



# Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila

"These Pleasant Days"

For Aramco, A.O.C. and Tapline Annuitants



NEW YORK, N. Y.

SPECIAL ISSUE  
NOVEMBER, 1958

Vol. 2, No. 4

## ALUMNI RENDEZVOUS

They began to gather on Monday afternoon, the day before the big party. When dinner was served in one of Castlewood's great rooms, nineteen of Aramco's annuitants and wives were already sunk in a pleasant sea of "What are you doing now?" and "Do you remember when ---?" After dinner, they loafed on the club's wide patio, for the day had been warm, and the breeze and the lights of Pleasanton below added to the pleasure of reunion.

As the evening advanced, more couples checked in, and the party grew in numbers and enthusiasm. A few energetic males defied the laws of gravity while they balanced on rickety chairs to paste a sheet on a sheltered wall. The sheet made a satisfactory background for the projection of some travel pictures....Who ever

heard of an Aramcoite without travel pictures? Some of the spectators dozed comfortably through the showing, others expressed admiration for the pictures at the right times, the photographer was pleased accordingly, and an atmosphere of good fellowship prevailed. (Note: The modest photographer was Phil McConnell, and the pictures were of a Sierra pack trip which he had taken a couple of weeks previously.)

A late breakfast on Tuesday morning was the choice of most people; but even before breakfast was finished, new arrivals were breaking in to confuse distracted waitresses trying to serve ham and eggs between hand shakes, hugs, and kisses. Andy promptly established his reception table and began to sell tickets for the evening gathering. A few ambitious amateur photographers

*The Banquet. At the speakers' table, left to right: Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wilson, Steve and Elsie Sweet, Sergei Tesar, Gertrude Phil McConnell, Evelyn and Andy Anderson, Lois and Lucky Luckenbaugh. (More banquet pictures on pages 5, 6 and 7.)*







*Open for business. Step Stepney and Bob Keyes (with money in hand — or is it his pipe?) get their dinner tickets from Andy and Evelyn Anderson.*

started to operate for the irrefutable record. And through the rambling rooms and out on the patio, vibrations of chatter and laughter rose higher and higher. The party was in full progress.

By noon, over sixty persons had registered. Lunch wasn't an event; it was simply a confused point of progress toward the ultimate objective of a large evening ahead. People ate between greetings.

Activity dropped during the warm hours of afternoon; as a number slipped away for brief naps to strengthen the ancient (or shall we say, mature) bodies for a strenuous evening. But still the new arrivals came and the steady roll of chatter strengthened. By four o'clock, most of the naps were completed and the nappers were returning to the turmoil, determined to make up for time lost.



*Lunch . . . a confused point of progress.*

The official cocktail hour started at six o'clock on the patio; but people were so interested in each other's tall tales that about half an hour was required to drive them from the lounge into the open. They were having too much fun to bother about moving. For the next two hours, the patio was a turmoil of squeals, laughter and talk in general. The guests were in full control -- having a whale of a time. When dinner was served, they moved into the wide dining hall and spread to the long tables, bringing the din and rattle with them. There was no head table adorned with dignitaries; but inasmuch as someone had to run the event, Andy and Evelyn Anderson and Phil and Gertrude McConnell did cluster around the microphone set on the table at the end of the room.

The meal was good; but food wasn't as important as talk; so, talk took precedence with most people. Of course, if the food had been bad, this attitude might have been different; but so long as it was good, it formed merely a pleasing background to the main objective: conversation.

Around ten o'clock, most people had satisfied the demands of hunger and were ready for the next adventure. According to plan, there were a few welcoming remarks by Andy, followed by short talks by half a dozen annuitants designed to assist in the recalling of old memories. It was a light program and a commendably short one. Before eleven o'clock, it was finished, and the guests were free again to move about and visit.

Farewells are a necessary part of gathering together -- farewells as heartfelt as the earlier greetings. Farewells and good wishes, until we meet again. By midnight, only a handful were left on the darkened patio overlooking the lights on the plain below, speaking again in soft and easy tones.

The party was over; its memories were beginning.



*Above. Facing camera: Clyde Swigart, Lu Weber, Leonard Sweeney and Walt Schmidt*

*Right. Jack Mathison laughs with Margaret Fitzgerald*



*Above. Thelma Loughboro, Ted Niethamer (back to camera), Bobby Loughboro and Walt Hansen*

*Right. Marie Ross, Evelyn O' Nelson, Russ Nelson, Isabel Beckwith, Cal Ross and Earl Beckwith*



*Abigail Duncan, Gladys and John Rogers, and Walt Dunten*



## On The Patio

## The Club

The Castlewood Country Club was at one time part of the extensive Hearst properties, and famed for its elegance for nearly half a century. Originally, it was the home of Phoebe Hearst, mother of the late publisher, William Randolph Hearst. When turned to commercial use in the late nineteen thirties and for many years thereafter, it was popularly referred to as the old Hearst Ranch. Today, the Club's central buildings consist of a charming, rambling pile of wood and masonry, a combination of the old and the new, where certain modifications have been made in recent years to meet the needs of modern living and playing.

It has become a bit weather beaten with time, resting on top of a picturesque hill, surrounded by rolling country covered by ancient trees and the smooth green of a golf course. It is a lovely and comfortable spot in the Spanish tradition but today are gone most of the carved paneling and tapestries and mementos of its past grandeur.

