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Merry Christmas

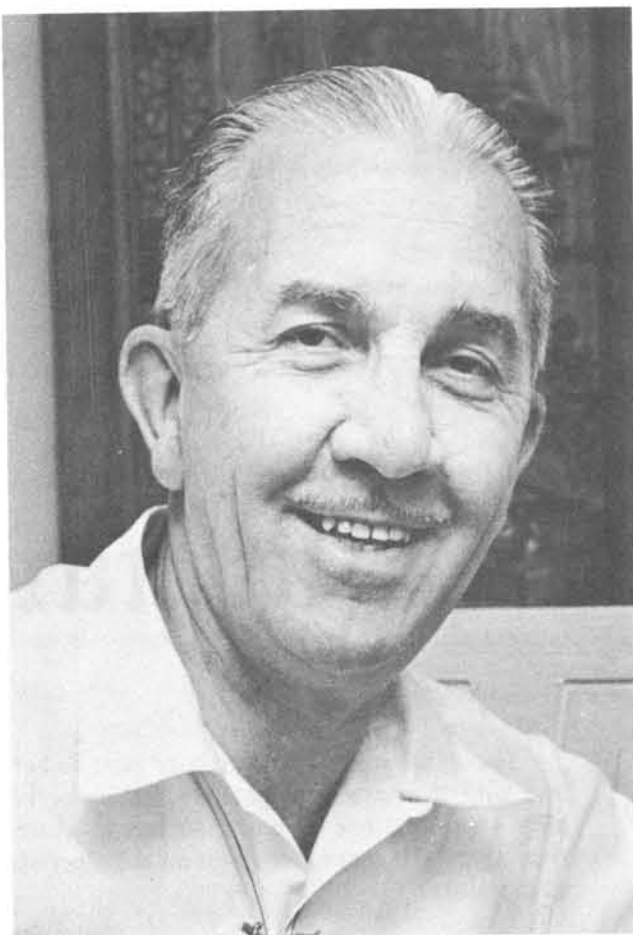
The season of Christmas once more is here, and with it comes a heightened feeling of kinship with each one of our associates, whether they live in the same town or on the other side of the globe.

This month, as we in Saudi Arabia hold our annual Nativity pageant, decorate our homes and get ready to receive guests over the holidays, we think of you and the similar preparations you are making, wherever you are.

One of the best things about Christmas is the wonderful occasion it gives each one of us to remember old friends with cards and messages of good cheer. May we use this occasion to wish you all Merry Christmas and the best of everything for the coming New Year.

Thomas C. Barger

Jazz Comes to Paradise, Calif.



Fred Graff

Around the first of March, Paradise, California, will be a real swinging town. FRED GRAAF, one of the organizers of the "Arabian Knight's Dixieland Band" which was the first swing band in Saudi Arabia, will be moving into his new home in Paradise about that time.

Fred's first assignment with Aramco was in the Purchase and Stores Department in Dhahran in February 1944. Later that year he was transferred to Ras Tanura to establish the Commissary there. As with any new venture, there was no lack of crises. Supplies were arriving faster than warehouses could be built. Everyone pitched in, working night and day, setting up the Commissary. When a refrigerator ship landed with tons of mutton in February 1945, the freezer rooms were not yet completed and the mutton had to be trucked to Dhahran for storage in whatever cold

space was available. By the time the second shipment of frozen foods arrived, the Commissary could accommodate it. In 1945 the air-conditioned Commissary was completed and storage space was no longer a problem.

There were light moments, too, and Fred recalls some of them: "Bunkhouse No. 7 was my Ras Tanura home during 1945 and 1946. Only Bunkhouse No. 14 topped us for spontaneous entertainment, due chiefly to such veteran organizers as Vic Stapleton, Bill Cooper and Charlie Johnson."

In 1948 Fred found himself back in Dhahran with Community Services. The Family Issue Store and Canteens modeled on American supermarkets were set up. Fred also was Santa Claus of a sort. He made annual trips to Nurnberg, Germany, to the Toy Fair where he selected the toys and decorations for Aramco families.

His last position in Dhahran was as local buyer in the Dhahran Purchasing division of the Materials Supply and Traffic department, General Office. He was assigned to this position in 1956 and his duties included assisting the development of local enterprise.

Fred was born in Estherville, Iowa, where his father operated several businesses. The family was musical and Fred was part of the family orchestra from the time he was six. He helped pay his way through Washington University in St. Louis with money he earned playing in bands.

Gladys and Fred plan to travel across the Pacific by freighter, stopping in Hong Kong and Hawaii. After this trip, they will be busy getting settled in their new home. Then there will be time for music and for photography and record collecting, Fred's hobbies.

W. A. Swains to Live in Beirut

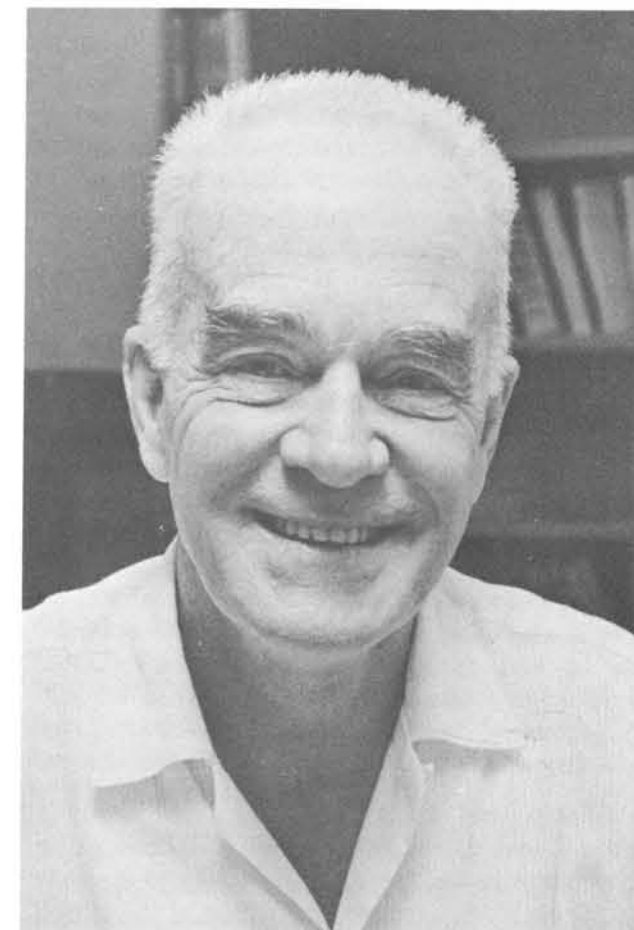
The Beirut Chapter of our club is gaining two new members when the W. A. SWAINS establish their new home. That's Lisette's home town and the place where she and Wilton were married. Wilton came originally from Nansen in Elk County, Pennsylvania, and received his early education in Kent, Ohio. He graduated from the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, with a degree in business administration.

