

Iraqi student sums up American experience with education

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Daher Sesi is settling into classes at Harrison High School, after one year and eight months in a country in which, actually, he didn't want to live.

"My father, brother and my older sister decided that we should come to this country," said the Iraq born student.

"In Iraq, you can't talk until you're 21 years old," he said. "You aren't a man until then. I was 16 at the time my family came here."

"I didn't have a choice in the matter. I would have stayed. You have a feeling about your own country that's unlike anything else," he said.

"It's something God put in you." Sesi, 18, found it hard to come to a country where he thought he didn't know anyone.

"IT'S HARD to leave your own country. It's hard to leave the people you know all your life and come to a country where you don't know anyone," he said.

Once he came to Detroit, he met cousins that he hadn't seen for about 10 years.

"It's strange to meet part of your family

that you didn't know about," he said. "You look at them. You have to ask 'are you my cousin?'"

"Then they'd answer back. 'I'm your cousin.' It was strange," he remembers.

Now settled in with his cousins in Farmington, he's grown used to the country.

"It's nice to be here, too," he concedes. Although he didn't have too much of an adjustment to make, he is sometimes surprised by the conduct of his American classmates.

"If I were an older person, I would probably have a more difficult time adjusting to the country. But I'm young. I have to face life with confidence where ever I am," he said.

"Life forced me here. I have to make a good life here."

When he compares Harrison with the

Jesuit run school he attended in Iraq, he shakes his head.

"We respected the teachers in Iraq," he said. "Here, they don't respect them."

"In Iraq, we used to have to ask the teacher permission to throw something into the garbage can."

"Here, the students are talking while the teacher is explaining the lesson."

"I FEEL SORRY for the teachers. They don't get that much respect. People scream, shout and laugh in class. It's as if there weren't a teacher in the class," he said.

If a student wanted to talk in Iraq, he'd leave the class, Sesi remembered.

"We used to stand up when the teacher came into the room."

Here, he has trouble getting used to students and teachers who nibble on snacks during classes.

"Eating in class wasn't allowed in Iraq. You'd have to leave and eat outside. The class isn't a restaurant," he said.

"Sometimes the teacher asks the students for food, too," he said.

He frowns on the use of marijuana that he has seen in school.

"They'd be hanged for smoking weed in the old country," he said. "The government won't let that disease come into the country."

"I saw a 14-year-old girl smoking weed here, once. I couldn't believe it," he said.

Sesi plans to attend Harrison for another two years, so he will have enough college credits. He could have left school this year.

He wants to study mechanics.

"I take care of my car. If I don't know what to do, I'll ask or look it up in a book. And if that fails, I take it to a real mechanic," he said.

He doesn't rule out the possibility of returning to his own country, some day.

"You never know where life will take you," he said.



Daher Sesi tells of the differences between life in Iraqi high schools and Harrison High School. (Staff photo)

Farmington folks author natural history study

Nature's battles and the human hand are the subject of a contemporary study in which the younger set in a list of danger. Farmington area residents soon will learn that all of these exist in this area.

Thanks to the efforts of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, a text in Michigan has been recorded with the publication of a natural history of the Farmington area.

The Farmington Hills region is the most urban in the state with a book dealing specifically with its natural development according to the publication editor, Jim Fox.

"A Natural History of Farmington is a series of essays, each focusing on a section of physical, biological or social development of the area from 1840 to the present," says the City of Farmington Hills in 1973. Mrs. Fox says.

A variety of local residents who have lived in the community for many years. Each is an expert in the field in which he writes, she says.

The book will be available through the public library in Farmington Hills.

THE FIRST SECTION, dealing with the biological aspects of the area, is written by Robert Douglas. He also wrote the section on the mammals of Farmington.

Douglas is a specialist in ornithology who teaches at Wayne State University. He is credited by Mrs. Fox as being the inspiration for the series.

Paul Schreiber deals with the section on Farmington as a human social entity. He was head of the history department at Detroit Marquette High School for 40 years.

Schreiber deals extensively with the early American Indians who lived in the area. The study was made challenging by the absence of clues left by the early residents.

The history entries weren't haphazard. They left no tape recordings or written documents, or a few interpretations in caves or on cliffs. Records of their thought and language are meager, indeed. Myth and legend are a help here," he says in the book.

A map of ancient Indian trails is printed in the book as well as a map defining the natural formations of the area which will put other clues in the mind

under which the Indians lived.

The section dealing with plants of Farmington is handled by Betty Frankel.

Mrs. Frankel is known for her newspaper articles on gardening. She once wrote a column for the Farmington Observer.

