

St. Sometimes

V209 - NOVEMBER 2018



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- *Brekke Bahrain Wedding Reception
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Mmmm....Pig?

Nope, this boutique restaurant substituted beef bacon. **F@#&!**

Urban

A DESERT THANKSGIVING AGAIN

For the second year in a row, I had the privilege of testing at Roseanna and Dave Haigler's house. Last year, I invited myself. This year, I was invited back. Imagine that?

Thanksgiving always falls on a Thursday, followed by the American creation called Black Friday. Here in Saudi, since we work for a Saudi company, we work Sunday through Thursday. Friday is the Islamic Holy Day (like the Christian Sunday). The teacher lounge was packed with Thanksgiving food, but we had to work on official Thanksgiving. (I barely think about it any more.) The American families celebrate Thanksgiving on Friday.

It takes three days for Dave to make his southern spicy beans. Roseanna wouldn't let him make them too spicy this time, but they were delicious!

Roseanna is one of our school nurses. Dave works for corporate as a project engineer. He reminds me a lot of my long-time buddy Mike. Along with a smattering of other guests and five children lost on electronic devices, we feasted like kings. I must have filled three plates of turkey and 3day beans while sitting outside on the patio. The weather has turned quite nice, hovering around 60 F in the evenings.

At this point, you might be asking yourself "Self, what did Greg bring to the feast? I know he never cooks." Clearly, I don't cook. But I do know one of the best cooks on camp! Ryan is our teacher lounge cook at school. I arranged to buy three pies from him a few days before Thanksgiving. (Note: I planned ahead.)

It was a real pleasure to sit around a fire pit in the small side balcony of the Haigler's house and listen to stories about the company. Only three of us in the conversation work at the schools. The topics of discussion were the different roles in the company like contractors, engineering, tech, training, and elsewhere. I caught another glimpse into what a huge company we work for here in the desert.

Before I waddled out of the Haigler house, I had to promise my return tomorrow. We had barely touched the pies or made a dent in the two 20lb turkeys. I promised to return at 1pm the following day. I then kept my promise.

Saturday. I had the entire morning to do my laundry, write part of this newsletter, and clean up around my sparse apartment. At 1pm I was on the Haigler's doorstep. Dave and Roseanna pulled all the food out once again and I loaded up a plate. The others had arrived earlier at 11:30, eaten, and already left. I took my loaded plate into their living room and spent the afternoon watching a movie with the family.

I am so thankful to Dave and Roseanna for including me in their Thanksgiving holiday. Being in a real house, decorated for Christmas and surrounded by family and friends, made me feel *jov de vivre* (Joy of Life). Thank You Haiglers!



"You might as well come over tomorrow, we still have another 20lb turkey to eat."



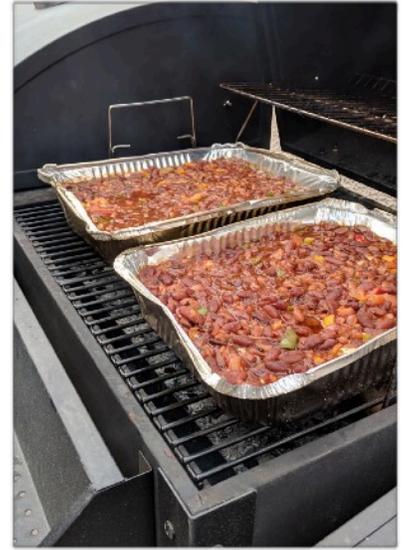
Decorating an Xmas tree in a Jersey



One of two 20lb turkeys cut up, ready



3 Day Beans on the Grill. Dave style.



Just part of the fest on the table.



Just one of my several plates over the span of two feasting days.



Happy Thanksgiving





RECORDING JAZZ

The Dharhan Big Band recorded four tunes in the newly opened ITHRA Multicultural Arts Center this month. It was orchestrated by my friend and neighbor, Paul.

