

we wish



We were at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Boasting a diverse line-up ranging from the electronica giants Massive Attack to the folk darling Willy Mason alongside the likes of Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock, this year's festival promises to be one of the most entertaining in its 43-year history

Summer projects
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Watch and learn

They are halfway through their eight-week missions to write a script, learn Arabic, get fit and start a business. Katie Boucher checks up on the four participants in our summer challenge

Steve Watson used to work in media but has, since arriving in Abu Dhabi last August, been a househusband. He is writing his first screenplay.

I started this challenge by diving in and now, at the halfway stage, I'm sitting back and trying to approach it from a more theoretical angle. I needed a rain-check to see if I was going the right way, so I've been spending some time with my friend Greg Unrau at the Abu Dhabi Film Commission. He's given me some books to read, including *Adventures in Screen Trade* by the Oscar-winning screenwriter William Goldman, who wrote *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men* and *Marathon Man*. He's also put me on to Robert McKee who lectures on screenwriting in the US, so I've been watching some of his video clips online about story and character structure.

The storyline for my screenplay is done but I've been struggling slightly with how to take your thoughts and craft them in such a way that people will want to see them, so that it's not just some voyeuristic insight into life as an expat, but something that's entertaining, challenging and leaves you with some kind of message. Talking to Greg and looking at some of the stuff he's given me is helping to do that.

I've also been watching some films whose content is relevant to mine, including *Meet Joe Black* with Brad Pitt, which covers themes such as the confrontation of death, the acceptance, the planning; and *The World's Fastest Indian*, where the protagonist travels to a foreign land (the US) and has to meet people using his charm and charisma. His openness and direct friendliness allow him to create friendships that most people would never be able to do.



Steve Watson, right, seeks advice about his screenplay-in-progress from Gregory Unrau, the head of production and training at the Abu Dhabi Film Commission. Rich-Joseph Facun / The National

Murtuza Kaizar is the branch manager of Hafele, a German company that supplies the construction industry with door hardware. He is studying level three Arabic at the Berlitz Language School in Abu Dhabi.

This was a tough week for me. Work has been extremely busy so I had to miss a class, and I haven't had any time to revise, either. Luckily my tutor makes sure he reviews what we covered in the last class before we start a new one. The previous few weeks have been fantastic and then you have one bad week and that's it; you feel that whatever you've learnt you're going to forget. But then when you get back to class and your tutor asks you questions, you answer back and start to regain confidence. I started the future tense this week which was a relief. It was so easy compared with the present and past tenses. My wife and son have done me a big favour by visiting my in-laws and leaving me alone this weekend so that I can make up for lost time.

I had a bad experience today when I was trying to use my Arabic to give directions to the pizza-delivery guy. He did not speak good English, so I tried to talk to him in Arabic. Perhaps out of frustration he said, could I try to speak in one language,

either English or Arabic, since he was all confused. I ended up handing the phone over to my Arabic-speaking colleague. I know this is often going to happen, but people are also not willing to help you. They don't have the patience. It's you who wants to learn the language; they're not particularly bothered. It's a must that I practise, though. You have to find a social group to communicate with, or else it's just impossible to keep up.

I am learning to be patient. I start thinking of my little son and wondering how he will learn to speak it one day. But Rome was not built in a day, as they say.

Jeanne LeSage is the managing producer of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. She is doing Original Fitness' Beach Boot Camp.

I have been on a long weekend in Lisbon and Milan, so missed two out of the three boot camp sessions this week. I was worried about what the effects of long European lunches would have on my training, but I actually found myself missing boot camp, hiking up the stairs of the Milan duo-mo, and doing stretches in my hotel room. I was itching to do something.

When I came back I was complete-

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Murtuza Kaizar language student

ly jet-lagged and went to the session on Wednesday expecting the worst. Actually it wasn't bad. My running endurance is getting better. In fact Thursday, which is running day, is now my favourite day. There's something about running that I find really contemplative.

It feels great to have got this far. When I started, the goal was to stick it out and slog through the early mornings. Now, a month later, it feels like a natural routine for me, and I can't imagine not doing it. It never gets easier, but it's nice that when you do it for four weeks you see a progression.

It has really lifted my mood; exercise for me is a great mood-balancer. We're getting very busy at work and doing really long hours but I'm finding that I'm much calmer. And I just have so much more energy. I'd like to see how long I can keep doing it in the run-up to the film festival, which is in October. At the end of each four-week cycle they have a get-together on a Friday night. It's funny because when you arrive you don't recognise anybody as they're all nicely turned out and showered. It was really nice to see them socially, though. As a new person moving here, I find it a good way to

meet new people. And there's a nice shared experience because you're all in it together.

Julie Meer is starting up Body Balancers, a wellness, sports and physiotherapy centre, in Jumeirah Lake Towers, Dubai.

This week we've been working on the company website. It's a challenge to explain the relevant information in a way that is concise but that people will find interesting. So we've come together as a team to decide what we need to put on there; the 10 most important questions that people will want to know about our technique and our company. It's a critical side of the business in this day and age since it's the face of the company.

It's also an important step towards building awareness of the company and most importantly for the "Dorn" method that we are bringing into the UAE. It's such a unique therapy [dealing with skeletal misalignments] and because it's new to here it needs a bit of explaining. Even though there's an element of massage, which we do primarily on the spine, we do not class ourselves as a spa and that's a difficult concept for people to grasp. If you're not a spa

then what are you? The other thing I've done that's been really helpful is to join networking associations, one being Heels and Deals, which is a group of all-female entrepreneurs and business owners, and the other BNI (Business Networking International). What I enjoy is that it's a whole new community of women coming together to support each other. You realise that you're not alone, and you can gain through their experience and pick up so many useful tips along the way.

I've also started social media classes, which have been fantastic. They have really opened my eyes to the next generation of how to do business online and be successful at it by teaching you how to use social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to promote your business more effectively. It's a whole new world but it's the way of the future. Fifty per cent of the population are under 30 and this is what they know.

It's already working because someone who'd read last week's article didn't know how to get in touch with me, so he had his secretary track me down via my Facebook page and left me a message on it asking me to call his company.

the to-do list: 12.07.10

Collective surprise

As part of the Dubai Summer Surprises programme, the BurJuman Centre has a mix of artefacts and record-breaking collections on display from today. Stamps, cars and coins are all on show, along with some more off-beat items. There is also a comprehensive selection of clothing and jewellery. Daily until July 24, 10am-10pm (10am-11pm Thursdays and Fridays), BurJuman Centre, Dubai, 600 545555.



Summer workshops for all the creative family

Adults and children alike can pick up a paintbrush and get their creative juices flowing at the Dubai International Art Centre, where there is a huge variety of summer courses, lessons and workshops available for all ages and levels. All participants must register and pay for classes in advance. To find out more call 04 344 4398 or e-mail artdubai@emirates.net.ae.



Photographs with the dream treatment

The Emirati artist Maitha bin Demithan has produced a collection of photographic portraits that have an almost dreamlike quality at the XVA Gallery in Dubai. Bin Demithan scanned the pictures on to her computer where she manipulated them to give a softer, more flowing feel. Daily until July 31, 9am-7pm (closed Fridays), XVA Gallery, Bastakiya, Dubai, 04 353 5383.