In the book, she points to the changes in the area which have caused natural growth.

"At one time this was a tropical swamp and at another time it was a barren desert. However, in the era just before the great ice sheets covered the area, it is thought that vegetation was very much like it is now with many of the same species of trees, shrubs and flowers," she says.

Grover Neergrath writes on "animals under the backbones." He is a longtime member of the Farmington Naturalists and an instructor at Selkirk College.

Neergrath deals with everything from anemids to butterflies. Flatworms also are his bailiwick. There are more than ten types of butterflies living in the area, he points out.

The invertebrates are the most numerous of all animals and include the greatest variety of species. That's true in Farmington area as elsewhere," he says.

FISH, AMPHIBIANS and reptiles come under the auspices of Harley Thornton. He works for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and has served for 14 years as the head naturalist at the Purock Lake Recreation Area.

Thornton points out that just about any kind of inland lake fish is available within one hour's drive of Farmington. He also points out that changing conditions have ruined fishing in the Farmington area.

There used to be excellent fishing in Farmington. Then, like all large suburban areas, with population expansion, our streams are gone and it's almost impossible now to have good fish because the streams are polluted," he says.

He skips from there to expand on the many kinds of frogs, salamanders, turtles and snakes.

For those who may feel a bit squeamish about snakes, Thornton dispels many myths in one simple sentence.

"Snakes are not evil or slimy," he says.

Beta and Joseph Dodd tell readers about the bird population. Mrs. Dodd has taught for 20 years in the Farmington school system.

Her husband is an engineer. But their avocation is birds. The Dodds inaugurated Farmington's birdhouse contest last year.

The Dodds list nearly 200 birds which either make their home in the Farmington area or stop by seasonally. The baldpate is among one of those who stops by.

Douglas points out in his section on mammals that a few white-tailed deer are still present in the Farmington area.

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"The oldest evidence of mammals in the Farmington area consists of bones of a muskrat and an elk discovered at a depth of 15 feet in a peat bog. They are believed to have lived here about 11,000 years ago," he says.

The specimens were donated to the University of Michigan.

ounding out the volume is a nature glossary dealing with the state of nature in each month.

CB mania strikes

The 104 fever has hit the Farmington Area Recreation Commission.

To serve the heightened interest in citizen band radios which recently swept the area, the commission is offering two instruction sessions at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 19 and 26 at Farmington High School.

The course is open to students 13 years and older. It will feature such speakers as Jack Fagan of the Michigan Council of Citizen Radio, Nita Pitz, vice-president of Helping Hands Club of Farmington and of

ficers Chuck Lee and Larry Echhoff of the Farmington and Farmington Hills police.

Topics to be discussed are proper usage involving language, Federal Communication Commission regulations and public service.

The cost is \$3 for both sessions. Registration are being accepted at the Recreation Commission Offices, 3155 Eleven Mile. Registrations will be accepted at the first class meeting if openings are available.

Dirty Dozen sweep Farmington to raise school band funds

When most people hear the name the Dirty Dozen, they think of Lee Marvin, Tony Danza and Clint Eastwood in the law as war movie.

But residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills know better.

The Farmington area Dirty Dozen are an aggregate of musicians from the district's three high schools bands, who are part of the promotional effort for the annual Tag Day.

Tag Day is intended to raise funds for band funds throughout the year.

Traveling from site to site during the two-day event, which starts Friday at 1

p.m., the Dirty Dozen play musical jam sessions to provide live music during the band booster clubs' fund-raiser.

North Farmington Band Director Doug McQueen has named Beth Berger on clarinet, junior Jeff Holtebrand on alto horn, Doug Smith on trumpet.

Representing Farmington High, whose boosters lead up this year's TAGGER Tagger Days, will be senior Jerry Jarczyk, senior junior Keith Scholtes on tuba, senior Scott Smith on drums, senior Mark Steinbaker on baritone and junior Steve Tucker on trumpet.

Director Paul Barber of Harrison selected junior Tom Ervin on trumpet, junior Brian Goodwin on trombone, junior Steve Landay on tuba and senior Tom Nottelme on trumpet.

Donations to the band members will give you a tag, which is your admission to one of three upcoming concerts at the schools.

Tagging Together is the combined efforts of 1,000 parents, teachers, students and others in the Farmington business community.

They hope to raise \$9,000 this year, split among the schools for their music and scholarship programs.



Strike up the band. The Dirty Dozen, a group composed of band members from all three Farmington District high schools, will be playing tunes in hopes residents will buy Tag Day tickets to support the bands throughout the year. (Staff photo)

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