

November 2022

S t .  
**Some  
Times**

Vol 262



What Kind of Scooter, You ask.  
It is officially called...  
**"The Scooter"**

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIEND...

# THE NEW "HOG"

Tragically, the fact that I recently purchased a new scooter is exciting news in my life. The old scooter from 2016 finally drove me nuts, "N.V.T.S nuts!" As Mel Brooks says in History of the World Part 1. Yet, this is a story worth telling.

I bought my first scooter back in 2016. You can read all about it in volume 178. I opted for a scooter rather than a car because there is no required drivers license, license plate, or insurance on camp. I can park up close with the bicycles in most parking lots and everything on this island is less than five mounts away.

Last week, I asked Rushdi, my scooter repair guy, to replace the battery. I had been kick



starting the damn scooter for the past week. He laughed at me because this was the second battery in two months. In fact, when he finished replacing it, he showed me "how to grip the brake handle" in order to use the starter. Duh. I gave him the "duh" look. After six years of starting it, how could I NOT know that. It started successfully the next day...and then it died.

Time for a new bike. I WhatsApp'd Rushdi and arranged to purchase a new bike. I'd get 5,000 SAR (\$1300US) to him by Wednesday and he'd arrange for the bike to be delivered on Thursday night. We had a plan.

Cash. What could go wrong with cash? This wasn't a loan. Wasn't a mortgage. Should not have been an event. But here on the island it, indeed, turned out to be an event.

I took thirteen, crisp Franklins to the bank. I luckily skipped the waiting list for personal bankers. That takes a long time because personal bankers go at a snails pace. Even two people ahead of you means a minimum hour.



Anyway, I gave the teller my crisp cash and national ID. And waited. And waited. For fifteen minutes, he tapped keys and sipped tea. He put my bills into the automatic bill counter three times. Finally, he handed back my US cash and ID. "You need to renew your account. Halas (finished)."

I was Gobsmailed, but remembering to leave logic out of it, I snagged a wait ticket for a personal banker.

Somehow, one of the guys was done with his tea. He motioned me over to his cubicle. I handed him my national ID. Peck peck peck. He stood up, left me. Minutes later, he returned with one piece of paper. "Sign here." Finished. Back to the teller. No other clients were in the bank.

The teller took my cash and ID. He put the cash in the automatic counter again while he

typed away. He stopped to chat with his friend behind him. The friend was cracking jokes in Arabic while he counted stacks and stacks of local currency bills. I waited and started shifting one foot to the other. And finally... fifteen minutes later... the teller handed me a receipt and said "finished". "Where is the cash?" I tried to ask politely. "No cash. I put into your account like you wanted. Go outside to the machine, Halas." What? Now I was truly confused. The man behind him was counting out mountains of cash. The sole reason I had even exchanged dollars-and asked him to exchange for me-was to get the large cash amount! 5000 SAR was more than I could take out of the ATM. No!!!

I went to the bank entrance and tried the machine. Wow. I was mistaken. The trip wasn't wasted. The ATM served me 5,000 SAR as the maximum. I tried again for another 200, just

## THE NEW "HOG" CONTINUED...

to see if it would work and to have a little cash left in my wallet. No go. 5000 is the daily max. I had never previously taken more than 1,000 out of any ATM.

Rushdi called at 10pm. "I'm here. Why don't you answer your phone?"

"I go to sleep at 8pm, Rushdi. You know that."

I handed off an envelope with 5,000SAR and a crisp Franklin (as a surprise tip) to Rushdi. He said the driver would bring the bike onto the island, but I'd have to give him my apartment landline for the security gate to verify the driver coming to me.

For the first time in years, I tried to use my landline. New security apps had made the landline verification almost obsolete. Oops! No active landline. The construction guys had probably hit my line or housing had disconnected it for the renovation happening all around my apartment. Another, longer story!

Instead of all the fuss. I arranged to meet the delivery driver outside the island security gates. I told Rushdi to arrange for the driver to take my old scooter on his truck, as a gift to Rushdi if he even wanted it to tinker with. Rushdi loved the idea. He just wanted to verify it no longer would speed past 40k/hr. He would give it to his son to use and Rushdi didn't want his son on a fast machine! Hah.

Rushdi bid farewell and I went to sleep. He sent a text and picture of the \$100 bill I had left in

the envelope. Surprise! He was grateful for the extra surprise.

One of the most important part of any business transaction is the personal touch. We (North Americans I mean) appreciate the personal touch. So, imagine my surprise when Rushdi met me Thursday night with the delivery driver and new bike! What a great guy. He could have easily done anything else with his time.

Rushdi in his Mercedes. Me on the old bike. We met up with the delivery truck near the visitors entrance, in the parking lot. Outside of security. The Bike was on a small, flatbed truck. The ancient Indian man climbed out of his cab and hopped into the back to unstrap the new scooter. I noticed there was no ramp! No folding tailgate. And the flatbed of the truck was almost my shoulder height! Interesting!

The ancient delivery man rolled the scooter to the edge. Rushdi and I grabbed hold of the scooter seat tail. (Rushdi has a bad back but he wouldn't let me do it alone!) We rolled it backward enough to drop the back tire on the blacktop while ancient driver controlled the front handbrake. He scrambled down and all three of us brought the front tire down. Then we did the exact opposite with the old bike.

