



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

Alyssa Tries to Deal with Eid ~

There is a big festival in Islam that comes right after the month of fasting. It is called Eid. The most common tradition at Eid is to buy a live goat, kill it, giving some goat meat to friends and poor people, and cooking some goat meat up for the Eid feasting.

We were driving along one day before Eid and got behind a truck full of goats. Alyssa, the consummate animal lover, knew instinctively what was the destiny of these goats, but she wanted to comfort herself and said to us something like, "Ah, look at the goats! They're so cute! They are going to be pets for people."

100 Years Back in Time ~

On a recent trip to meet with the men running our flood relief work, Jeff met a man from a remote mountain village where some of the work is going on. The man (we'll call him Ned) was on his first ever trip to the big city, and was sore amazed by it all. A while back, our flood relief project manager came riding into Ned's village on a motorcycle. This was the first time a motorized vehicle had been there.



To give you an idea of the landscape, Ned said that the people there don't keep camels (only goats and sheep) because it is too mountainous and the camels fall and the people lose that animal, which costs a lot of money.

Well, when the motorcycle came along, one woman clapped her hands over her ears, not knowing what the noise was or what it would do to her. A man darted furtively from bush to boulder to tree, trying to get a look at this thing without endangering himself. The people didn't know what a motorcycle was.

Our project manager put it this way: "Our country is way behind the US. Ned's village is 100 years back in time – even by our standards."

Kids' Sports Korner ~

Daniel has worked himself into the starting lineup of his Jr. Varsity basketball team, on the strength of his defense and rebounding. Their final tournament is the second weekend in March, with schools from various Arab countries.

Daniel said yesterday that the track coach approached him to join the track team. Daniel will give it a try. The coach took note of Daniel's performance in an all-school athletics day, where the 9th & 10th graders were put into color teams. Daniel's team was *pink*, so he had to wear pink to school! Daniel ran the 400 meters, came in 6th, then ran the 800 meters and came in 2nd, and ended the day running the 1500 meters and finished 1st. Go Daniel!

Alyssa also worked her way into the starting lineup in her Jr. High basketball team for the last week of the season. Like Daniel, her strength is her defense. Alyssa is one of the taller girls, so she plays down low, but in their final game, Alyssa dribbled the ball for the first time.

Alyssa has her first track meet today. She is in the high jump, the discus, and the 800 meters. Her team has had very little practice, so she is a bit nervous about it. Go Alyssa!

Student Scholarships ~

Unlike in many urban settings in the US, parents in Osceola, Iowa (where Jeff grew up) don't struggle to make good schooling decisions and then worry that they have made the right choice. There are no options – school is mandatory, available, and there is only one school to attend.



One of the outdoor classrooms

There is a parallel to this where we work, with a twist. Just like their counterparts in the US, rural parents here typically don't have to worry

about making good schooling choices – because there are no schools. End of discussion.

One of the indoor classrooms



Where there is a school, there is a decision to make, and it goes like this: should our child go to school or (more likely) work in the fields, with the herds, or in the kitchen.

We have been able to provide scholarships to several of the brightest and most hard-working students who are finishing a girls grade school that we formerly supported (until the local community took it over) in an impoverished neighborhood. This will enable them to continue their education until graduation.

Here is what one girl wrote, translated to English:

"After passing my 5th grade class I am thankful to be given an opportunity to study more. Actually, I was going to quit my studies, but this donation helped me in the difficult time. I belong to a poor family, our financial position is very weak. I cannot continue my study without someone's help."

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News from Jeff & Diane

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Come visit our website:

www.BrowNews.org! We have a new flood relief update on it.

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