

St. Some Times

The Life and Times of Greg Lemoine, International Educator.

V223

October
2019

October

Check out the new
Teacher Feature
section on page 3.

Nope,
that
is **not**
me



Growth

The only thing you
can do when life
gets routine is
inner growth. page 6



iCamera 11 Pro Max "this goes to 11"



I Cannot Put it Down!

The pictures are amazing. Almost every photo in this issue has been taken with the iPhone 11 Pro Max that I bought after Kent showed me his new purchase.

The cover photo of Kent is probably the 20th shot that I took on my phone. Wham, bam, thank you mam. I even edited the Kent photo right on the phone and slapped it directly into the cover as is. Amazing.

No Need for a DSLR Camera

A few years ago, when I got the iPhone 6 and I was living in Switzerland, my DSLR camera became a burden. It seemed that the majority of my best shots were coming from the iPhone. I ended up gifting the DSLR Nikon and all three lenses to Philipp. He loves that camera and I'm sure there are terabytes of Shwarz Family photos somewhere.

As for me, there is no looking back now. Imagine, I was thrilled with the quality of the iPhone 6. Even more thrilled with the Google Pixel's ability to take portrait shots. Now? It doesn't get much better than this. At least not for a while. This is a flagship change of camera

once again. Usually I wait to buy a new phone. I was actually ready to wait until the 5G came out in 2020, actually skipping 8 iterations of the iPhone, until I saw the photos it was capable of.

DSLR cameras take up way too much room. The lenses, the flash, and the camera body itself all require a small camera bag or piece of luggage. The phone fits in my pocket and includes a lot more than just a camera.

So you might ask why it's such a good camera. Instead of reading tech magazines or interviewing a professional photographer, suffice it to say there are three 12megapixel cameras on the back side of the iPhone and one on the selfie side. That's four cameras. The main telephoto lens on the back is accompanied by a wide angle and a super wide angle lens. What a lot of opportunities!

I've been telling everybody about this phone. People scream "airdrop me, airdrop me" when I take a picture. It's not me. It's the phone, er.... I mean it's the camera. No need for a DSLR with lenses. "this one goes to 11"

Other Teacher Feature



"I appreciate you." - KA

Other Teacher Feature #1

The StSomeTimes newsletter has grown in many directions over the last 18 years. This is the first newsletter where I officially start sharing some of the quality people that surround me in my travels. KA's phrase "I appreciate you" was the inspiration. I genuinely appreciate KA. This section honors his phrase and him.

Since my readership is really only 1 (mom), I don't let the colleague know I writing about them. But...I'll respect their privacy and avoid names.

Joie de Vivre - Meet K.A.

If you are in the hallway at school and you hear laughter, KA is probably standing there talking with a colleague. He's the most jovial teacher in our school (besides me). And I used to think I was the happiest.

Joie de Vivre is French for "joy of living". I have a past reference letter that used the very same phrase to describe me. KA rivals that.

KA is a fourth grade teacher that I only really got to know last year. He is a year or two ahead of me at school here so he was part of a really big cohort like mine. He's accompanied here by his wife, but she is non-working like many other wives here.

We don't know each other much outside of school but we did go on a trip to Bahrain one weekend last year for a Google Convention. Both of us are gadget geeks so it was a perfect setting.

KA's classroom is a lesson in ordered chaos. He is one of those teachers that likes lots of action in the classroom. When you enter, it feels noisy. However, if you listen in on the noise, it is meaningful noise of kids interacting on task. KA knows each of his kids and keeps cool in his ordered chaos. The respect he has from his kids is obvious when he is around. They watch everything he does and listen intently when he is communicating instructions.

He reminds me of my friend Kappy, a big teddy bear with a huge heart.



Hallow's Eve

Staff Goes All Out

Every year, on October 31st, the afternoon classes stop. The elementary school has a parade through the hallways and into the parking lot. Parents wait anxiously outside. The classes line the hallways. Adding to all of that, the Administration starts off the parade with the Kindergarten students. This year, my vote for best team was a tie between the art team and the music team.



