

Orlando 'Hafla' 2010— A Reunion to Remember!

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Left: Retiree Frank Pietrowski bids adieu to the dhow model he bought in Bahrain in 1945, and which he donated to the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran this year. Below: Before going to Dhahran, the model is being showcased at an exhibition titled “The Dhow, Mastery of the Monsoon,” which opened Sept. 16 at Exeter University in Britain. The exhibition continues there through Dec. 17, after which it may travel.

Donated Dhow Draws “Wows” At UK Exhibition

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ARTHUR CLARK

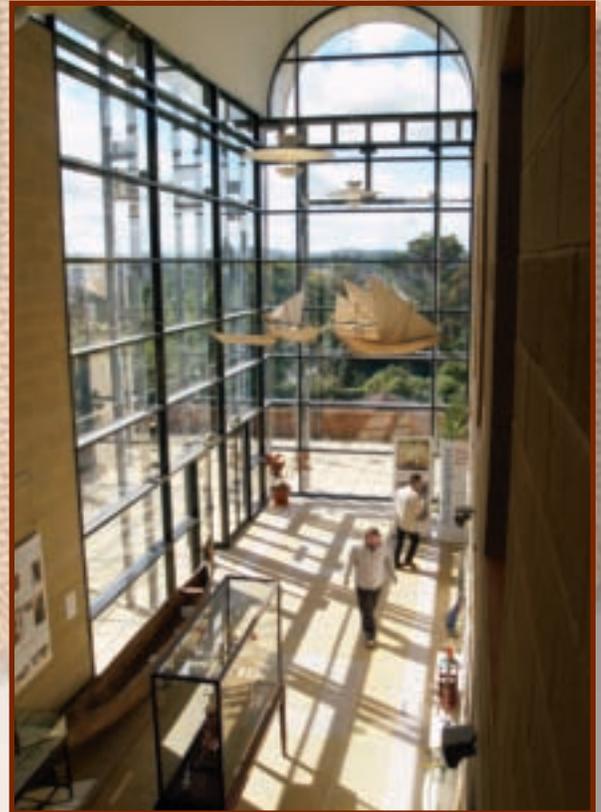
SHORTLY AFTER FRANK PIETROWSKI JOINED ARAMCO AS A 23-YEAR-OLD CIVIL ENGINEER IN 1945, HE SAILED TO BAHRAIN AND BOUGHT A FOUR-FOOT-LONG WOODEN DHOW MODEL THAT REPLICATED TO THE SMALLEST DETAIL THE PEARLING BOOMS STILL WORKING THERE AND ON THE COAST OF SAUDI ARABIA.

The *booms* and their sister dhows have now disappeared, replaced by motorized vessels, but Pietrowski kept his ship in good condition and donated it this year to Saudi Aramco’s Aramco’s King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, a multifaceted facility dedicated to learning that is due to open in Dhahran late in 2012.

Today, however, the dhow model is on loan to the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) at Exeter University in Britain, where it is a highlight of a compact yet comprehensive exhibition called “The Dhow, Mastery of the Monsoon.” The show opened in conjunction with the Red Sea V conference, a biennial meeting held Sept. 16-19, and will continue at the IAIS until Dec. 17, after which it may travel.

John Cooper, a research fellow at the IAIS’s MARES Project—which focuses on the maritime traditions of the peoples of the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf—organized the exhibition. He called the dhow model “absolutely lovely.” It is paired in a showcase with an antique Bahraini pearling merchant’s chest.

“It’s really serendipitous” to have two such items reflecting the time when pearling played a key role in the region’s economy, Cooper said. Along with pearling, dhows served short-and long-distance trade



for more than 1,000 years until the advent of the cultured pearl and oil-powered vessels undermined the ships’ use beginning in the 1930s.

Prof. Ali Al-Ghabban, vice president for Antiquities and Museums in Saudi Arabia’s Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, opened the exhibition, paying tribute to dhow-builders, sailors and pearl divers.

Pietrowski said he bought the dhow model on one of the Thursday trips that he and coworkers made to Bahrain. He couldn’t recall how much he spent for the vessel.

Pietrowski worked in Dhahran until 1948, and then went to the San Francisco office to assist in moving company headquarters to New York, N.Y. Later assignments took him to places including Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Rome, Holland and Houston, and he retired in 1985.

He left the dhow with his parents and then with his sister over the years, and brought it to Houston, where he now lives, around 2004. He contacted Aramco Services Company to see if Saudi Aramco would like to receive the ship early this year after deciding it needed a long-term home.

The model carries with it “an awful lot of memories” of the kingdom, the company and the people he knew there, Pietrowski said. “A good portion of my life was spent with people [from Aramco],” he noted. “That was the center of my life.”

Today, he’s sharing some of that life with others.

Cover: Orlando “Hafla” 2010, the 27th Annuitants Reunion, brought big smiles from the nearly 400 attendees—as Sol and Gillian Asekun show here. Photo by Art Clark. **Back cover:** Edna Catchings.

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A Reunion to Remember

From breakfasts to dinners, golf links to tennis courts—and everywhere in between—attendees had fun at Orlando “Hafla” 2010. Right: Ali Baluchi shares stories with Lucy Templer, left, and Rose Mowbray after registering at the 27th Annuitants Reunion, which unrolled Oct. 1-4. They joined nearly 400 other retirees, family members and friends at the event.



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The Mail Center

Aramco Memorabilia

» MARCH 25, 2010

I shipped off a box of Aramco memorabilia to you today. Please attribute the materials to the estate of Joseph A. Hayes and Vada MaRae Hayes, Aramco employees, respectively, from 1944-1958, and from



↑ Joe Hayes shows off his New Year's Day 1954 catch from Half Moon Bay—a 33-pound hamour—to his son Joe. It was a “record catch for underwater spear fishing,” reported *The Sun and Flare*. It said that John Lunde and his son David also took part in the Aqua-Lung fishing trip, but that none of their catches “came near this whopper.”

1948 until they married in 1949.

My parents met in the Dhahran Dining Hall ... and got married on May 6, 1949, on Bahrain Island. It's easy to focus on the work of “the man.” But my mother had graduated from college at 20, and had already done some fairly exotic traveling on her own. She was quite an adventurer.

My mother went to Dhahran as a Personnel secretary. Those were the jobs that women could get in those days. They truly had a pioneering spirit.

I know my parents would feel very good about being able to contribute to Aramco archives and such. Aramco, from the very beginning, really set a high standard for its operations. It's apparent in the materials you will be getting.

Susan Affholter
7206 Creekside Dr.
Lansing, MI 48917

NOTE: Susan was born in Dhahran in 1953 and lived briefly in Abqaiq with her brother Joe, Jr., sister Mary Alice and half-sister Janet before moving to Dhahran. The family had earlier lived in Ras Tanura. Her sister Ann was born in Dhahran in 1955. Joe Hayes joined Aramco as a fire fighter and later worked in Industrial Relations. He died in 2008 at age 95; Vada Hayes died in 2006 at age 90.

Story Of Achievement

» APRIL 22, 2010

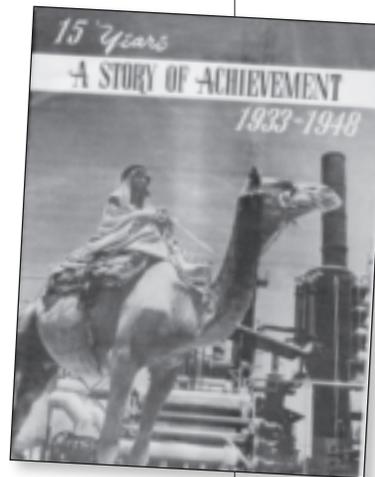
My mother worked for Aramco after the WWII as a clerk or secretary. In her estate I found an Aramco booklet from May 29, 1948, that was given to the employees commemorating them for their work from 1933 to 1948. It consists of 28 pages....

My mother's name was Elsie Tabor—born Dec. 5, 1919, and passed away Jan. 20, 2009. She was with Aramco for maybe a year.

She liked telling the story about how the few ladies that were there at the time would be invited to the *shaykhs'* tents for dinner as guests of honor and how they had to eat the goats eyes (the best part of the goat!). She worked in Dhahran, which must have been desert at the time.

Stephen de Stefano
Neutsch 3
64397 Modautal
Germany

→ “This booklet is an anniversary tribute to you ... the men and women of Aramco whose industry and perseverance have made it possible to create in 15 years one of America's greatest overseas enterprises....” reads the introduction to *Story of Achievement*. “On May 29, 1933, when His Majesty, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, granted the Saudi Arab concession to Standard Oil of California, the visible assets consisted of a lot of sand, a lot of heat, a lot of flies and a great deal of faith. Today, the emptiness has been filled with a \$150,000,000 project which is still growing....”



Remembering Ray Graham

» MAY 9, 2010

After reading the article about myself and the al-Hamra Palace in Riyadh in the Spring 2010 issue, I read about the passing of Ray Graham. Since Ray was one of the people who interviewed me in regards to working for Aramco as a PR photographer, it brought back many memories.

In the spring of 1955 I was going to the New York Institute of Photography on 35th St., right across from the Empire State Building, at night and working days as a locksmith in the Times Square area.

One night a note on the bulletin board at school caught my eye. It said if anyone was looking for work as a newspaper and a magazine photographer and wanted to travel go see a Mr. T.O. Phillips at the Arabian American Oil Co. at 505 Park Ave. Since I had never worked as a photographer, I did not think I would qualify for the position but I went to check it out—like looking at million-dollar yacht you know you will never own.

After meeting with Bill Scott and T. O. Phillips I was told to bring in my photos from school and others that I had and meet with Ray Graham to go over my photos.

I guess Ray was satisfied with my photos as I was offered the job.

Bert Seal
45445 Berwick Dr.
San Diego, CA 92117

» May 12, 2010

... thank you for sending me the copy of *Al-Ayyam* containing Ray's obituary. I think you did a beautiful job

compiling it and thank you for remembering so nicely his long association with Aramco, as well as including features following his departure therefrom.

As he described it to me, as Aramco grew it wanted to bring all of its “HR” functions in house and wanted him to come in as an employee. However, [Ray and his brother

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Roy] had their own Graphic Design company in Washington with, as you know, many clients in addition to Aramco. Consequently, it became time for them to part company, though he retained wonderful memories of the long association.

Barry O'Meara, M.D.
336 No. Birch Rd., Apt. 12-1
Ft. Lauderdale, FLA 33304

'A Wonderful Way To Keep In Touch'

>> May 14, 2010

We have just received your Spring 2010 copy of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* and have enjoyed reading it very much. It is a wonderful way to keep in touch with old friends from Dhahran....

On your inside last page, you write about a 50-minute filmed called *Arabia* that is showing across the United States. Could you please let us know when it will be in the Southern California area as we want to go and see it.

I was in Dhahran from December 1953 until October 1962.

Bonnie D. Hood
28650 Macklin Ave.
Canyon County, CA 91387

NOTE: Information about Arabia is available at www.arabia-film.com.

Hobby Farm Story Draws Notice

>> May 24, 2010

I enjoyed the article about the Hobby Farms. It was fun to see the old pictures and read familiar names. We (or at least I) didn't know too many of the horse people in the other districts, though. I can think of a couple pictures Mom [Eleanor Nicholson] took which might have been options for the article, but ... I'm not sure if I could put my hands on them at the moment!

In the "it's a small world" category, I was contacted a few weeks ago because of the In Memoriam item about Mom. A man called me

saying he had just gotten an e-mail from his cousin (Ann & Jim Rhea), who had seen the item and had known Mom and Dad via square dancing (they were in DH). She had mentioned it to him because he also lives in Fort Collins and might know me! Apparently he had spent one summer out there visiting them when he was 17, and it made a big impression. So he thought I might like his cousins' e-mail and forwarded it to me....

Cyndy Castain

>> June 7, 2010

A couple of observations from friends of mine who saw the Hobby Farm article. They said that unless my dad looked much



↑ Linda Lee Killian, not her father Lou Killian, was shown riding Khali in the Hobby Farm story published in the Spring 2010 issue.

different than they remembered him, the picture of me on my mare Khali was mislabeled. It wasn't my dad racing the barrels—it was 13-year-old me. Ah well. Anyone who remembers those days will observe the mistake and make a mental correction....
Linda Lee Killian
Walsh

>> AUGUST 10, 2010

I would like to receive a subscription to *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*. I attended elementary school in Dhahran in the 1970s when my father Thomas White was employed by Aramco. Also, my grandfather, Lewis Payne, was employed by the company in the 1960s....

Would it be possible to receive the Spring edition of the magazine? My mother and aunt were very active at the Hobby Farm and would enjoy viewing this copy.

Bracken White
2608 Warring Street
Berkeley, CA 94704



A Tea Party For The King

>> June 20, 2010

I'm attaching a photo of a tea party I gave King Sa'ud in 1954 immediately after his coronation ... on his way back to Nasariyah Palace [in Riyadh]. I'm the guy sitting in front of the Royal Guards looking up at my interpreter ... repeat in my robes. In those days, [Government Relations Vice President] Floyd Ohliger was really big on our wearing our robes when we went to the palace ... but we didn't often, only when Floyd was going to be around.

The king was so pleased with the Aramco tea party that he sent me a new set of robes, a gold Rolex and \$5,000. I kept the watch and the robes and gave the money to my employees who had participated in the tea party. Those were the days!!

Hugh Renfro

NOTE: Hugh was replying to a message asking about his involvement in the film Arabia, featured in the Spring 2010 issue of Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah. He worked for Aramco from 1952-67 (marrying Romana "Mana" Hards in 1956), and returned to the kingdom from 1975-83 to establish and run Arabian Chevron.

My First Airplane Flight

>> JULY 25, 2008

... In May 1952, my dad took a job with the Arabian American Oil Company in Ras Tanura. Due to a housing shortage, my

mom, my sister and I couldn't accompany him. Finally, in early December 1953, we left Kansas City via train to Chicago and then on to New York City. It was wonderfully fascinating for a six-year-old.... We spent a couple of days in New York at Aramco's Park Avenue office getting oriented for Saudi Arabia. We also saw the Radio City Rockettes....



