





*Happy Retirement*

**Dr. David LeMoine**

sources tell me he did a hell of a job on his speech. Naturally. Duh!

According to certain motherly sources, Jeff stepped up to bat and helped out the techies sort out enough video screens to rival the local sports bars. Once again, nothing I didn't expect. Jeff puts a lot of effort into family pictures and family history. I'm surprised he didn't make DLL placemats for everyone at the party.

Jason is now the doctor in the house. I might have to change my chosen hero from dad to Jason. Just kidding. I've got three heroes - Dad, Jason, and Jeff. Maybe I'll just move Jason to the top for finally kicking the old man out of the office.

The question now is - what is dad going to do with all of his free time? I really think he should work for the local FleetFarm. He could be a greeter. Wouldn't THAT be funny! He could get a discount on brooms for sweeping the garage.

## THE END OF AN ERA AND A NEW BEGINNING OF SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW YET

I missed it. The retirement party that put other parties to shame. Over 300 friends and family showed up to send off my dad into his retirement years. Wow. It would have been 301 if this had happened during a month that I didn't have 20 little monsters sitting at desks asking me a bunch of questions!

According to my sources on the ground in Green Bay, my family really knows how to throw a party. My dad has been doing surgery for so many years, I would expect nothing short of an amazing retirement speech. My

Would you believe me if I told you we have a full sized ice hockey rink just outside of camp? I'm not kidding. It's for real. On one Saturday in May, there was a kids tournament for about 30 teams of all age brackets. It's all run by parents and a small association. Imagine the cost of keeping an ice rink cooled off in the desert!





I'll miss this class. It has been a challenging year, but this group was really special. They were my fifth year in a row as homeroom for elementary. Remember, I left the tech specialty to recover the empathy for homeroom teachers and what they do in the mainstream classroom. I figured it would make me a better specialist in the long run. We will see.

Above, you see just a glimpse of a few memories. The pics are more for my memory than yours. I never publish their names. Rarely even a picture.

## GRASS AROUND CAMP

How do they do it? In the middle of the desert?



I live in the desert. Let's get that straight. However, does it look like it from the picture above? Nope. On camp, there is so much grass. It gives me pause enough to question how we can have so much lush lawn in the desert. So I did a little googling.

According to what I have dug up online, the grass around camp was originally brought to Aramco in the 50's. Some lady brought a sample of the grass in a plastic cup from Egypt. Seriously? That's as far as you know. As far as I can dig up. It is a kind of Bluegrass that is popular on Egyptian golf courses. I can attest to the lush grass on Egyptian golf courses. Well, at least the 9 hole course next to the Pyramids. Dave and I golfed them back in 2005 (the day of the simultaneous triple suicides in Cairo), memorable for the golfing and the CNN coverage.

Anyway, this grass is amazing. It grows fast in the desert climate even though it sits right on top of sand. If you dig an inch into the base of the grass, the roots form an intricate kind of woven layer. The roots are like a horizontal maze of tree roots, two or three inches thick! If it is watered daily, it grows like a jungle. Most of the park above was uncut and about 6 inches high. If they cut it too short it goes yellow. Happens a lot.

## AN UNBELIEVABLY PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Seriously, a set of colleagues to be proud of.

I have worked at seven different international schools around the world. Add in all of the schools I have visited and the schools I worked at as a pre-service teacher, and that includes a lot of educators in and around my life. Hands down, this is the most professional staff I have ever worked with.

It might be the fact that we are the highest paid teachers in the world (at least in the top 5). It might be the benefits package and the Aramco experience. Even with the benefits and pay, a school district with 4,200 students from preK-9 has a huge staff of educators, administrators, and support staff. When we have our “gold day” meetings (district meetings), we fill an auditorium. With all of those teachers, the odds would be that I would meet some sub-standard teachers. Nope.

Go through our school and be prepared to be amazed. Meet librarians that blow you away with knowledge. Sit in a music class and see them weave curriculum into slices of “fun”. Have a deep conversation about learner profiles with a PE teacher, (any of the four we have at just our school). Walk through our halls and see administrators laughing with a small group of students. Sit in on a psych assessment with our educational psychologist. Visit a kindergarten if your feeling a bit “down”.

No matter where you roam, you’ll see a professional staff that cares about its children. I am part of a “world class” team. This is real. SAES!

# MAINTENANCE



*COUNT ON THEM (DAILY) TO:*

- ✓ clean your classroom to a shine
- ✓ keep the bathrooms super clean, even when kids are around
- ✓ work in extreme heat with a smile
- ✓ smile even if you don't
- ✓ “boss” this and “boss” this
- ✓ work tirelessly EVERY DAY
- ✓ be grateful for even the smallest act of kindness
- ✓ help with almost anything that we need help with
- ✓ work together on any task given to them at school

**\*\*This school would not run without such a committed maintenance staff. It starts with Ravi and ends with Ravi. Thank you. All of you. Every day!**



## MIKE OLSEN

MENTOR, CAT JUGGLER, OVERALL  
GREAT FRIEND

2018 is the end of another chapter in my book of teaching. Mike Olsen has the nerve to leave me here in the desert. Of course, after reaching his five years +1 with Aramco, his goal, Mike is joining his lovely wife in Qatar. They have been apart far too long.

Mike has been my mentor since 9:00 am on July 29, 2016. I had just flown into Saudi the night before. My original mentor asked Mike to do him a favor. Like any time someone asks Mike for help, Mike said yes. He was on my doorstep to sit in as my mentor: show me around, drive me around, introduce me to

Aramco life, help me get a rental car, take me for groceries, find the bathroom, help me find the best Afghanni bread off campus, exchange money, wait a few hours in a lobby for a local SIM card, and accidentally taking hundreds of dollars out of an ATM by miscalculating currency (or hitting the wrong buttons).

Mike was there for me the first day and he has been there for me every day since. One morning he scrapped all of his plans to get me from my apartment. I had overslept. Mike and one of our assistant principals came to see if I was alive in my apartment. When I woke up from my couch and came to the door, the principal screamed "double PINK EYE" and ran away. Mike returned with his car and took me to the hospital.

Mike has also been there for me in the classroom for the past two years. I was blessed with several students, each year, that required Mike's unique outlook on life's survival. Each of those students





MIKE OLSEN'S  
MOMENTS OF:  
"LIFE IS GOOD"



THE SCHOOL WILL MISS YOU MIKE, BUT FAMILY COMES FIRST..

# 100% GUARANTEE

If you ever need technology help, you are guaranteed to have help just a phone call or email away. I'm not making fun of you. I'd tell you if I was.

I WISH YOU LUCK AT YOUR NEW SCHOOL.