Wilton's first job after college was with the Davy Company near Akron, where he was an accountant. Then came the first touch of wanderlust and he moved to the West Coast where he was also employed in accounting. One of his positions was as chief accountant for a steel brokerage firm.

Following his stint as chief accountant, Wilton joined Tapline and came to Aramco from Tapline in July 1947. In the first few months he was with Aramco, Wilton was practically a Dhahran-Ras Tanura commuter as he traveled between the two towns learning more about Aramco's materials system. He was assigned in Ras al-Mish'ab from October 1947 to March 1951. For the next two years he was in Beirut and it was during this time that he and Lisette were married.

When he was transferred back to Saudi Arabia, he was assigned to Abqaiq Accounting for the next five years. He returned to Dhahran Consolidated Materials Accounting in the General Office in 1958. During his career with Aramco, Wilton has worked in Accounting in each district.

Lisette and Wilton have many plans for their new life. You wouldn't miss the mark by much



W. A. Swain

if you guessed that they would be spending some of their time around the bridge table and hunting and watching sporting events, which are their three main hobbies.

it indicates another area in which men of retirement age will be employed.

The New Jersey Highway Authority announced that retired men over 65 will be hired as part-time toll collectors on the Garden State Parkway. These men will be on duty mainly during rush hours. They will be guaranteed a minimum number of hours' work each month.

N. J. HIRING RETIREES TO BE TOLL COLLECTORS

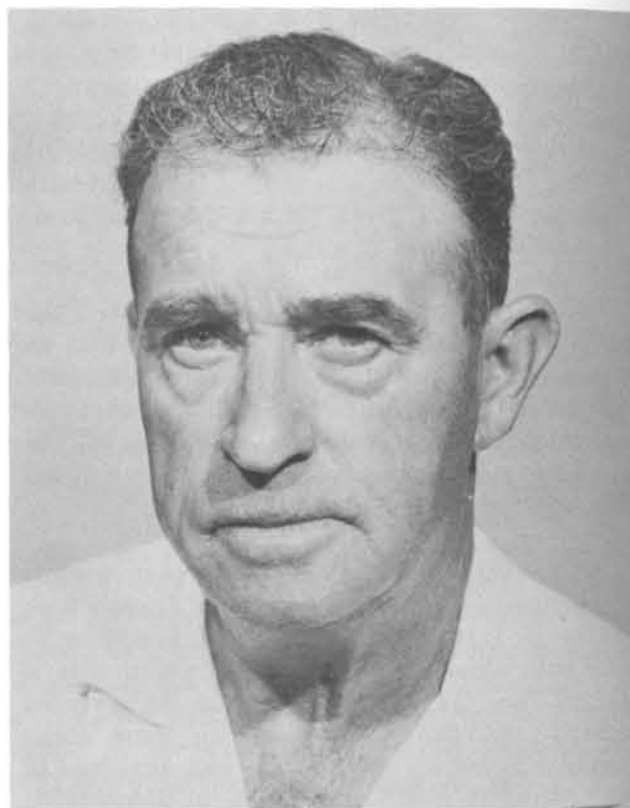
The New York *World Telegram and Sun* carried an item recently which should be of interest, as

"Fore!" in Anaheim

One of the mainstays of the Abqaiq Golf Club, GEORGE R. HANCOX, is transferring his game to the links in southern California. During the time he and Marie lived in Abqaiq, he was a member of the Inter-District Golf team for many seasons, and also took an active part in all the Club activities.

George arrived in Dhahran in September 1946 to take up his assignment as a journeyman carpenter in the Carpenter Section. The following year he put in a lot of time on the family housing project — which some of you may remember was known locally as "Skunk Hollow." In 1949 he became acting assistant foreman (carpenters) in Abqaiq. The "acting" was removed from George's title the next year. In 1955 he was promoted to foreman, masons and insulators. Three years later he was assigned to the position of zone maintenance foreman, his position when he left Saudi Arabia.

George and Marie are now living at 1844 Margie Lane, Anaheim, California. Before going to their new home, however, they picked up their car in Frankfort, Germany, for a tour of the Black Forest and other places on the way to Rotterdam. They shipped their car from Rotterdam to the



George R. Hancox

United States, where they drove across the country, arriving in Anaheim in early November.

Reduced Rate for Renewals Available

Personnel and Administrative Services Department has asked that we bring this information about *Retirement Planning News* to your attention.

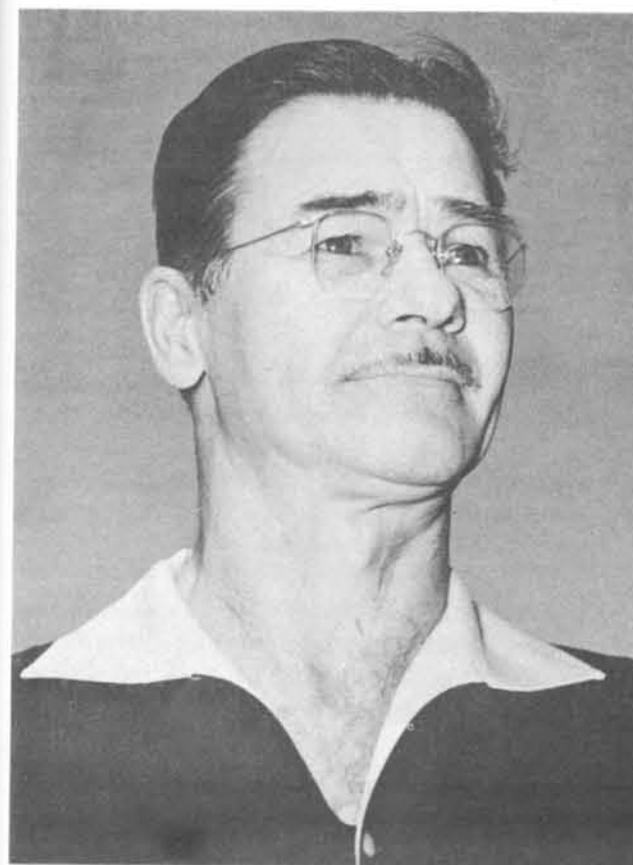
Many of the one-year gift subscriptions to *Retirement Planning News* which Aramco, Tapline and AOC arranged for their annuitants will be expiring soon. As you may remember, the original announcement indicated that anyone wishing to continue his subscription after the first year will have to make his own arrangements with the publisher.