↑ Charles Foreman and his mother Evelyn disembark in an overcast Amsterdam on Dec. 10, 1953, en route to join Reuel J. Foreman in Rar Tanura. He retired in 1982 and Charles worked for the company from 1974-80 and 1991-2000.

Aramco owned three DC-6's, the *Flying Camel*, *Flying Gazelle* and *Flying Oryx*, which made the New York/Dhahran run every week. For the trip, we were given green flight bags with the Aramco logo on them. Since we were a family with young kids, we got to fly in the rear lounge of the plane, when the rear of airplanes was designated as First Class. We left Idlewild Airport on the evening of Dec. 9 on the *Flying Gazelle*. The first stop was Gander, Newfoundland, to refuel, and then we flew all night (plus some) to finally land in Amsterdam....

I remember looking out the hotel window and seeing a mass of people on bicycles on their way home in the cold drizzle. There were more bicycles than cars!

The next evening, Dec. 11, we flew overnight from Amsterdam to Rome to Beirut to Dhahran. I saw my first palm trees as we were landing in Beirut. It was raining when we landed in Dhahran on the afternoon of Dec. 12....

My dad had written and said it didn't rain very much in Saudi Arabia. So when I got off the plane and it was raining, scared me had to point out to Dad that, "You promised me no thunderstorms." It turned out that 1953 was one of the all-time wettest rainy seasons in the Eastern Providence....

My first airplane trip was also the first for my mother and sister. You might as well start flying with a 7,115-mile, three-day, first-class trip on a four-engine prop job.

Charlie Foreman
12015 Yarbrough Dr.
Austin, TX 78748

Brat Seeks Info About MEA Crash

»AUGUST 25, 2010

I am an "Aramco brat," having been born in Dhahran in 1953 to my Aramco-working parents, Helen Weeks and Ralph Henry Devenney. I'm hoping you can help me with a personal request. My father was killed in the MEA plane crash of April 18, 1964. The plane was found in the Gulf off the coast of Dhahran.

I am looking for any and all information you might have related to this tragedy. In particular, I'd like to find the full

→ The April 20, 1964, *Sun and Flare* reported that there were no survivors on MEA Flight 444, carrying 42 passengers, including 22 Aramco employees or family members, and a crew of seven.



passenger list of everyone who died that sad day. I've located a list of the deceased Americans who were onboard, via *The New York Times* archives, but I've been unsuccessful in discovering the names of the Arabs and foreigners who also perished.

Pamela D. Devenney
PO Box 30607
Sea Island, Georgia
31561 USA
E-mail: pdevenney@gmail.com

Pakistan Needs Help

»AUGUST 26, 2010

[Pakistan is facing its] toughest days ... due to devastating floods. The world is still not realizing the impact of the floods in Pakistan [and the problems] which Pakistan and rest of the world may face in the years to come due to a shortage of crops and food items. As you know, Pakistan is basically an agri-based country and now more than 70 percent of our farmland has been washed away.

The flood victims are hapless. They are displaced and I know most of them will never return to their homes, which are washed away.... We on our part are doing our best privately to collect donations in the form of money, food items, clothing, etc. and arranging its periodic distribution in the flood affected areas in Swat Valley. Whatever we collect during the fortnight ... we dispatch by truck to the victims.

M. Javed Iqbal
Islamabad, Pakistan
E-mail: javedislamabad@gmail.com

NOTE: Javed, who worked in the Industrial Security Dept. from 1980-85, wrote earlier to AramcoExpats.com urging former Aramcons to contact him about donating to relief efforts. A campaign at Saudi Aramco to raise money for Pakistan relief began in mid-August and collected more than 5 million riyals from 10,405 employees in the first week.



Alaele Cameos Old AOC Friends in Premiere Issue

Old friends Cees Bogaert and Elly Trossel graced the cover of this summer's inaugural issue of *Alaele*, the new magazine for Saudi Aramco and Saudi Aramco subsidiary retirees and their families in Europe. They were among 165 retirees and family members who celebrated at the biannual Aramco Overseas Company B.V. (AOC) reunion in Voorschoten, Holland, in March.

Alaele, Arabic for "the family," is published semiannually by AOC London. The first issue appeared in July.

The Bogaert-Trossel connection stretches back more than half a century, including time in Saudi Arabia. "Elly Trossel is the wife of Cees Trossel, an AOC engineer, who also spent many years in Saudi Arabia ... and whom my wife 'Toos'—short for Catharina—and I frequently met during our various trips to the kingdom," said Bogaert.

Trossel retired in 1986 with his 35-year pin and Bogaert retired in 1989 after 34 years on the job.

The Trossels spent 15 years in Saudi Arabia. Cees Trossel said a "memorable moment" there was when Elly arrived in Dhahran in January 1953 with their

daughters, Ingrid and Zeta. "After the first year alone, Elly came down the plane stairway with a stewardess behind her carrying a six-month-old baby on each arm," he recalled.

Their son Robert was born in Dhahran in 1954 and daughter Sabine was born in 1963.

"We enjoyed all the years with Aramco/AOC and made many lifelong friends, especially Americans," Trossel said. "My family and I enjoyed being a member of the Aramco family."

Bogaert joined AOC in 1955 and made his first trip to Dhahran in 1959. "I will never forget my arrival. The airport building consisted of six wooden poles, covered with corrugated sheets. There was one customs officer in a white burnous with a large dagger in his belt," he said.

"We lived on Fifth St. next to Jean and Walter Dell'Oro. At that time our three-year-old daughter Margot shouted at the top of her voice to the three Dell'Oro kids, as she could not understand them. However, three months later she spoke English, when my wife and I were not around."

The family also lived in Dhahran in 1962, 1963 (when their second daughter, Yvette, celebrated her first birthday) and in 1971-72, during a career that also included jobs in the United States, London, Rome, Cairo, Beirut, Sydney and Tokyo.

Today, the Bogaerts split their time between the Netherlands and Austria. The Trossels live in Spain, but make regular trips to Holland.

"The reunion in Voorschoten meant a lot to me, as we could talk to many old friends and colleagues," Bogaert said. "I sincerely hope that such reunions will continue to be held for many years to come."

Ballard Marks 80 Years In Style

Pete Ballard, who taught English at the Abqaiq Industrial Training Center from 1959-67, and made a name for himself on stage by designing handsome costumes for the Abqaiq Players, marked his 80th birthday in style in Peterstown, W. Va., on March 31. Ballard, a fashion-doll maker, artist, costume historian and conservator, was fêted by friends including Gov. Joe Manchin and his wife Gayle.

"It was really fantastic," said the newly minted octogenarian, reported *The Register-Herald* in nearby Beckley. The event got front-page coverage and a page of photos in *The Monroe Watchman*.



← Pete Ballard, flanked by Gov. Joe Manchin and First Lady Gayle Manchin, sports the Order of the 35th Star at a luncheon on his 80th birthday.

Manchin gave Ballard the Order of the 35th Star, one of the top awards he can bestow. The decoration is named after West Virginia's entry into the Union as the 35th state in 1863. Only individuals 80 years old and above

can receive it.

"He has shared his passion and wealth of knowledge as a fine artisan with people from all over the country and from across the globe," Manchin said of Ballard, who also taught in the United States, Vietnam and China.

Norton Named 2010 Catto Fellow

Carrie Norton, vice president at the California-based solar-energy company PetersenDean, Inc., and daughter of retired Aramcons Howard and Mary Norton, has been named a 2010 Catto Fellow by the Aspen Institute in Aspen, Col. Norton (DH'84) joined 19 other fellows from other business, government, and foundation positions from around the world in the two-year program that aims at securing a "healthy and sustainable environment," the institute's website said.



Carrie Norton

The fellows meet in four weeklong sessions during their tenure, including one in Cape Town, South Africa, next April. "The focus on collaboration across sectors will make energy and the environment a cornerstone of the leadership experience, which fellows will then apply in their professions for the betterment of the world," the website said.

Norton was previously director of business development at Energy Innovations, a renewable-energy company in California.

Halliburton Taps Jum'ah For Board

Abdallah S. Jum'ah, who retired as Saudi Aramco president and CEO in 2008, was named to the board of directors of oil-services giant Halliburton Co. on July 14.

Jum'ah "brings tremendous global knowledge and industry wisdom to our board and we are delighted that someone of his caliber became available for service to our organization," Halliburton Chairman and CEO Daved Lesar said, according to a published report. The report said that Halliburton has increased its Middle East activities recently, noting that Lesar is based in Dubai.

John Ricca Tells Parents' Story

John B. Ricca dropped by Aramco Services Company in Houston in April with a bag full of company history collected by his father, John, whose Aramco career spanned 14 years (1945-'59) and several continents. John brought the items from his home in Plano, Texas. He's a member of the South Midwest Region Board of USA Triathlon, and has competed in more than 300 triathlons and duathlons, 15 marathons and 18 ironman contests.

On his visit, he told some interesting tales.

His dad joined Aramco in 1945, coming from Cairo, Egypt, where he'd become the civilian personnel manager for Army construction projects in North Africa late in WWII, after jobs in Asmara, Eritrea, and Khartoum, Sudan. He worked in Ras Tanura and Dhahran (where he was involved in building the Dining Hall), at the Aramco Overseas Company (AOC) office in Beirut, and New York, N.Y.

In 1944, Ricca was loaned to Aramco from his post in Cairo to travel to Eritrea investigate if Italians interned there during WWII could be recruited to work on the Ras Tanura Refinery construction project. The idea bore fruit, and by 1947 there were 1,384 Italians on the payroll.

Ricca put his knowledge of Italians and their language to work in Ras Tanura, where his first assignment was

supervising the contingent from Eritrea.

When he took home leave in 1947, he recruited a head food specialist: Marcelle K. Gumm, who was chief of food planning for the Army in Washington, D.C. Her assignment with Aramco was short. She and John Ricca were married in Rome in 1948.

John was born in 1949 and their daughter Anita was born in 1955.

Before she married, Marcelle Gumm put her master's degree in nutrition to work in Dhahran. "She basically set up the Dining

Hall, created the menus and trained the locals how to cook and serve Western foods," said her son.

John Ricca took early retirement in 1959 and signed on with Oasis Oil Company in Tripoli, Libya, in 1960. In 1962, he joined the Office of Oil and Gas in the U.S. Interior Dept. in Washington, D.C., where, as acting

director in 1971, he delivered a statement to Congress highlighting America's increasing reliance on imported oil. He was manager of Energy Resources Analysis for GM in Detroit from 1972-82, and he died in 1984. Marcelle died in 2000.

John said his parents valued their time with Aramco. "Mom enjoyed it—she thought it was a good opportunity," he said. "Dad liked it a lot."



↑ This photo of the Ricca family appeared in the January 1955 *AOC Reporter*, when John Ricca headed AOC's 37-man Beirut office. The caption read: "Little John, big John and Marcelle Ricca in their home in Ras Beirut."

Readers: Keep Hard-Copy Magazine Coming

Most of the *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* readers who returned the subscription survey in the Spring 2010 issue said they wished to continue receiving the magazine in hard-copy form. A total of 739 respondents said they liked the printed magazine; 25 said they wanted only online access.

Anyone wishing to read the magazine online may visit www.aramcoservices.com and click on the "News and Publications" tab.

THE ARAMCO ARABIANS

SPIRITED, SASSY, AND EVER SO SMART!

PART II

By Jane Waldron Gritz

IN SEPTEMBER 1971, FOUR RAS TANURA RIDERS MOUNTED THEIR HORSES AND BEGAN THE 45-MILE RIDE TO DHAHRAN.

The old Ras Tanura stable was about to make way for Terminal North. And Kate Worthington on Khalifa, Diane Burge on Zahra, Jennifer Rader on Zerqa and Sylvia Rader on Latifa were taking their horses to Dhahran where they would join Malik, Rafyk, Ruks and several other horses from Abqaiq.

The Abqaiq and Ras Tanura stables were no more. In a few years, new Aramcons would arrive, new enthusiasm would build and the two stables would reopen. But for the moment, the action was centered on Dhahran—home to the fledgling Pony Club and the soon-to-be initiated Spring Show.

Dick Kerr and Virginia Brown, both longtime horse enthusiasts, had established the Dhahran Pony Club in the early 1970s. Only with the arrival of British riding instructor Rosemary Beeton, however, did Pony Club activities move into high gear.

“She was fantastic, so professional,” remembers Susan Benediktson, daughter of Stephen and Audrey Benediktson. Susan began her Aramco riding career on Malika, a lovely but elderly mare who couldn’t quite keep up with her riding expectations. Luckily for Susan, Beeton found a more suitable mount in Mazuene, an al-Khobar cart horse clearly meant for better things. Soon Mazuene was winning prize after prize for Susan, usually in competition with Huda, the mount of Susan’s good friend Charlotte Shriver, daughter of Andy and Yate Shriver.

Beeton had discovered Huda as well, a pure white Bedouin mare who arrived in Dhahran, remembers Charlotte, with “her tail dyed red with henna—bright red against pure white.”

Thirteen-year-old Anne Marinovic and May’ouf tally up the points to win the pole-bending contest at a gymkhana in Dhahran in 1984. The Hobby Farm stable had moved from Imhoff Gardens to Dhahran in 1981.



Huda's athletic ability was as remarkable as her appearance. Over the Imhoff Gardens obstacles she would go, unfazed and largely unbeaten, not only in the gymkhanas but also in the equestrian event of the year—the Spring Show.

The Spring Show was initiated by riding enthusiast Sue Thames in 1973. According to Vicky Fate, daughter of Don and Marge Fate, the idea for the show germinated during a 1972 trip to Riyadh by Thames and

five young riders, including Vicky. To reciprocate the Riyadh hospitality, Thames invited the Riyadh riders to join the Aramco riders in a late March competition in Dhahran.