Saudi mega museum—King Abdulaziz Center in Dhahran—is finally moving ahead

After years of delays and a dearth of information, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (known as Ithra) in the Saudi Arabian eastern city of Dhahran is finally getting off the ground. The long-awaited culture hub, which is funded by the Aramco oil conglomerate, should be fully open and operational by the summer.

A spokesman for the centre tells us: "The centre is undergoing its soft opening phase after [it was] officially inaugurated by the Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, on 1 December. We're ramping up for full operations during the first half of this year." The Art Newspaper understands that the cultural institution, designed by the Norwegian architects Snøhetta, cost around \$400m to build. The centre will host touring exhibitions and houses a museum that incorporates four main galleries.

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/saudi-mega-museum-king-abdulaziz-centre-in-dhahran-is-finally-moving-ahead>

Have you ever recorded music? Mike has. I haven't. Never had the chance. Now, been there done that. Our Jazz band was tossing around the idea of recording some of our pieces. I don't remember why. Perhaps it's because the band members are changing. Perhaps it was an advertising idea. (We really only play gigs once a month for fun - and a bit of cash.)

As chance would have it, the idea took off a few practices ago. Paul decided to set up a sound recording session for us at the newly opened Arts Center. It's a company asset. It's just down the road.

We showed up a bit earlier for our weekly Sunday rehearsal, but this time it was at ITHRA. The building is amazing, but we only had a short tour from Paul. The band recorded four tunes on the stage with the three man team of sound artists from the ITHRA production team. It was quite daunting for most of us. Each one of us had a microphone. Most of us were basically soiling ourselves as we went over the tunes four or five times each.

Why is this even news? The band is a collection of part-time musicians. The band was founded just six years ago. Only a few members play regularly.

A different inside source puts the cost at \$2B not \$400M



THE HIGHER IQ MAGNET

I don't know how I always surround myself with such high IQ's but it happens. If I could get Mike, Dave, and Dumbass together in one room, with a few cases of beer, the world would never be the same. A new world politic would emerge! World hunger would be solved. These guys don't put up with stupidity. All three of them are highly logical. All three of them have a lot in common, but have never met.

First thing that comes to mind? None of them are doing jobs that they should be doing - at least in my mind. In order of getting to know them, here is my humble opinion of their current occupations.

Todd? He's married and living in Switzerland. His talents are being wasted at a school that just frustrates him. Why? Because he is surrounded by the stupidity of worldly rich kids and he carved out a position sort of like a handy-man "do almost anything" in tech or maintenance. He is a professional HVAC guy that was wasting away in Misery (Missouri) until he met his new "boss" - Sarah. Todd should own his own company and run a crew of professionals of his own. Then Sarah can raise goats and teach online.

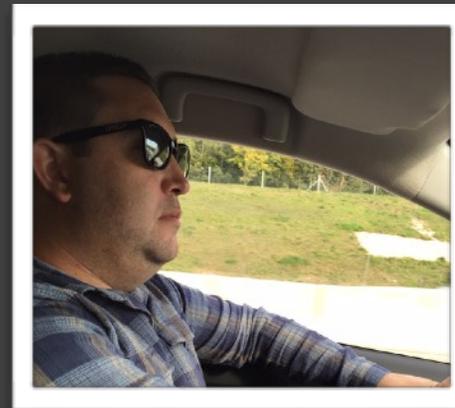
Dave? I've only been friends with him for a year or so. He shouldn't be working over here either. I'd like



Dave Haigler
In Saudi



Mike Silha
In Wisconsin



Todd (Dumbass) Bearden
In Switzerland

Mike runs his own construction company. That's all fine and good, but he's brilliant. He has a musical background and perfect pitch. His attention to detail should be producing and sound mixing for major bands! He could run a construction company on the side, while he records bands. But, he loves his career!

to see him run his own company. Things would get done. He'd have major construction projects finished on time and quality.

Politics. Money. Bands. Logic. History. You name it. Never underestimate these guys! It's great to surround myself with such quality friends.