The great spaces of its lower floor require more than a mere country club to occupy it, despite a membership of some fifteen hundred. As a result, the management frequently makes its facilities available to large groups for special gatherings such as the Aramco Annuitants' party. Probably because such entertainment is a regular occurrence at the club, and practice makes perfect, its service for large groups is excellent. A more suitable spot for our party would have been hard to find.

standing: Earl Duncan, Tibbie Weber, Abigail Duncan, Clyde Swigart, George Johnson and Lu Weber

Casper Gee, Warren Hodges,  
C. Timberlake and Elsbeth Rushmer



Mrs. Regan and Mrs. Walt Schmidt seated,  
Abigail Duncan and Tibbie Weber standing



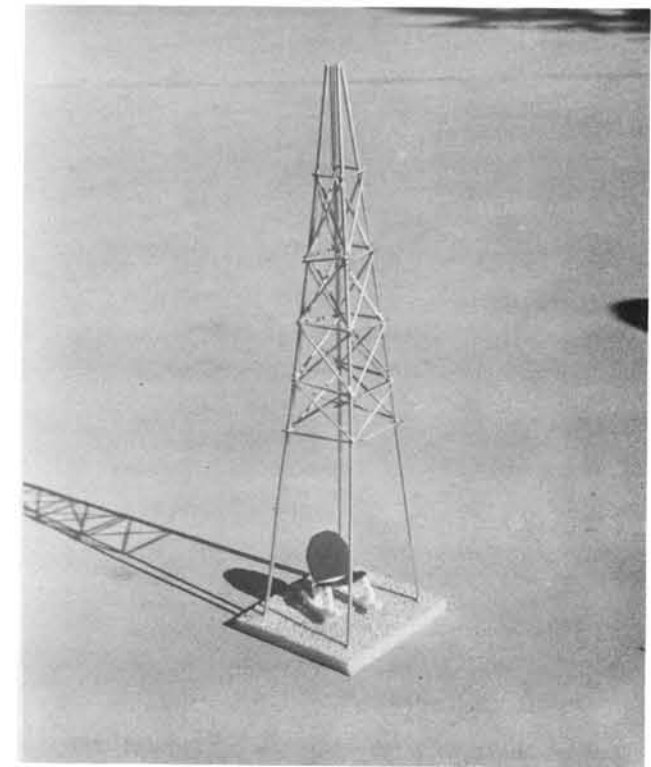
Peggy and Ralph Wells and Sergei Tesar

## Complete With Theme

Fall colors, both vivid and mellow, were used in the decorations for the main event in the big private dining room overlooking the valley.

The tables were arranged like a giant fork — four "tines" and the speakers' table across one end. Gracing the tables, together with tall white candles, were long low floral arrangements in shades of red, rust, gold and white. Gladiolas, chrysanthemums, daisies and gold ribbon rested on sprays of fern.

The flowers were beautiful. But it was another type of decoration on each of the tables which delighted all of those present even more and reflected the true theme of the affair. These were small gold oil derricks which had been created from thin strips of balsa wood — artistic and unique in their originality and standing about eighteen inches high. On each derrick floor rested a miniature rocking chair ingeniously fashioned from white pipe cleaners, its tiny seat and back of reddish felt.



Theme

General view of group at banquet, looking toward the speakers' table





## And More Banquet



Left row, front to back: Pat Moore, Lloyd Moore, Jane Ashford, Harry Ashford and Walt Hansen

Right row, front to back: Gene Hughes, Ethel Hughes, Mrs. Chamberlin, Ralph Chamberlin, Ralph Wells, Tibbie Weber

Back row, left to right: Homer Wilson, Mrs. Wilson, Les Jorgenson, Maurine Jorgenson, Warren Hodges, Merle Hodges, Casper Gee, Sophie Gee, Hazel Steinmetz

Front row, left to right: Mrs. Hatch, Tom Hatch, Mrs. Quiett, Dave Swindig, Minnie Swindig, Walt Dunten



Row, left to right: Alma Fritzie, George Vivian, Josie Vivian

Row, left to right: Larry Tweedy, Marge Ogilvie, Helen Tweedy, Bob Tweedy, Ed Christiansen, Elsie Christiansen and Grace Pryor



Left to right, facing camera: Jack King, Carol Keyes, Bob Keyes, Sidney Keyes, John Rogers, George Rogers, Bob Cooney and George Johnson

Backs to camera: Mrs. Nix, Bill Nix, Ellen Cooney



Left row, front to back: Doug McConnell, Marge Kelt, Doug Kelt, Ruth McConnell

Right row, front to back: Fred Hilton, Mrs. Palmer, C. Timberlake, Elizabeth Rushmer, Mrs. Freeland

Left row, front to back: Fred Hamann, Mrs. Hamann, Mary Marr, Tommie Harr, Pauline King, Charlotte Browne Reynolds

Right row, front to back: Charlie Voze, Lenora Voze, Mrs. Baker, Harold Baker



# They Were There

From north, south, east and west they came, from near and far, like homing pigeons one hundred forty-seven strong, their reason the same — reunion with old friends whom time and circumstance had kept apart. Their representation was almost as varied as the points from which they came — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Beirut, The Hague, New York, Missouri, Oklahoma and up and down the West Coast. There were Aramco, Bapco and Tapline annuitants and their wives; there was a son and there was a daughter; there was a charming and well known mother-in-law; there were bachelors and bachelorettes; there were present employees and their wives; there were former employees and their wives; there were friends from Socal and from Bechtel; and there were widows of employees who came to join the circle of friendship their loved ones could not be present to enjoy.