The Retirement Council in Stamford, Connecticut, has advised us that these renewals are available for a special reduced price of \$5.00 per year. There is an additional charge of fifty cents for any subscriptions mailed outside the United States.

When you write to the Council about your renewal, be sure to identify yourself as an annuitant of Aramco, Tapline or AOC so that you will receive this special rate.

The Ed Osterhubers are

BOWLING 'EM OVER IN FLORIDA



Ed Osterhuber

with material control in the light car garage. When he left Dhahran in September, he was with the Consolidated Shops Materials Forecasting unit.

Ed was born in Newark, New Jersey, and spent some of his early years in Austria. He attended Newark schools and also studied electrical engineering at the Newark College of Engineering. In 1928 he took his first job, in the contracting business in Newark. He went to work for an auto manufacturer in 1931. Ed was a maintenance man for Cool Company and also service manager for Brockway Motors Trucking Co., before joining Couse Laboratories in 1937. Ed started as a model-builder for the Laboratories which were manufacturers of mobile machine shops. They also turned out trucks for the Burma Road; machine shops for Russia, Japan and the United States; and they conducted experiments with long-range radar.

Later Ed was sent to Canada, where he demonstrated mobile machine shops for aviation repair to the Norwegian Air Force, and for six years he traveled throughout the United States for Couse. His final position with them was as superintendent and plant manager.

Also, during World War II, Ed was employed as production manager for Harco Steel in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

In addition to bowling, Ed's other hobby is photography. In the early 30's, he was a weekend auto racer. He built the cars himself, incorporating Model-T and Model-A engines, and raced on dirt tracks in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Florence and Ed have two sons. One son, Robert, and his wife live in Abqaiq, where he is with Communications. Their other son, Richard, is with General Motors in Detroit.

The American Bowling Congress has reason to celebrate. Florence and ED OSTERHUBER are in Englewood, Florida, and they will be giving the sport a shot in the arm there. Both Ed and Florence were enthusiastic bowlers in Dhahran and members of the Bowling Association.

Ed's first assignment after joining Aramco in 1946 was in Dhahran with the road patrol. Because there were no radios in operation then, the roads were patrolled 12 hours daily to take care of any vehicles that broke down. In 1947 Ed was transferred to the motor room where he did engine overhauling. Two years later he started

MURPHYS' CHOICE - UNION, NEW JERSEY



Martin Murphy

MARTIN MURPHY has left Dhahran and he and Anna are now living in Union, New Jersey. They can get to the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York more easily now. And who would be after having a better reason to be there than the

Murphys? He was born in Wexford and Anna in Donegal.

Martin came to the United States when he was 20. His first job was with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in Union, where he was a locomotive fireman. Martin began studying marine engineering in 1936 and earned his license in 1939. When the railroads switched from coal, Martin was qualified to be a marine engineer and for the next ten years worked on the ferries and tugs in the New York harbor. During this time, he and Anna and their two sons and two daughters lived on Staten Island.

In 1950 he was employed by Aramco and assigned as supervisor of utilities in Dhahran. He spent his entire time in Dhahran, where he was utilities supervisor in the Utilities Division of the Mechanical Services and Utilities Department at the time of his retirement.

Before settling in their home in Union, Anna and Martin spent some time touring Europe. By now they should be catching up with the doings of their children and grandchildren.

Greetings from Bob and Thelma Loughboro

BOB and THELMA LOUGHBORO chose an attractive Christmas card this year. It had a covered bridge in a winter's landscape in color on the front. The message to all their Aramco friends read: "With every good wish for your Happiness this Holiday Season."

In the letter that came with the card, the Loughbors told how much they enjoyed seeing so many of their friends at the September reunion. They hadn't seen some of the people since 1942. The party, they thought, was a great success and they enjoyed every minute of it. "Sorry the rest of them couldn't make it."

Bob and Thelma enjoy their fishing and camping trips with their boat and trailer. They were in the High Sierras and also fished along the Sacramento River. We have it on good au-

thority that fresh or smoked salmon will not appear on the Loughbors' menu. It seems that the salmon always run best the week before and the week after the Loughbors go fishing.

On their trip they stopped to see LEILA EYRE, who took them to see BILL and BUTCH NEEDHAM and Helen Fox, who were camped just upstream from the Loughbors. The Needhams planned to stay until Bill caught a salmon. No report on their success, but Bob and Thelma did wish them well.

And here's a switch. The Loughbors didn't move; their road did. They're still in the same house, but their address is now Santa Rosa Road in Camarillo, California. Route 1 - Box 618 didn't change either.

Willisons in Their California Home



M. W. (Bill) Willison

M. W. (BILL) WILLISON is in California by now. He retired from Aramco on December 1, came

to New York, picked up a car and headed for the West Coast. He and Eleanor are now at 514 Alhambra Avenue in Monterey Park, California.

Bill joined Aramco in June 1950 in New York where he was hired as a construction superintendent. He came to Dhahran in August of that year and began work as a job engineer. He was later assigned to Ras Tanura and Ras al-Mish'ab. Most recently Bill worked in Abqaiq. It was here that he was promoted to senior engineer and then became superintendent, G. O. Construction.

Bill and Eleanor have celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary. Their daughter, Eleanor Jean, is now a senior at Linden Hall School.

Bill is postponing any serious plans for the future. Right now, loafing and fishing are high on his things-to-do list. We hope he'll keep us informed about his activities.

Charlie Gonzales Keeps a Promise



Charlie Gonzales with his grandchildren, Deborah and Steven Anderson, in their home in Bayport on Long Island.

children's mother is Charlie's daughter Genevieve.

Charlie has been very busy helping his other daughter, Pam, plan her wedding and furnish an apartment. He had a good time trying to match fabrics for her living room. Pam was married on November 26 in St. Gregory's Church in Harrison, New York.

The fall season was a special treat for Charlie. Trips into the countryside to see the foliage were especially appealing after being away from this part of the country for some ten years. Charlie also told us his new job is shaping up ok, but there is lots to be done.

"I do miss all my friends in Arabia," he wrote. He hears from some of them quite often and is always glad to see or hear from the people he knew. To all of them he sends best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

True to his promise, CHARLIE GONZALES sent us a picture of himself with two of his grandchildren, Deborah and Steven Anderson. The

Accounting for the Powells

the time of his retirement he was Staff Accountant.

After joining Aramco in 1946, Mel was assigned to Dhahran District Accounting where he served until 1952. In that year he was transferred to Staff Accounting.

