



The newsletter of Jeff, Diane, Daniel & Alyssa ~ living and working in the Persian Gulf & Central Asia.

## Yasmin's Wedding~

We were recently honored by an invitation to part of the wedding festivities from our next-door neighbors, who are Bohra Muslims, originally from India (<http://www.sharjahjamaat.org/general/bohras.asp>; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawoodi\\_Bohras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawoodi_Bohras)). There are two grown sons, their wives, two grown daughters, their parents of these grown children, and a pre-schooler. Yasmin, one of the daughters, interviewed many Bohra marriage candidates selected by her parents, mostly for their economic prospects. The wedding has three stages: a legal marriage stage, a religious ceremony stage, and a celebration stage. We went to the celebration. We had no idea what to expect, or how to fit in. There was an outdoor meal, followed by some contests directed by the MC. They cajoled us up to the front for the best-dressed couple contest. *Not* surprisingly, we did not win! And then there was dancing. Not western style dancing as couples, but a traditional group dance – mostly everybody bouncing up and down in a big bunch in front of the stage. We don't know how long the dance went on – we left waaaaay early.



## Sports Center ~



Daniel is #25, shooting

It is sports season for Daniel and Alyssa. Daniel is a starter on his school's Junior Varsity basketball team. Alyssa plays netball (<http://www.netball.org/>; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netball>) on her school team and softball through Dubai Little League. In his last game, Daniel scored 4 points, hitting both shots, and had four rebounds in the early part of the first quarter! The team will travel to Cairo – yes, the Cairo in Egypt – later in February to play in a tournament.



Alyssa just threw the ball in a netball game ~ she is playing WD, wing defense



Alyssa crossing home plate

Alyssa is doing quite well in softball. She is the second best player on her team, which leads the other teams, having only one loss this season. In a recent doubleheader, they were behind in the bottom of the final inning. They scored to tie it, and Alyssa was up to bat with two outs and a runner on second. Alyssa hit a triple to bring the runner home and win the game! In

the second game, they were ahead by 4 to 1 in the top of the final inning, when Alyssa hit a two-run home run. The other team scored 3 runs in their final time at bat, so Alyssa's team won 6 to 4, the winning margin being the two runs Alyssa scored on her home run.

## Evolution Story~

Imagine talking to somebody who has never heard even a shred about evolution, the big bang, natural selection, DNA – nothing – and trying to explain it from beginning to end.

There is a follower of Jesus, born a Muslim, with whom Jeff works closely on economic development projects and scripture translation. Jeff told him that many people in western countries don't believe that the first people were named Adam and Eve and were specifically created by God, and that God created the Earth from nothing. [Muslims do believe these things, so both of the faiths he has known in his life share this same view of history. Only, nobody where he lives ever talks about any other history.] He then asked, "So what do they believe?" Jeff looked at him, "You're not going to believe this – it's going to sound strange – but here it is ..."

Jeff started with the big bang. He described how most western people believe the universe and everything in it, including the Earth, came from this explosion. Next was the detailed explanation of how the primordial soup on Earth spawned the first life: reproducing organic molecules, amino acids. He told step by step how single celled organisms gradually became more complex over billions of years of beneficial accidental mutations; how ocean species evolved, then how they made their way onto the land, continuing to change with more beneficial accidental mutations. Then there were the amphibians, reptiles, dinosaurs, birds and mammals, monkeys, and finally ... people. He told how the people advanced through beneficial accidental changes in brain size and walking more erectly and using tools they found and then making tools and more brain size increase and harnessing fire and domesticating plants and then animals, enabling them to settle into villages and then towns and then cities. And now here we are today, with iPods and spatulas and American Idol.

It all took a couple of hours to go through. This guy was dumbstruck. He had never heard anything about any of this. He could hardly believe his ears. He asked, "Who do they think made that first little piece of material that exploded in the Big Bang?" Jeff told him that they are still working on that one.

What an experience! You should try it sometime. Find somebody who has never heard any of it and go right through it in detail. The SMS he sent Jeff after dropping him off at the airport read: bye brother money, ha ha!

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## ***News from Jeff & Diane***

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