Anderson, Mr. & Mrs. A. L.  
Ashford, Mr. & Mrs. H. T.  
Baker, Mr. & Mrs. Harold H.  
Beckwith, Mr. & Mrs. Earl  
Bevan, Mr. & Mrs. C. F.  
Bigger, Mrs. R. J.  
Braun, Mr. & Mrs. Charles  
Brickhouse, Mrs. A. A.  
Carpenter, Mr. & Mrs. A. E.  
Chamberlin, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph  
Christiansen, Mr. & Mrs. E. W.  
Colwell, Mr. & Mrs. Obert S.  
Cooney, Mr. & Mrs. Robert S.  
Duncan, Mr. & Mrs. Earl E.  
Dunten, Mr. & Mrs. Walter C.  
Enyart, Bluford Claude  
Fahey, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. E.  
Freeland, Mr. & Mrs. Mace D.  
Fritzie, Mr. & Mrs. Herbert W.  
Gee, Mr. & Mrs. Casper T.  
Grumm, Mr. & Mrs. Watson  
Hall, Mr. & Mrs. W. S.  
Hamann, Mr. & Mrs. Fred W.  
Hansen, Walter F.  
Haskell, Mr. & Mrs. A. F.  
Hatch, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E.  
Henry, Mr. & Mrs. S. B.  
Hilton, Fred  
Hodge, Charles M.  
Hodges, Mr. & Mrs. W. F.  
Hughes, Mr. & Mrs. E. M.  
Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Geo. V.  
Jones, Capt. & Mrs. J. R.  
Jorgenson, Mr. & Mrs. L. W.  
Kelt, Mr. & Mrs. Douglas M.  
Keyes, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L.  
and daughter, Carol  
King, Mr. & Mrs. Robert F.  
and son, Jerry  
Langsdorf, Mr. & Mrs. Gaynor H.  
Lebkicher, Mr. & Mrs. Roy  
Loughboro, Mr. & Mrs. Robert B.  
Luckenbaugh, Mr. & Mrs. M. L.  
Marr, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E.

Saratoga, California  
Walnut Creek, California  
Santa Ana, California  
Oakland, California  
Los Angeles, California  
San Francisco, California  
Aptos, California  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Huntington Beach, California  
Concord, California  
Richmond, California  
Modesto, California  
Paradise, California  
Walnut Creek, California  
Santa Barbara, California  
Bakersfield, California  
Oakland, California  
Gold Hill, Oregon  
Redwood City, California  
Pomona, California  
San Francisco, California  
Oakland, California  
San Rafael, California  
El Sobrante, California  
Lafayette, California  
Santa Barbara, California  
San Francisco, California  
New York, New York  
San Francisco, California  
Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia  
Santa Monica, California  
Forsyth, Missouri  
Beirut, Lebanon  
El Cerrito, California  
Sacramento, California  
  
Denver, Colorado  
  
Klamath River, California  
Hillsborough, California  
Los Gatos, California  
Sepulveda, California  
Danville, California  
Paradise, California

Mathison, John L.  
McConnell, Mr. & Mrs. Douglas D.  
McConnell, Mr. & Mrs. P. C.  
Miller, Mr. & Mrs. C. V.  
Moore, Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd L.  
Nelson, Mr. & Mrs. Russell A.  
Niethammer, Ted  
Nix, Mr. & Mrs. Whitfield S.  
Ogilvie, Mr. & Mrs. Robert C.  
Palmer, Mrs. K. S.  
Pinckney, Mrs. D. T.  
Potter, Mr. & Mrs. Charles M.  
Pryor, Miss Grace  
Quiett, Mrs. E. F.  
Regan, Mr. & Mrs. Frank W.  
Reynolds, Mrs. Charlotte Browne  
Rogers, Mr. & Mrs. John M.  
Ross, Mr. & Mrs. Calvin W.  
Rushmer, Mrs. L. H.  
Schmidt, Mr. & Mrs. Walt  
Shaw, Mr. & Mrs. Lee L.  
Singelyn, Mrs. E. C.  
Fitzgerald, Mrs. Margaret  
Steinmetz, Mrs. Geo. C.  
Stephen, Mrs. George  
Stepney, Mr. & Mrs. A. H.  
Sweeney, Mr. & Mrs. Leonard  
Sweet, Mr. & Mrs. S. C.  
Swigart, Mr. & Mrs. Clyde A.  
Swindig, Mr. & Mrs. David  
Tesar, Sergei  
Timberlake, C.  
Tweedy, Mr. & Mrs. Larry  
Venier, Mrs. Mary Jane  
Vivian, Mr. & Mrs. George T.  
Voze, Mr. & Mrs. Charles  
Weber, Mr. & Mrs. Luther C.  
Wells, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph  
Williams, Mr. & Mrs. Guy S.  
Wilson, Mr. & Mrs. Homer C.  
Wilson, Mr. & Mrs. Walter

Menlo Park, California  
Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia  
Ojai, California  
Denver, Colorado  
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia  
San Rafael, California  
Rio Vista, California  
Paradise, California  
San Francisco, California  
San Francisco, California  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Bakersfield, California  
Fresno, California  
Richmond, California  
Oakland, California  
San Francisco, California  
Walnut Creek, California  
Paradise, California  
Oakland, California  
Bahrain  
Taft, California  
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia  
San Francisco, California  
Bakersfield, California  
San Francisco, California  
Santa Barbara, California  
Placerville, California  
New York, New York  
San Francisco, Calif.  
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia  
San Francisco, California  
San Francisco, California  
Jacksonville, Oregon  
The Hague, Holland  
Antioch, California  
Livermore, California  
Napa, California  
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia  
Willits, California  
Okmulgee, Oklahoma  
Sausalito, California



The Three Musketeers:  
Luckenbaugh  
Hodge  
Tesar



*A game of Bridge*



*At lunch — Vi Jones, Captain  
John Jones, Helen Brick-  
house and Nita Pinckney*



*Bob and Sidney Keyes with  
Gertrude and Phil McConnell*

*Connie Stepney and Ruth McConnell*



*Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hamann*

## Objectives of Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila

Since Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila is strictly the annuitants' magazine, the over-all objective is to make it as interesting and as helpful to its readers as is possible. In order to accomplish this, there are a number of new features in the wind, some of which were begun with the September issue.

For example, "The Book Shelf" reviewed a new book on the Middle East. Others will be reviewed from time to time — books which may be helpful or just fun to read. Some will be serious, some not. The idea: perhaps you hadn't run across them yet and just might be interested.

Then there is always the decision of where to retire — whether it might be some place other than California. When something which sounds unusually good comes to light, Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila will provide the available details. Phil McConnell gave this particular ball a big push down the slope of his last Sand Pile, and the newsletter hopes to keep the ball rolling.