Prior to joining Aramco, Mel had worked in San Francisco in the West Coast Life Insurance Company's accounting department, his first job, after graduating from Heald's Business College of San Francisco where he studied accounting. Mel spent ten years with American Trust Company banks. He was chief of accounting in the bank's branches in Santa Rosa and Palo Alto. During the war Mel worked in Bethlehem Steel's San Francisco shipyards and also in a defense plant in Sonora. After the war Mel served a term as office manager of the Price Administration in Tuolumne County, California. Just before joining Aramco, Mel was employed as an accountant for a construction firm in Sonora.

Mel and Janina, and their eight-year-old daughter Zofia, returned to the States by ship from England and plan to settle in San Jose. Mel and Janina met in Tehran in 1947 and were married the following year in that city at the American Mission. Once they have their home fixed up, Mel will probably use most of leisure time for his favorite hobbies, fishing, swimming and boating.

Melvin Powell

MELVIN POWELL and Janina have left Dhahran for their new home in San Jose, California. Melvin had been in Dhahran since 1946, the year he began his career with Aramco. At

The Wedding and Other Clan Happenings

BARNEY and HELEN McKEEGAN knew we'd all be interested in having a picture of their daughter, Maureen and her husband, Robert Dean Lansing. When Helen sent the picture, she also took time to tell us about all the things that had happened to the Clan.

Barney is being kept very busy in real estate. He works out of the office five days a week and he is on duty at the tract on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. He's beginning to build up a clientele in Richmond, California, and he's getting to renew many old acquaintances. He and Helen

are also enjoying the many social functions sponsored by the business and social groups to which Barney and his brother Ed belong.

As you'd expect, most of Helen's letter was devoted to Maureen's wedding. From Easter Sunday, Helen was fighting her way through yards and yards of taffeta and organza, fashioning the wedding dress. "It took me two months of sewing — and shook nerves — but I did it! Maureen was very pleased with the results and looked like a queen as she walked down the

aisle, on the arm of her very proud father, on September 3." The marriage took place at a nuptial Mass in St. Callistus Church in El Sobrante, California.

"Barney and I were so very, very proud of our children and our new son-in-law. They all looked so handsome. Sharon was maid of honor and our two daughters-in-law, Kimiko and Annemarie, were bridesmaids. They all wore aqua blue with blue accessories. Sharon carried yellow and white chrysanthemums and the bridesmaids carried yellow mums. Our eldest son, Barry, was an usher and Alan, with equipment all over the place, was official photographer.

"Bob is employed by Convair Astronautics at Vandenberg Air Force Base. Since he could not get time off for a honeymoon trip, they went to their apartment in Lompoc. Maureen wanted to get started at the job she prefers — homemaking. We McKeegan women are sort of old-fashioned, I guess — we like our homes and housekeeping."

Sharon graduated from Notre Dame High School in Belmont in June and is attending Contra Costa Junior College which is only about a mile from home. She is still planning a career in medicine.

The McKeegans have been host to many friends from Arabia the past few months. Alpha Hennig stopped in. Paul Helwick was another guest, and Al and Fran Kienholz and their children spent a day with Helen and Barney. Al Singelyn had lunch with Barney a few days before Maureen's wedding and stopped off to say "Hello." One of the guests at the wedding was Ardith Manson Pimenta.

Helen wrote another letter after the Reunion to tell how much they all enjoyed seeing so many of their friends at the Miramar. Afterwards she and Barney drove to San Diego and Chula Vista to visit relatives. On the way back they visited some of the Missions, San Miguel, Santa Barbara and Capistrano. San Luis Rey was closed, but they peeked through the windows. They also toured the museum at Presidio Park, the old town and the place where Ramona was married in San Diego.

"Naturally, I added two carved Madonnas to my collection. Since we returned, I have received another of Leerdam crystal from Holland through the kindness of 'Tex' Schaefer and her son,



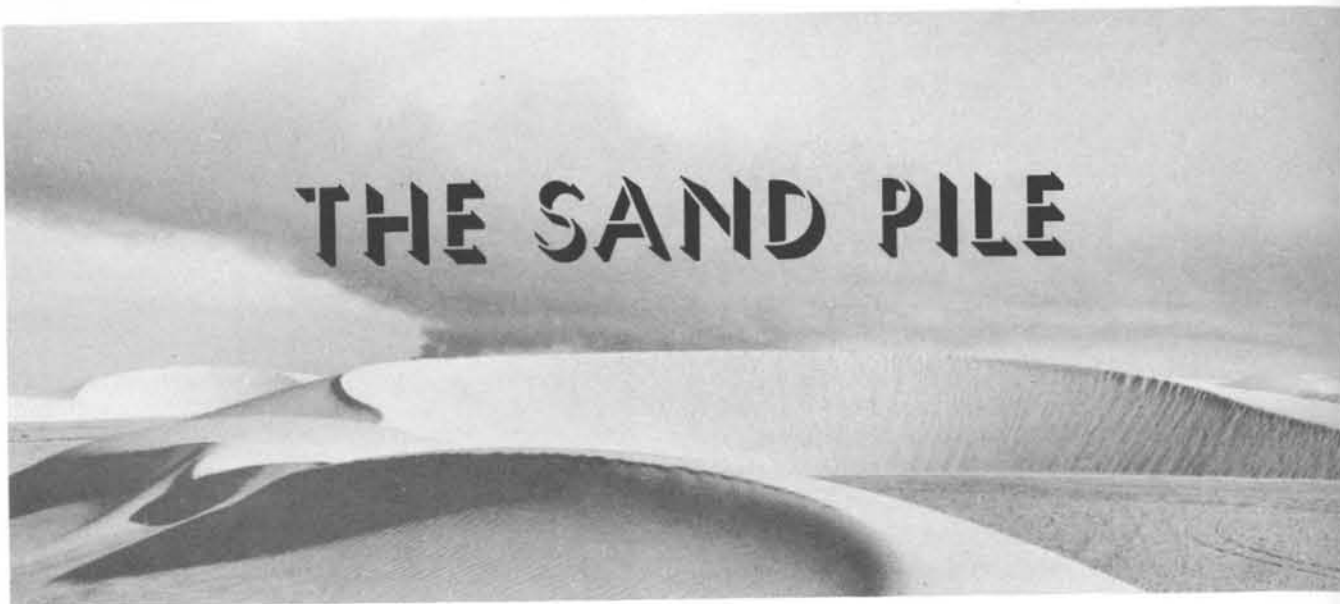
Robert Dean Lansing and his bride, Maureen McKeegan. Helen McKeegan made the wedding dress which Maureen is wearing.

Donny. So far I have 16 statues, three copies of paintings and four wall plaques."

Helen is active in a morning bowling league. When she started, her average was 140. She smoothed out her hook shots and got her average up to 148. She was going to wear her Saudi Arabia 200 pin and see if it would bring her average to 150 at least.

