

What's On

PET PALACE

Look out for the Arab Times series, the Pet Palace, and read about how people and their animals enrich each other's lives.

The Palace welcomes submissions by our readers. If you'd like to tell the world about your pet, send us a photograph and accompanying article for publication.

— Editor



By Valiya S. Sajjad
Arab Times Staff

Sharps is a crazy cat, says Fiona. He has got qualities that are quite un-cat like, she adds drawing quotation marks in the air.

Sharps entered her home as a little kitten one cold day. The memories of it are vivid in Fiona's mind. She had just moved into Kuwait and hadn't started working yet. He husband, an engineer, was away on work a good 8 to 10 hours every day. That left Fiona with a lot of time to kill.

She murdered time with magazines and lots of TV. That's when she chanced upon this poor little lost kitten in the stairwell of her apartment. It

walked about listlessly scouring trash bins for food.

One day when she went to dump trash, she saw two gleaming eyes staring at her from the darkness of the bin. She reached into the bin and grabbed the owner of the eyes by the scruff. The eyes disappeared into two tiny hyphens, and a set of sharp teeth appeared accompanied by a meek mew.

Fiona took the cat to her flat and put it on the carpet. The kitten did not run away. It stood surrendering fully to its fate, meowing. Fiona stroked it gently until it felt calm and sank to the floor.

She fed it milk and some biscuits. The kitten felt comfortable and knew that he has found a good friend in Fiona. And Fiona knew that she had found the best weapon to kill time.

people & their pets

That day Fiona's husband was in for a surprise when he suddenly felt the kitten's fur brushing his legs under the dining table. He sprang with a start. Fiona shook with laughter. She had forgotten to tell him about her knew friend. She liked the introduction though.

Fiona's husband is not very fond of animals, and thinks there's something creepy about cat fur. The silky smoothness of it gives him goose bumps. But he doesn't mind, because after all it is his wife's dear friend.

He is the one who named it Sharps for no particular reason. Maybe he got scratched by it, guesses Fiona.

New Look

'Respect time honored traditions'

Al Yaqoob keeps old family tradition alive

Today's article takes a look at young Kuwaiti Yousef Abdullateef Al Yaqoob born and raised on old Kuwaiti traditions.

— Editor

By Lidia Qattan

Special to the Arab Times

Yousef A. Al Yaqoob is a young Kuwait born in 1961, of typical Kuwaiti parents of the older generation, who lived through the pre-oil era in Kuwait; hence they engrained in their offspring the principles of honesty, temperance and respect to duty and responsibility on which they themselves were brought up by their parents. Yousef did not test the hard life of his father, who started his working career as a builder, then became a pearl-diver and finally a carpenter, when the pearl industry died out and the oil revenues were pouring in transforming the country and the soul of the nation.

Indeed he was born in the same year Kuwait became fully independent (on the 19th of June 1961) it was also the year in which it faced the open threat of Iraq's covetousness after it first attempt in 1938 failed. Iraq's new threat acted as a catalyst spurring Kuwait's development into an exemplary welfare state with a new status quo in the political and economic arena.

Method

Yousef grew up observing what was going on around him especially when schooling began, which in his days the curriculum was still based on the Scandinavian scientific method of education before it underwent changes that lowered its standard. In Yousef's school days the education department provided two meals for students, besides uniforms for summer and winter, books, stationery and transportation all free of charge. From the late seventies all this changed — the fully automated kitchen providing the meals was closed, students had to provide their own uniform and stationary, only books were given free of charge; more importantly the system of teaching began to deteriorate.

Throughout his schooling Yousef's favorite subject was history, he loved to know how humanity developed through the ages, how civilizations were born and died-out, how wars were instigated.

After completing his formal education Yousef took special courses at the college of Applied Studies, henceforth he began his career in the Para-military Force at the Ministry of Interior and rose to higher ranks through years of service.