Congratulations Kim and Cole. The reception in Bahrain was a fantastic evening of dancing, fun, food, and beverages.

A WONDERFUL COUPLE!

Kim Brekke, colleague and friend in the desert, just got married this summer. This month was a reception gala in Bahrain.



Tiffany (ES art) and Chris (MS videographer and P.E) were driving to Bahrain for the day. It just so happened that they had room in their car and Tiffany was getting her hair done near the InterContinental, where I was staying overnight.

We had breakfast at the Nomad Urban Restaurant once we got through the Causeway traffic and into Bahrain. Loved it! While Tiffany got her hair done, Chris and I sat in my hotel room talking about video editing and life in general. Tiff was done by 10am, so we headed to the Mall Theatre and watched the new Queen movie - edited. The reception started around five. After quite a few Yuenglings, I pored myself into my hotel around midnight. Fun weekend.

JUST MARRIED



MERRY JAZZMUS

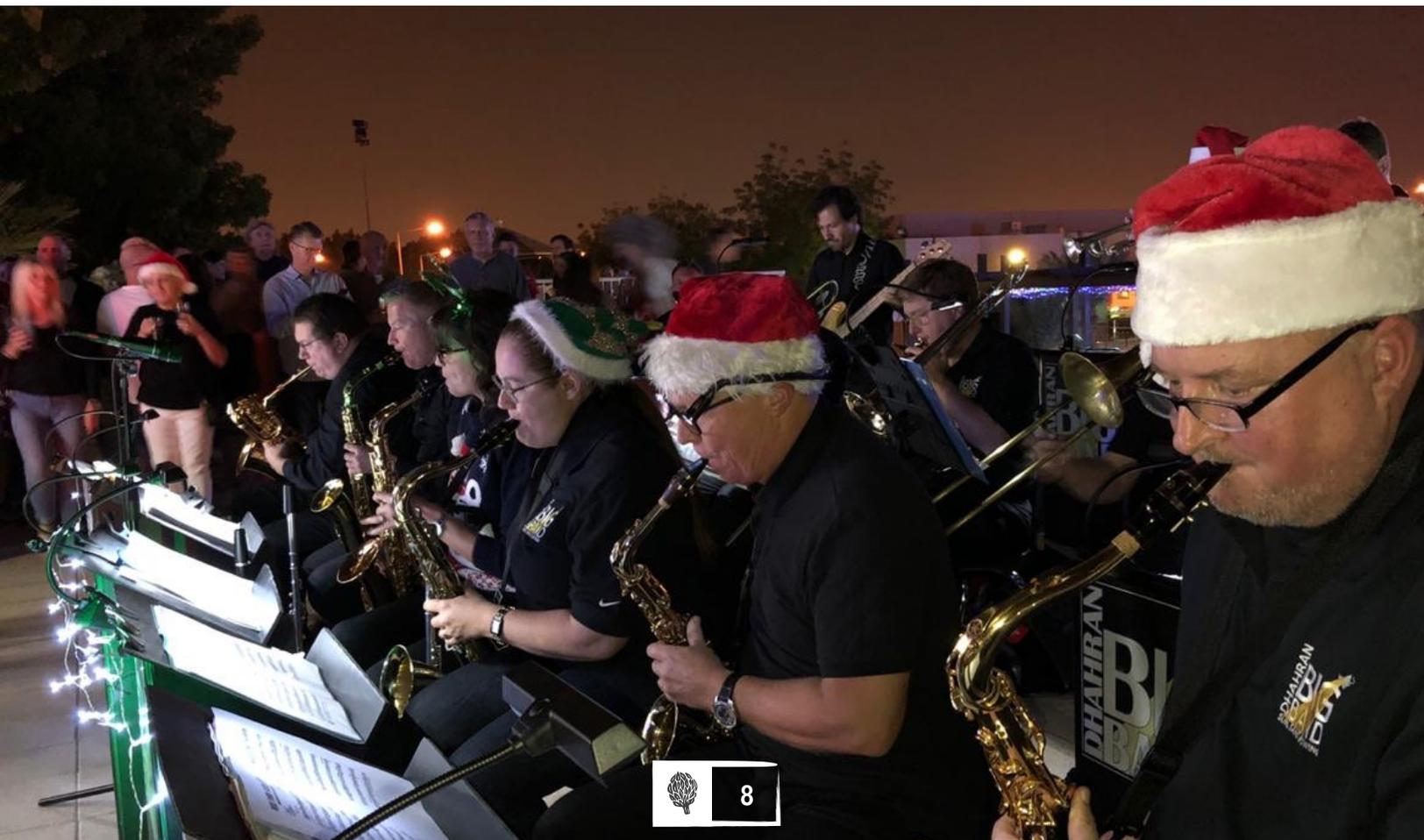


It was only November 30, but the British compound (called Sara) lit their main Christmas Tree and had their Christmas festival 2018. Dharhan Big Band was the entertainment once again.

Just outside of Al Khobar, near Half Moon Bay in North Eastern Saudi, is a British compound that primarily supports the British Aerospace (BAE Systems) that trains and supports the Saudi Air Force.