"We are all busy and healthy and quite happy. Barney is up to ears in real estate and I'm just up to my ears! Right now I have Christmas cards to get off, just under the wire, so they will reach Arabia before June or July. I hope to send cards to all our friends in the States; but should I fail to do so, please extend our best wishes to everyone for a very Merry Christmas and a New Year of an abundance each would enjoy — plenty of fishing, beautiful gardens, travel (more?) and *wajid* sales in real estate for those retired realtors — and good health and happiness. Our very best to all, with the latchstring out at the same old address, 3137 Benjamin Drive, Richmond 10, California."

THE SAND PILE



Southern California had its first rain of the season today — which is reason to be optimistic for the future. If we haven't had more rain by the time you read this, my optimism will have shriveled and blown away — but for the moment, I am encouraged. After two years of near drought in this part of the world, the gentle drumming of rain on the ground has become one of the most welcome of sounds.

I recall that as a boy, I hated rain. It meant chores performed with my overalls sticking wet and cold against my legs, the push of damp fingers of chill into the back of my coat. It meant slippery mud, and the sting of a cow's wet tail slapped around my head as I drew her milk. Perhaps if I had to milk a cow again, I'd dislike rain as much as ever. It's a matter of viewpoint.

Jet-Age Memories for Jet-Age Kids

Which shows how our environment affects our thinking. What will the youths of today remember when they are in their sixties and seventies? They'll recall their first stripped-down automobile, the jet liner ride to New York, and the home-made space rocket that blew up on the ground. Perhaps they'll remember that Channel 9 always was bad on the TV — or that time someone dropped a transistor radio in the high school air vent, where it played Rock 'n' Roll until the

janitor ripped open the heating system. One thing is sure: they'll not remember milking a cow.

Which brings me to my latest news concerning the space age. Recently, I heard a man presenting reasons why we want to send men to the planet Mercury. In the first place, Mercury is the planet nearest the sun, a mere 36 million miles distant, which is practically next door, astronomically speaking. So, if we can establish ourselves on Mercury, we will have a grandstand seat from which to observe what happens on the sun.

Is Phil Planning a Trip?

Now, I repeat that this is approximately what the man said. He did admit that in addition to the problem of getting there and returning, a few other difficulties might be encountered in staying for an appreciable length of time. Mercury has the same habit as the moon of keeping one face toward the body around which it revolves; so the same side of Mercury always is turned toward the sun, and the same side always remains in the dark. However, the planet wobbles a bit, which provides a sort of twilight zone, sometimes light, sometimes dark.

But here is another angle. Because Mercury hasn't much atmosphere to regulate temperature, this twilight zone, where man might manage to live briefly, probably shifts rapidly from brilliant light and temperatures above boiling, to intense

darkness and temperatures several hundred degrees Fahrenheit below zero — which would be quite a change for a summer day. (I can hear people already complaining that they don't like living on Mercury because of the climate.) How much insulation do you suppose would be required to protect a man from a change of four or five hundred degrees of temperature?

Here's Another Reason

The second justification advanced for travel to Mercury would be the collecting of gases existing in that planet's atmosphere but extremely rare in ours. I don't imagine that gas collection on a commercial scale would be attractive (running around Mercury collecting gas in a bottle sounds sort of silly), but perhaps a couple of cylinders charged with the stuff would assist some of our research projects.

Which brings us to another interesting theory about Mercury. Suppose, the theory goes, that these rare gases form on the hot side and then drift around to the cold side. Once subjected to cold near absolute zero temperature, they might solidify. Once turned solid, they never would have a chance to drift back to the hot side, but would remain as a steadily accumulating weight on the cold side. This might account for the thin atmosphere on the hot side — because the gases are constantly being drained away, never to return.

And finally, what is the possibility of life on such an inhospitable spot as Mercury? Obviously, it couldn't be the sort of life that exists on the Earth. But what about some other form, one that could stand the tremendous changes in temperature, that could exist in the presence of rare gases which do not include oxygen? A substance that has the ability to reproduce itself might consist of elements other than carbon and hydrogen. It might consist of silicon and reproduce itself by growing new sections.

Crazy, huh?

Probably so. But can you prove that it's crazy?

New Vistas Opening

The significant feature of such mental gymnastics lies in the realization that man may be near to a new realm of knowledge so blinding,

so overpowering in comparison to our present concepts that we may stand today as children in the dark, waiting for a door to open to a room of brilliance.

Are we prepared for it — morally, spiritually? Is man prepared to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge? We haven't done too well with our learning to date, insofar as living together is concerned.

And speaking of the modern trend, a driver of a hot rod stopped to help a farmer start his ancient Model-T. The hot rod lad tied onto the Model-T and told the farmer that he would pull him until the motor started. He told the farmer to honk when that happened, then took off with his exhaust open, which drowned the sound of the farmer's honking. They roared through a small town, picking up speed as they went. A few minutes later, the local traffic officer phoned his chief that he was quitting.

"What's wrong?" the Chief asked.

"I've had enough. I just saw a sports car go through here at a hundred miles an hour."

"That's not so unusual."

"No. But this one had a Model-T behind it honking to pass."

A few items for the Queer World section of this column:

Of Boxes and Banks

The first one happens too often, even in our modern world, and isn't funny; but it still reminds me just how primitive we can be. A widow, I read, cleaned her closet recently and, in the process, tossed out an old shoe box with the rest of the trash. Later, she remembered that the shoe box held her life savings represented by seventeen \$100 bills. By the time she reached the trash dump, she learned that her shoe box had been destroyed with the other refuse.

Why do people keep large sums of money around the house unless it is in a safe? Haven't people heard about banks? Haven't people heard about interest on savings accounts? The explanation must be the primitive concept that, if it's close to me, I can guard it.

But if people are queer, what about some of our laws that queer people make? The other day, when I bought some pre-shave lotion to be used ahead of my electric razor, I learned that the lotion wasn't subject to excise tax. I wanted to know why. (Not that I wasn't able to rise above the habit of paying taxes; I simply was curious.) Because it is used *before* shaving, I was told. If I bought *after* shaving lotion, I'd have to pay excise tax.

The McConnell Theory of Taxation

This opens a great new field of taxation theory: determining tax exemption on the basis of whether you've shaved. I view this decision with alarm as it will throw all the shaving barbers (and there aren't many left) out of work. Gillette no longer will sponsor the World Series telecast, for its blades will go out of existence. I suspect that this is a move by the feminine politicians, who rarely shave, anyway.

The defense against this ruling is obvious. Buy all your toilet articles to be used *before* you shave. Leave that till last.

And next, I find this in the report of a columnist recently returned from Hong Kong. As many of you have been in Hong Kong, I ask you if you ever heard the weird advice offered by this columnist concerning eating in that charming colony.

