

# FEATURES

## In the shadow of Saddam:

### ECSU student copes with pain of Iraq's invasion

By Becky Overton

When he talks about Kuwait, Basem Calis' dark eyes grow somber, and his voice rises: "Imagine that one day you have everything and suddenly you have nothing," he says, pacing back and forth and smoking a cigarette. "Not even contact with your family."

Calis, an ECSU junior from Kuwait, came to the U.S. in 1986. He worries daily about his parents, who are still living in Kuwait. "My main concern is, are they alive or not. If someone came out of Kuwait today and told me that they were fine, I still would not know if they are alive now."

Calis last spoke to his parents by phone on August 2. "I talked to them just a little," he says. "They said at 6:30 a.m. my father was going to work and he heard on the radio that the country was in a state of war. He tried to go to the bank, but it was already closed."

Calis had no further contact with his family until his younger brother, Rami, 16, arrived in the United States on September 14. "My brother went to Iraq in a taxi where he crossed the border to Jordan the next day," he says. "My uncle met him in Jordan and then he came to the United States."

Calis says that he feels a great responsibility to protect and care for his younger brother. "I have to start thinking about my responsibility to my brother. He is my main worry. In Kuwait he had everything done for him. He even had a maid that my mother flew in from the Phillipines. Now I have to take care of him completely."

"I want him to have a nice place to stay. I realize to him this is not even close to home; this is his first time away from my parents. One of



ECSU student Basem Calis, whose parents still live in Kuwait, last spoke to them by phone on Aug. 2. He worries daily about their safety. With his funds cut off, he also must worry about how to pay his bills. Still, Calis tries to maintain a positive attitude.

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Basem Calis

my troubles is food; he's very fussy about that." Although Calis said his father "is very well established" in Kuwait, he added that his father stands to lose everything now.

"When we were in Kuwait, before the war, Kuwait gave my father a nice home and a car every three years. We were living happily. We didn't need anything, but since the war there is no money."

Calis admits that the money problem has brought him difficulties at ECSU.

"I have no money and I can't work because I have no work permit," he says. "I owe the school a lot of money—all of the tuition for this year. Next month I might not have a place to stay, and sooner or later I will have to start selling my personal things."

Calis thinks Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, is "not crazy; in fact, he's extremely smart, but he took too many chances. What he's done is wrong."

"Kuwait is an established independent country, and it has been for 250 years. Hussein did not calculate well. He knows what he's doing;

he knows how to get to the womb where it really hurts. He has the power to destroy the world's economy."

Calis believes the stories of crimes and rapes in Kuwait are somewhat exaggerated.

"The regular Iraqi soldiers are not that bad; the volunteers to the Iraqi army are the ones who are committing the crimes."

Despite his concern for his parents and his country, Calis, who, like his parents, holds Jordanian citizenship, said he opposes the U.S.'s military presence in the Gulf.

"The United States is not protecting the Kuwaiti citizens. It is protecting its oil interests. That is the only reason that the U.S. let the Jews have Palestine; they had nothing to gain financially."

"Most will disagree with me, but I feel that the U.S. military involvement made matters worse. The embargo is helping, but the military forces are a waste of money if there is not a war. If there is a war Iraq will fire to destroy oil tankers which are very close to my house. The most important thing is not the oil, but the people."

Calis said if war breaks out, the U.S. will encounter fierce fighting from Iraqi forces.

"Hussein has excellent ground forces. And you can't underestimate his chemical weapons. The protective suits are fine, but how many can they protect from a chemical war? The Middle East is extremely hot, too hot for the suits. The American soldiers might not be able to take it."

In reflecting upon the changes in Kuwait, and his own life, Calis continues to strive to maintain an optimistic attitude.

"Everyone has problems," he says. "You just have to know how to deal with them. Luckily, my parents taught me how. Don't give up. Whether it takes a month or a year, you never give up."

## School's new band director says 'Music is important to the world'

By Tymekia Troy

Dr. Gary Callahan, ECSU's new Band Director, makes no secret of his faith in the power and beauty of music.

"The Lord created music, and the birds sing," he says. "Even when the wind blows, it's music."

"Music is important not only academically, but also in the world in general. Music is universal in the sense that it doesn't matter what country you go to you can basically play the same music, and you can find the joy and aesthetic love that seems to exist in music."

A native of Springfield, Ohio, Callahan comes to ECSU from the Columbus, Ohio public school system. He learned of the band director's position from an ad in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

"As I thought about it, I remembered Dr. Sullivan when he was at Ohio State," said Callahan. "When I looked at how things were going at the campus, and learned of the plans for the future, I began to get really excited."