There will be an occasional thought provoking item which we hope will provide the individual with an idea here and there of how to better serve his community and indirectly himself. Such was the "Food For Thought" feature in the September issue.

A wise man was once heard to say that "laughter is the best medicine" — both preventive and curative no doubt. With this in mind Al-Ayyam is also trying to make room for things on the lighter side, and not leave the full responsibility for smiles and chuckles to Phil.

Our magazine has always been and will continue to be an instrument for announcing retirements and keeping everyone posted on where the Refugees are located. A complete and up-to-date address list is distributed once a year (in time for addressing Christmas cards). Al-Ayyam then tries to report all changes as they occur under the section entitled "Mail Call." This will enable those who so wish to keep their

individual lists current.

During recent months there has been a growing interest in Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila. This is particularly true among those who are or will be getting ready for retirement within the next few years. The Field recently requested that six hundred and fifty copies be forwarded to Arabia for distribution and use.

This seems to emphasize one thing above all others — a sincere interest in those who have already retired. But it becomes more than curiosity about one's friends and the desire to keep in touch. Of course, it is interesting to all of us to know how a friend is spending his time — in what efforts he is engaged. Many, however, have not yet decided on the direction for their energies. For these, the knowledge of another's activities may provide the idea needed for self application. The constructive features of retirement provide a vital factor in planning this phase of our lives in a manner which will reap the greatest rewards.

It is hoped that Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila can greatly expand this particular function. Success, however, can be accomplished only with the help of the annuitants. Remember, Al-Ayyam has no detectives or roving reporters and must rely almost entirely on direct word from the annuitants themselves.

This brings up a point which was recently raised about the art of storytelling. Very few of us are blessed with a gift of expression such as Phil's. No one should be reluctant about writing in, however, just because he doesn't sound like Phil — the important thing is getting down the facts. Whether you are busy playing, hobbying, traveling, working (be it full or part time) — we are all interested in what you are doing and want to hear from you. So please send in the details and let the editor of Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila get the gray hairs over fancy phrases, punctuation and split infinitives. In that way you'll be right in style, too. If you've noticed the periodicals

lately, almost everything seems to be coming out these days "as told to so-and-so."

Travel is a subject which can provide almost endless material for use in the newsletter. Many of the annuitants today find themselves exploring parts of the world which were not usually encountered in the globe-circling days of their preretirement. Here again the September issue carries such a case in point with "Island Interlude." One should not necessarily shy away from comment on a general area because it has been mentioned previously. The Caribbean for example is so rich in history, beauty and interest, that it alone could provide material for many issues of our magazine. Also, different people often do different things and see things differently in the same places. So, for the reader who hasn't visited a spot at all, two reports that differ appreciably can be better than one. Material must first be sent in, however, before a travelogue or commentary can show up in print.

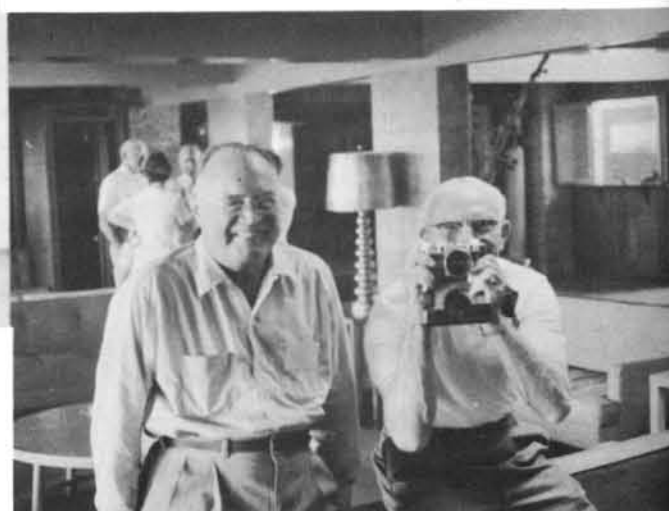
Plans for an occasional feature having a "way back when flavor" were being drawn up

## Watch these men! They are armed and should be considered dangerous!



Above: Fred gets ready to fire as Phil covers

Below: Step, tense and alert, watches as Phil, up to no good, aims and prepares to shoot



even before the Get-Together, with its thousand and one reminiscences, and this issue's Sand Pile in which Phil looks back over his shoulder. What do Phil's stories of yesterday bring to mind? Surely each of us has many of his own. We would like to throw open the doors for an "I Remember" column.

It is hoped that Aramco's historical picture files will provide some interesting material for illustrating such a series. Also, some of our readers may have pictures of the early days in Arabia which they would be willing to loan for this purpose. Any pictures (they must be black and white) provided for use in Al-Ayyam would be appreciated, treated kindly, and returned to the owner intact.

A sincere effort is being made to make Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila a magazine of substance and enjoyment. If it is accomplishing this end as time goes on, we would like to know — likewise, if it appears to be falling short of its goal. The only source of such information lies with the readers, and a response from them will be welcome indeed.



Doug and Ruth McConnell (standing), George Johnson, Lloyd and Pat Moore, Mimi Johnson, Andy and Evelyn Anderson



Facing the camera: Lois Luckenboer, Peg Wells and Alice Haskell

## Echoes

People talk, you know, and we eavesdropped on a number of the visitors at the reunion upon their arrival in New York — visitors meaning nonannuitants who were there, like the employees who are still waiting for the diploma which will entitle them to a place on the refugee roster. The reports were glowing, oft repeated and very interesting. The things we learned....well, here are some.

That it took seeing to believe it possible — that a gathering the size of the Get-Together could be held with not a single sour note throughout the entire affair.

That although it has been several years since many of the annuitants retired they all look better and happier today than when they started their retirement. This just confirms Phil's report, but it comes from some completely unbiased sources.

That everyone appears to be doing what he or she has wanted to do for a long time, and whether it is real estate, insurance or construction, it is the more enjoyable and satisfying because they don't have to do it.