"Never turn a fish over when cutting it, as it means bad luck for someone going on a trip."

(Please explain how you eat the bottom side of a fish, if you don't turn it over. Possibly with chop sticks. . .)

"If the head of the fish is placed. . . pointing toward you. . . it means you're the guest of honor."

(Possibly so. I've never been a guest of honor. Will some guest of honor please corroborate?)

"The highest honor comes when the host gives you the fish's eyeballs."

(Who's been stealing our Saudi Arab customs - and is this one as big a gag as its Arabian equivalent?)

And the final bit of wisdom: "Never order snake soup or bears' claws in the summer time - people will know you're a tourist."

Although I have eaten cow's stomach, prehistoric eggs, regurgitated bird seed and half soles sauteed, in Hong Kong, I don't recall exposing myself to the snake soup and bears' claws; but I shudder now when I think of the danger that I have escaped: the shame of having been recognized as a tourist. I'm sure that my problems with the language, my new Hong Kong suit, the armload of parcels just purchased by my wife and the three cameras strung around my neck would never give me away. And moreover, I think it's an exaggeration to say that a ricksha boy on the Victoria pier can spot a tourist on the Kowloon side, several miles distant. I don't think he can see that far.

Here are a couple of definitions for your dictionary.

Adult Western: One in which the hero is smarter than the horse.

Antique: A piece of furniture that is paid for.

The political news continues to remind me that as a senior citizen (and isn't that a smooth designation - much more dignified than "one of the old folks"), I am growing in importance. As I possess at least an average amount of egotism, this improved status pleases me, even as it may other senior citizens. In fact, I suspect that I should exercise some care to retain that small sense of balance that I may have developed over the past sixty-five years. In view of this attention that is coming my way, I run the danger of violating the eleventh commandment which, freely translated, reads: "Thou shall not take thyself too darned seriously."

Now the cold and obvious fact is that our political leaders are awakening to the increasing size of the senior citizen vote. This recent upsurge of concern for the aged may be regarded with something less than gratitude, rather as evidence that because of our numbers, and regardless of our intelligence or lack thereof, it may be good political business to become interested in us. If we are becoming a political force, perhaps we should give some thought to what we are going to do with our influence.

No Danger of Bloc Voting

If all Americans over sixty were agreed on any given issue, we could swing nearly any vote

for the action we favored. However, Americans over sixty are apt to have as diverse opinions as Americans under sixty; so I wouldn't expect to find the oldsters much more united on national issues than their junior associates - except, like other pressure groups, on actions that benefited them directly. The fact that we are inclined to think for ourselves and can't be led as a body is encouraging. One of the dangers to free government is the behavior of large pressure groups acting only for their own interests. When the leaders of labor or agriculture or the veterans or similar groups are able to control the votes of their supporters, our government is threatened to that extent.

Experience Counts at Local Level

But I suggest (and this is the point of my political eruption) that the senior citizen does possess certain special qualifications for supporting sound government in his own community. At the local level, the right way and the wrong way to act are more easily identified than on the national basis. You may not be sure whether we should recognize Red China, but you know darned well that Joe Blow is trying to have his land zoned for manufacturing so that he can build a tannery on it and ruin the air of the homes down wind. My neighbor is an ardent Democrat who disagrees violently with my Republican theories of state and national government; but we work in complete harmony for consistent zoning, for a new sewer system, for an effective police force, even for county officials who are elected on a non-partisan basis.

At this local level, where the facts are before him, the common sense that the senior citizen should have acquired over sixty to seventy years should be an asset. Oh, I admit that many of us at that age will continue to cling to our bias and prejudice, even as we did when we were younger; but a percentage - a percentage, mind you - can be expected to have developed some judgment. For that reason, as a group, we ought to exercise a sound balancing quality. Here on the local level, you and I, as senior citizens, might unite for some benefit to the community and the country.

Letter to a Granddaughter

I've just finished a letter to my grandchild - which may be a surprise to some of you who labored under the impression that we had no grandchildren. I should explain that this is a

relatively new arrangement brought about by the enthusiasm of a Japanese girl of fourteen, whom we met when we were traveling on Japan's Inland Sea in 1959. For a few hours of that trip, we visited with a group of Japanese school children heading for a summer holiday. One little girl was especially friendly; and when the group left the ship at an island port, she stopped at the head of the pier after the others had disappeared and continued to wave. Through the activities of casting off, her arm pursued its enthusiastic pumping, even as the ship turned slowly and headed out to sea. As the shore receded, the small figure in the red dress continued to wave, continued until she became a speck on the shore and then was lost to sight.

A few weeks after our return to California, I received a thick letter from Yoshiko Sharai. Did I remember her? Would I write to her? She was learning English (and very well, I thought), but was deeply apologetic because she felt that she still didn't understand the more difficult words. And she closed by again hoping that I would write.

A Diplomatic Birthday Cake

The correspondence has bloomed since then. Yoshiko was so enthusiastic about her new American friend that she baked a birthday cake for him and decorated it with thirty-six candles (which is enough for anyone). I expressed appreciation for the cake but regretfully explained that she would have to add several more candles to indicate my true age - and that she should face the harsh fact that I was old enough to be her grandfather. Her reply was illuminating.

"I am regrettable that your birthday has gone. I made ready thirty-six candles for your birthday. I thought thirty-six candles were sufficiency for your age so I was taken by surprise, but I am happy because I can be your grandchild."

Yoshiko recognizes the problems of our correspondence.

"I received your letter last Monday. Hole this week I read your letter and tried to understand your letter. Yesterday I finished reading and understood well. Your letter is little difficult for me. . . I think my letter is too easy for you, but I can't write more difficult. Please do not be

angry. If you wait, you can see more easy to understand letter."

Is Yoshiko an average little Japanese girl? If she is, I am inclined to the belief that little Japanese girls must be an extraordinary class. Listen to her humor and her imagery:

"... I must tell you one important thing that if words are misspelled the fault lies in my pen which can't speak English very well ...

"I have one grandmother in Toyohashi. In U.S.A. I have one other grandmother who is your wife so you are my only grandfather ...

"I am learning the tea ceremony because Mother told me to be graceful. Whenever I do it, my heart can be quiet so I like it very much ...

"My bother has a typewriter which speaks English, but when I use it, it says, 'Ton! Ton,' like raindrops. If you want me to type a letter, I will do so, but you must make up your mind because my letter can't reach you early times."

Last spring, I told Yoshiko that a couple of our close friends were planning to visit her home city of Kobe and that they would arrive by a certain freighter. The day of arrival proved to be one of mist and drizzle. Our friends left the ship early on business, then contacted Yoshiko's family and learned that Yoshiko had gone out to board their ship and welcome them. When they finally returned to the ship that evening after meeting Yoshiko and her family, they found their cabin loaded with flowers.