Two of our band members are residents at Sara so we've been fortunate enough to get the Christmas gigs for several years now. I cannot post many pictures, even in this newsletter, because the compound has strict rules for the safety of its expats. You wouldn't believe the fortifications and entry process we had to go through just to enter into the compound. It's a lot like our company, but there is only one main entrance instead of multiple entries and three security layers. The four pages added to the end of this newsletter are a flyer the BAE Systems puts out to the press. I included it because I have gone to the compound several times now, never knowing much about the layout or even where it is. We always have a driver take us. When I'm not the driver, I rarely pay attention to routes.

Playing the annual Sara Christmas party puts a smile on my face and fills me up with the Christmas spirit. That's why they have it, to provide their residents with a feeling of "home" out in the desert. Christmas is far away from this Islamic country! I wish you all a Merry Christmas. I'll be reporting from the Philippines this year.



Santa Does Exist!

Not in my apartment. This Santa is just part of the Haigler family house decorations for the



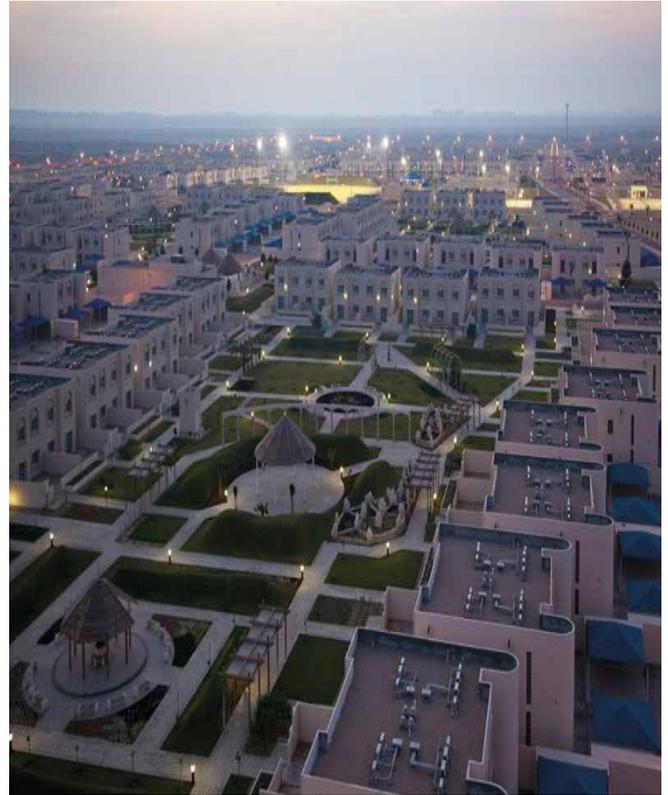
Sara Village

Al Khobar, KSA

Apartment Units Available To Let

This is not a publication of St.StomeTimes. The following pages are attached as a supplement to the newsletter. It is posted publicly by BAE online.