Even show organizers Thames, Bill Hogendorn and Lee Carson probably never guessed that so many enthusiastic riders would be involved in what turned out to be a highly successful event. That number included young Vicky, who in 1975 went on to win the show's dressage category on Ruks, one of the seven horses given to Abqaiq riders by Minister of Agriculture Ibrahim Abu Butain in 1965. Overall first-place honors that year went to Siobhan O'Grady, daughter of Bill and Joan O'Grady, riding Rafyk—another of the horses given to the Abqaiq riders by Abu Butain.

Ridden by Morris Taylor, Rafyk had already been named Horse of the Year in 1970, while Ruks won the same award as a novice in 1971, and in the advanced category in 1973, 1974 and 1975, each time ridden by owner Vicky Fate.

*Jennifer Harbert
taught Nurah many
tricks, including her
'I'm Wild' routine.*

As often as not, Huda's athletic prowess placed her in the winner's circle, too. Acquired by Anne Marinovic, daughter of Baldo and Maya Marinovic, when Charlotte left for boarding school in 1979, Huda became a competitor to watch as Anne, who began riding when seven, took her from one triumph to another. Prizes included novice Horse of the Year in 1981, the year the Hobby Farm moved from Imhoff Gardens to Dhahran. But Huda died young, and unable to find another horse with Huda's ability, Anne began to ride her mother's horse May'ouf.

Like Huda, May'ouf was speedy, spirited and, even by Arabian standards, super-smart. "He learned to unhook his stall door and raid the food bin," reports Anne. But he was equally quick to learn the gymkhana routines and barely needed a rider to win top honors in the keyhole, barrels and poles competitions. "He knew what he had to do, and he did it," says Anne of the stallion she rode to advanced Horse of the Year awards in 1983, 1984 and 1985.

Anne's mother Maya seldom competed, but enjoyed training and riding her horses, and didn't even mind helping the Hobby Farm sort out its finances. It was Maya, after all, who suggested



Top: Nurah shows off her "I'm Wild" pose for owner Jennifer Harbert. Nurah was among five Arabian mares brought to Abqaiq in 1973 by Jennifer's father, John Harbert. Left: John Lunde takes a turn on Jamal Al Ubayan, a purebred Hamdani stallion raised by Ibn Jiluwi and owned by the Lou Killian family.

selling the horse manure to the local nursery, thereby creating a money supply that went a long way toward paying the stable boys' salaries.

Maya's great love, however, was riding her stallion Antar into the desert, often with John Lunde who, remembers Maya, "knew all the trails" but only two gaits, "walking, over rough ground," and galloping at top speed across the desert sands.

Lunde usually rode Maneghi, a purebred stallion that had initially been given to al-Khobar businessman Abdullah Kanoo by the Amir of Bahrain but, sadly for Lunde, was later given to the King of Jordan. When Maneghi was replaced at the Pony Club with the beautiful chestnut mare Suqlawiyah, Rosemary Beeton took the reins—until Suqlawiyah, too, was given away, this time to a prince in Riyadh.

Few Aramco horses had pedigrees as distinguished as those of Maneghi and Suqlawiyah, but all were dearly loved, and none more so than the five Arabian mares that arrived at a brand new Abqaiq stable in 1973.

Halawah, Azzizah, Khaydra, Kharima and Nurah were acquired when John Harbert and Doc Chugga drove to Jordan where Harbert, who spoke fluent Arabic, purchased two bay mares and three grey ones.

The bays, Halawah and Azzizah, went to the Lundbye family for their daughters Julie and Janet, while the grey mares, Khaydra and Kharima went to the Chuck Graham family for daughter Michelle. The young grey mare Nurah went to Jennifer Harbert.

Nurah was a former cart horse, but high-spirited and eager to learn the many tricks Jennifer taught her, including her "I'm wild" routine. She also proved to be a good gymkhana horse, winning the first "obedience race," organized by Walter Zercoe.

Halawah, Khaydra and Azzizah became good riding horses, as well. But Kharima, a former race horse, proved so hard to handle that the Grahams finally hired a British bachelor to exercise her, a routine that ended abruptly when Khalifa threw the former jockey into a metal fence. "He broke ribs on that one," remembers Jennifer.

As it turned out, both Halawah and Khaydra were pregnant when they arrived. Halawa's filly Zurina was born first. Sadly for the Lundbyes, she died a few days later.

The Grahams were luckier. Khaydra's foal Shalimar thrived and soon became the darling of the new Abqaiq stable which, by 1974, had grown from five to 23 horses.

Cindy Grimes's horse Malik had returned and soon became a "lesson horse" for the many beginners taking riding instruction from Cindy, a returning-student herself. Other new arrivals included Sultana, ridden by Sheila Zercoe, daughter of Walter and Phyllis Zercoe, and Dhalalah, ridden by Joni Summitt, daughter of Joyce and Reid Fitzgibbons.



More exotic animals lived at the stable as well. Chitty the camel appeared in the annual Christmas pageant and stayed on until he was too big to handle. Scrabbet the donkey was there too, along with two pretty little gazelles.

There was also Shay'ah, a beautiful race horse ridden from Qatar to Abqaiq and purchased by Marion and Hasan Jezzini. "I fell in love with her immediately," says Marion, who knew at once that Shay'ah was

Top: Shay'ah carries Jeannine Jezzini of Abqaiq over a jump in an Abqaiq cross-country event. Jeannine and Shay'ah went on to win the Abqaiq Horse of the Year award. Middle: Billy Shepherd takes Outlaw and Shalimar for a dip off the Ras Tanura beach.

Bottom: Janet Lundbye poses with Halawah and Zurina, the first foal to arrive after a new Hobby Farm was established inside the Abqaiq community in 1973. Sadly, Zurina died soon after she was born.



“a once-in-a-lifetime horse.” That view was shared by the Jezzini’s six-year-old daughter Jeannine, who “took over” Shay’ah to win Horse of the Year awards in Abqaiq and Dhahran.

Marion’s next horse was Shalimar. Shalimar’s mother, Khaydra, died of colic soon after the foal was born, leaving it to the Graham family to bottle-feed her and shower her with so much affection that, says Marion, “she thought she was a person.”

Marion had worked with horses all her life, but even she was surprised when one-year-old Shalimar, now “a very large animal,” greeted her by planting her rather heavy hooves on Marion’s tiny shoulders.

Under Marion’s guidance, Shalimar eventually became a fine riding horse, a point much appreciated by Billy and Glenda Shepherd of Ras Tanura, who bought the lovely mare in 1977. In 1978, Shalimar gave birth to Shaliefa, the first foal born at the newly opened Ras Tanura facility.

Like her mother, Shaliefa soon became the darling of the stable, which was beginning to acquire more and more horses.

Among them were Dhallal and Sharif, ridden respectively by Michelle and Conny Van de Pol, daughters of Klaus and Connie Van de Pol. Dhallal had started life as a race horse, but Sharif had been born at the Dhahran Hobby Farm to Marge Bolles’s mare, Star. Both were good gymkhana horses and they thrived at the new 24-stall facility that had been designed by Klaus Van de Pol. Management of the new facility was largely undertaken by Ruth Ingham, wife of Len Ingham. The Ingham’s daughter Claudia rode Humboldt, while Ruth rode Nabi.

Nabi had been sired by Nabil, owned by Sue Thames and Bill Hogendorn of Dhahran, who were noted for breeding fine horses. Humboldt had come from Riyadh to replace Sultani, a lovely old mare who had been retired, along with many other elderly Aramco horses, to the delightful Mohammad Rashid date farm in Hofuf.

For the most part, the Ras Tanura riders competed in local gymkhanas, but each April they, and the Abqaiq horses, would make the annual trip to Dhahran to take part in the Spring Show.

Many did well, including Suger, ridden by Jodie Sutton, daughter of Joe and Etta Sutton of Abqaiq. By the time Suger placed fifth in the 1975 Spring Show dressage competition, he had become a fine performance horse, and a fine companion horse as well. But he didn’t start out that way.

“He was mean, so mean,” says Jodie, who fell off her bucking bronco several times daily until, with time and patience, she gentled the unruly Arabian. Her training experience paid off when she later acquired a plucky little filly named Shagara.

Discovered at the Hofuf camel market, Shagara had come straight from the Baghdad Equestrian Club and had the papers to prove it. “She



Shagara had come straight from the Baghdad Equestrian Club and had the papers to prove it.

was just three when I bought her and I trained her from scratch,” remembers Jodie, who sold her to Ghislaine Maze, daughter of Louis and Elinor Maze of Dhahran when Jodie left Abqaiq a few years later.

After a “bouncy” start (Ghislaine slid off Shagara’s back during their first appearance in the show ring), the pair bonded and began a winning streak that included top honors in the Spring Show of 1987.

“She was good at everything,” says Ghislaine of the little mare who seemed to have springs in her legs. “When other horses knocked down the bars, Shagara would sail right over. She had a natural extended trot

Top: The Roc (al-Rukh) takes Dick Kerin over a fence in the demanding cross-country trials in Dhahran in the late ‘70s. Above: Jodie Sutton and Suger fly through the barrel-racing event in Abqaiq in 1975. She gentled the bucking bronco into a top-notch performance horse.



as well,” not to mention a delightful temperament, “brave, bold, yet very sweet.”

“She was just a little star,” remembers Ghislaine.

When Ghislaine left for boarding school, Shagara went to Celeste Guiffre, daughter of Richard and Karen Giuffre, and in 1991 to Marc and Jenny Spalding and daughters Sarah and Elizabeth.

Shagara is now 30, a ripe age even for an Arabian. She still lives at the Hobby Farm, enjoying the attention and the carrots she always loved so much.

In 2009, Celeste visited the Hobby Farm where, to her delight, she found her beloved Shagara, older and whiter but “with her same sweet face and the unruly cowlick in her mane.”

It turned out to be an emotional meeting, and if Celeste found it hard to leave Shagara the first time, she found it even harder the second time.

As she later wrote in her daily blog, “the Hobby Farm was always ‘my heaven on earth.’” And, she added, doubtless echoing the view of most young Aramco riders, it “always will be.”

Epilogue

Most of the Arabians featured in the “Hobby Farm Horses” stories have long since disappeared into the sunset. Many lived out their lives at Aramco community stables. Others were taken to the United States by their owners.

Lou Killian’s fine stallion Jamal Al Ubayan accompanied Bill and Connie Cobb to Missouri, Cynthia Larson Aquino brought Shamalia back to Tucson, Ariz., and Shr-Lyn Cruse brought all 12 of her horses back to California. After years apart, Marca Smith Stickles was reunited with her beloved mare Saraea, only to have Saraea die tragically when she was kicked by another horse.

Marca owns other horses now, as do many Aramcons. Jim Mandaville admits he bought his Arabian, Sharif, because he looks exactly like Zubaydah, the mare he rode as a boy in Ras Tanura. Linda Killian Walsh houses 28 purebred Arabian horses, many of them champions, at her Kastania Ranch in California. Shr-Lyn Cruse has 16 horses—two Arabians, two quarter horses and 12 mustangs. “They’re the most like Arabians I could find here,” she says.

Vicki Fate owns three horses, while Marion Jezzini, Charlotte

Shriver Belasco and Susan Benediktson Abbiati each owns two. Jennifer Harbert Harms will soon bring her three Blue Star Arabians to her new home in Washington state, and Joan Gillen Edwards continues to raise Tennessee Walking horses in Virginia. In Oregon, Claudia Ingham teaches riding to the students as an American Riding Instructors Assoc.-certified instructor. And Michelle Van de Pol Gillette and Jennifer Rader still ride Arabians in highly competitive endurance trials.

The Abqaiq stable closed in 2003, but the Ras Tanura and Dhahran stables continue to do well, and a new ‘Udhailiyah stable opened when the Abqaiq stable closed. There are four horses there now, and two owned by ‘Udhailiyah Recreation are available for any ‘Udhailiyah resident to ride. The stable built in Ras Tanura in 1978 now houses 19 horses. Biggest of the stables is the Dhahran Hobby Farm, with 95 horses, including the 30-year-old grande dame, Shagara.



Top: With Ghislaine Maze up, seven-year-old Shagara makes a four-foot jump look easy in the puissance competition at the 1987 Spring Show. Right: The beloved Shagara now leads a life of well-earned ease at the Dhahran Hobby Farm.





Annuitants Hold Hafla To Remember In Orlando

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ARTHUR CLARK AND BERT SEAL

A total of 386 retirees, family members and friends attended the 27th Saudi Aramco Annuitants Reunion, Orlando “Hafla” 2010, held Oct. 1-4. The Florida get-together lived up to its name, turning out to be a dandy “family” gathering.

“You become a family when you get overseas. The people you meet become your family,” said Janny Slotboom of Hippolytushoef, Holland, whose late husband Hans worked for Tapline from 1963-80 (she joined him in 1965) and then in Ras Tanura for Aramco until retiring in 1990. The couple’s two girls, who were born during the time they lived in Tapline communities, attended the reunion too.



Celebrations all-round: Facing page, old Ras Tanura pals are, seated (l-r): Vicci Thompson, Monique, Janny & Arleen Slotboom, Helen & Curtis King; standing: Delores Marshall, Kay Taylor, Des & Virginia DeSouza, Bill & Val DeVoe, Jerry and Gloria Stupay, Al & Karen Fallon, Al and Barbara Harris, Damien Drum, Mike and Kay Waneka. Below: Al Dowell, Betsy Priest, Debra Schwartzburg, Alice Seil, Darlene Dowell & Bobby Priest. Right: Nancy Williams Howell, Soliman & Ikbal Moussa, Julie Doody.



'You become a family when you get overseas. The people you meet become your family.'

Reunions allow Aramcons to reconnect with old “family” members and add new ones, said Slotboom, who has attended six of the biennial gatherings: “It’s fun.”

Her words echoed those of Éva-Kinga Farnsworth, reunion hostess and a former resident of Dhahran, whose late husband Frank worked at the Exploration and Petroleum Engineering Center.

“I’m tremendously happy,” Farnsworth said, noting that the peaceful Marriott World Center hotel lent itself to retying links among retirees. She praised her committee members, on whom she relied during a serious illness

prior to the reunion. “My committees were absolutely wonderful,” she said. “They were just phenomenal.”