Over the months, my granddaughter's English

has improved — and I am slightly disappointed, for I shall miss her delightful twist of the words as she learns to use them with conventional conformity. But I can hope that no matter how familiar she may become with this new language, she will never cease to hear the typewriter say, "Ton! Ton," like raindrops.

The mail is beginning to be cluttered with suggestions for Christmas gifts, indicating that the holiday season is not far away. Apart from its frantic confusion, its exhausted crowds and its herd-like spending, it remains the best time of the year. We often are scolded (and properly) because we fail to keep the Christmas spirit with us throughout the year. But how wonderful it is that we can hold it for a few weeks!

A Christmas Thought

The Christmas issue of our magazine should be the most personal, should contain the most news from old friends — for this most friendly of seasons can be the loneliest for those who cannot share it with others. So, while I send to all of you a wish for a Merry Christmas, I add the hope that you will help to open this merry season to someone who needs your companionship.

All the Season's Best,

Phil McConnell

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM BEIRUT

MARY and BILL EDDY made use of an interesting device for their Christmas card. It was a printed letter addressed to family and friends, in which the doings of all members of the Eddy family in the past year were summarized. We are including those portions which we think you would be most interested in:

"We have often told you of the charm of Lebanon: the mountains and sea together; the historic sites: Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Crusader and Arab; the happy meeting-ground and melting-pot of East and West, of Muslim and Christian. We find one delusion held by many who come for the first time, who have been led to believe that the Arab world is infested with

dictators and communists. Lebanon suffers, not from dictators but from far too much democracy and laissez-faire. Freedom is so rampant that citizens exercise it in utter disregard for traffic cops, gendarmes, zoning laws or tax collectors. A one-way street is negotiated the wrong way by taxi drivers backing up it at twice the normal forward speed, and to the demurring cop they explain blandly that they are facing in the right direction.

"The other day the inmates of the Beirut Citadel Prison went on strike and rioted. Why? Because a guard had confiscated a dagger brought to a prisoner by a visitor. Surely no self-respecting criminal can tolerate an oppressive government which denies him his rights to a dagger.

"Recently, the municipality introduced traffic lights at a few dangerous crossings. Drivers were outraged by the red lights as a bull is inflamed by a red rag, and the police were both roundly cursed and thoroughly ignored. The solution to make everyone happy, as noted with surprise by Barbara Hayward but not by us, was to put green lights on all four sides of the

crossing. Say not, please, that we live in an autocratic, totalitarian State!

"Mary has not let up one bit in her full program of welfare work, aiding Palestine refugees, exploring, hiking, swimming, tennis and bird-watching. She is known everywhere as an authority on the birds of Lebanon, and she is in regular correspondence with top ornithologists at Yale, in Germany, and at the British Museum (whose 'Bird Room' stationery is something swanky to see). I am not jealous; like Carmen, I am content 'just to let the birds fly around,' respecting their privacy as to their names and body markings. Anyway, why should I object? Collecting data on birds is much cheaper than if she collected jewelry.

"We plan to return to the USA in October 1961, and hope to stay over Christmas. As previously, we will probably spend a month in Washington to be near our daughters and our many DC friends. A visit, of course, to each of our sons in the Middle West. And, we hope, another visit to our beloved Hanover, N. H. No letter like this next year, when we hope we will be seeing many of you in person."

Doings and Greetings from the Gees

From Pomona, California, SOPHIE and CASPER GEE sent their warmest seasonal wishes to all their friends. They hope that the year ahead will be a happy and prosperous one for everyone.

Casper sent us the program for the installation of officers of the Claremont Chapter of the Order of De Molay, of which he is the advisory chairman.

The Gees had a reunion with a former Aramcon, Vic Posta, whom they had not seen since 1945. The reunion came about in an unusual way. Casper has had some Letters to the Editor published by the Los Angeles Times, and Vic happened to see one of them and put a call through to Pomona. Casper said that Vic is doing quite well working on oil leases and has three wells of his own in Yorba Linda. Casper also saw

Carl A. Handschin recently. He is also a former Aramcon. Now he is assistant divisional manager of salary savings for the Equitable Life Assurance Society and lives in southern California.

During the election, Sophie served as a member of the precinct board. Since she's studying American Government at night school, this gave her a chance to see part of the system in actual operation.

Casper gave two lectures at the Ganesha High School, one a travelogue and the other political. He also has an engagement to speak at the Lions Club in Ontario, California. In mentioning these activities, Casper went on to say, "Oh well, it's fun and keeps me young, says me. And look at all the people I meet and the free meals I get."

Work and More Work for Jim Keck



There's a warm welcome awaiting any Aramcons stopping at the Kecks' home in Florida.

There's never a dull moment at 4829 5th Street South in St. Petersburg, Florida. JIM KECK was most anxious that we have this picture of their home for the December issue, but he was worried that he wouldn't get them

out on time because he was on a trip to the hills of Tennessee.

Among Peg and Jim's visitors have been Eleanor Ladner and Don and Inez Wasson. They mentioned that this proved St. Petersburg was not too far off the beaten track and thus they are hoping for more visitors.

Their house is on approximately a half-acre of land. Jim is sure the picture will explain fully why he has constant callouses and aches and pains.

The Kecks were written up in a newspaper recently and the article mentioned that they had been in Saudi Arabia. Since then, "we have had *wajid* correspondence. Everyone wants to sell us something." But the one letter they remember above all came from a widow who said she owned her own home and car but was so lonesome. She wanted to know if Jim and Peg knew of a likely single man in Arabia who wanted to exchange letters.

Peg and Jim closed their letter by extending their "best wishes to all for the coming holiday season."

There's Music in the Air

From Scottsville, Virginia, come warm greetings from EV and BELA BARNES. Bela, because of the time of year, was hunting, but Ev wanted to be sure to wish all their Aramco friends, both active and retired, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

They hope that all the other annuitants are enjoying their new lives as much as they are: "The year has been a good one. The yearling steers have been sold; the pastures are being limed and fertilized; and we are bedding down the farm for the winter. The strawberries are mulched and the last of the bulbs were planted

yesterday (November 28) when it was 75° here. The bobwhites are plentiful but elusive, so Bela and Hank, his pointer, are having a wonderful time."

Something new has been added to the Barnes' home — an electronic organ. Their new hobby is giving them loads of fun and pleasure, even though Ev modestly says they do not play well.

"As our Yule log burns, we will think of you all and those far-away Arabian days, and in our hearts ask God's blessing upon you all. Come see us. Merry Christmas."