A "mah salama" and a handshake later, I was heading back to my apartment on the new scooter. I'm surprised I didn't get a speeding ticket. The new "hog" goes well over 90K/hr. For now at least.

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Like being an add-on at a dinner party, sitting between two invited guests that know each other already.



A New Kind of Recruiting Fair, For Me

# Global Recruitment Collaborative (GRC)



Who has heard of the GRC fair? Not me. How did this get past me? Maybe because I wasn't looking, let down my guard, and had my eyes closed. No one ever mentioned it to me. No one at our school knows about it. Perhaps because the fair started off as a horse trading opportunity for school heads?

The GRC started back in 2016 when some international school superintendents decided to eliminate the "middle man" (paid job fairs). According to my sources, the first few fairs required attending school heads to recommend candidates. So, a school is losing a teacher and that position is announced to the other leaders.

In effect, this method was a card game, a "switcheroo", a horse trade.

I signed up for the fair. Why not. I could go to Dubai for our three day weekend, drink a few delicious beers, and have some bacon. While I was relaxing, I could meet some international teachers and interview with some schools. It's always informative to know what your "value" is.

Little did I know, this wasn't that kind of fair. It was only two days. Most of the candidates went to the fair with interviews already set up. There were fifty-five schools, three hundred positions open, and only 150 candidates. The opening



**Madagascar?**

comments from one of the volunteer organizers included “please take two positions before you leave”.

Now, I didn’t just sit around. This was an opportunity to find a new school to work for. I spent the entire first day pouring over the GRC website and database. I didn’t send out any CV copies or emails to school leaders, but I figured it was more important to meet them face to face the next morning at the “round robin” interview signup. Hmm. Wrong.

I arrived early at 2am Friday morning. The fair was scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. I woke up early at 5am and took part in a podcast video call, hosted out of the USA. Around 7am, after putting all of my interview clothes in the hotel dry cleaners, I headed to breakfast on the IHG membership club floor.

A long bacon inclusive breakfast was a perfect environment for job fair preparation. I nibbled on bacon and endless cups of coffee as I made my plan for the round robin and researched schools. There were 32 tech positions open and another 8 positions for maker space or design thinking.

Friends had been asking me, for the past week, where I was looking next. My reply is a simple: Middle East, India, and China are all out. I also won’t go to a country I’ve already lived in. My list went from yesterday’s forty down to eight. That included three schools from China. Whatever. I was keeping an open mind.

The table next to me was taken by a woman and a man that seemed to be involved in an interview. I couldn’t hear, nor wanted to eavesdrop. When the man left, the woman stopped by my table. Natalie and I struck up an exciting conversation. She was currently in Sudan but originally from Bear country. Her parents had never been outside of Chicago area, but Natalie had accidentally found out about overseas. She’s been teaching IB, AP, and DP math for the past five years in Sudan. Now she was looking for somewhere else.

Natalie had no less than eight interviews lined up for today, the day before the fair. All had been set up weeks ahead of time over email and video chats. She had been signed up for the fair since registration had opened and her current super was here at the fair. That was the man she had been eating breakfast with. Her number one was Serbia! They were here.



**Kazakhstan?**

The rest of the day was devoted to Erdinger beer, pizza, and data collection. The bar in the hotel was a smoky sports bar, but I didn't mind. They offered Erdinger on tap. It had been months since I last had a beer, two years since I'd had on of my favorite German beers. Yummy.

My biggest problem was appearance. My sport coat, shirts, and pants were all in the hotel laundry. I kept checking with the concierge, but I didn't get my clothes until after 7pm. I was going around in jeans and a white t-shirt. Bad form. What could I do? It was important I was dressed for tomorrow! Five a.m. Bamm! I did my morning routines and headed to breakfast downstairs. The main breakfast area would be where the majority of the candidates and recruiters would be eating, so I avoided the quaint, ritzy club breakfast upstairs. I was looking professional as I sat at breakfast watching the comings and goings of fair-goers and waiting for the "moo" session at 10am.

Just before 10am, I headed upstairs. The registration desk didn't have a name tag for me so I had to hand-write my own version. That was the first sign of trouble. The next sign was the school that didn't show. My list went down to a mere three possibilities. Colombia, Colegio Nueva Granada (CNG) is a quality international school in Bogata. Mary is the HS principal there now. But they were a last minute no-show. My only three targets were KIS in Korea, Madagascar, and Kazakhstan. Above all, I am still riding the fence about whether to leave my current island package. I might last another three years and hold out for the 10/50 health care package. Then again, I'm ready to leave.

This wasn't an easy fair. No one wanted to take a little time and talk. KIS is a huge school, recruiting simultaneously on three continents. The principal wasn't even sure if they still had their tech position open. Kazakhstan was prioritizing candidates they had already set up interviews with. Madagascar took my CV and placed it on the pile. She already had a full interview schedule for the next two days.

I spent the rest of the morning in the coffee shop lounge area and headed to the bar for the afternoon. I spent time talking to more candidates but most were too busy with interviews. The next day was the same. This wasn't the fair to just drop in on. If there is a next time, I'll sign up early. Lesson learned.



Colombia?



Korea?

Dubai may seem like an amazing destination. Not for me. It's just a hub to pass through to other destinations.

There are definitely some cool things to see in Dubai, but I'm just a bit jaded.

Been there, done that. Time to leave this behind. Maybe I'll check out the 60m diving pool sometime.

Crowne Plaza Dubai