The Saudi Aramco group was a hit with the hotel staff members. “They told me they had never seen such a happy, friendly crowd in their lives,” Farnsworth said. “So *hafla* did its stuff!”

“We have forged strong relationships during our years spent living and working in Saudi Arabia and at Aramco affiliates,” the hostess wrote in a message to attendees. “When someone says, ‘I was in Saudi Arabia’ or ‘I worked for Saudi Aramco,’ you

immediately have a kinship, a kind of connection that no one else can understand. You start reminiscing and ... you share your experiences.”

And share experiences guests did, over three delicious dinners, including a gala banquet sponsored by Aramco Services Company (ASC), and in animated conversations that started early in the morning, continued during golf, tennis and bridge tournaments, and lasted until late at night.

In his keynote address, Abdulaziz F. Al-Khayyal, senior vice president of Industrial Relations, saluted Farnsworth at the gala

Below: Abdulaziz F. Al-Khayyal leads the applause for Reunion Hostess Éva-Kinga Farnsworth at the gala dinner Oct. 2. Bottom: Nearly 400 annuitants, family members and friends filled the banquet hall. Right: Fred Bobb, right, discussed old times with Mae Mozaini, director, ASC Public Affairs, left, and Ibrahim K. Naimi, president of Saudi Petroleum International, to his immediate right; Tofiq H. Al-Gabsani, president and CEO of Saudi Refining, Inc., is second from left.



dinner for not letting illness slow down her efforts to make the reunion a success, and praised her and her team for their hard work. Adding their congratulations were Ali A. Abuali, ASC president and CEO; Tofiq H. Al-Gabsani, president and CEO of Saudi Refining, Inc.; Ibrahim K. Naimi, president of Saudi Petroleum International; and Mae Mozaini, the first female director of Public Affairs at ASC.

“Éva and the organizers have chosen a wonderful theme for this year’s event,” Al-Khayyal said. “A *hafla* is always a happy event, when family and friends gather for fun and fellowship.”

He said two characteristics defined Aramcons and their friends: “a family bond” and “a gift for getting the most joy out of life.”

Al-Khayyal told attendees that that they



had made an enduring and positive impression on the company and its communities, “creating a firm foundation on which we continue to build,” and that their enterprise, combined with their “love and enthusiasm for Saudi Aramco, ... makes each of you wonderful ambassadors for the company, our

industry and our Kingdom.”

Saudi Aramco President and CEO Khalid Al-Falih struck a similar chord in his welcoming letter, saying that the experiences of retirees and their families made them experts at “bridging cultures and building goodwill.”

“Wherever and whenever you gather,



Far left: Bert Seal, Saif Al-Hussaini and Richard Johnson share stories in the registration hall. Left: Grace Banta talks about her book, *Graciela, No One's Child*, with Nancy Williams Howell in the Sidelines room. Below: Brenda Dayhuff brought along a Saudi flag to celebrate the reunion with her old Ras Tanura friend BillieLee Langley.

you can be proud that your *hafla* is keeping a diverse, far-flung community vibrant and connected,” he wrote.

Attendees came from as far away as Saudi Arabia and signed on with the company as long ago as 1945. Saif Al-Hussaini, who joined Aramco that year and attended the Jabal School in Dhahran, said this was his fourth reunion.

“I liked to see the old folks,” said the 76-year-old great-grandfather, who lives in al-Khobar. “I like to see my workmates ... whoever is left.”

He recalled Jabal School classmates like Ali I. Al-Naimi, who went on to become company president and CEO, and minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, and reunion attendee Ali Baluchi, who hosted the 2000 and 2009 Expatriates Reunions in Saudi Arabia and is planning the third for March 9-18, 2015.

“I remember Ali Naimi typing—he made 120 words per minute. Ali Baluchi made 110 and I made 80,” said Al-Hussaini, who worked in Saudi Personnel for most of his 44-year career.

Harry Wolf, whose returns in the tennis tournament Oct. 2 belied his 83 years (his wife Joyce scored



the most aces in women's play), boasted the earliest service date of any expatriate retiree at the reunion: 1951.

The MIT chemical-engineering graduate went to work in Abqaiq as a bachelor at age 24, and transferred to the New York office after two years in the field. He and seven of his colleagues made the move and each found a wife. “Just sticking a guy in the desert for two years sort of increases their enthusiasm,” he said.

'A hafla is always a happy event, when family and friends gather for fun and fellowship.'

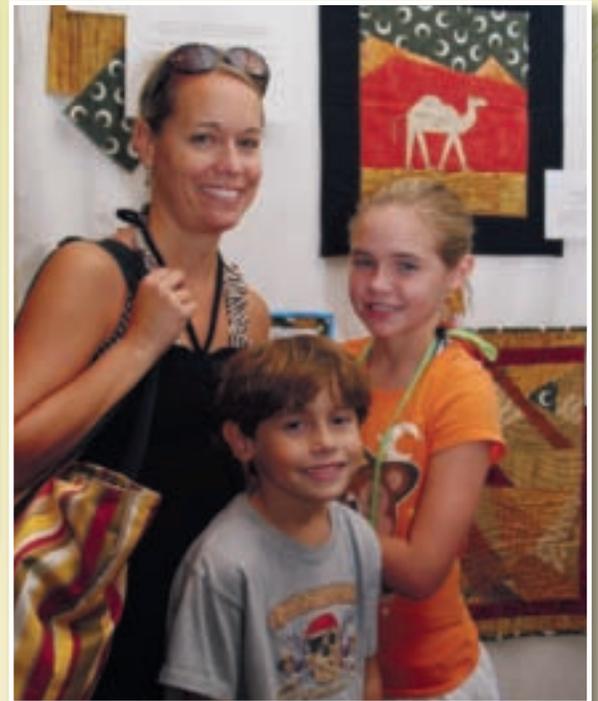
The Wolfs moved to Ras Tanura, where they house-sat until they landed their own home. He retired in 1989 and the couple has attended every U.S. reunion but one since 1990.

“They're great,” he said. “It's great to talk to old friends who are spread out all over the country.” Even with the younger retirees, “you always have something to talk about. You've had a lot of similar experiences over there. You're not exactly strangers.”

Like many others, Wolf said he and his wife had been well taken care of at an



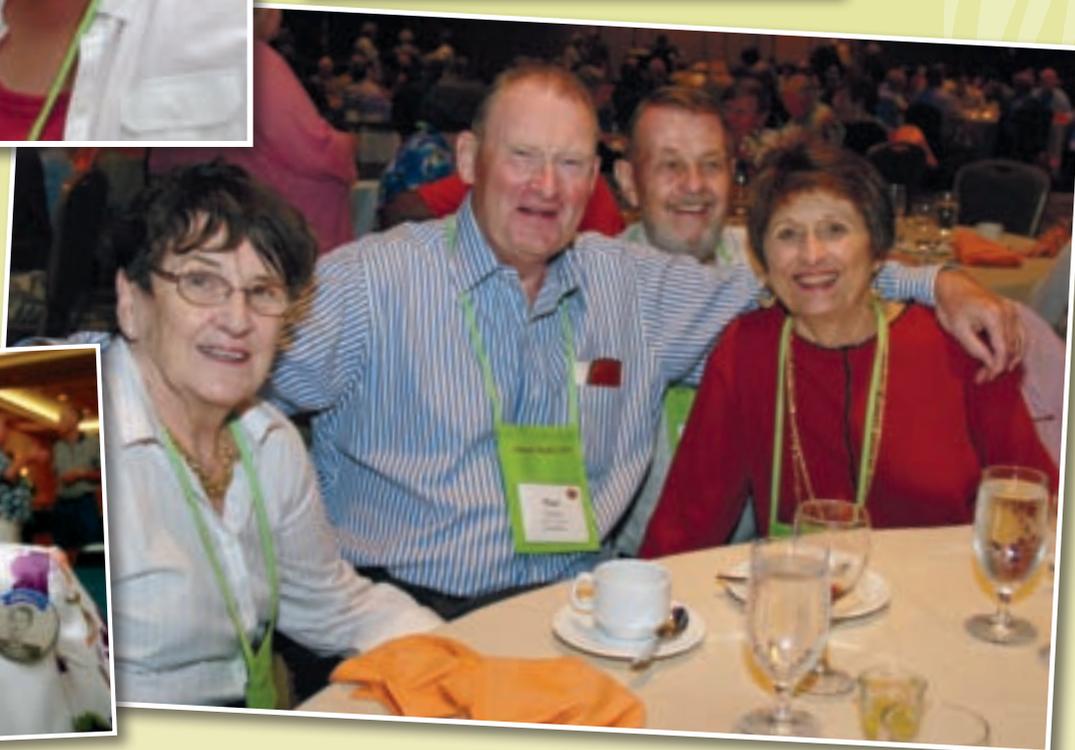
'Wherever and whenever you gather, you can be proud that your *hafla* is keeping a diverse, far-flung community vibrant and connected.'



Top: Longtime music directors Lou Anderson of Abqaiq, left, and Bob Klein of Ras Tanura established the Big Band Festival in Dhahran in the '60s, bringing together musicians from all the company communities, and retired in 1986 and '87, respectively. Above: Marcia Barham, Theresa Kelly and Maggie Shoemaker look over a vintage scrapbook from Ras Tanura. Right: Bailey and Jake Cook, ages 10 and seven, posing with their mother Cindy at the quilt exhibit, were among the youngest reunion attendees.



All smiles, clockwise from far left, are: Louise Wood and Nellie Lannin, among the intrepid registration-desk staff; yet-to-retire Mike Perry and Diane Jackson; Gwen & Paul Soane, Tom Swepston and Edie Offield; Barbara Sargent, who joined Aramco in 1957 and was wearing her badge, No. 19016.



excellently organized reunion. “This was really very nice,” he said.

Brats (or Geezers) Brenda Dayhuff and BillieLee Langley were part of the employee-offspring contingent at the reunion. Dayhuff’s father Kenneth (“K.O.” Feltman) went to Ras Tanura in 1944; when she was five, in 1946, Brenda and her mother Merle joined him.

The girls met on a company DC-4 flying from New York to Dhahran in 1955, when Langley’s dad Tom was working in Ras Tanura. “We hit it off right away,” said Langley, whose

retirement from teaching this year freed her to attend her first stateside reunion with her friend. (They both went to the 2000 Expatriates Reunion, heading back to Ras Tanura to visit old haunts.)

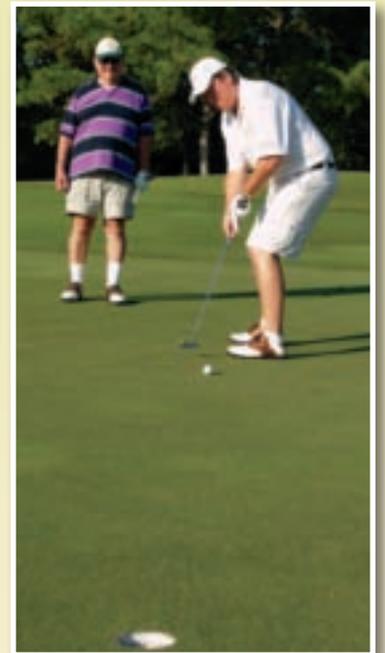
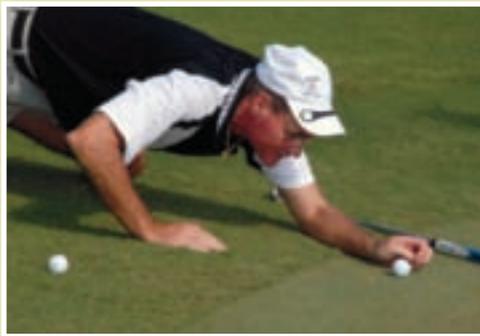
Fred Bobb, who attended the reunion with his father, retiree Arthur Bobb, reunited with two Saudis he’d known years ago. He and Mae Mozaini shared stories of the time they spent in the fifth-grade in 1968, and he touched base with Ibrahim K. Naimi, who was a fast-track Professional Development

Program employee in the Ras Tanura Refinery Maintenance Dept. when Bobb was supervisor of Support Services at the refinery in 1985-86.

It was Barbara Sargent, who retired from Aramco in 1978, spending all but two months of two decades of service in Ras Tanura, who most succinctly summed up the special draw Saudi Aramco get-togethers, and Orlando “Hafla” 2010—her seventh reunion—in particular. It’s “all about friends—it’s like family,” she said, proudly sporting her 1957 badge.

Games Galore in Orlando

GOLF



Clockwise from above left: Sally Aslan rolls oh-so-close putt on the World Center Marriott course as Dan Pouliot lifts the pin; Andy Battenbough, Glyn Jenkins, Mike Butler and Hal Barham celebrate after finishing a round; Jon Cavanaugh aims one for a birdie, with Bob Shea coaching; Rem Seil gets up close and personal on the green.

BRIDGE



Kelsey & Diana Muchacho, left and top right, placed second in social bridge. Seated right is Terry Meehan and facing her is Rita Hanlin.



Left: Tom Doody and (“craziest spin shot” prizewinner) Dwight Brixey shake hands with Charles Holland and (“best-dressed” prizewinner) Ray Stevens after a hard-fought match. Right: Inge Holland (who took home the fun prize for “best hat”) goes up for the ball.