That Bob King, in making his contribution to the program, said it looked to him like the annuitants were a lot busier now than they had seemed to be in Arabia.

That Herb Fritzie, whose present enthusiasm for retirement seems to confirm Bob King's

contention, says he's working an eight day week — he's on the job for five and it takes three to keep their place in shape.

That Roy Leblicher's amusing reminiscences at the dinner evidenced a facet of his nature which came as a surprise to many. Those who had known him only during working hours had little opportunity to enjoy the depth of his sense of humor.

That Al Haskell was thwarted repeatedly in his attempts to obtain the floor during the program (could be he's just not up on his rules of parliamentary procedure). He was finally permitted to introduce his canine friend in verse and was able to relax happily thereafter.

That no contribution of Phil McConnell's is ever complete without his rendition of "Old 405". This time, however, an unidentified (to now) box-like stringed instrument took the place of his usual guitar.

That an exceptional bond of friendship exists among those who have been associated with Aramco at different times and in different ways. This was emphasized by the large number of ex-employees whose presence can best be explained by their desire to join friends whom they hadn't seen for so long.

That no one was more happily welcomed than Mary and Tommy Marr — a heart warming tribute to courage and devotion.



CLASS OF SERVICE  
This is a fast message  
unless its deferred char-  
acter is indicated by the  
proper symbol.

# WESTERN TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

WU L PFB102 PD NEW YORK NY SEPT 16 955 PHE

A L ANDERSON

CASTLEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB PLEASANTON CALIF

PLEASE EXTEND MY BEST WISHES TO EACH AND EVERY ONE  
GET TOGETHER AND MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE COMM  
ITS RESOURCEFULNESS AND A JOB WELL DONE. SINCE  
REGRET I CANNOT BE THERE TO GREET YOU ALL IN PE

N HARDY ARABIAN AMERICAN OIL CO

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING

ARABIAN AM

NEW

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT  
J. G. HOSMER  
MANAGER

Dear Friends,

There's an old quotation that goes, "Words are easy  
like the wind, faithful friends are hard to find." The meaning  
of this is especially clear to me as I try to compose this little  
note of greeting to all of you at Castlewood.

As many of you know, Betty and I had planned to be  
among you today getting up to date on all your doings and remi-  
niscing over many pleasant field memories. Unfortunately, we  
can't be with you, but certainly want to share in the spirit of  
the occasion.

I could write a lot of words dealing with experiences  
shared with many of you, the trials and tribulations borne in  
common and many other things that come to mind from the so-called  
"pioneer days" of Aramco. But as the man said, "words are easy".  
The most important thing is the bond of friendship we have forged  
over the years.

In the spirit of friendship then, Betty and I send our  
most sincere best wishes to each of you, coupled with the hope  
that we'll see each other soon at other reunions in the years to  
come.

With kindest personal feelings,

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*

Mr. A. L. Anderson  
P.O. Box 4  
Saratoga, California

## ARABIAN AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

DHAHRAN

SAUDI ARABIA

F. A. DAVIES  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

July 1, 1958

Dear Andy:

We are told that you and an enterprising committee  
have been instrumental in planning a get-together for our  
annuitants in September. Needless to say, we are enthusiastic  
about it as a step in the right direction in sustaining con-  
tacts with old friends and associates. It has been said that  
"as we go along in life little bits of us get lost". Friend-  
ships founded during the early operations in Arabia are no  
small things and perish the thought they should become lost.

We wish we could be with you to greet our old friends  
and renew our old fellowship. As we write this in the midst  
of a broiling Arabian summer, the sound of Pleasanton,  
California, rings sweetly in the ears.

Much credit is due your arrangement committee for  
fostering the gathering. We are happy to have this concrete  
evidence that the energies and enthusiasms of Phil McConnell,  
Earl Beckwith, Ed Christiansen, Earl Duncan, Al Haskell, Les  
Jorgenson, Roy Leblicher, Bob King, Lucky Luckenbaugh and  
their ladies remain as we remember them here in the Field.

Permit us to congratulate you all upon this happy  
occasion. We hope it proves to be the first of a continuing  
series that will permit us to join in the fun when our tour  
is completed here in Arabia.

Further, we would like to convey to each one of you  
our sincere wish for your continued health and happiness in  
the "ayyam jamila" - the pleasant days ahead.

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*

F. A. Davies



# THE SAND PILE

Inasmuch as this is a special issue of Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila, I feel that I should try to put something special into this column, something to match the special experience of the annuitant gathering at the Castlewood Country Club.

Now that this excellent party is past, I need to make a confession. Although I drove north to attend the gathering, hoping for the best, I admit that I had some misgivings as to the success of the venture. After the years of separation from Aramco, I expected that many of the group would be strange to me. I expected that after we had warmly shaken the hands of old friends and sworn that they didn't look a day older, we would find little to talk about. We'd be reduced to discussing the weather and our latest stomach-ache.

But it didn't work that way. It is true that the weather did crawl into the discussion, because the Bay Area was having a hot spell; but the weather had to fight all manner of other subjects of conversation — conversation that usually started with screams of welcome followed by hugs and kisses (I tasted some of the best lipstick I can remember), and leaped around the place without effort from that point onward.

All of you at one time or another, have attended or given a party that was about as exciting as an old dish rag; and you also have attended or given the same type of party at another time

and discovered that everything was clicking, that the guests had taken over and that everyone was having the time of their lives. You seldom know why, but you do know that one party was a howling success and the other one wasn't. Well, the Castlewood party was one howling, screaming, chattering, back-slapping success.

I did hear that old gag that "You don't look any older than the last time I saw you;" but what surprised both Gertrude and me was that it was true in most cases. Most of the group didn't look older than we remembered them. Matter of fact, in most cases, they also looked healthier than at our last meeting. Did only the healthy ones come to the party? I can't say. But on the basis of the Castlewood gathering, I'd say that the Aramco annuitants are doing very well, thank you.

