

St. Sometimes

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Special points of interest:

- The ministry members of the Q8 government recently quit. The amir was out of country. No one cared.
- My superintendent is under the impression that I teach math instead of sciences.
- My new quest is for fitness. Thailand and the beach are 2 months away. I joined the Holiday Inn health club and go daily. I am impressed.

A Teenaged Snowblower

I don't know what's going on in the states, but it looks COLD. I haven't seen snow in two years! The last time was in Lebanon, when I went skiing in Beirut. Yep, that was a long time ago.

So while I've been gone, my family is getting older. Not only is my younger brother 35 years old, my oldest niece is now a TEENAGER. Katrina seems to be old enough to be in charge of the slave labor of the Minnesota Lemoine labor camp. One word: SNOW-BLOWER!

Like father like son. I guess Jeff sees his children as a way to get out of buying a new machine. Hah. (remember, this is all in fun) But, did you know, dad didn't buy a snowblower for our family until the third snow season in our newest, and largest family home! I

don't know even ONE Kuwaiti teenager that could handle the kind of work that Katrina is doing. Of course, why do something if you can pay someone else to do it for you? That is the Kuwaiti mentality.

I applaud Katrina for braving the cold weather shoveling the driveway. Now daddy can get his car out.

My question is: did Katrina spend endless hours trying to build a snowfort with her sisters? That is what the bros and I used to do. We made the best snow forts!

Can you see the resemblance in the ladies of the picture? I sure can. Katrina is growing up to be her mom. But I DO



Lynn and Katrina pose in the snowy Minnesota driveway. I think the TEENAGER did all the work.

know, that Katrina is not all work with no play. I now have hard evidence, thanks to her friend's website. The oma sent me the website so I could see all the silly pictures of the birthday sleepover. It seems like Katrina is turning out to be a real HAM.

I am a real proud, old uncle overseas!

Command and Conquer

I still play games. Heck, there isn't much else to do in Kuwait. Mario and I have a daily routine: work, play. Nearly every day after school, we take on the Chinese and the GLA (Arab terrorists) in a computer game called Command and Conquer. We set up a wireless router, plug in the supercomputers, and play for

hours. I won't take him one-on-one because he is just too good. Instead, we team up against the computer and take on two to four armies. These computers are very fast, but the game slows down over the wireless. We still haven't figured out how to speed up the game.

If you have any ideas, please let me know. We aren't playing on the net. Kuwait internet is way too slow for gaming or video conferencing.

Next year I want to start a new game with the brothers. Jeff and Jason, any new game ideas? Fable looks pretty cool. At the very least, we should start up Diablo again. Nuff said!



The Diving Lemoines



Big Boots to Fill! I don't think I can do it. Jason and Jeff will have to do it. Dad cannot fit

into these either. I know, because all three of us boys have the same shoe size as dad.

So this is dad south of the border in Mexico. The guys went diving without me. Yes, they invited me, but I couldn't make it all the way from Kuwait.

Cozumel is a great place from what I hear. The guys spent a fitful week down south taking in the sun, drinking margaritas, and making bubbles with scuba gear. Hey dad, nice backpack. The twin has been all over the Middle East but it won't accommodate my

super computer!

It doesn't sound like the guys got to do much diving, but they certainly had an experience on the few dives they were on.



Egads! Where is all of Jeff's hair? Maybe the pool chlorine affected his bountiful hair!

Last week, one of my students (autistic) came into the classroom and asked me... "Mister Lemoine, youtube. Do you know it? Wassup? Wassup? Bud Light. Do you know it? Wassup? Wassup? She had happened to find the old commercials on youtube.com . I laughed about this all day!

Jason of the Alpacas!

Jason must have loved his time away. Imagine, leaving four kids, several pregnant alpacas (I think those are like Llamas but they make better sweaters) dogs, lizards, birds, a new house, and a dental practice. Now imagine the destination is Mexico, where everything is "menana". I cannot

imagine how far Jason's cholesterol went down just within five days!

I know he had a lot of fun diving. He deserves some time off from the wild life at home in Green Bay. Maybe he can teach his alpacas how to scuba dive?



Down and Out in Kuwait

What a sad existence! I am counting the days before I leave this place. It seems like all I do is drive to and from school, babysit students that don't want to learn, and spend my time in the apartment reading or watching TV series (on DVD).

To save my sanity, I decided to quit tutoring after school. It seems like parents are willing

to pay a lot for your services, but still treat you like the hired help. No matter what, you are on THEIR time. I used to sit at school for an extra two hours so my tutor student could take a nap and have his meal after school. Kuwaitis usually have their big meals after school and late at night around 9 or 10. The parent would ask me to show

up at five. That meant I couldn't go home (45 min outside of the city) until I was finished with his hour and a half lesson. I let the family know well in advance I couldn't tutor one night because I was graduating with a masters. My phone was vibrating while I was on stage because my tutee had a test the next day. The mother just didn't care.