TENNIS

COMPETITION RESULTS

Bridge

Duplicate

- 1) Paul and Bea Urban
- 2) Carlos Maetzu and Jane Stillabower

Social

- 1) Carlos Maetzu and Jane Stillabower
- 2) Diana Muchacho and Kelsey Muchacho

Coordinator: Lynn Brown

Golf Scramble

Winning team: Rem Seil, Mike Jurlando, Mickey Schwartzburg, Vaughn Martin

Straightest Drive: Lewis Boyd

Closest to the Pin on Hole #2: Don Reilly

Closest to the Pin on Hole #13: Fred Aslan

Coordinators: Mike Butler and Hal Barham

Tennis

Most Games Won, Ladies

Joyce Butler
Mahala Brixey

Most Games Won, Men

Byron Taylor
Gary Howell

Fun Prizes

Most Aces (L): Joyce Wolf

Most Aces (M): Ray Stevens

Least Games Won (L): Lynn Paul

Least Games Won (M):

Harry Wolf

Best Hat: Inge Holland

Best Saudi Aramco T-Shirt:

Dale Brock

Best Dressed: Ray Stevens

Least Equipped: Alma Russell
(borrowed tennis shoes and racket)

Craziest Spin Shot:

Dwight Brixey

Best Good Sport: Sandra Hardy

Coordinator: Diane Jackson

Photo Album: Families and Friends



Reunion hosts, present and past (l-r): Éva-Kinga Farnsworth (Orlando, 2010); Fred and Sally Aslan (San Antonio, 2000), Al and Karen Fallon (Las Vegas, 2008); Tony & Judy Germani (Branson, 2006).



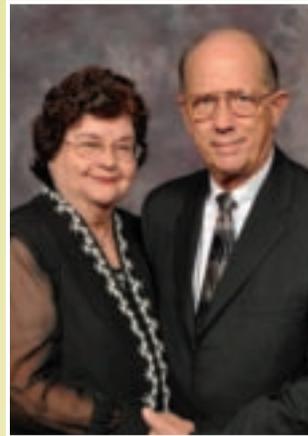
Keynote speaker Abdulaziz F. Al-Khayyal, senior vice president of Industrial Relations (second from left) is flanked by Ali A. Abuali, ASC president and CEO (left) and (from far right) Tofiq H. Al-Gabsani, president and CEO of Saudi Refining Inc.; Mae Mozaini, ASC Public Affairs director; and Ibrahim K. Naimi, president of Saudi Petroleum International.



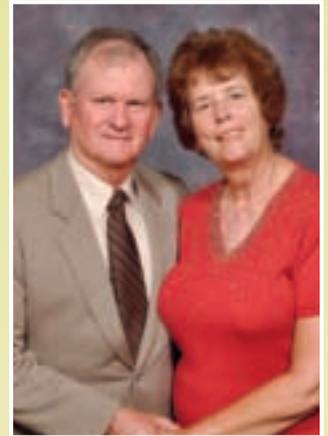
Rod & Sandy Fleck



Jim & Janet Anthony



Bill & Victoria Seward



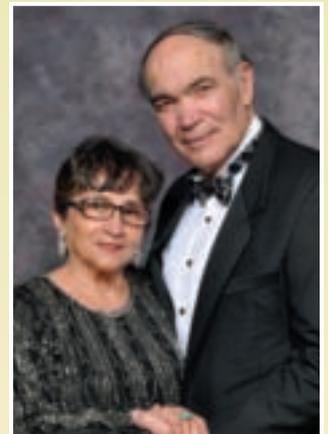
Nancy & Richard Gardner



Al & Barbara Harris; Helen & Curtis King



Geeta & Deepak Bhatt



Bob & Grace Banta

The photos on these pages and the seven that follow offer just a sampling of reunion images. To view and access images online, go to www.christiesphotographic.com. Click on the link "Order photos Online" and then click on the links to Orlando HAFLA 2010.



Front: Dolores Marshall, Monique & Janny Slotboom; Back: Ree & Bill Chretien, Adam & Krystyna Zaidan



Glyn & Trish Jenkins, Dale & Edie Offield; Gwen & Paul Soane



Brenda Dayhuff & BillieLee Langley



Karen Eaton-Hinz & Dave Hinz



James Milliken, Victoria Fernando, Ed Dymicki, Carmen Lombardi



Roger & March Lindeken, Elfreda & Mike Fillipoff



Tony & Zena Mariados, Otilia & Justina Ferreira, Ikbal & Soliman Moussa



Jim Milliken & Diane Jackson



Fred Bobb & Arthur Bobb



Vicci Thompson, Rusty Swain, Bonnie Cook



Tom & Suki Swepton



Greg & Carol MacKeen



Dan & Ellen Pouliot



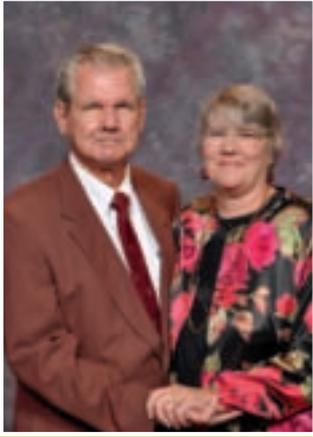
Hernando & Elsa Hernandez



Front: Magda Csaszar, Sue Long, Joan Golding; Back: Albert & Andrea Csaszar, Bob Long, Bert Golding



Richard & Juana Johnson; Amy Dimmen, David Haburjak



Art & Ileta Spitzer



Joseph & Herma Rivera



Front: Jenny Collins, Pu Niamvanichkul, Yupin Shackelford, Tippy Hummel; Back: Tim Collins, Doris Devlin, Lewis Boyd, Bobby Suuanna-good, Ken Hummel, David Shackelford



Front: Bev Capozzoli, Laura Miller, Sue Schlembach, Cindy Cavanaugh; Back: Ernie Capozzoli, CJ Miller, Mike Perry, Jon Cavanaugh, John Schlembach



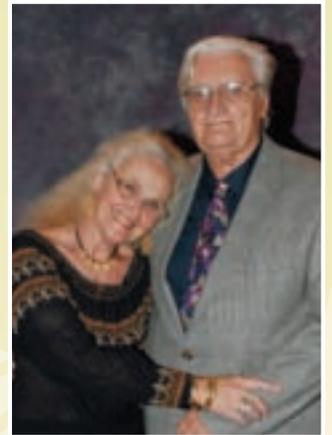
Front: Rose Mowbray, Lucy Templar, Rita Hanlin; Back: Jackson & John Mowbray, Terry Meehan, Art Moehlenbruck



Rita Hanlin, John & Eunice Williamson



Maynard & Cherie Gillispie



Gene & Mary Stenov



Bob & Christy Maxwell



Paul & Magali Kirwan



Front: Penny Spaid, Barbara Salstrom, Shirley Savage, Karen Irwin, Anne Seymour; Back: Chris May, George Spaid, Phil Salstrom, Richard Savage, Bill Irwin, Ted Seymour



Rianne & Rick Chimblo, Anita & Tom Flickner



Gene & Sharon O'Brien



Éva-Kinga Farnsworth



Ken & Carol Swanson



Mike & Linda Sawran



Jim Bob & Pamela Pickrell, Bob & Zarela Land, Bea & Paul Urban



John & Anne Reynolds, Sally & Ed Flynn



Sol & Gillian Asekun; Scott & Audrey Stanaland, Jean & John Burton



Byron & Kay Taylor



Lucy Templer & Marjie Clark



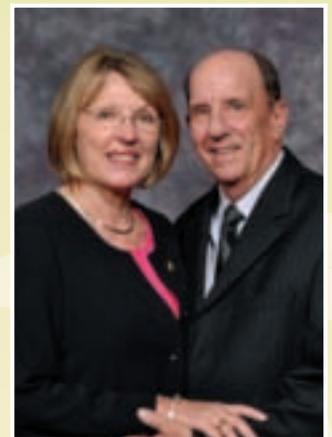
Darren Lamb, Jennifer Fotos Oro, Carolyn Fotos



Patsy Knox, Bonnie Cook, Elizabeth Baab



Mike & Kay Waneka



Gary & Inge Deese



Bob Allen, Mohammed Saeed Al-Ali



Val Snider & Andy Quick



Carol Swanson, Shannon McNulty, Janice Allen



Karen Fallon, Éva-Kinga Farnsworth, Diane Jackson



Susan Husted Cowles & Staci Cowles, Annalee Georgopolis



Donna Lewallen & Eric Wells



Bert Seal



Paul & Bea Urban



David & Yupin Shackelford



Bill & Joyce Duet, Ray & Sheila Stevens, Dwight & Mahala Brixey, Mike & Kay Waneka, Danny & Bethany Greer



Front: Judy Germani, Alma Fernandez, Judy Lucas, Darice Tiffany, Joyce Lange, Betsy Priest; Back: Tony Germani, Segundo Fernandez, Harvey Lucas, Bob Tiffany, Carol Swanson, Ken Swanson, Robert Priest



John & Joyce Hankamer



Tim & Norma Ackert



Rita Hanlin, Terry Meehan



Bob & Jocie Kaufeler



Front: Karen Eaton-Hinz, Marge Johansson, Lucy Templer, Julie Doody, Janet Anthony; Back: Dave Hinz, Sheila & Ray Stevens, Gen Sullivan, Tom Doody, Kay & Byron Taylor, Jim Anthony



Mike & Christine Gillett, Linda Sizemore



Cindy & Peter Cook, Bonnie Cook



Al & Karen Fallon, Gloria & Jerry Stupay



ASC Public Affairs: Edna Catchings, Michelle Flores, Alma Kombargi

Old Friends Celebrate

Ukaramcons Reunite For A Triple Celebration

BY KIMBERLY JOHANS

More than 130 Saudi Aramco retirees and family members celebrated the third Ukaramcons Reunion with a whirlwind of social activities and reminiscing July 29–Aug. 1 in Edinburgh. The biennial event reunited ex-Aramcons based in Europe, with some retirees coming all the way from Hungary, Portugal and Spain.

The reunion was the culmination of months of hard work by hosts Tom and Eileen Henderson, who also arranged the first two reunions and who ensured that guests came away with wonderful new memories to add to their old ones. Of course, that may not have been the case for Bill Davies, who won the consolation prize at the golf tournament. (Murray Welsh took first prize.)

Aramco Overseas Company B.V. (AOC) sponsored the reunion, reflecting the value placed on the retirees as ambassadors for Saudi Aramco whose wealth of experience is a vital resource for the company's future employees.



Top: From left, Lois and Tony Marsh, Vic Bath and Louis Rotter (who traveled from Hungary) make up a reunion-luncheon foursome.

Bottom: Reunion hosts Tom and Eileen Henderson celebrate Tom's birthday July 31 as Martin Wingrove of AOC looks on. Eileen's birthday was at the start of the reunion, July 29.

Martin Wingrove spoke on behalf of AOC Managing Director Ahmed Alzayyat, bringing up fond memories that drew an enthusiastic response from the group at the main banquet, held July 31.

The occasion also provided a perfect platform for the launch of *Alaela*, AOC's semiannual magazine aimed at Europe-based retirees of both Saudi Aramco and AOC, with host Eileen Henderson remarking: "It was a lovely surprise to have the magazine launched this evening."

The celebration was nicely rounded off with the announcement of host Tom Henderson's birthday, whereby he was gifted with a traditional Scottish friendship cup called a Quaich.

The packed room, excited chatter and teary hugs were all testament to the success of the evening. Yet it was much more than just a reunion. As Carmel Philp put it: "This was the only company I wanted [my husband David] to stay with ... the only one that cared for the whole family. You always have that sense of belonging, as if you're still a part of Aramco."

ACS Aramcons Mark Old Ties With New Smiles

BY WILLIAM TRACY,
ACS CLASS OF 1953

North American alumni of Beirut's American Community School (ACS), many with Aramco or Tapline connections, reunited in Austin, Texas, over the July Fourth weekend.

Late in the 1940s, Aramco supported the establishment of a new boarding department at ACS, and during the next two decades many children of Aramco and Tapline expatriate employees went to high school there. ACS alumni volunteers from a different region of the United States host an all-school reunion every three years. (See *Aramco World*, "A Reunion in Boston," J/A 1989.)

Plenty of Aramcons showed up in Austin. Or as Aramco student Jack Sommer ('56) said, "Old ties. New smiles." He attended with his wife Diane Renfer Sommer ('56), daughter of Carl and Verdel Renfer of Dhahran. Jack's mother Helen and stepfather Ralph Finlay lived in Jiddah and Abqaiq.

Also among attendees (to name just a few) were Jim Mandaville ('53), son of Paul and Maxine Mandaville; Marilyn Bunyan Wilkens ('53), daughter of Matt and Esther Bunyan; Bob Swanson ('54), son of Oscar and Pauline Swanson and stepson of Ruth Fry; Dave Engen ('54), son of Joe and Doris



Engen; and Blaine Chandler ('77), son of William and Clair Chandler.

Simon Dodge ('77), son of David and Doris Dodge, attended. His father worked for Aramco in Dhahran and Tapline in Beirut before serving as president of the American University of Beirut. Simon is a great-great-grandchild of Daniel Bliss, who founded AUB (originally the Syrian Protestant College) in 1866.

Five Kelberer sisters, daughters of John and Arlyne "Art" Kelberer, were there. Margaret "Mug" Kelberer ('73), Barbara McDonald ('75), Elizabeth Kerr ('78) and Kristine Kelberer ('81) joined sister Anne Marie

From left, Bob Swanson ('54), poses with his wife Cynthia Shevlin, Marilyn Bunyan Wilkens ('53) and Dave Engen ('54) and his wife Kasia Quillinan at the Beirut ACS Reunion.

Kelberer, who didn't attend ACS.

Aside from endless reminiscing and some Austin sightseeing, the reunion included an opening reception, a formal banquet with music and dancing, a business meeting, presentations and a farewell breakfast.

Jack Sommer summed up the ACS reunion in a few words. "It's rather like a family picnic," he said, "with great aunts once removed, and distant cousins, as well as brothers and sisters."

Geezers To Gather In November

The "Geezers," folks who attended Aramco schools in the 1940s and '50s, are holding their biennial reunion Nov. 5-7 in at the Hotel Monaco in San Francisco.

"We were the early birds," says Linda Lee Killian Walsh, who moved to Saudi Arabia in 1947, just before her seventh

birthday, and graduated from the Dhahran School in 1953. Her dad, Lou Killian, was Bechtel's project manager for its in-kingdom work for Aramco.

"We contemplate a banquet in Chinatown and a fish feast at the Wharf and are planning a get reacquainted reception on the Friday arrival

day," says Walsh. "Anyone who wants to be a Geezer should feel welcome to come to the reunion even if the dates of their time in Arabia differ from the group at large. I am looking forward to a wonderful reunion!"

