

## Special points of interest:

- The Kuwaiti Parliament pays special fees to families with disabled children
- Speeding tickets don't deter speeding here
- It rains a lot here in Kuwait
- Electricity is free, Gas is cheap
- Most workers here are Pakistani or Indian

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## Time for Tim Moran

A while back I got an email from Kappy. It said "call me ASAP!" That is a strange message to receive across the world. I knew it was bad news! I bought another cell phone pre-paid card for minutes and called him up.

Sure enough. Tim Moran has checked out. Kappy wasn't sure, but people suspected suicide.

The circle of friends closed out Tim many years ago. It happened in my absence, but I know it had to do with some of Tim's personal choices, bad enough choices to scare away the rest of the Happy Campers.

Now, as I reflect back on my friendship with Tim Moran, I am both happy and sad. Neither of us kept up with each other. I didn't call him and he probably didn't even know how to find me. I am the eternal optimist

though! My memories of Tim make me smile.

1. My favorite word for him is PSYCHADELIC
2. Tim was the master of music. He introduced me to bands I had never heard of.
3. Tim had the knack for making people laugh at the smallest details
4. He had the best t-shirt collection of any human being I have ever met.
5. He introduced me to Alison, who now lives happily with Dan and Shea.

Tim went through some hard times in his life. Many of those I was never privy to. I didn't even get to participate in his marriage. I heard about the

way he and his new bride danced through the aisle to the soundtrack from *Grease*.

In the end, he decided to take his own life. He must have been very lonely. That is the ultimate in selfishness and it only leaves his family in grief and I am left writing a small piece in his memory. I can only hope his family has the strength to remember the good times he shared with us.



(Greg, Michelle, Pat, Tim - circa 1986)

## St. Sometimes Changes its Look Once Again

Changing the look of a personal newsletter is similar to changing around the furniture in your home. I change my bedroom around every chance I get. Too bad Feng Sue is unattainable!

It is my quest to find the proper look: professional, yet personal. It certainly won't win any awards. But who cares. It is you, my readers, that can have a say in all of this. Email me and whine if you don't like the look. Just tell me. Did you know

this website and publication has been live on the web for almost five years? It all started in Oshkosh, Wisconsin when I was in school for my education degree. My computer came with a whole mess of software included, including a publishing program called Correl Word Perfect. From then on, it was all downhill. Personal projects, websites, school projects, and classroom materials were all made possible. You could even by one of those "For

Dummies..." books on just about any topic having to do with computers.

So how about using a blog? So far, I have stayed away from them. I went to a conference this weekend and saw how one teacher in Kuwait uses blogs in the classroom. It's not a bad idea for students. However, I am just getting into this new format of a newsletter.

Feel free to email me and let me know your input. Am I doing ok for a self-publisher? You tell



A rainy day at school.

**“Kuwait is the coldest country in the world... INDOORS!”**

**-a Kuwaiti addressing the new teachers**

### What Speed Limit? The Meaning of “God Willing”

It is hard to believe the driving in this country. I wrote about it before and I now continue.

There are police cameras posted, police cars with sirens and lights, speeding tickets, and well posted speed limits. Does this stop the death toll? No.

The Kuwaitis, mainly the late teens and 20-somethings, are not intimidated by ANYTHING on the road. Many believe it is up to Allah, their God, whether or not they will live through a wreck. So, they drive fast, weave in and out, and care little. If they live through a car wreck, they leave the car and go out to buy a new

one. They have the money! Just remember, I mainly speak of the younger Kuwaitis.

It is rare to see less than four accidents during the evening. Night rules in this culture. Hence, most accidents are at night. The highways boast all of the car remains along the shoulders in the morning.

Imagine a three lane highway with rush hour traffic. It is not uncommon to see Landrovers speeding along the median past the lines of cars. They don't want to wait so they drive like a bat out of hell along the line. Someone pulls out and WHAM! Another addition to

the hospital.

The cars here are amazing. I have seen Rolls, Vintage Mustangs, Porsche, etc. on any given day. All the great Italian cars are here too. This is where people do not know how to spend their money quickly enough!

On a good note, when it rains they slow down a bit. I am happy to see Kuwait is nothing like Cairo in the rain. Egyptians are confused and scared by the rains. It never rains in Cairo! (ok, twice a year) The Kuwaitis still have a traffic flow on rainy days.

### The Rains, The Rains!

When it rains, it pours. I am having a blast with the rain. I was teaching thunderstorms and weather. Perfect timing! We talked about lightning, thunder, storm fronts and much much more.

A question occurred to me as we were in the storm, on the way to school one morning. (I have a lot of time to think because the trip is 45 minutes,

one way). Doesn't all of the sand block the aqueducts? When the water goes rushing into the street it brings along sand. Remember, this is the desert. There is sand everywhere. So where does it go? Is there some poor soul that has do go down there and shovel out the sand? There is no way all of that sand is simply washed out! So help me here. Any ideas?

No one knows so far. I will just have to keep asking people and think to myself on the bus.



### Life at Dasman (for me)

Either I am getting older, or I am just picking my battles better. You see, this year I am not the hard-ass on rules. I am not the teacher that gives out detentions for chewing gum, running in the halls, or not handing in their homework. The year has progressed much more smoothly for me. I worry about my small class! My kids are the only students I truly keep in line. I have fewer kids

than I have ever had, but my focuses have changed. I haven't yelled once! (All teachers yell at some point).