Top Ten Things to do in Kuwait City

1. Leave the country whenever possible. (The Kuwaitis are the first to leave. Usually, half of my students miss the two or three days prior to any break and two or three days after.)
2. Watch a movie at home. (If you go to the theatre, you end up watching a cut version of the movie. The government censors out scenes of affection and violence.)
3. Read. I have read tons of books. In general, Kuwaitis do not read as a pastime.
4. Go shopping. (Kuwaitis spend all of their time cruising in their cars at the malls)
5. Go to restaurants. Yep. There are many restaurants here if you can afford it. Two people at McDonalds is \$15US.
6. Smoke shisha. Shisha is a water pipe tobacco. It is everywhere. Sit around, smoke, and talk about how there is nothing to do in Kuwait.
7. Talk on the cell while you sit in traffic. There is so much traffic here and most people are on their cells while driving. Dangerous? Yes.
8. Go to a Kuwaiti's house and party. Kuwaitis can do anything they want here. They have alcohol. Many of them even drink and drive. Dangerous? Yes.
9. Go for a drive. Yes, you can drive in the desert but there is nowhere to go. Iraq is war. Saudi is restricted to business visas only. Ugh.
10. Be creative. I spend a lot of time on the internet. Man that gets old.

Why Stay in Kuwait?

I accepted the contract to stay for two years. I decided to honor that contract. Schools will not hire you if your teaching history shows you break contracts.

I see this as a stepping stone. I have gained a lot of experience with special needs students, learned a lot about

technology in the school setting, and earned a Masters degree in the interim. I have improved this school and changed a few students' lives for the better.

Two years in a place so unfor- giving is not really that bad in the grand scheme of things. A job has to be a job sometimes.

Maybe my next school will be more rewarding. It is a quality setting so far. I worked hard to get accepted and I have a lot of work to do. No matter what, at least there will be some vices available. Kuwait has no women, no alcohol, and a lot of religion.

Kuwait: the richest Welfare State!

Kuwait has billions of excess dollars. There are only one million Kuwaiti residents. There are three times as many expats living and working here.

Mario recently had a discussion about Kuwait with a Kuwaiti man. What came of it are some laughable stats. According to this man...

The government has a solution to its unemployment of Kuwaitis. If there is one position open, instead of hiring the best person for the job, ten people are hired. That way, there aren't nine people out of work. Literally, there aren't enough desks so Kuwaitis don't go to work. They still get paid. Recently, the minimum wage for a Kuwaiti

went up to 700Kd a month. Multiply that by 3.5 to get dollars. The minimum wage for a Kuwaiti, whether they show up at their "job" or not, is around \$2450!

Begging is against the law here. Anybody caught is basically "referred to the concerned authorities"- that is what the newspapers say. My guess is jail time or deported.



Going to see a movie is like a Scooby Experience. Remember at the end of a Scooby Doo cartoon how the screen gets all squiggly and the plot unfolds? That is how Kuwait strings together the parts of a movie when they cut out the good parts. You are watching a man talk to a woman, all of a sudden, your eyes hurt and Godzilla is killing bambi.



?Alpaca Quiz?

So, do you know anything about alpacas? I thought this might be fun. You can find the answers in the next newsletter. See how you do...

1. Where do alpacas originally come from? _____
2. How many natural colors are there in the natural fibers of the alpaca coat? _____
3. What is the natural, average life span of an alpaca? _____
4. Why do alpacas spit? _____
5. What do you call a baby alpaca? _____ My first would be named "Hoochymama", but the question refers to science. (i.e. a baby horse is called a "calf")
6. How do you tell the difference between an alpaca and a llama?

7. What is the gestation period for an alpaca? _____
8. What type of alpaca is the most common? _____
9. How big do alpacas normally get? _____
10. How many alpacas are there at casa de Lemoine? _____



ALPACAS AND THE ZOO



"Alpaca man"

There was this truck driver who had to deliver five hundred alpacas to the state zoo. As he was driving his truck through the desert, the truck broke down. After waiting by the side of the road for about three hours he waved another truck down and offered the driver \$5,000 to take the alpacas to the state zoo for him.

The next day the first truck driver arrives in town and sees the second truck driver crossing the road with 500 alpacas walking single file behind him.

The first truck driver jumps out of his truck and says, "What's going on? I gave you \$5,000 to take these alpacas to the zoo!"

The second truck driver replies, "I did take them to the zoo. And I had a ton of money left over so now we're going to see a movie."



They look like Llamas. What's that white beast in the background?