Those interested may contact Walsh at lindawalsh@kastania.com.

Campers Hold 'First Fly' Reunion

BY WILLIAM TRACY
CAMPING CLASS OF 1979-80

During the cool seasons of 1979 and '80, a group of young Aramco bachelors spent many a weekend off-road camping in the sands and *jabals* of the Eastern Province. In different pairings, but almost always with two vehicles, we camped in al-Hasa Oasis, the Dahna sands, the cliffs of Jabal Tuwaiq west of Riyadh and at the cave-like Dahl Sabsab sinkhole north-west of Abqaiq.

One amusing memory: No matter how remote and desolate the location, each camping day began with our waking shortly before sunrise to the insistent buzzing of the first fly over our sleeping bags.

Campers Chuck Freeny and Kamal Amer were engineers in the Professional Development Program, George Sewell worked on gas projects in the Contracting Department and I was with Public Affairs. Non-Aramcon Scott Pendleton often joined the group; he was a writer for *Saudi Business*, a publication of *Arab News*, and lived in al-Khobar.

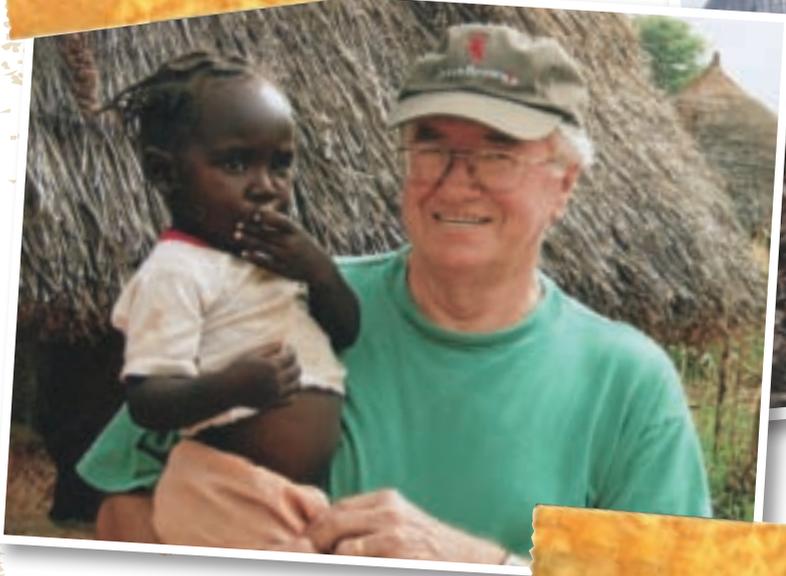
Over a long weekend in May we all gathered for a mini-reunion in Flower Mound, Texas, just north of Dallas.

Chuck and Sarah Freeny hosted the reunion at their ranch. Sarah, who met Chuck in Dhahran, is the daughter of Ruth and former ASC President Tom Schultz. Julie Sewell arrived from Georgia with George. Lynn Amer came from California with her husband.

One classic tradition of the Arabian camping trips was maintained in Texas: the shooting of a climactic "expedition shot" to capture our first U.S. First Fly Reunion forever in our memories.



Top: From left, campers Chuck Freeny, George Sewell, Kamal Amer and Bill Tracy pose at Dahl Sabsab in 1980. Above: First Fly Reunion attendees, from left, are (front): Sarah Freeny (with husband Chuck at her shoulder), Lynn and Kamal Amer, and Julie and George Sewell. Standing in back are Bill Tracy and Scott Pendleton.



RAY BRANCH REINVENTS RETIREMENT TO DEAL WITH DISASTERS

BY OWEN OXLEY

One might think that a mechanical engineer who spent most of his professional life working in Saudi Arabia, completing his career as Saudi Aramco's chief engineer, would heave an enormous sigh of relief upon retiring. Say, a little golf, some travel, and catching up on a lot of good books?

Well, for most people, perhaps.

Not for Ray Branch. What lay ahead of him was another period of extraordinary professional involvement, fueled by a driving personal commitment to help others. He's lent his considerable skills to meeting the needs of the victims of natural and manmade disasters worldwide on assignments requiring big doses of grit and perseverance.

Branch spent 27 years with Aramco, retiring at age 58 in 1993 after working in several company communities where he and his wife Norma raised three children, Beth, Pam and Scott. Over the last 11 years, he has served in a dozen countries, from Sudan to North Korea, as a volunteer with Samaritan's Purse (SP), a Christian humanitarian group based near his home in Charlotte, N.C. The work is different from building a gas-oil separator plant, for example, but "the function is the same," Branch says. In a nutshell, that means focusing engineering and management skills on a task and seeing it through to completion.

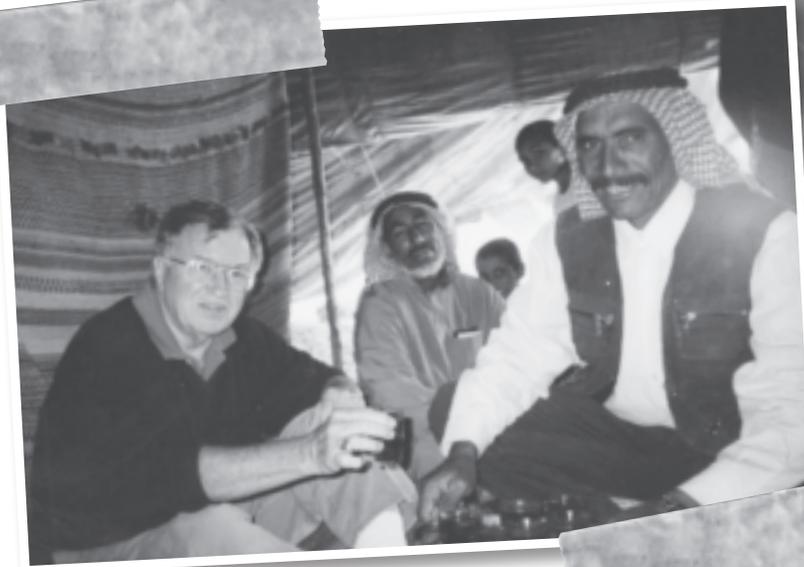
However, his work has another, deeply human, side. To encounter a devastated landscape—such as Honduras after Hurricane Mitch raked it with 180-mile-per-hour winds in 1998—and to help to rebuild not only physical assets but lives has bought a whole new dimension to his career and his life, Branch says.

"It was the people who had no control over what had happened to them—that really was the motivation [for my work]," he explains. "The responsibility of putting peoples' lives back together was the real challenge. It was an honor to be involved in this."

Branch and his fellow volunteers have confronted, struggled with and helped mitigate damage caused by storms, tsunamis, disease and deeply ingrained historical, religious and cultural conflicts that seem to defy resolution.

On his first SP job, in 1999, Branch helped build a camp for 25,000 Kosovar refugees in Tirana, Albania. There, in just one example of what

Opposite page, from left: Ray Branch holds a new friend at a village near Yei in southern Sudan where he worked on a major construction program. Branch stands in a bombed-out home in shattered Gjakova, Kosovo.



Left: Jordanian Bedouins welcomed Branch in their tent after his group provided food for their families. Above: He takes time out from a building project in Afghanistan to pose with two Afghan workers on his team.

he means by “putting peoples’ lives back together,” he and his team helped a Kosovar girl whose special medical shoes had been destroyed by the Serbs. “We obtained a new pair of shoes for her so that she could walk without a limp,” he says.

Since then, Branch worked in smorgasbord of countries: Kosovo, El Salvador, Jordan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia, as well as Sudan, Honduras and North Korea. He estimates that he’s spent a total of two years on various assignments, most lasting one to three months.

“Most of my trips have been involved with building new homes, installing new water systems and food relief,” Branch says. “We have constructed churches, schools, clinics and hospitals—and even a bridge!”

In Kholm, Afghanistan, near the border with Uzbekistan, Branch helped drill water wells and build two schools, a clinic and a hospital in 2004. In Honduras, he spent six months as SP country director, overseeing the construction of 1,500 new homes.

In Cambodia, he helped build a new school and community center near the country’s infamous Killing Fields. And after a tsunami struck Indonesia in 2004, Branch helped build new homes and a school near hard-hit Banda-Acheh.

Abdul Rahman Al Wuhaib, senior vice president of Operations Services at Saudi Aramco, worked with Branch for a number of years in various posts in the company. He says his old friend’s second career comes as no surprise.

“Ray Branch’s remarkable humanitarian work today is really a logical extension of what he did with Saudi Aramco to develop the human talent and petroleum resources to provide energy to the world and promote economic growth,” says Al Wuhaib. “All Ray’s accomplishments

are based on his love of God, his love of his fellow human beings regardless of nationality or specific creed, and his wise recognition that great enterprises result not from greed but generosity.”

Branch didn’t plan to put on another hard hat—in spirit or in reality—when he hung up his old one at Saudi Aramco. But Norma found him very restless after hiking on the Appalachian Trail, canoeing the Boundary Waters near Ely, Minn., and tramping and working for six weeks in Glacier National Park in Montana. Finally, she looked him straight in the eye and said: “Ray, what you need is a job!”

With his wife’s blessing, he set out to find one. Within days he discovered SP in nearby Boone, N.C., and assignments that suited him to a “T.” Little did Norma know that she would become a supporting partner in an adventure that would span the globe. She shared time with him on his assignment in Honduras, and otherwise offered moral support.

SP volunteers work in more than a hundred countries “to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people suffering from war, poverty, disaster, disease, famine and persecution ... through its global humanitarian work,” according to the organization’s mission statement.

“It’s wonderful work and I have tried to get other ex-Aramcons involved. It is truly a blessing,” Branch says. “I’ve always been convinced that former Aramcons can do about anything because they are, at the core, a different type of person to begin with.”

The former chief engineer has put a special stamp on the term “retirement,” turning what’s often an abstract notion into something concrete and fulfilling. He’s harnessed his skills to bring coherence to his volunteer assignments. And, perhaps most importantly, he’s practiced patience and compassion in resolving issues affecting human lives.

By any measure, he’s found success.

Retired Pilot Puts Aramco Skills to Work Fighting Gulf Spill

A retired Saudi Aramco pilot who served on Saudi Aramco's Oil Spill Response team during a quarter-century career with the company that began in 1975 was back on the job this summer, combating BP's Gulf oil spill as a member of the aerial-dispersant group.

Robert "Bob" Meyers, who helped organize the operations of Saudi Aramco's Air Tractor AT-802 dispersant-spray aircraft in the mid-1990s, and piloted the plane himself, worked at BP's Integrated Command Post (ICP) Houma, La., as a contractor for about two weeks beginning June 30.

He called the professionalism and teamwork there "phenomenal," but said that getting permission to use dispersant in the Gulf was frustrating because of the layers of governmental review involved.

The spill began April 20 when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded and lasted until early August. It is reckoned at 4.9 million barrels—the world's largest. The plugged well was declared dead September 20.

Along with flying for Saudi Aramco, Meyers's work in the Aviation Dept. included related tasks such as verifying pilot performance and training, and he managed Aramco Associated Company, the aviation office in Houston, Texas, for two years. He was a pilot for three ministers of petroleum and mineral resources, concluding with Ali I. Al Niami.

Meyers and his wife Ruth retired to the lower Eastern Shore of Virginia in 2000, and he got involved with the Gulf spill through the owner of a local spill-consultancy firm who knew about his background. She called him June 28 to see if he could replace the original AT-802 liaison at the ICP, who was out with a family medical emergency, and Meyers was in the hot seat within 48 hours.

He served as liaison for three AT-802 aircraft based at the Houma airport, working from about 6 a.m. until after 6 p.m. every day. He also did contingency planning in case a hurricane disrupted the aerial-spill response. Twelve spray aircraft and eight spotter planes were assigned to the dispersant group.

Starting at dawn, his group monitored and documented drifting oil using GPS-equipped spotter aircraft, determined the proper aerial response and initiated the "voluminous paperwork required for permission to treat the oil with a carefully determined quantity of dispersant," Meyers said. The plans had to be approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency—and the latter was often slow to respond, he noted.



“Safety is a critical element” in fighting a spill.

“When I told the pilots how Aramco’s planes were set up, they said, ‘That’s a great idea.’”

The longer the oil spill stays on the surface of the water, the more difficult it is to disperse and, eventually, it cannot be treated with dispersant. So waiting for approvals was frustrating, he said.

A political and academic debate over the toxicity of Corexit, BP's dispersant of choice, proved a major snag in attacking the spill. Meyers said the dispersant, used worldwide, is comparable to household dish-washing soap.

"It does essentially the same thing—breaks oil into very small droplets that can be quickly eaten by naturally occurring microbes," he noted. "Most people do not realize that oil is an organic substance and part of the food chain when conditions are favorable."

A government report on the spill Aug. 2 said chemical dispersants had taken care of eight percent of the oil from the ruptured well and that—combined with efforts like skimming, burning, evaporation and natural dispersion—about a quarter of the total spill remained.

On July 16, just after completing his assignment at the ICP, Meyers e-mailed Mazen Snobar, a former Aviation Department manager who chairs Saudi Aramco's Oil Spill Committee. He told him that fighting the spill had brought back "a lot of good memories of working with the Spill group in the Tower Building. I have had a lot of satisfaction using what I learned through Aramco training to help others in the same field."

The dispersant-aircraft pilots were "fabulous, absolutely superb,"

Meyers said in an interview, noting that dispersant planes fly just above the water and that judging height in an environment without good visual references is notoriously difficult. He recommended that dispersant planes be equipped like Saudi Aramco's Air Tractors, with low-range altimeters and a special warning light.

"Safety is a critically essential element" when combating a spill, Meyers said. "When I told them how Aramco's planes were set up, the pilots said, 'That's a great idea.'"

Meyers gave BP good marks for its spill-response effort. "I cannot speak highly enough of the support that we got from BP," he said. "They assembled the best and the brightest from around the world to do their jobs and they gave the entire group 100-percent support."

