that the AI made this particular error, it’s a clear demonstration of the capacity for these systems to write fluent prose that is clearly at odds with reality. You don’t have to imagine what happens when such flawed and problematic associations are drawn in real-world settings: NYU’s Meredith Broussard and UCLA’s Safiya Noble are among the researchers who have repeatedly shown how different types of AI replicate and reinforce racial biases in a range of real-world situations, including health care. Large language models like ChatGPT have been shown to exhibit similar biases in some cases.

Nevertheless, companies press on to develop and release new AI systems without much transparency, and in many cases without sufficient vetting. Researchers poking around at these newer models have discovered all kinds of disturbing things. Before Galactica was pulled, the journalist Tristan Greene discovered that it could be used to create detailed, scientific-style articles on topics such as the benefits of anti-Semitism and eating crushed glass, complete with references to fabricated studies. Others found that the program generated racist and inaccurate responses.

To read the full article,
ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

Launched in 2012, the Gabr Fellowship programme helps to connect and build constructive relationships between future leaders between the ages of 24 and 35. Each year, the Fellowship consists of 20-24 Fellows, half of which are men and the other half women, with an equal distribution between participants from the United States and Egypt. The Fellowship also accepts applicants from Jordan, Lebanon, France and the United Kingdom. Fellows represent a variety of sectors, including the arts, law, finance, tech, non-profits, and entrepreneurship – both business and social.

The mission of the Fellowship is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between the two cultures by instigating dialogue and the exchange of ideas between emerging leaders from the United States and Egypt. Together, they explore one another’s cultures, political realities, business trends and their goals for the future.

In addition to engaging in deep discussions with key stakeholders from both countries in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech and finance, all Fellows are invited to form multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as inter-cultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship’s reach and impact.

Ultimately, through hands-on activities, rigorous discussions, cultural site visits, and the collaborative action projects, the Fellows have a greater understanding of both countries and become part of an international cohort dedicated to building a more equitable and peaceful world.

The Gabr Fellows have acquired a greater understanding of both Egypt and the United States and the challenges faced by both communities. Having served as cultural as well as linguistic ambassadors to one another, they then return home to play the role of diplomat, introducing Egyptians and Americans to a people, a culture and a future never before explored in this way.

Together, they are creating the legacy of 'The Gabr Fellowship': an international cohort dedicated to pursuing cooperative, collective solutions to their regions' most pressing issues.
The Shafik Gabr Foundation invites you to invest in the future and partner with the Foundation using one or more of the following means:

**Sponsor a Fellow** - Individuals have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow and if selected, sponsor their participation in the Gabr Fellowship. Sponsors will be recognised in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events.

**Corporate patron** - Corporations can nominate Fellows for participation in the Fellowship Foundation and sponsor their participation on a company-wide level. The company will be listed in all publications, the logo will be presented on the Foundation’s homepage and be given visibility at all events in the United States and Egypt.

**Unrestricted support** - A general operating grant can empower the Foundation to continue to invest in innovative platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the East and West. From new technologies to expanding the programme to more countries and a greater number of participants, the Fellowship can create a broader multiregional impact.

To support the Foundation, visit [https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support/](https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support/) or

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**Gabr Foundation Reading Corner**

The Foundation Reading Corner encourages Fellows to critique the books that have been recommended to them in each issue. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends *The World: A Brief Introduction* by Richard Haass and *World Without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech* by Franklin Foer.

We are connected to this world in all sorts of ways. We need to better understand it, both its promise and its threats, in order to make informed choices, be it as students, citizens, voters, parents, employees, or investors. To help readers do just that, *The World* by Richard Haass focuses on essential history, what makes each region of the world tick, the many challenges globalization presents, and the most influential countries, events, and ideas.

In *World Without Mind*, Foer traces the intellectual history of computer science, from Descartes and the enlightenment to Alan Turing to the origins of today’s Silicon Valley, and exposes the dark underpinnings of our most idealistic dreams for technology. The corporate ambitions of Google, Facebook, Apple, and Amazon, he argues, are trampling longstanding liberal values, especially intellectual property and privacy. By reclaiming our private authority over how we intellectually engage with the world, we have the power to stem the tide.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR APRIL FELLOWS!

Christi Fallon
2013 Gabr Fellow
April 4

David Guhl
2022 Gabr Fellow
April 5

Maram Osama
2018 Gabr Fellow
April 6

Ahmed Aboulnaga
2016 Gabr Fellow
April 10

Casey Smith
2015 Gabr Fellow
April 10

Heidi Green
2016 Gabr Fellow
April 10

Kate Chiuccini
2016 Gabr Fellow
April 10

Yomna El-Awamri
2022 Gabr Fellow
April 11

Mohamed El Hawary
2018 Gabr Fellow
April 12

Alen Amini
2022 Gabr Fellow
April 13

Pascal Rathle
2022 Gabr Fellow
April 15

Mohamed Elattar
2016 Gabr Fellow
April 18

Sarah Walker
2018 Gabr Fellow
April 24

Basma Elbaz
2015 Gabr Fellow
April 22

Jeremy Pesner
2022 Gabr Fellow
April 26

Eze Redwood
2015 Gabr Fellow
April 30
For more information on the Shafik Gabr Foundation and its *East-West: The Art of Dialogue* Initiative, please visit the website https://eastwestdialogue.org/

For earlier itineraries of the program, please see the previous years’ reports at https://eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/brochures/

Ludwig Deutsch, *The Qanun Player*  
Oil on panel  
The Shafik Gabr Collection

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