The last few years have run me ragged with classroom management. Face it, they were much different kids. The Egyptian kids were the worst. There was no control there. If a teacher cared enough to keep their kids in line, that teacher

was crazy by the end of the day. I see a little bit of that here, but it's no longer me.

How do I do it? I set up some rules for my kids and I stick to it. When I see other kids out of line, I patiently try to solve the issue with a smile or a stern look. Then it's back to class, back to my students. They respect me because they need my help. And I respect them.

### Life—continued

My classroom is probably the smallest in the school. However, one of my students told me she loves coming to my little class. She looks forward to it. She is one of my six 11th graders that I teach Earth Science to.

The 9th graders are my most frequent class. They all have special needs of different varieties. Most of them would drown in a regular high school classroom setting! Many of them have social problems. They don't fit into the social norm. Several have few friends, one or two have none, and the rest benefit from a few close

friends. Many of them have dyslexia, a true reading disability that takes time and patience to work with. All of them have problems with organization. I spend a lot of time with them on their schedules, homework logs, student planners, and even organizing their notebooks. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rules.

The smaller class allows me to be more on top of the individuals. I can individualize the readings or tests, rewrite sentences while the rest of the class finishes their writing, or have a private talk about

friendships or hygiene. If you have 22 or more students, a lot of these very personal needs get passed over. I know. I was a mainstream teacher for years.

I have gotten to know their parents well. Many call me on my cell phone, some email me, and I personally see at least one parent every two weeks.

I even did the unthinkable. I gave out my MSN chat address and phone number to my students. I will be online at 10:30pm working on something and one of my students will log on. I keep the chat short. Just long enough to evaluate their

### Kuwait, the place to leave

Sit down and talk with a Kuwaiti. Most of them will admit there is nothing to do here. Kuwaitis leave for vacation or they stay and work. There is a distinct lack of arts, recreation, and museums. There are rarely any concerts, festivals, or even any parks to walk through. What's the answer?

Go to the mall and shop. If you don't want to shop, then go to a

restaurant and eat. Really. There is little else to do. When I ask my kids what they did over the weekend there is little said. They need stimulation!

I wish someone would build a giant park right in the middle of the city. Of course, it would help if there was more than one city in all of Kuwait! I can't just jump in the car and go to Iraq. I could, but I might get shot. I

cannot get into Saudi without a proper working visa. Imagine a city with nothing to offer unless you jump on a plane.

Oh sure, I have found a few things to do. Ice skating, diving (although the sites are dull and visibility is poor), camping in the desert (if you have equipment and a car), and of course there are markets to go to. But that is back to shopping!

**“The only thing to do in Kuwait is shop and eat!”**

**-Kuwaitis in general**

### Going to Parliament

Did you know that the government subsidizes any student that has disabilities here in Kuwait? That is not too amazing in the US but I find it overwhelmingly interesting for another country such as this. A few years ago, most Kuwaiti families would do anything to hide the fact that they have a child with any disability. Over the past few years, the problem of disabilities has become too

great to hide or ignore.

There is a grand explanation for all of this. Kuwaitis don't marry outside of their families. It is OK for them to marry even their first cousin! They do not marry outside of family because this society is centered around the family. It is ruled by a family. It is important for them to marry Kuwaiti, and it is usually only within their specific social class.

There just aren't many people to add to this gene pool. So, this country is rich with something besides oil...disabilities.

Oh, I went to the parliament building with a few other teachers and administrators from Dasman. We listened in on the parents demanding support .



A little boy speaks to the parliament with emotional pleading.

**A Monthly Newsletter from  
the life of Greg LeMoine**

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Mario and Kathleen are working really hard to get me set up with a woman. Too hard. The woman with me is from my masters course. Lisa is from Ireland. It turns out she would rather date some Lebanese used car salesman than me. Harsh. Oh well. Life is always interesting. This is the first time I have been beaten out of a woman by a Lebanese car salesman. Hah. Life goes on.

**No Tutoring after School! No Way!**

It is a good thing I don't tutor after school. I could get fired. You see, no one does it. Nope. No one. But if I were to tutor after school I could make a lot of cash. The parents want help for their kids and the going rate, set before I ever got here, is 12 KD an hour. That works out to be 36 dollars an hour. But money is relative. It costs 5 KD just to go one way into town via taxi.

So if I were to be tutoring it would be difficult hours. I would have to be picked up at school or my apartment by the student's driver, driven out to their house, tutor for an hour or so, and then be driven back again. Those

would be some long hours if I were to tutor. Imagine going to school all day and then spending another three hours just to help a student with their studies. That would be very tiring if I were to do it.

Believe it or not, a lot of teachers set up tutoring. A lot! They make a lot of money but they work hard. There is nothing to do anyway.

I could just see it.... Trying to help a student that is failing a course and has no sense of organization. That would mean tracking down the teachers of the student and trying to keep up with their assignments just so you could help the student at

home. If I could tutor a few students, I would probably end up with such a student.

I imagine it would be pretty fun to drive so much with the non-Kuwaiti drivers. Most of them are from Pakistan, India, or Bangladesh. They all speak Arabic plus three or four other languages! I would be able to hear all of their stories about working for rich families. That is, if I tutored.

Time is way too precious. I have been spending my time in a masters course instead. That is a royal pain. Teach all day, take a quick break, then sit in class for four hours. End the day by going home and doing master's homework for



This is my fish tank in the class. We have had a few problems, like suicide, fighting, and low oxygen levels in the tank. That makes class more exciting.-- See you next issue.