"It was just as good as working with a small spill-response group in the Tower Building," he said. He added that what he'd learned during the Gulf spill would be applicable in planning to combat spills in Chesapeake Bay, an environmentally sensitive area next to his home that he is thoroughly engaged in protecting.

Below: Capt. Bob Meyers flies an Air Tractor AT-802 dispersant-spray plane in a drill off the Ras Tanura Tank Farm in the 1990s. Opposite page: Meyers explains the plane's instrumentation. Background: A helicopter prepares to land on a ship at the BP spill site. (PHOTO: NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION/DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.)





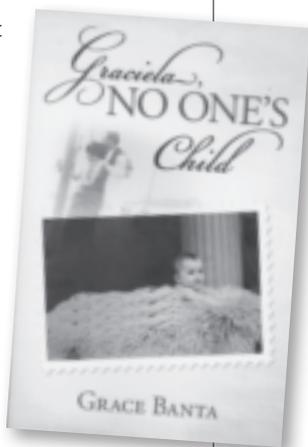
Titles to

Graciela, No One's Child Traces Aramco's Odyssey

Grace Banta, who lived in Abqaiq and Dhahran with her husband Bob from 1982-2000, has written Cinderella story that ends with the main character finding, not a prince, but the family she never knew she had.

In *Graciela, No One's Child*, published by iUniverse, Inc., Banta movingly describes her odyssey after she was given up by her mother as a baby in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1940 and taken to Mexico by her abusive custodian. She made her way back to the United States in 1957, married Bob in Hawaii in 1968 and became the mother of two children—Angelique and Marlon. But only in 1981 was she able to piece together enough information to find her real mother and her siblings.

She also recounts time spent in Mexico with Chilean Nobel Prize laureate Gabriela Mistral—whom she met in a café in Veracruz where she was selling bags of peanuts—and



who perhaps provided inspiration for her own book.

Banta began writing the book in mid-January 1991, at the start of the first Gulf War. Fearful of losing what she had recorded in notebooks, she raced to type the entire story, completing the job five days after she was evacuated from the kingdom late that month.

She continued to work on the manuscript, meant only for her children and grandchildren, for nearly two decades. But she says her husband's and son's positive reactions to it led her to publish the book "to encourage those facing despair to keep a strong focus and never lose sight of their dreams."

Reviews of *Graciela, No One's Child* on www.amazon.com gave it the top ranking. *Amazon.com's* review said Banta "brings to life harrowing, narrow escapes as she constantly pursues her quest to return to the country of her birth and find her family ... [facing] seemingly insurmountable obstacles."

The kingdom is mentioned only in the book's preface, but "parts of the story took place while we were living in Saudi Arabia," Banta said in an interview. "Like many Americans, our time in Saudi Arabia gave our family very important opportunities."

The book retails for \$28.95 hardback and \$18.95 paperback.

Middle East Patterns Reflects Aramco

A retired American diplomat-geographer with fond memories of Aramco has completed the fifth edition of *Middle East Patterns*, a 660-page regional study that swings in arc from Egypt to Turkey, including the Arabian Peninsula. Colbert "Cokie" Held, who served as deputy consul-general at the U.S. Consulate in Dhahran from 1963-66, coauthored this edition with veteran economist John Thomas Cummings.

Held joined the Foreign Service in 1957 and went to Beirut as a geographic attaché whose duties included acquiring maps. He traveled to Dhahran for the first time in 1958 and "Aramco very kindly flew me and another geographer to the Empty Quarter" to visit seismic exploration sites, he recalls.

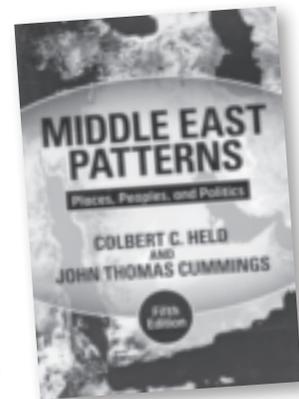
Now diplomat in residence at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Held worked in every country in the region during a 15-year Foreign Service career. He and his wife Mildred started writing the first edition of *Middle East Patterns* in 1980 and it was published in 1989.

"I came back from all those years in the Middle East absolutely overwhelmed with the realization that it was so much more important than people were realizing. I thought the best thing I could do was write a book in my field of expertise to acquaint people with what the Middle East was about," Held said.

The book is aimed at "midlevel college students and general readers who seek understanding of the spatial dynamics of the Middle East," its preface says. It is richly illustrated with maps and black-and-white photographs, most shot by Held.

The section devoted to Saudi Arabia offers a brief but insightful sketch of the historical and political geography of the kingdom before turning to its territory, peoples and economy and global relations.

Held said Aramco "contributed enormously to the book," noting that the consulate and the company had an excellent relationship that gave him special insights into important aspects of the country.



Book

Susan Byrne Publishes New Sierra Cloud Title

Susan Byrne, a second-generation Aramcon who got her first horse, Sultan, in Abqaiq when she was 11, has a lifelong passion for animals that she now brings to her work in Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP). She's just published her second therapeutic children's book, a story "narrated" by Sierra Cloud, her Appaloosa mare on her farm in Grass Valley, Calif.

Heartache's Way: A True Story of Loss and Healing is a sequel to *Sierra Cloud: A True Story about a Horse with Courage*, reviewed in the Fall 2003 *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.

Both books are intended to help children coping with loss and grieving.

Byrne grew up in Abqaiq and Dhahran, where her parents, Ruth and John "Red" Byrne, lived from the mid-1940s until 1976, when Red retired. He later worked as a consultant at Aramco Services Company (ASC) in Houston.

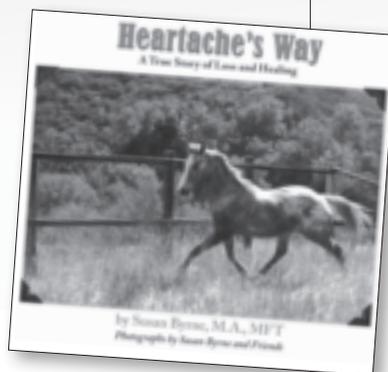
Byrne (DH'68) attended the American Community School in Beirut, then studied zoology at the University of California, Davis. She worked at ASC as part of the team orienting new employees on their way to Saudi Arabia, and spent two years in Riyadh at a Ministry of Interior hospital.

She earned a master's degree in counseling as a step toward becoming a psychotherapist and eventually began her private practice east of Sacramento, Calif. A licensed marriage and family therapist, Byrne employs EAP to address a variety of mental-health and human-development needs, partnering horses with people for emotional growth and learning.

Heartache's Way is designed for use by therapists who work with children ages five to 12. Sierra Cloud is a young horse who loses her mother, and a child reading her story can identify with her and become able to express his or her own feelings.

The book retails for \$25 and a journal/drawing book or CD of same is also available.

For more information, contact Sierra Cloud and Friends, 13129 Arthur Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949; e-mail: sierracloud@foothill.net.



"[Then-president and CEO] Tom Barger personally invited me to attend some of the weekly 'closed' meetings of top officers and department heads to hear goals and problems. I'm sure that the meetings were selected, but I was pleased and honored to be included," Held said. "I sincerely consider my [Aramco] connections as very close—nothing, of course, like those that real Aramcons feel from years and years of collegiality in the Eastern Desert, but genuinely intimate." When he left the consulate, Aramco honored him and his wife with a farewell dinner at Hamilton House.

Held said producing a new edition of *Middle East Patterns* at age 93 had been taxing but worthwhile, noting that 23 universities regularly use the book. "I'm very much convinced that the time and effort put into this has achieved what I had envisioned—to help people understand a very complicated area," he said. Published by Westview Press, the book retails for \$52.

Meeks Penned By Julia Holmes

Julia Holmes, whose parents Dick and Lucy Holmes met in Dhahran and married when they both worked for Government Relations in the late 1960s, has won top reviews for her first novel, *Meeks*, an Orwellian tale set in an ominously contemporary land where the "Enemy" lurks everywhere. It is published in paperback by Small Beer Press, retailing for \$16.

Holmes was born in Dhahran in 1970 and lived there for two years. She returned to the kingdom with her parents when they lived in Riyadh from 1979-81. She holds an MFA from Columbia University and is an editor at *Rolling Stone* in New York, N.Y. Her gritty, image-rich prose has a dark-yet-funny sizzle that would

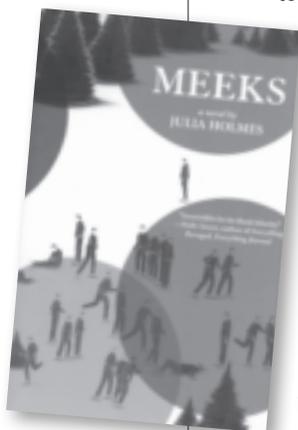
make Franz Kafka smile.

Meeks recounts a season in the life of Ben, a just-retired veteran in a society divided into "bachelors," married couples, "civil servants" leading worker-bee lives in factories, and police. All march to the orders of the state's late founder, Capt. Meeks, including a minor policeman (or vagrant?) with the same name. His story intersects that of Ben, who has just five months, until Independence Day, to find a wife or face the factories himself.

The Los Angeles Times called *Meeks* "a prayer for the doomed that reads like a comedy" that is "set in an allegorical city-state that could be any Western nation with a taste for warfare, statuary and civic-minded totalitarianism." *Publisher's Weekly* said "Holmes has fashioned a terrifying and utterly convincing world in which the perfect human being is one stripped of all illusions." *The New York Times* said *Meeks* is "wild, woolly, sly, gentle and wry."

Holmes told *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* that she'd been back to the Middle East "a few times for long visits [since 1981] and I'd love to go for a longer stretch in the next in the next year or two. Attachment to places is always mysterious.... As much I felt a strong connection when we lived there, I was always an outsider, of course, and I think that's an invaluable experience too. Living in a world whose rules and subtleties you may intuit but not quite grasp, feeling half-exiled from a world you love or are drawn to—that's probably a good start in life for a writer."

Her first book, *100 New Yorkers*, appeared in 2004. It profiles a range of the city's most illustrious citizens.



In Memoriam

Patricia Andrews

March 7, 2010

Predeceased by her husband, retiree William C. Andrews. Survived by her children Abby, Becky and Bill. Correspondence may be sent to Abby Andrews at 4508 Rockford Ct., Charlotte, NC 28209.

Richard Anglemeyer

December 27, 2009

Survived by his son Donald. He joined Aramco in 1981, retiring in 1987 as a technical advisor in Mechanical Services in 'Udhailiyah. Correspondence may be sent to Donald at 1719 Highway 287, Searcy, AR 72143.

Andrew Baker

July 11, 2010

Survived by his children Richard, Barbara and Jacqueline. He joined Aramco in 1972, retiring as a purchasing and control consultant in 1987. Correspondence may be sent to Richard at 11795 Queensbridge Ln., North Royalton, OH 44133.

Brian Blakely

July 30, 2010

Survived by his wife Lisa, sons Jayme, Chris and Andrew, and daughter Courtney. He joined Aramco in 1980, spent most of his career in the Terminal Maintenance Dept. in Ras Tanura, and retired in 2003. Correspondence may be sent to Lisa at 364 Leighton, Cambria, CA 93428.

Arthur Bernard Coulter

July 21, 2010

Survived by his children Timothy, Sandra and Deborah Coulter-Allen. He joined Aramco in 1947 and left the company in 1963, having served several years as chief geologist. Correspondence may be sent to Timothy at 51 Albany Road, Aberdeen AB11 6TN, UK.

Ralph D. Davis

May 6, 2010

Survived by his wife Henriette and children Eve and Manon. He joined Aramco in 1981 and retired in 1991 as a field maintenance superintendent. Correspondence may be sent to Henriette at 224 Dawns Edge, Montgomery, TX 77356-6022.

Hildegarde DeCarlo

February 7, 2010

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Ray

DeCarlo, and survived by her daughter Diana Prescott.

Anna Dzielski

March 3, 2010

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Edward Dzielski, and survived by her son John. Correspondence may be sent to John at 1500 N. Juanita St., Hollidaysville, PA 16648.

Yngvar Friiso

December 4, 2009

Survived by his wife Turid and sons Geir and Alf. He joined Aramco in 1978 and retired in 1984. Correspondence may be sent to Turid at Bratthenget 29A, 4846 Arendal, Norway.

Virgil Brown

March 7, 2010

Survived by his wife Mary Lou. He joined Aramco in 1972, retiring as project manager, Terminal Operations, in Ras Tanura in 1982. Correspondence may be sent to Mary Lou at 37209 Meredith Dr., Lebanon, OR 97355.

Galal H. Hafez

May 6, 2010

Survived by his wife Ettemad and children Ola, Hassan and Lamia. He worked for ASC from 1989 to 1994. Correspondence may be sent to Ettemad at 12414 Milestone Manor Ln., Germantown, MD 20876.

Mary Jackson

June 23, 2010

Predeceased by her former husband Carl. Survived by her son Michael and daughter Jane Lehmann.

Jasper Joiner

March 25, 2010

Survived by his wife Virginia and daughters Elizabeth Milem and Judy Kramer; predeceased by his son Giles. He joined Aramco in 1955 and retired as a technician in the Aviation/Aircraft Maintenance Div. in 1981. Correspondence may be sent to Virginia at 12501 Longhorn Pkwy., A-307, Austin, TX 78732.

William P. Kulpa

June 8, 2010

Survived by his son William and daughter Linda Longmire. He joined Aramco in 1949 and retired as a Material Supply controlman in 1969. Correspondence may be sent to Linda at 123 Harbor Dr., Apt. 103, Stamford, CT 06902-7459.

Aziz Kureshi

April 19, 2010

Survived by his wife Louise and children Nadeem and Jamil. He joined Aramco as a pediatrician in 1983 and retired in 1993. Correspondence may be sent to Louise at 10246 Timberland Pt. Dr., Tampa, FL 33647.

Joseph Mahon

April 15, 2010

Survived by his wife Ruth and children Richard, Michael, Robert and Elizabeth. He joined Aramco in 1951, retiring as senior vice president, Corporate Services, in 1982. Correspondence may be sent to Ruth at 5632 Escondido Blvd., St. Petersburg, FL 33715.