The eighties were the most turbulent in the modern history of his country for it underwent a series of terrorist's attacks that endangered state security. From the time Kuwait was founded it maintained strict neutrality from any involvement with neighbor countries, its deviation from this policy when the Iran-Iraq war broke out, terrorist attacks soon followed, perhaps the most serious was an attempt on the life of the Amir himself, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Suffered

Kuwait also suffered from repeated Iranian attacks on its oil-tankers in international waters of the Gulf till they were reflagged under a superpower in spite of Kuwait had been siding with Iraq, and was made to suffer the consequence, Yousef was appalled when shortly after the Iran-Iraq war ended leaving Iraq on the verge of economic bankruptcy, the Iraqi regime instigated a crisis against his country that culminated with a total invasion. Backed by a clever propaganda the Iraqi regime



Yousef A. Al Yaqoob

fooled the world in believing its allegations, so when it invaded Kuwait it had the sympathy of the world in its favor, besides having 40% of the Arab world supporting its cause. Only hard evidence of what was going on in the country smuggled out by the Kuwaiti resistance, uncovering the Iraqi scheme, besides the constant defiance of the Iraqi regime to any of the United Nation's Security Councils resolutions could finally set in motion a campaign to free Kuwait.

Yousef was abroad with his family when Iraq invaded his country, being unable to return home he suffered from the constant tension and worries thinking about his elderly parents and of his brothers, who being all militaries men, were in particular danger of reprisal from the Iraqi Mukhabarat.

As he set foot inside his country he was so overpowered by emotion, appalled by the destruction he saw wherever he went that a choking feeling prevented him from uttering a word. The whole country was unrecognizable; he was particularly horrified by the hundreds of fiery tongs reaching for the sky amidst cloud of heavy smoke; that sight made him yet more worried about his people.

He felt relieved when returning home he found them in good health in spite of everything. The reunion brought joy in his heart, but he could never overcome the effect of his traumatic experience on his physic; for he has been suffering from diabetic and high-blood pressure ever since. The same experience has made him very conscious of the precarious situation of his country amidst powerful neighbors, all posed to get the best of it by one way or another.