I don't want to leave the impression that the success of the party was due entirely to the annuitants. We had important help from a number of old friends: Aramco employees from the Field on home leave and some from the New York office, old associates from Bahrain, and some of our Bechtel side kicks. Nor was it exclusively a gathering of senior citizens; we had a pleasing sprinkling of younger people who gave a lift to the occasion.

I'm sorry for those of you who couldn't be there. You missed a rare experience: the general

friendliness and good feeling that enveloped the Castlewood gathering on September 16th.

A gathering such as ours at Castlewood is bound to give the "I remember" Club a field day. As the years increase, so does the size of the stories — which is fine with me so long as the stories are entertaining. So, before someone else gets the floor, I'm going to spin my own yarns drawn from the early days in Arabia.

The time that I remember best was from late 1941 to early 1943. I had come to Arabia from Bahrain at the beginning of that period, after the wives had been evacuated because of the war threat. The year and a half that followed gave me the profound experience of living with a handful of men and two women nurses, almost isolated from their homeland while the threat of attack grew around them — approximately a hundred Americans operating a concession as large as several western states, living in part off the land, and producing as much oil for our Navy as possible with the worn-out equipment left from earlier development.

I remember our first wedding. Ann Snyder, one of our two nurses, was marrying Bob Williams. I remember the old theatre and its meager decorations of white flowers — all the white oleander blossoms that our camp possessed. I remember arriving a few minutes late — and seeing the solid block of seated men all wearing dark coats with the white lines of collars showing above the coats. I'd forgotten that we

all had regular store suits. I remember the bride and the groom (he had a dark suit, too) standing before the minister imported from Bahrain, — the three beneath an arch of the oleander blossoms.

We had known of Pearl Harbor for only a few weeks. We were unpleasantly alone, not knowing what might happen next; but we had a wedding. To me, that wedding was a symbol of the attitude of our small group: to take events in stride, to be prepared to meet trouble when it came, but in the meantime, not to become panic-stricken. As Americans, we had learned certain forms connected birth and marriage and death. We did not propose to forsake those forms and the traditions they represented, merely because our enemy was on the loose.

And there was a lighter side of remembering — like the time the fish froze in the Gulf. Well, they didn't actually freeze, but the results were much the same. That was in the winter of 1941-42, one of the most severe of my time in Arabia. The low temperatures and the bitter wind caused a great deal of suffering among the Arab workmen; and there was evidence that some Arabs died from exposure. We were building a pipeline along the shore of the Gulf, to connect Dhahran with the oil shipping port of al-'Aziziyah. In the early morning hours of several of the bitterest days, the men working on the shore noticed a number of large fish floating in the shallow water, like sticks of drift wood. The Arab workmen promptly waded in and collected the fish (which were stiff and, to all appearances, dead),



"It happened this way —"  
Mrs. Miller, "Punk" Miller, Connie Stepney

Ellen and Bob Cooney, Bill Nix  
and Claude Enyart



then laid them on the bank above the reach of the waves. Later, as the sun rose and warmed the sand, the fish began to flop around. Some of them flopped back into the water and swam away before the Arabs noticed what was happening and killed those that hadn't escaped.

I was afraid that you wouldn't believe that one; but that is what a number of presumably reliable people reported. Seems to me that Cal Ross was on that pipeline job. He might be able to say whether the story is true.

I remember the days before the airport was built, the days when those who were returning to America departed from the Khobar pier for Bahrain and a BOAC plane; and I remember the standard ritual for male home leavers. With the launch some fifteen to twenty feet from the pier, the departing traveler was speeded on his way by four huskies who grabbed him by the arms and legs, and tossed him and such clothes as he might be wearing into the Gulf. When he rose sputtering to the surface, he was permitted to swim to the launch where sympathetic hands dragged his dripping carcass aboard. All males went in unless they were ill or disabled. We managed to stop this gentle parting gesture after we observed that the heads of one or two victims cleared the edge of the concrete pier only by inches as they curved into the Gulf. A concussion didn't seem to be a suitable requirement for home leave; so, the practice was dropped at the urgent request of our then Safety Engineer, Andy Anderson.

And this talk about home leaves recalls the time when Floyd Ohliger suddenly received word that Pan American had agreed to return fifteen of our men to America. Many had been in Arabia for from three to four years because of the problems of wartime transportation. Priorities on military planes and on commercial planes under military control (the only transportation available) couldn't be obtained. Then, without warning, the word came through about dinner time that the lucky ones had to be in Bahrain before noon the next day.

Most of those due to depart were drilling men spread out in desert operations. All through the night, cars were dashing over the dunes. Men were shaken from sleep with the harsh demand that they grab their pants and whatever happened to be handy, jump in a car and head for Dhahran. They drifted in all through the night – and all through the night, the houses of Dhahran were a-light, for few people cared to sleep and miss the farewell party. As the sun rose over the Gulf, the entire camp staggered to the pier and the waiting launch. This time, no one was dunked. It was an emotional parting, in spite of the wise cracks. Hand clasps were hard and tight. We waved them over the horizon – those who were going home. Half way to Bahrain, the launch stopped to make contact with a returning launch carrying a number of our group who, while in Bahrain, had heard the good news and were hurrying back to tell their friends good-bye. As you know, a drilling man is supposed to be sure-footed on a greasy rig floor; but the shifting deck of a boat is something else – and in the enthusiasm of that meeting in

Right: Step Stepney listening while Mace Freeland tells about the big one that didn't get away.



Lloyd Moore, Merle Hodges, Lucky Luckenbaugh and Warren Hodges

Nellie and Al Carpenter with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Baker



the Gulf, Skinny Daniels went overboard, bright home leave suit, expensive camera, watch, and all. They fished around and saved what was worth saving, including Skinny, rejoicing in the knowledge that the tradition of swimming part way to Bahrain had been preserved.

