

Apologies!

It has been a very long time since I last wrote a newsletter. Sometimes it is just not worth the pay. Hah! Like I get paid for this! NOT. You see, freelance writing fulfills only a personal need to write down gibberish for you, the readers, and ultimately for myself. There is no better way to keep my life in order. Who knows where I will end up? When will I change places?

Perhaps you wonder why I am writing from Kuwait? Patience. The thoughts on Egypt come first.

Goodbye Egypt!

What a fun time it was. I say that in earnest. As of the last newsletter I was on Safari in Tanzania, diving in the Red Sea, and working at a job that made me very unhappy. It takes a lot to drive me from a contract. The job was just not a true "fit" for me. A "fit" is the linguistic term used in the international teaching career, used to describe the school (and country) that you are teaching in. The country was fine. The school was the problem. Let's just say I had the worst teaching year of my life and I had several differences with my administrators.

I made a lot of strong friends teaching in Cairo and I owe a lot to the individuals that made life easier. It would take another twelve web pages to thank everyone personally. Most of you know how much I appreciate and respect you. That said, I will live with the good memories from Cairo as life quickens its pace.



Summer of 2005 in the States

Green Bay will always be my home, at least as long as my few boxes are in my parents' storage garage. Ask my father how many boxes I left there and he will throw a fit. Stories about hundreds of boxes will spout from his lips as he smiles with mock disgust. Truly though, there are only 10 boxes stacked neatly in one garage and a few pictures hanging in the room above the garage.

The summer of 2005 can be summed up with one word: VAN. Thanks to Jason and Erin I had a place to sleep while I traveled around the state all summer. I spent most of my time at my parents' Hotel del Green Bay, but when I needed to boogie, it was in the van. What a lucky traveler I am. When I come back to Green Bay there is a warm bed, a storage garage, and a family that loves me.

The following list is a jumble of memories. You can sort them out later.

✦ I traveled all around Wisconsin for weddings, family reunions, and friends

- cottages
- ✘ Playing catch with my Nephew TJ and going to his baseball games
 - ✘ Colin fell out of the camper and proudly went down the highest water slide in the country
 - ✘ Planting trees and bushes with Jeff's family in Minnesota
 - ✘ Reading stories with Samantha
 - ✘ Teaching Dad and Mom how to work with computer filing and digital photos
 - ✘ Going to class at UWGB
 - ✘ Meeting a beautiful international teacher from Venezuela and getting lost in conversation for 6 hours. She does exactly what I do (career and travel), dives more than I do, and makes my knees weak
 - ✘ Gas Prices were sky high
 - ✘ watching movies with my beautiful blonde munchkins in Minnesota
 - ✘ holding little Ella if the babysitter wasn't there and Erin was tired
 - ✘ I became a full fledged turtle! YBYSIA!
 - ✘ Spending time with Mom and Dad on the Katrina before the disaster



The Flights to Kuwait

Many of you don't know the specifics of how I chose Kuwait. Actually, it's all Roberto's fault! Roberto is a dear friend from Honduras that happened to be a principal in Kuwait while I was having the troubles in Cairo. He recruited me for a position in his special needs department. Here I am.

On August 23rd, I packed my three suitcases and headed out for Kuwait from the Madison Airport. It was actually a mix up with my tickets, but looking back on it, I had a chance to spend some more time with mom. As an added bonus, Alison and Shae were there to bid me farewell too. Alison has been a dear friend for years and her daughter is almost as beautiful as all of my nieces. Hah.

The ride to Minneapolis was uneventful, but when I arrived at the gate for Amsterdam I was in for a wonderful surprise. Mario and Kathleen were waiting for me at the gate. I had totally forgotten they had also been recruited by Roberto. Mario and Kathleen were both working at the school in Honduras with me. What a small world. Right off the bat, Mario was ushering me into the nearest bar so we could celebrate the next two years of living in a dry country!