Busy Times for the Keiths



Marion and Homer Keith are a good ad for Florida as they pose on the patio of their home in Clearwater, shown left.



MARION and HOMER KEITH sent along some pictures when they wrote their Christmas letter this year. They are finding that there's more to retirement than just sitting around. Homer keeps busy with his many projects, caring for the garden and reading.

Marion is a member of the board of the Republican Club in Clearwater, Florida, the Women of the Church of the Trinity Presbyterian Church, and the Clearwater Women's Club. In the latter group she is the second vice president, in charge of membership. Many of you will remember that

is nothing new for Marion, because she was one of the founders of the Women's Club in Abqaiq and organized the Book Review Club which later merged with the Women's Club.

The Keiths entertained Liz and Harry Egly last winter. They enjoyed talking about the good old days and the good new days, too.

Marion and Homer sent their very warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all their friends among the annuitants and in Saudi Arabia.

Year 'Round Gardening in Portugal

LEDA and DON MAIR wish all their friends "a Merry and Healthful Christmas and more of the same for the New Year." They are hard at work on their winter garden — as if one garden a year wouldn't be enough. But that's Portugal for you.

Many of their friends have visited the Mairs at "Nosso Sonho." Mr. and Mrs. Jack Berlin,

from the Consortium, spent two days with Leda and Don. Warren and Merle Hodges passed through on their way back to Saudi Arabia. While the Mairs were on vacation in Central Europe, they met and spent considerable time with the Will Drumms, Miles Lupien and Everett King and others, renewing old acquaintances and catching up on the news.



Leda and Don Mair in an uncharacteristic pose — sitting on the terrace of their home in Monte Estoril, Portugal.



"Nosso Sonho" in the background, and the owners of the dream in the foreground.

Highlights of the Haskells' Tour of Europe

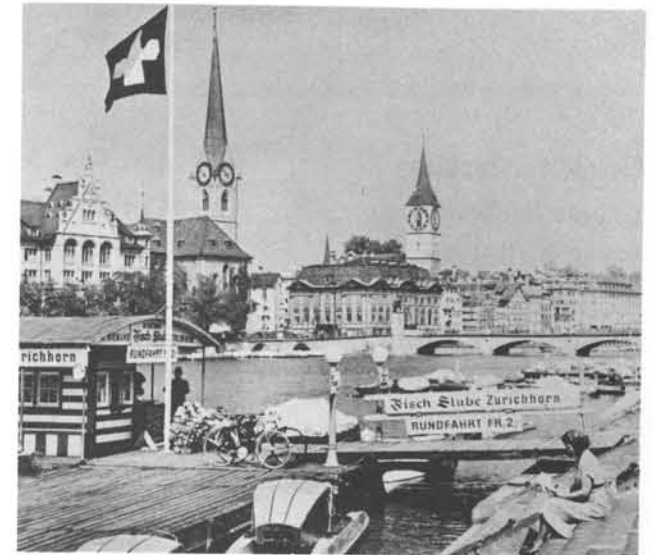
AL and ALICE HASKELL took a wonderful trip last spring and summer. They went from Los Angeles to New York by jet, and sailed aboard the *Independence* on April 23 for Naples. They visited Sicily, Greece and the Aegean Islands, including Rhodes, Delos and Crete. After a five-day visit in Istanbul, the Haskells traveled by ship along the Yugoslav coast to Trieste. They went by train to Venice, Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Milan, the Italian Lake country, Genoa, Monaco, Nice and Cannes. The next stop was Paris where Al lost his camera to some &\$\$%\$% thief. After The Hague, they went to the Scandinavian countries. Copenhagen, Goteburg, Oslo, Stockholm, and then back to Germany and Switzerland where they saw Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Nuremburg, Munich, Heidelberg, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Luzerne and Zurich.

The Haskells passed through Innsbruck again, this time on the way to Oberammergau. They toured the canals of Holland and used various modes of transportation to see a great deal of that country. Their last stop was Rotterdam where they boarded the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. They landed in New York eight days later on September 14.

Alice and Al made it a point in Europe to get off the beaten track and wander about in the various places they visited. They talked to many people, took many excellent photographs and took notes on their experiences and impressions. Nevertheless, they were glad to get home. Al says he has been busy ever since he got back trying to earn a few bucks.

All the pictures they took are in color, a fact which prevents our using any in Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila. A little too modestly, Al said that "no doubt anyone who sees them has better. But if

The Town Hall in Stockholm, Sweden.



The Haskells visited Zurich, Switzerland, with its tenth-century cathedral, shown left center.

anyone wants to drop by our house (1076 Serrano Court, Lafayette, California), I will compare, exchange or even give some of them away."

To complete their report, Alice and Al wish to be remembered to all their friends. They wish them a very happy holiday season and hope that they will find health, prosperity and happiness in the New Year.

Christmas Greetings

From the Jacobsons

We were very happy to receive a card from MILDRED and MALDOR (JAKE) JACOBSON. They sent their best wishes to all the "Aramco folk we knew and loved." Jake also wrote that he hoped we would "have even a better year with Al-Ayyam Al-Jamila," a wish that we concur with wholeheartedly.

This is the first time we've heard from the Jacobsons directly, and we hope that maybe it will be just a beginning of news and pictures from the people at 10636 Sandpoint Way, Seattle 55, Washington.

Mail Call!

Harold B. Beckley
George M. Hendry
Frank W. Holmes
William C. Johnson
Freeman C. Knight

M. L. Luckenbaugh
Howard Martin
Wilfred B. McLain
George D. Petrie
Dallas T. Pinckney
Melvin F. Powell
Ernest H. Thayer
Gustav Von Maur
William M. Weiss
Burris A. White
Miles W. Willison
H. C. Wilson

P. O. Box 884, Sonoma, California
17 - 145 Park Avenue, Indian Lake Estate, Lake Wales, Florida
365 Walnut Avenue, Walnut Creek, California
298 East Aliso Street, Pomona, California
c/o John V. Stroope, 909 Carlisle Boulevard, N. E., Albuquerque,
New Mexico

P. O. Box 612, Danville, California
1140 Mamaroneck, White Plains, New York
2032 S. E. Pine, Apt. 2, Portland, Oregon
1721 North 17th Street, Arlington 9, Virginia
c/o C. J. Pinckney, 3945 Bob Street, San Diego, California
775 South 8th Street, San Jose, California
1520 Elm Avenue, Richmond 9, California
325 Greenwood Drive, Key Biscayne, Miami 45, Florida
9200 Lexington & Gallatin Road, Downey, California
12354 Holley Street, Sun Valley, California
514 South Alhambra Avenue, Monterey Park, California
Box 57, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

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