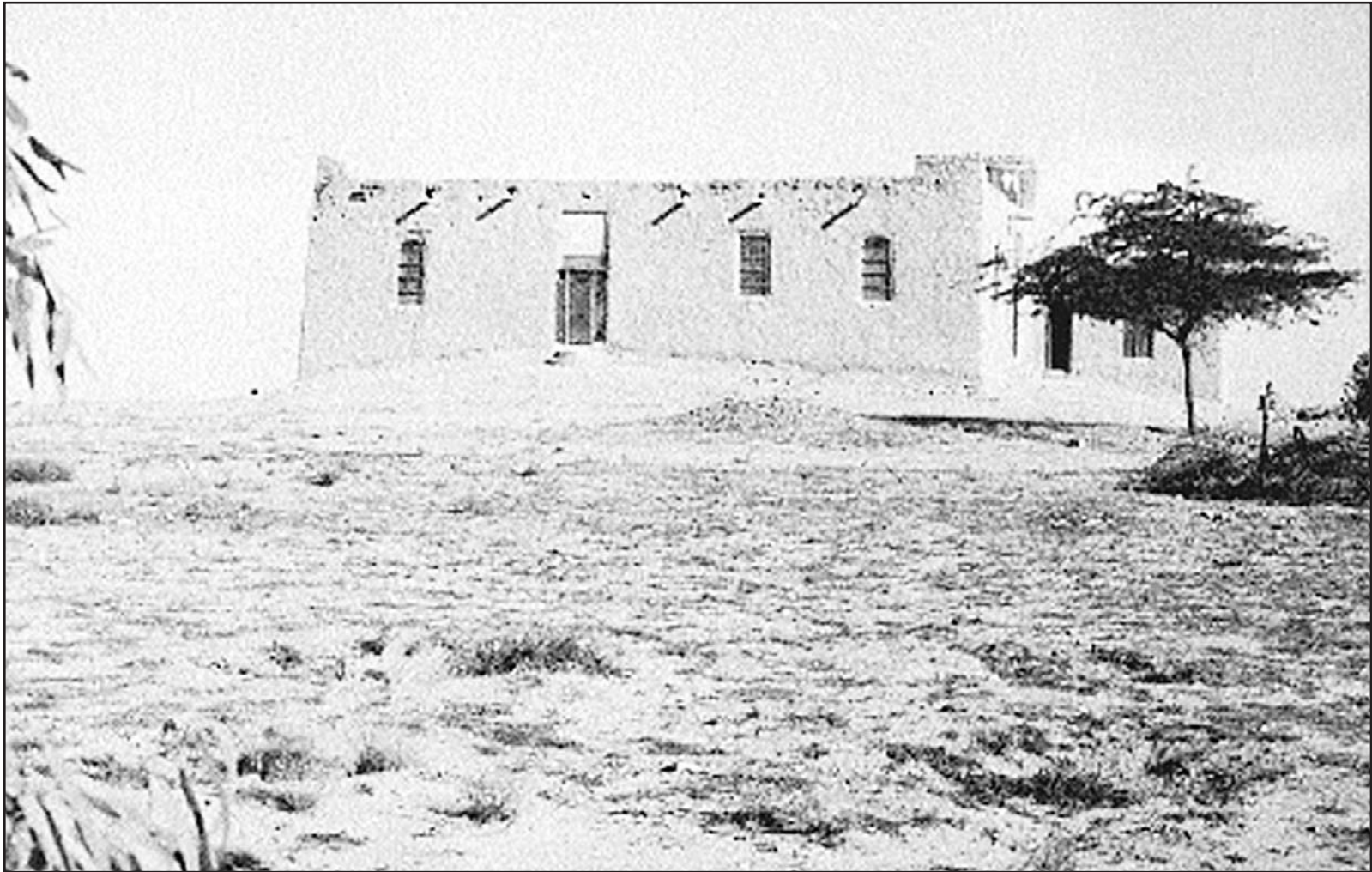
Resourceful

In the pre-oil era the people were united in a common endeavor, they formed a tight community abiding to time honored rules of honesty and cooperation. The hardship of life made them resourceful and productive, generous and feeling for one-another, they were also hard-working, good-humored and contented with the little they had.

The old neighborhood solidarity disappeared, affectation set in. The large family unit in which youngsters had plenty of adults looking after them was replaced by the small family unit in which foreign nannies not the parents are taking care of the little ones. Father and mother are both working and too busy to pay much attention to their emotional needs; so, growing-up without parental direction they reach adulthood unprepared for life and its commitments.

Fortunately there are still many Kuwaitis keeping up the tradition of family gathering which encourages youngsters to respect time honored traditions, while keeping alive the old Kuwaiti spirit, that sense of community on which the future of the country depends.

Yousef is one of those Kuwaitis keeping the old family tradition alive, inculcating in his progeny same principles of honor and responsibility to family and to the country on which he himself was brought up.



One of the houses in the western part of Failaka, close to the archaeological sites.

Building an oasis on Failaka

Laying pipeline a challenging task

Matthias Bertram was living and working in Kuwait in 1976 during the construction of the Water Supply System to Failaka Island. This article is a short version of article translated into English from the German original written by Matthias Bertram. Original article link is [www.http://ahr.eifel-rhein.de/seiten/reisen/1976_Failaka_Island_Water_Supply.pdf](http://ahr.eifel-rhein.de/seiten/reisen/1976_Failaka_Island_Water_Supply.pdf)

This is the second part in a series of articles on Water Supply System to Failaka Island.

— Editor

By M. Bertram

German Water & Engineering Solutions
Email: mbertram@wateranden-ergye.de

Continued from yesterday

Matthias, the responsible employee for these works, stayed for many weeks on board of the Northern Offshore 21, the boat that was redesigned for the measuring and on board of the Baas Kobus. He was accompanied by three colleagues from the Preussag Meerestechnik. That was an challenging and exciting task for a young engineer, although Matthias had to struggle with seasickness quite often.

The results of the further surveying showed that it would be possible to lay the pipeline with few deviations from the originally planned route, avoiding both the critical points on one hand and the lengthening of the route. But it became absolutely necessary to position the pipeline in this critical coral reef area exactly and to observe possible free spans between the touch points of contact between sea ground and pipeline.

These free spans could become very critical under certain current velocities. It was not possible and not wanted by the client to dig a trench for the pipeline in the area of the shipping channel or the coral rock. Therefore the client accepted the risk that a ship going to or coming from the port of Shuwaik anchors in the area of the pipeline.

For measuring of the offshore part of the route it was necessary to stay on board of the Lay Barge for longer periods, a strange experience at stormy weather. It happened that the team woke up at night through the roar of the sea, getting the impression that water would be entering into the crew's cabin at some points.

During a heavy storm it happened that the Northern Offshore 21 that was fixed alongside to the Baas Kobus sank. Sometimes, the flood and the storms were so strong that the

quay in Kuwait Mainland as well as the floor of the pipeyard and the site office were flooded. Thus, one of the employees was shown with his car at the front page of the Arab Times on April 7, 1977.

Some employees had their problems with the unusual and monotonous situation on board of the lay barge Baas Kobus. But the cook of the ship used to say that it is not that bad until an employee pulls a banana with a leash. In this case it would be time for a vacation. Well, no one reached this point.