We made sure to flag down the flight attendants as soon as our wine glasses were empty and there was a nice bar in the Amsterdam airport. What a long trip. My entire trip time, from Green Bay to Kuwait City, racked up a total of just under 24hrs!

School is school

Don't get me wrong, I love my job. However, people ask me "so what is it like?" School is school. No matter which way you look at it. This school is like others around the

world. Sure, we have prayer rooms for Muslim praying, 120 special ed students, students wearing hijabs (the head covering of the Muslim religion), and a total school size of about a 1000. However, we are just like any school. Kids are kids. Teachers are teachers. Duty at lunch is duty at lunch.

On a personal note, Dasman Model School is a great experience for me. I truly love my job once again. The students are caring, the staff is helpful, and as soon as I found out how to turn my classroom light on and off all was just peachy. For some reason, whomever designed this school followed the Kuwaiti bright idea of putting the light switch outside of a room. I will never understand that. (I guess it comes from being one of three brothers. If a light switch was on the outside of a bathroom and you were sitting on the toilet, one of my brothers would simply turn off the light while you were in there helpless. I know I would've to them. So, the scenario lives on.)

Dasman Model School

Rather than digress again into babble, perhaps I should clarify the school. Dasman Model School <http://www.dasmanschool.com.kw/> is an international school that serves the Kuwaiti upper class and foreigners that can afford the steep costs. The school is broken up into three different schools: elementary, secondary, and special education. With just under 1000 students, there are about 120 students in the special needs program. Most of the rest are in regular classes from Kindergarten through twelfth-grade. There is a unique vocational program in this school. I will go into more detail later, but the vocational program runs the lunch program for the high school. Quite an amazing program!

This school is a very unique opportunity for students and staff alike. Usually, special education programs carry some kind of stigma and special needs students are targets of ridicule. Not at this school! The regular education students and special needs students share the entire campus. It is "normal" to be different at this school. Thank God, because I am not exactly "normal" myself. Hah.

Many of my friends and family ask a lot of questions about teaching overseas. There are several different models of schools: International Schools for expats and government official families; International Schools, such as Dasman, that teach the upper-class of the local population; bilingual schools, which spring up everywhere and range in size from 10 students taught in some nun's home to 200 students at a locally funded school; public schools; and of course the DOD (U.S. Dept. of Defense) schools that teach the families of our armed forces around the world.

Dasman falls into the category of International School. It is a rather large school- 1000 students or above is how I categorize a larger school- that serves mainly the host national community. That means the wealthy local population.

The Apartments in the "Sandbox"

Before I sound like I am bitching, know that I am content in this apartment. The school has an apartment building that provides housing for import teachers as part of their

contract. We don't see any kind of bill that comes out of our paychecks, nor do we have to pay a monthly rent. The school includes the cost as part of the contract.

All of the new teachers live in the same buildings outside of the city. If you are a former college student that stayed in the dorms for your first year (or longer) then you have a good feeling for what kind of building it is. The rooms are furnished with dorm style stuff. But I am easy to please. Each apartment is TWO yes TWO bedroom and one and half bath. The apartments have a living room set, a dining table and chairs, beds, wardrobes, a telephone, a starter set of pots and pans, dishes and silverware, a shower curtain, and even a set of sheets. This is the first school that has included pillow cases!

The Top Ten Good and Bad of Kuwait! (input from Mario)

Cons-

1. litter box (sand, cats, piles of crap everywhere)
2. speed drivers
3. nowhere to go
4. average age of a pool hall goer is 12
5. covered women
6. too many Canadians
7. it's about 180 degrees
8. anal violation a.k.a. exchange rate of dollars to dinars
9. random deposits of raw sewage
10. prohibition

Pros –

1. covered women (some are quite ugly)
2. prohibition – we learned homebrewing
3. Philippino maids
4. free aircon
5. anal protection a.k.a. getting paid in Dinars
6. center of the World
7. homebrewing
8. gas is cheaper than water
9. dominos delivers
10. homebrewing (oh, did we repeat that one)

“That’sAll Folks!”