Compound Description

- Sara Village is a self-contained compound designed and developed for BAE Systems.
- The residential units are arranged in fifteen neighbourhoods each overlooking a landscaped park,
- Groups of four neighbourhoods are served by a restaurant or a clubhouse.
- The compound has 952 residential units of varying accommodation within a high security perimeter

Location

Located off the E617 highway Sara Village is located near the Half Moon Bay area of Dhahran, some 15 km from the centre of Al-Khobar and about 45 minutes' drive from King Fahd International Airport.

Maintenance and Services

- Sara Village was designed to be as far as practicable a completely self-contained and self-supporting community compound with a dedicated 24 hours support and maintenance team

Key Highlights

- Two restaurants - Palms and Butterworths Restaurant
- Full-size grassed football pitch with floodlighting

Amenities

- Sara Village has generous ancillary sports, retail and leisure facilities
- Play areas located in designated communal areas have been provided with child-friendly floors and equipped with various play equipment including swings and climbing frames.
- It is also served by a fully equipped car wash and service bays, a fire engine station, a laundry and a garden nursery

School

International School Group primary school but please note that preference is given to BAE staff and admissions are subject to availability of spaces.

Car Parking

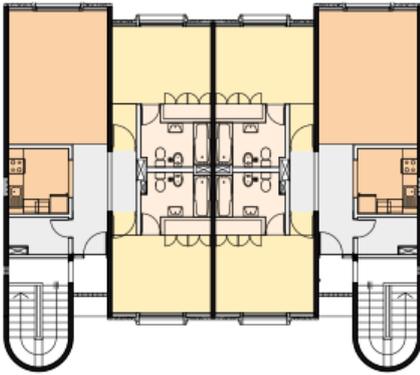
One space per apartment

Journey time by car	Minutes
King Fahad Causeway	10 mins
South of Khobar	15 mins
North of Khobar	20 mins
King Fahad International Airport	40 mins
Bahrain International Airport (excluding immigration time)	40 mins

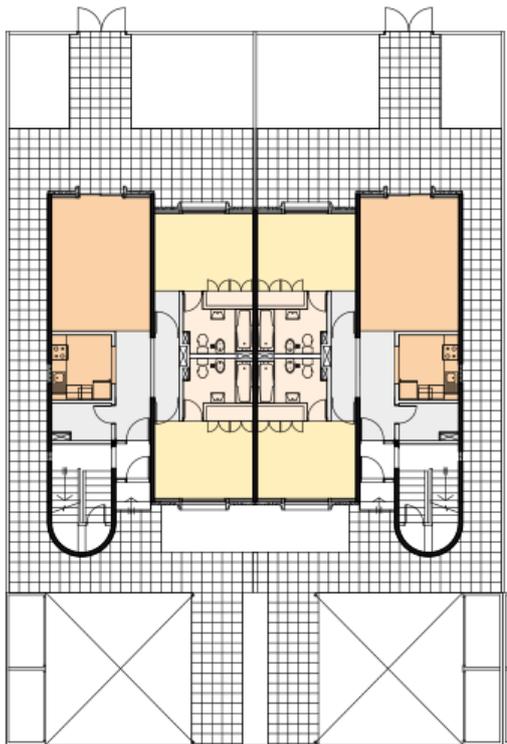
Availability

- A number of 2 bed room furnished apartments are currently available for rent immediately.
- Preferred Occupancy: Single, couples or families with one child
- The apartments have a gross area of 108 sq. m and have two bedrooms, both with en-suite bathrooms. There is additionally a living / dining area, a kitchen and a storeroom .

Floor plans and Interior



First Floor Plan



■ Kitchen/Living
■ Bedroom

Ground Floor Plan



Amenities – Sports, Leisure and Retail

- Shopping centre
- Indoor sports complex with 4 squash courts, gymnasium, fitness / dance studio , 8 lane bowling alley
- Main outdoor leisure swimming pool
- Tennis and volleyball courts



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