

Synopsis of Interview

Suzette van Greune (Sue)

August 18, 2008

Among the first staff at TAMUQ, Sue van Greune, was hired October 15, 2003 to take over for Todd Gregory, and interim finance manager. Continued for about 6 months, and then stayed on as a financial specialist. Around 10-15 staff and 27 students. Very much of a family atmosphere. Did whatever was necessary, but things were simpler in the earliest days.

First visit to the Middle East

It wasn't what Sue expected, more modern. Small but all the needed implements to live. The roads didn't have names, had to give directions by landmarks. Buying furniture, the order form had a large blank square for customers to draw a map for delivery.

Good merge of the cultures, tried very much not to offend anyone. Got to know what was expected. The first Ramadan arranged a speaker to come and talk to people to explain the customs. At the convocation, had arranged the event with Lallah Howard and other team members. A very fun time, got to meet many dignitaries.

Came from So. Africa originally. Recruited locally. Friends with someone who worked at Qatar happenings (publication). Arranged to interview, and was hired.

Left to go work with the Asian Games Organizing Committee 2006 on April 30, 2006.

Came up through several positions: financial specialists, business coordinator, and now assistant manager of Finance.

People are always very helpful and approachable. Got some training in College Station.

Asian Games Organizing Committee

The best and the worst at the same time. Put on the opening ceremony. Had a very good producer, David Atkins, came in with an idea for the show. The mammoth task just to get all the stage and equipments, built everything in Sydney, checked it, then dismantled it, shipped it to Qatar, than reassembled it. Procuring all the stuff, whatever cannot be obtained locally must be imported. Lot of delays getting everything imported. Then on the opening day, had a horrible rainstorm. Deadlines leading up to the show, and even afterwards, was a huge job. Got to work with both of her children, in the technical and costumes departments. Also had show roles as well. Worked with daughter in costume department, all the show members were 7500 in number.

Second time at TAMUQ

Biggest difference is how spread out people are in the engineering building, as opposed to the beginning when everyone was located in a corridor. The first year, knew all the students, now just barely see the students.

It was good to be back for the graduation of the first class (in May 2008.) Very emotional, to see the student worker in Finance graduate, who said "After working in Finance, it's going to be really good to be an engineer."

Very proud of those students. Came back just a few weeks before graduation. Was contacted, TAMUQ needed someone, so came back. Worked out. Good to be back.

Getting into the new building, but had remained in touch, and thought it was such a huge achievement, to have everything moved, staff, in place, and working. Tremendous accomplishment, to start from scratch, and in only five years, have a working university.

People get on well together, under the right leadership. Influenced by Texas (A&M main campus people) support is good.

Coming back: Returned to TAMUQ in March 2008

Stayed the same, has just gotten bigger. Geared up for more students. The work hasn't changed much, more of the same (more volume.)

Driving is difficult. Lived about 20km and was very nervous of driving. Used to driving on the left side of the road in So. Africa, have to switch over here. Sand, palm trees, camels – what you'd expect in the Middle East.

Haven't probably cooked since being in the Gulf. Popular places like Turkey Central (restaurant on Merguab Street in the Al Nasr area), delicious and reasonable. Hardly ever need to cook, with all the restaurants.

Fifth anniversary of TAMUQ (Sept 2008)

Would like to see all the people who were originally here.

Lot of work involved, but looking back, it's been good. Had fun with it, that's what was so good.

Future

Get routines in place, hope that Finance will run like a well oiled machine. Hope the university continues to grow.