From a technical point of view the measuring of the onshore part of route was not that difficult, but the weather conditions turned the work on the island sometimes into a huge challenge. So, it happened shortly before one of Matthias' three yearly flights home to his family that he wanted to survey the pipeline route on the island. That wasn't a big task, only one kilometer. In the night before he slept on board of the barge that was anchored offshore Failaka. It was agreed upon that a local survey assistant should come to the island in order to support him. But the assistant didn't leave the mainland and Matthias stayed alone on the island with his measurement devices. So, he tried to work together with local people who hadn't any knowledge of surveying or any experience in the use of surveying equipment; a nearly impossible task. After a few hours the sun shone vertically on the treeless island. Temperatures of 50 degrees, in the shadow; but there was no shadow at all. Matthias was afraid of collapsing, so he knocked on the doors of some local houses asking for "Mayya", water. A housewife brought a bowl of water to the door. Such small things became essential for survival and caused a great thankfulness: "shoukran", thank you. Finally they

conducted the work before a ship was picking him up in the evening, bringing him back to the barge.

The laying of the pipeline to Failaka

The additional offshore surveying works took some time, but didn't cause an extension of the construction period, because of other problems. Just before Matthias' first flight from Germany it had turned out that the barge and its components were not fully prepared for the special needs of this project. One of the employees in Germany had — during the preparatory stage — mixed the units of measurements, forwarding the wrong data to the external consulting office. The consequence would have been a big material load excluding the possibility of a secure laying of the pipeline. So it became necessary to build a completely new stinger in order to guaranty that the admissible stress during laying of the pipeline was not exceeded. Additionally it was necessary to install a new, more powerful tensioner at the barge to make sure that maximum pull forces could be transmitted into the pipe string. This was necessary to guarantee a certain predefined radius of the pipelaying (lower bend) during the laying procedure.

These modification works had to be conducted on site in Kuwait, since the team didn't realize the wrong calculations before the barge was shipped to Kuwait. During the alteration works the pipe yard was built at the beach, in the south of the newly installed Kuwait Water Towers, the new symbols of Modern Kuwait. The seamless 10" pipes with a length of twelve meters and a wall thickness of 14 mm (sockets with 17 mm) were produced by Mannesmann in Düsseldorf and equipped with an internal cement lining and an external

PE-coating as corrosion protection. Additionally to that the pipes were equipped with an external concrete coating (30 mm) in order to ensure buoyancy control.

To improve corrosion protection the external concrete coating was reinforced with a plastic reinforcement instead of "chicken wire" that is normally used in the offshore construction sector. The concrete wasn't coated as jet-concrete but as form-work concrete. The pipes were transported by ship from Düsseldorf to Rotterdam, from there to Kuwait, and from the port of Kuwait by barges and tugboats to the pipe yard, for stocking and further processing.

Arrival of the ocean ships carrying the pipes

Before the offloading of the ocean going ships in the port of Kuwait it was necessary to carry out the custom procedures on board of the ships.

Matthias will never forget one of these procedures: He went from the pipe yard to the port Shuwaik close to Kuwait city with captain Andreas Attema and Rainer using the Waddenzee, a 500 HP tugboat of the Dutch sub-contractor of Northern Offshore. The vessel anchored in the roadstead, close to the port. When they arrived, the crew of the vessel threw a rope ladder to them, in order to get from the Waddenzee onboard of the ocean going vessel. The altitude difference between the Waddenzee and the deck of the vessel was around 25 to 30 meters. Rainer was the first climbing the freely hanging rope ladder. Matthias was the next one to climb. The higher he climbed the more he got a bad feeling. He was really afraid of losing control. The consequences would have been bad. This was not the moment to show any weakness. But finally he reached the deck; he will never do this again.

The pipes were discharged and stacked at the pipe yard of Northern Offshore. Shortly after this, Mr. Kalotti a Palestinian construction engineer who worked as Project Manager for the client MEW refused to accept the pipes! The reason: On the one hand the thickness of the concrete coverage ranged between 28 and 29 instead of 30 mm, and on the other hand there were small cracks in the concrete mantle. For a couple of days the team discussed this topic with the clients engineer trying to convince him with several tests of the quality of the pipes. The sub-contractor from Düsseldorf, Koenig Company, who had applied the concrete mantle was attending the discussions; he feared that his company would not survive the refusal of the pipes.

To be continued



Digging the trench at the landing point in Salmiyah.