



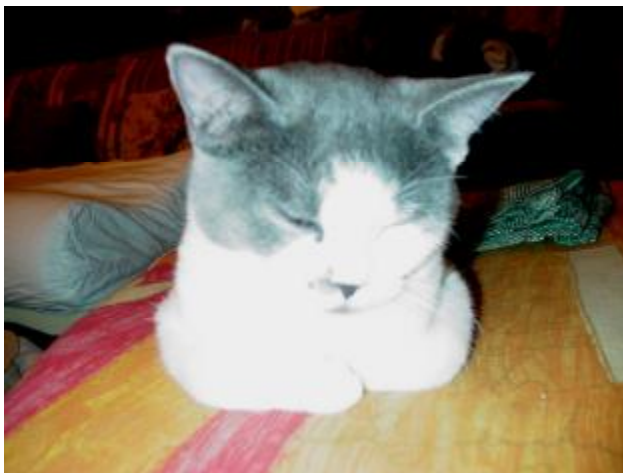
Newsletter of Jeff, Diane, Daniel & Alyssa ~ living and working in the Persian Gulf & Central Asia.

Incredible India ~

Daniel and Alyssa spent about ten days in India this summer – Daniel in and around Pondicherry and Alyssa in and around Bangalore. They helped in orphanages and communicated their faith cross-culturally through music, drama, speaking, and service. The group was about 50 teenagers living in the UAE. Years ago the Dubai government set aside an area for a church compound so that the foreigners living and working in Dubai can have a place to gather to meet and worship. Most of the many churches that use the compound are various Asian-language congregations: India, Philippines, etc. There is also a sizable English-language congregation, which has a youth group every Thursday evening after the school week is over. Even though we are not a part of that church – our small church meets in homes – Daniel has gone to the youth meeting most of the time we've lived here, and Alyssa off and on. That church does one of these trips every summer. They didn't allow the kids to bring cameras or mobile phones on the trip, so we have only a few photos. In this one, Alyssa is part of a music ministry team (in the red and white striped shirt). Those squiggles on the wall are actual words that actual humans can actually read! Or so they say ... how do we really know? They both enjoyed the experience. This was Daniel's last opportunity, but Alyssa is already excited about possibly going again next summer.



New Kitten, New House, New School ~



The small news is that we have a new kitten: Sky. She is, needless to say, very cute. She was a stray in a tree. Some "friends" brought the kitten's plight to Alyssa's attention, and the rest is history. Sky fought with and hissed at our two Thai cats for a couple weeks, but now she just tries to get the old guys to play. And she is cute.

But the big news is that we have moved from Sharjah to Dubai, thanks to the global economic crisis, which caused rents to go down markedly. The idea was to live in the same city (Dubai) where Daniel and Alyssa spend the bulk of their waking hours. Instead of

getting on the bus two hours before school starts every morning, we drive them TWELVE MINUTES to school. Now we can actually hope to get to know their friends and their friends' parents. It's a smaller place than our apartment, but it's all about location, location, location.

The other big news is that Alyssa was accepted into Daniel's school, so for the first time since 2005 they are going to the same school. Alyssa studied math with Jeff this summer and did quite well on the math portion of the 10th grade entrance exam she had to retake. Alyssa is now tied with Daniel: this is her 11th school. Daniel is a senior, so he can't go higher than 11 schools. Alyssa, however, could be all alone in first place, if she doesn't attend this school through to graduation. This week they both started practicing on the school varsity volleyball teams. Go Scorpions!

Ramadan ~

It is the month of fasting for Muslims: no eating, drinking, or smoking from sunrise to sunset every day for one lunar month. Their daily routine goes like this: they wake up before sunrise to eat; some of them go to the mosque to pray when the call to prayer sounds at "first light"; many of them take a nap after the early morning eating; they go to work or school for a shortened day; they eat a lot of food once the sunset prayer calls sounds; many of them go to evening mosque prayers; they eat and

socialize until late into the night; they get some sleep before waking up again the next day early enough to eat before the fast begins again.

Some interesting cultural things we have noticed about Ramadan in the UAE:

- Many men are smokers. Some have unlit cigarettes in their hands when the time for the sunset prayer call approaches. As soon as the mosque blares the call to pray they light up. (Not sure if they catch the spirit of their holy month.)
- Tempers get short each day as the afternoon wears on with no water, food, drink, or nicotine. Both road rage increases. (Not sure if they catch the spirit of their holy month.)
- Driving becomes especially fast and aggressive (since most people are Muslims and most Muslims are fasting) the closer it gets to the sunset prayer call, because they all want to be at home, with family, and with food (particularly dates) in front of them, when the prayer call gives the okay to start eating. (Not sure if they catch the spirit of their holy month.)
- The radio commercials all try to take advantage of Ramadan by attempting to somehow link the holy month with buying a new luxury car or gold watch or a fine dining buffet. (Not sure if they catch the spirit of their holy month.)
- The Dubai area is notorious for its traffic congestion, especially from 6-10am and 5-9pm. But during Ramadan, almost nobody is on the roads during the evening eating and mosque time (about 6:30pm to about 9pm), so we non-Muslims can fly around the city unencumbered. It's a great feeling!

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News from Jeff & Diane

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