There was a war on in those days. We were reminded of that fact at approximately thirty minute intervals throughout our waking hours. We had been bombed once – a comic opera sort of bombing; but we never knew when it might be repeated more efficiently. We were trying to ship as much oil as possible to the Bahrain refinery by way of our leaky old barges and, at the same time, keep one or two drilling strings operating. We lived with shortages, we dreamt of shortages, we tied drilling equipment with wire, we made steam in ancient leaking boilers, none of which had a right to stay in one piece. We lived off the left-over food supply of the previous expansion program (some of which was pretty good) and what we could glean from the country. Remember Steve Furman's farm at Nejma: the scrawny cattle he fattened, the sheep and the gazelle and the chickens?

The chickens! Remember the incubator? Some one produced the bright idea: why not make an incubator and raise our own chickens? No one had experience with making incubators, so far as I can remember; but there were men in Casoc capable of making 'most anything. So, the incubator was built and someone discovered data on proper hatching temperatures. When the Arab employees learned of this plan, they were sure that American craziness had reached its limit – but when the chickens started to appear, they also knew it was another American trick, for anyone should know that only hens produce chickens. When the second batch of eggs was placed in the incubator, the Arabs asked that one of their number be permitted to stay on the job at all times to watch the machine. After this request was granted, they kept someone on guard day and night, just to be sure that the Americans slipped no chickens into the box. They were told that the eggs should begin to hatch about the nineteenth day; and when the nineteenth day passed without chickens, they were jubilant. But when the eggs began to pop on the twentieth day, and when more opened on the twenty-first, they gave up.



Foreground: Abigail Duncan, Gertrude McConnell, Sidney Keyes, Zella Lebkicher





*Tommy and Mary Marr talk with Sidney Keyes*

But if our Arab friends didn't know all about chickens, they did know much about camels, and the profit to be made from using them to haul supplies. Remember the time when camels replaced trucks for Casoc?

In the fall of 1942, wear and tear had reduced our trucks to the point where we couldn't transport enough supplies over the sand dunes to support our one rig drilling at Abqaiq. So, Cal Ross and that fabulous man of the desert, Khamis, started to round up Bedouin and their camels to carry lubricating oil, drilling mud, cement and similar materials from Dhahran to the field. A camel couldn't carry drill pipe and casing, but he could carry sacks of dry mud and cement — and even drums of oil.

The financial arrangements were simple. For each sack of mud or cement, or drum of oil delivered at the drilling location, the camel driver received a chit worth so much when presented to the Dhahran office. As the Bedouin at that time placed no value on the materials that he hauled, he had no incentive to keep them. He could get the chit, which he could exchange for cash, only by delivering sacks and drums in good condition; so, he went to great pains to avoid loss. I have seen sacks carefully sewn with twine and patched with hide and leather.

Cal and Khamis were surprised when Bedouin with over 500 camels reported for the haul. They had expected a fraction of this number; but there were the Bedouin clamoring for sacks and drums. Soon, they were arguing with each other for the right to load their camels.

Then someone reported that the Bedouin were stealing sacks of cement. A check showed that a certain group were loading their camels several times a day. As the round trip to Abqaiq required three to four days, the cement obviously was not being delivered where it was wanted. So, the scouts went out (I imagine that, as usual, Khamis was the man) and found the cement. It wasn't being stolen; it simply was being cached behind a sand dune a few miles distant. The Bedouin of one tribe had figured that with so many camels to haul supplies, the job would be finished too soon. So, they ganged together and started to develop their private dump out of sight of other Bedouin. They planned to deliver to Abqaiq after they had collected a comfortable back log for employment. And there have been certain ignorant Americans who have thought that



*With cash in hand, Earl Duncan waits his turn to do business with Andy*



*Bob Cooney and Dave Swindig*

*Andy and Evelyn take a martini break*



the Bedouin didn't know all the angles.

As I said, we tried to deliver oil to Bahrain in those days, by hauling it from al 'Aziziyah to Azzallaq in leaking barges towed by decrepit tugs. Some of the boys swore that they had seen fish swim through a hole in one side of a barge, and minutes later, swim out through a hole on the other side. While that may have been a slight exaggeration, the fact remains that we never were able to stop all the leaks. We worked as hard then to deliver ten thousand barrels a day as we did later to deliver a million. Barges frequently had to be removed from service and patched. About the time one was repaired, another would go aground as it was hauled through the twisting channel to Bahrain — or the engine of one of our



*Now that must have been a good one — Roy Lebkicher and Nellie Carpenter*

ancient tugs would quietly die, leaving tug and barge to roll helplessly as they drifted onto the nearest sand bar.

I remember a Christmas Eve when a storm drove the barges together, causing damage and threatening to further limit our oil deliveries. And I remember with admiration those cussing, half-drowned, near-frozen men of Casoc who struggled with those slippery leaking wrecks through Christmas Eve, risking their necks in their dogged struggle to repair the damage in the midst of a howling storm, sliding and slipping, even falling into the Gulf — but completing the job.

I remember so much, although I have forgotten so much. I remember the expedition to rescue



*Alma and Herb Fritzie facing the camera*



*The Steve Sweets get acquainted*



*Claude Enyart stashes his dinner ticket under Dave Swindig's watchful eye*

*Mrs. Ed Quiett standing behind Gertrude McConnell and Zella Lebkicher*



*Casper and Sophie Gee. Owner of the hand at the left isn't identified, but he has their rapt attention.*

*Candid shot! Al Carpenter didn't hold very still for this one.*



the British Hurricanes from a sabkha — the gazelle hunts — the soft ball game with Bapco, won by Casoc when Carl Larson crawled the last ten feet to home plate — and I remember Charlie Davis in his bare feet, leading the gang in tramping wet clay into the soft ball diamond. And I remember the three strong men of Casoc: Homer Flory, John Ames, and Hank Trotter — and that wonder man of the desert, Khamis. Bring me the tales of your Vikings, your Mountain Men, and your covered wagons, and I will match them with stories of Khamis and Flory and Ames and Trotter — and mine will be no more exaggerated than yours.