After visiting the campus, he decided he wanted the job. So far, ECSU has surpassed his expectations.

"At Elizabeth City State, I've run across some of the best people I've ever worked with," he said. "There are several bands that I've been with that talk about pride, but this band has demonstrated more of it. This band is self-motivated due to some of the changes they've been through with other directors and other problems that they've had."

"The group is young, and I'm looking forward to a stronger band for the future."

The tall, slender educator said he has definite plans for his students at ECSU.

"I want to take musicians from where they are to where they are capable of going, to keep them focused as a group and help them learn how to get along with each other," he said. "I want to take the potential here and get everybody to realize how much that is, and be able to really reach for it."

Callahan said students gain many

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Dr. Gary Callahan

things from their participation in band, including "the enjoyment of being able to demonstrate their love for their university, and their love for music."

"Since not everybody can sing or rap, band gives students a way to express themselves through song." Pointing out that most students in band have above average academic standing, Callahan added, "Band also helps discipline them. The time they put in band is so extensive that they don't have time to do anything else but study."

Callahan's wife, Linda Florence Callahan, teaches journalism at Ohio State University. He looks forward to



the time when his wife and his twenty-month old son, Jesse can join him in Elizabeth City.

"My wife had some commitments and obligations that she had to stick with," he said. "She is the president of the Columbus Black Journalist Association, and they had several functions they had planned for the year."

"She also has several minority graduates that she advises and works with, and she didn't want to leave during the middle of their program."

Callahan said his family "is the biggest part of my life. But being that my family isn't here I have to spend most of my time working on things for the band."

He pointed out that, among other things, this also allows him time to help recruit new members for the band.

Callahan will also have time to play his beloved saxophone, his favorite instrument. He also plays clarinet and string bass instruments, "and a little keyboard, just enough to do arrangements for the band."

He likes a variety of types of music, including "classical, blues, orchestra, chamber winds, 'oldies but goodies,' and gospel—depending on my mood for the day."

Callahan earned his bachelor's degree at Wittenburg University in Springfield, Ohio, his master's degree at the University of Michigan, and his Ph.D. at Ohio State University.

Photo by Jackie Rountree



Dr. Gary Callahan pauses to meditate while working with members of ECSU's Marching Band. Callahan, a native of Ohio, says he's looking forward to "a stronger band for the future."

## Campus leaders tackle problems during August retreat in Virginia

By Chukundi Salisbury

ECSU's student leaders grappled with some weighty issues during their annual student leadership retreat in Capahosic, Virginia.

The issues included campus vandalism, and how to handle problems like drinking, drugs and fighting.

The retreat, which ran from August 17-18, was sponsored by the Student Government Association and the Division of Student Affairs. The event was coordinated by SGA president Renel Sample, former Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs/Programming Treva Thomas and Willie Spence, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs/Administration.

During the retreat, administrators and students discussed problems facing the campus, including faculty-student relations, vandalism and problems with controlled substances.

An anonymous "rat-on-a-rat" type telephone number was suggested to help curb campus vandalism and the

drug problem. Dr. Leon White, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs suggested a "get-tough" policy on student behavioral problems like drinking and fighting. Under this policy if a student is involved in a fight on campus he or she will be automatically suspended from the University.

ECSU Chancellor Jimmy Jenkins addressed the group, asking students "to take the responsibility for yourselves," in their education.

Attorney Ronald Penny followed the Chancellor with a presentation on "What's Going On In The '90's." Penny's speech was followed by dinner and recreational activities, including a basketball game.

The game pitted students against the "old guys" (administrators Dr. Leon White, Dr. James Hedgebeth, Mr. Ulysses Bell, and Mr. Roger McLean). The students, Chukundi Salisbury, Renel Sample, and Kelvin "Kaz" Brown, played exceptionally well and defeated the "old guys" after a grueling physical game.

"Dr. White played like a Patrick Ewing or a Charles Barkley—very

physical," said one student participant in the game.

Following this, Spence moderated a SGA officers panel discussion on "Conflict & Resolution." This discussion took a satirical look at some of the conflicts that arise between students living together.

This session marked an end to the business portion of the evening, and then the real recreation began. The rec room at the center was moderately equipped and provided entertainment for everyone with table tennis and cards and a television to watch the "Skins" game. Outside the rec room a group of students swam in the center's pool.

The next morning after breakfast Dr. Helen Caldwell and Dr. Hedgebeth presented a program on "Improving Faculty/Student Relations."

Next a program on "Student Behavior & Conduct" was presented by White, McLean, Sample, George Mountain, chief of campus police, Kenneth Roberts, Director of Resi-

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