Claudia McKeever

June 28, 2010

Survived by her children Mary Duffy and James Matteson. She joined Aramco in 1973 and retired in 1981 after serving as chief area nurse in Dhahran and Abqaiq. Correspondence may be sent to Mary at 600 W. Ninth St., Unit 1512, Los Angeles, CA 90015.

James Morris

August 3, 2010

Mr. Morris joined Aramco in 1961 and retired as supervisor, Environmental Health Lab in 1989.

Debra Morrison

December 27, 2009

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Brent Morrison, and survived by her brother James Gibson. Correspondence may be sent to James at 7454 River Garden Dr., Houston, TX 77095.

Earl Nelson

April 24, 2010

Survived by his wife Betty and children Earl (Von), Brannon, Amber and Ben. He joined Aramco in 1980, retiring in 1990 as coordinator, 'Uthmaniyah Gas Plant Training Unit. Correspondence may be sent to Betty at 104 H. Burge Rd., Popplerville, MS 39470.

John H. Onnen

May 24, 2010

Survived by his wife Virginia and children Sally, Mary-Jane, Amy, Becky and Jennifer. He joined Aramco in 1951, retiring as manager, Oil Supply Planning and Scheduling, in 1983. Correspondence may be sent to Virginia at

The Heritage, 4409 Gaines Ranch Loop #415, Austin, TX 78735.

Clifford Perrine

February 28, 2010

Survived by daughters Christina, Marilyn and Anita. He joined Socal in 1937 and worked for Casoc in Saudi Arabia before joining the U.S. Navy in WWII. He returned to the kingdom in 1946, retiring in 1971 as foreman of crane and rigging in Abqaiq. Correspondence may be sent to Christina Goodell at 12604 Savonburgh Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93312.

Victor Popan

July 4, 2010

Survived by his wife Renate. He joined Aramco in 1976, retiring as a senior project manager in 1991. Correspondence may be sent to Renate at 3101 Old Pecos Trail #207, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

Brock Powers

September 15, 2010

Survived by his wife Marte and daughter Cydnie. He was an Aramco employee from 1947-49 and 1952-79. He became chief geologist in 1961, manager of Exploration in 1966 and assistant general manager, U.S.A. Offices, in the New York office in 1969. He was elected a company vice president in 1970, a senior vice president in 1971 and president in 1973. He was elected to the board of directors in 1970 and served as board vice chairman board from 1978 until he retired. Correspondence may be sent to Marte at 11101 Champions Ln., Austin, TX 78747.

Hanna Ibrahim Saba

December 10, 2009

Survived by his wife Hoda and children Ramzi, Mazin, Sana and Rihab. He joined Aramco in 1958, retiring as an Industrial Training Center instructor in 1985. Correspondence may be sent to Hoda at 139 Mondavi Rd., Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada L4H-1L5.

Edward Stecher

March 14, 2010

Survived by his wife Frances and daughter Kathy; predeceased by his wife Thelma and sons Richard and Steven. He joined Aramco in 1954, retiring in 1979 as construction engineer II in Ras Tanura. Correspondence may

be sent to Frances at 137 Rhett Ct., Karlei Hill, Greenwood, SC 29649.

Cathy Ann Sudholt

March 12, 2010

Survived by her husband, retiree Charles Sudholt, and daughters Claire, Catherine, Courtney, Christen and Caroline. Correspondence may be sent to Charles at 1930 Farmers Creek Dr., Richmond, TX 77046.

Robert G. Watts

April 4, 2010

Survived by his wife Dorothy and children Barbara and Karen. He joined Aramco in 1979, retiring as Yanbu' Process Operations Div. shift superintendent in 1988. Correspondence may be sent to Dorothy at 3 Michael Snow Ct., Sarnia, Ontario, Canada N7W-1B8.

BOLD SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN BIDS ADIEU

Retiree Clinton Jackson "Jack" Coley, Jr. died Aug. 12, 2010, leaving behind friends in his native Alabama, Saudi Arabia—where he worked in the Personnel Dept. in Dhahran from 1980-94—and around the world.



Jackson "Jack" Coley

His hometown newspaper, in which he wrote weekly columns about life in Alexander City, Ala., and in Saudi Arabia, called him one of the town's "most recognizable residents."

Retiree Dwight Fullingim wrote, "I knew Jack in Saudi Arabia and found him one of the most interesting and entertaining fellows around." Another Aramco friend called him "the funniest man I ever knew."

He had a serious side, too. Ismail Nawwab, a Saudi colleague, called Coley "a unique individual, with a large heart, generous spirit and compassionate character. He represented the best of the traditions of the archetypical Southern American gentleman...."

"Having lived with Arabs and studied their history, Jack had an understanding of their point of view and sensitivity to their religion and culture. He often gave talks to Alabaman audiences about Islam and

Renetta Wicher

March 6, 2010

She joined Aramco in 1973, retiring as an in-service nursing trainer in Dhahran in 1988. Survived by her husband, retiree Handel (Andy) Battenbough, whom she married after retiring. Correspondence may be sent to Andy at 714 Marsh Rd., Carson City, NV 89701.

S. Joan Wilson

February 12, 2010

Survived by her sister Jane Durie. She joined Aramco as a secretary in Dhahran in 1953 and left in 1962. She joined Aramco Services Company in Washington, D.C., in 1964, retiring as executive secretary in 1992. Correspondence may be sent to Jane Durie at 5951 Autumn Wood Dr., #3C, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

the Arabs in order to build interfaith and intercultural bridges between Middle Eastern Muslims and Americans.

"A little-known aspect of Jack Coley's life may not have received due recognition. While in Saudi Arabia, Jack was the moving spirit behind the establishment of the first Alcoholics Anonymous group, which later grew into a nationwide movement that has been of help in rehabilitating thousands of drug addicts. This was a bold, pioneering move by Jack as at the time the problems of addiction were swept under the carpet by the local media and Saudi society.

"The founding of that first group required a lot of effort and time as well as persuasion of and coordination with the appropriate government agencies, but Jack never faltered in the pursuit of his humanitarian goal. I cannot think of any American who served Saudi Arabs so selflessly, determinedly and passionately for what many would have considered a thankless and difficult task not related to their official duties.

"Jack Coley, Jr.'s legacy of the battle against drug addiction in Saudi Arabia will continue to resonate with many in the Kingdom. Those who knew him in Alcoholics Anonymous will always cherish the memory of this stranger whose love for them was unbounded and heartfelt."

He is survived by a sister, Evelyn McCord Coley Puckett, of Birmingham, Ala. Correspondence may be sent to his cousin, Marri Rhodes, at ednamarrie@aol.com.

Sam Whipple

PIONEER PRINCIPAL

Sam Whipple, the pioneer principal of Aramco's senior-staff schools in both Dhahran and Ras Tanura in the 1940s, died at his home in Ashland, Ore., on July 11, 2010, at age 94. He became the first American-certified teacher for Aramco in Dhahran in 1945 and spent nine years with the company's schools, leaving a legacy of fond memories with his students.

In a letter to friends, including a number of former students, sent after his death, he wrote: "I ... want to thank you for the many wonderful years we have shared," and signed off as "Sammy, Sam, Whip, Mr. Whipple."

In an interview published in *Saudi Aramco and its People, A History of Training*, he said he landed his job in Dhahran after answering an ad in the *Los Angeles Times* for a "foreign service" teaching position in 1945, following time in the Army. (Before that, he had taught school for five years in rural Washington.) When he found out the job was in Saudi Arabia, he said, "Saudi Arabia! Where the hell is that?" He ended up serving as

the sole teacher at a one-room, kindergarten-to-eighth-grade school in Dhahran. He earned \$250 a month, plus a \$50 hardship bonus.

Steve Furman was Whipple's first student when the school opened Oct. 1, 1945, in the living room of a duplex house just east of the east wing of today's Dining Hall. "I was the first turkey to knock on the door and Sam opened it," said Furman, who was seven years old. Furman, an Aramco retiree, remembered that "nobody else showed up" for the first day of school.

"He was a very friendly guy ... a wonderful person. He motivated the kids," Furman recalled of his teacher. "No matter where I was in Dhahran when I was a kid, I'd always yell, 'Hi, Mr. Whipple.'"

The two kept in touch over the years. Furman remembered meeting Whipple when his old teacher was the guest of honor at the Brats Reunion in Houston in 1995, and sending a message that was recorded and played for Whipple when he was a guest at the opening of the Community Heritage Gallery in Dhahran later in the decade.

Miles Snyder, another member of Whipple's first class, said he was "really charming." Snyder, a California attorney who was 12 in 1945, described his teacher as "an upbeat, positive young man with

a buoyant personality. He laughed easily and often, and got along well with all ages.

"I now realize more fully the challenging job Sam Whipple had as our teacher. Ten kids at different levels of learning, all in one room!"

In the fall of 1946, Whipple opened the first senior-staff school in Ras Tanura. Bill Tracy, a retired writer, editor and teacher, was one of his first students there. "Sam probably got me (and others) started as a writer when he instituted our grade-school newspaper in Ras



↑ Ten pioneer offspring in Sam Whipple's one-room schoolhouse in Dhahran appeared with him in this 1945 photo. From left are: an unknown student, Sam Whipple, Steve Furman, Zane Lillie, Jimmy McPherson, Miles Snyder, Gracie McPherson, Robin "Pinkie" Alexander, Louise Snyder and two unknown girls. If you know the names of the unknown students, please contact the Editor of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.

Tanura in about 1948," Tracy wrote.

Whipple resigned in 1954, returned briefly to the United States, and then taught school for Esso Standard Oil bases. After that, Exxon hired him to teach in Tripoli, Libya, for 12 years. He concluded his career in Japan, teaching an annual course in conversational English.

He appeared in several stories in his hometown newspaper, the *Ashland Mail Tribune*, in recent years, the last time in 2008 when he celebrated his 91st birthday.

Former students and friends may send condolences to: Family of Sam Whipple, c/o Litwiller-Simonsen Funeral Home, 1811 Ashland St., Ashland, OR 97520.

'GERIATRIC GYPSIES' REPORT



Photographer
Bob MacDonnell



Marvin and Ruth Star, left, and Judy MacDonnell strike a sunset pose just off Port Ghalib, Egypt.

When the Aramco Expatriates Reunion

concluded in March 2009, Judy and Bob MacDonnell retraced their tracks by bus from Dammam to Riyadh to Aden (where they'd arrived by sea from Malaysia with old Ras Tanura friends Marvin and Ruth Stark) and then completed their round-the-world odyssey, visiting more ex-Aramcons en route. This June, Bob reported:

When we arrived in Aden, Marvin and Ruth were waiting for us on *Toucan Tango* which had been anchored there throughout our absence. They had made their own side trip to Sana'a while Judy and I were in Saudi Arabia.

The sail from Aden was uneventful, but memorable for the fine fishing we experienced in the Red Sea.

Hopping up the coast past Djibouti and through Eritrea and Sudan to Egypt provided the opportunity to meet other "grotty yachties." As well as South Africans and Americans we had met earlier in the trip from Langkawi, Malaysia, we met Australian, British, Canadian and Turkish sailors along the way and shared potlucks and land transports.

We left *Toucan Tango* in the new Egyptian coastal city of Port Ghalib. The Starks went touring (including a cruise, reminiscing on *Death on the Nile*, which Ruth acted in at Aramco). They continued on to the Suez Canal and Turkey, while Judy and I travelled by land to Aswan, Abu Simbal, Cairo and Alexandria.

We then flew to Spain to see long-lost Ras Tanura neighbors Bob and Rose Avila in Moraira on the Mediterranean Costa Blanca.

From Spain, we flew to Boston and were reunited with our North American land transport, a Gulf Stream RV purchased the previous year. After a brief visit with Bernie Heaney, another ex-RT scoutmaster, and his

wife Nancy in Massachusetts, we visited Charlie and Delores Rogan in New Jersey.

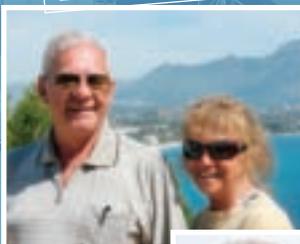
In Virginia, we visited ex-Aramcon Steve Wann and his wife Mandi, en route to N. Carolina to help Carl Stover replace an ageing deck. Carl is a brother-in-law to Jim Perkerson, ex-RT and Dhahran science teacher par excellence. Jim and wife Pat have retired to Asheville and Carl followed them, getting as far as Hendersonville. While passing Asheville, we stopped to see ex-Aramcons Frank and Laura Pavlat who were visiting daughter Julie Sech and family.

In Canada, we went to Newfoundland-Labrador for a short visit. Back in Nova Scotia, we helped celebrate my mother's 88th birthday in October before leaving for Australia, Judy via friends in California and Nevada (including ex-Aramcon dental hygienist Linda Hurd) and myself via Massachusetts. We met in the SFO airport and spent the next two months in Queensland, including hosting my second Aramco Brat Bruce and family for a short vacation "Down Under."

In late January, we left for Tasmania via New South Wales and Victoria. In SE Queensland we visited ex-Aramcon Diane Stubbs (RT and DH) and in NSW we saw Helen Venner, a physical therapist with Judy in RT. In Tasmania, we spent a few days with ex-Aramcons Josh and Wendy Cocker, giving them a hand in their "Thistle War" on their 200 acres in the Tamar Valley. Great exercise with great friends!

We are now back in Brisbane, via Western Australia, after cleaning up unwanted vegetation from our plot of land on Bruny Island, Tasmania. We may well build there some day when we settle down....

REUNIONS EN ROUTE



Bob & Rose Avila



Steve & Mandi Wann



Pat & Jim Perkerson



Helen & Steve Venner

Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah



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↓ *A Golfer's Delight* The Orlando "Hafla" 2010 foursome of Sol Asekun, Rod Fleck, Don Reilly and Ken Swanson finishes a golf scramble hole at the reunion-venue course. Clear blue skies greeted golfers and fellow Annuitants Reunion attendees throughout the four-day event.