Yes. For a time, it is good to remember, to recall the achievements and to chuckle at the failures. For that is the privilege of man: to view the past as the beginning of the present, and by so doing, to give meaning to the future.

## Special Note

The following was sent in by Phil McConnell with the request that we pass it along. This we are very glad to do, although saddened by its message.

"In early September, I received a letter from Leila Eyre advising that Bill Eyre had suffered a bad stroke on May 21st, and had been in the hospital ever since. Leila asked me to pass this to Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila, as she wants Bill's friends to know of his condition. Leila reports that Bill's right side is paralyzed and that he is unable to speak. He has improved slightly, is able to sit up for a short time, and can feed himself with his left hand.

"Leila, of course, has a tough row to hoe in caring for their home and handling the problems of Bill's illness. I'd like to give her a pat on the back for the brave tone of her note...at the time, she was about to attack her lawn, aiming first at the grasshoppers, then at the crab and salt grass."

Here's a quick reminder of the address for those who wish to drop Bill a word: Wilfred C. Eyre, 1610 Colusa Street, Corning, California. We will all look forward to Bill's improved health in the very near future.

*Phil McConnell*

*Facing the camera, left, Pat Singelyn and Margaret Fitzgerald*



*Facing the camera, below, Fred Hamann, Elsie Sweet, Mrs. George Stephen, Gertrude McConnell and Zella Lebkicher*



*Ralph Chamberlin, Harold Baker, Tommy Marr and Dave Swindig*





## WE REGRET

Around one hundred replies were received by Andy from annuitants and a few former employees who were not able to be with their friends at Castlewood. Their cards, letters and telegrams came from literally all over the United States — Maine to California, Wisconsin to Texas — from Mexico and from Switzerland. Declinations in most cases included the writer's hope for the success of the affair and a request that his best regards be extended to those who could be present.

A sincere note of disappointment accompanied the varied reasons for not being present. Of those who told why they were obliged to miss the event, six were going to be out of the country — Canada, Mexico, Europe and East Pakistan — some for business reasons, some for pleasure. A few had already planned vacations in other areas. About a dozen said they were forced to forego the excursion because of illness, their own or in their immediate family. Some were just getting settled in a new home, some were still building their dream house.

Then there were about thirty-five who reported that full or part time jobs, business commitments or business trips would keep them away. Others were not inclined to let their horses, cattle or farms go unattended. A few said it was just too far from here to there.

But whatever their reasons for passing up this year's party, everyone seemed to feel it was a wonderful idea, and there was an almost unanimously expressed desire to be advised when the next reunion is held.

## Wednesday Morning Departures

Bob King with Ruth and Doug McConnell



Gene and Ethel Hughes, and The Charlie Brauns



Bob and Ellen Cooney



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Nix



The Herb Fritzie





## Orchids To You

How does a gathering such as that at Castlewood progress from an idea to a fact? Not by wishful thinking, not by hoping that someone else assume the burden of organization and planning, and will do the job. The annuitants in the Bay Area who worked to make this gathering a success, deserve the deep appreciation of all who took part in the affair. Andy Anderson, as committee chairman, Evelyn Anderson and their helpers spent freely in time and effort, assumed the considerable financial responsibility required, met and handled emergencies as they arose, and carried the party through to its highly successful conclusion. May we introduce all of the members of the committee — their efforts deserve the thanks of all who came to Castlewood.

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Anderson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Earl Beckwith  
 Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Christiansen  
 Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. Duncan  
 Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Haskell  
 Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Jorgenson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. King  
 Mr. and Mrs. Roy Leblicher  
 Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Luckenbaugh  
 Mr. and Mrs. P. C. McConnell

### In Memorium

After taking care of all of the expenses for the annuitants' gathering, the Get-Together Committee had thirty six dollars left over. This surplus was due to a larger attendance than was originally estimated and to savings on other items such as promotional expense.

The Committee has donated this surplus to The American Cancer Society in memory of Richard A. Bramkamp.

Andy — "Gee, I'm tired"



## Encore - By Popular Demand

Many of the annuitants have expressed the hope that this party would mark the start of annual or biannual gatherings. Not only were these sentiments expressed over and over by those who were at Castlewood. They appeared frequently in the messages from those who were regretfully not able to attend this year's affair, but had unbounded confidence in its outcome and wanted to be present next time. In view of the remarkable success of this event, that hope is surely a reasonable one.

Annuitants of the Bay Area, however, should not be expected to repeat their efforts immediately. Those in some other area, such as Southern California, which also contains a large concentration of annuitants should assume responsibility for the next meeting.

Plans for the Castlewood affair were begun in March; fulfillment came more than six months later. It sounds like a long time but hardly seemed adequate near the end for those who

carried the big responsibility for the party's success. Although a second gathering is a project for the future, some thought should be given to it now while the enthusiasm of Castlewood is still high. This is also true because of the time needed to plan, organize and execute an undertaking of such magnitude.

### This Came Over The Grapevine Too

That the George Johnsons may be moving from Missouri to California one of these days. Could it be that they just don't want to have to travel so far for the next Get-Together?

## Mail Call!

Since the Annuitants' Address List was mailed out last week, it was not originally intended to include a Mail Call section in the special issue. The following two addresses, however, in which you may be interested, were inadvertently omitted from the list:

Peter Duhart, 804 Baker Street, Santa Ana, California  
 Floyd W. Meeker, 124 Jefferson Street, Klamath Falls, Oregon



## Credits

The pictures which appear in this special issue were taken by Phil McConnell, Roy Leb-  
kicher and a commercial photographer engaged to  
take the banquet shots. Basis for the narrative  
material came from Phil, Andy, Roy and employees  
who came back to or through New York after the  
Get-Together. Sorry, there just weren't any reports  
from other annuitants.