Elvises are in the Hallway

Our Music teacher team is amazing. They work well as a team and as a costume.

I often see them planning their curriculum, rearranging music to fit their classes, and playing a variety of instruments in their classrooms. The school supports the team with plenty of instruments and music, but it really comes down to the quality of the teachers themselves. Perhaps my favorite classes to drop in on are the music classes. I often went with my 3rd graders too.

Safety First

The island closes down its access points for outside visitors on Halloween and spreads out extra guards along the family housing areas. Trick or treaters and their accompanying parents go door to door even into the darkness of the evening. Imagine a Safe Halloween! We have that experience on the island. Wow!



Halloween in Saudi?

Not really. More like...Halloween on the island. The parents collect Halloween costumes and decorations, all brought in from the USA. Items are passed on over the years as families come and go. There is little to no Halloween in Saudi besides embassies or camps like ours.

Like the 70's

Years back, when I first witnessed Halloween in this desert oasis, I couldn't believe it. Kids walking with their parents, house to house at night! Trick or treating like we did back in the 1970s. Yes, the houses all have lawns decked out. Parents wear costumes. Even a few token Saudi families (from our Community) participate!

"Haram"

Strict Muslim families don't let their kids come to school on Halloween. It's probably the same back home. No doubt! The festival dates back to Samhain (celebrated by Wiccans), which many consider evil. Their choice.

No candy for them.

Halloween still thrives here!

Personal Growth



The past month has been quite boring as far as travel news or exciting overseas stories. Instead, I have to look inward and share a few more personal efforts. You can blame the ripe age of 50. You might think it is simply mid-life crisis. Those that know me better just see how I just refocus (hah, camera pun) on other things to keep me busy. Look inward.

Obviously, my health is a major focus. I am still watching what I eat and staying on the Nazi Doctor's dietary regulations - no coffee, no soda, no tea, no caffeine, little sugar, absolutely no salt, no fun, no nothing. Ugggh. I'm making it work. Medications? Just two. One in the morning and one kind at night. Exercise, yep. See below. Health is something I have no choice about.

Ooh, Jazz. My major focus. I've been playing more and more sax. More than I ever have before. There are four saxes in our band. Izzy, Brett, Me, and Fröde are left from former days. Simon just joined to make that two Band directors in our section of five. I'm quite happy Simon is willing to take lead tenor and relieve the stress. Even though I practice every day, it doesn't show yet. Simon rounds out a great section.

Practicing every day, just for a bit - say 30 minutes, requires great effort. How did I ever do this when I was younger? (I guess I was forced most of the time.) I set a time in the evening and stick to it. After I spend time on my tenor, going over notes for our current songs, I take out my clarinet for a few scales or long tones. There are some clarinet parts in our Jazz pieces, but I haven't hauled my clarinet to jazz sessions yet. Izzy seems to do that just fine. She happens to be a clarinet specialist/music director/play any wind instrument at any time kind of *Wunderkind*.

Speaking of clarinets. I just bought a 1927 refurbished Silver King from Paul, my clarinet fixing (trombone playing) buddy next door. Pretty awesome instrument. Now I have to play the clarinet better. Practice, practice, practice.

When life gets routine or boring, just fill up your days with personal goals.



AM Bike Rides?

After stopping and starting over the years, I have finally gotten into the habit of biking in the morning before school.



Swimming?

When I got into the company olympic sized lap pool the other day, I tried to remember the last time I had been in a lap pool for exercise. 30 years? 20? Now I go swimming at lunch every day for about 30 minutes. Refreshing!



PM Walk

I usually ear between 7,000 and 10,000 steps on my FitBit for an average school day. Yes, I walk a lot between classrooms. Now, I plug in an Audible book on my phone and walk 1 1/2 hours around our golf course. Now I earn between 18,000 and 20,000 steps. Feels good.



Great costumes like this T-rex inflatable can be very tiring. But hey, Halloween only comes once a year. It's worth it.