

# Al~Ayyam Al~Jamilah

الأيام الجميلة



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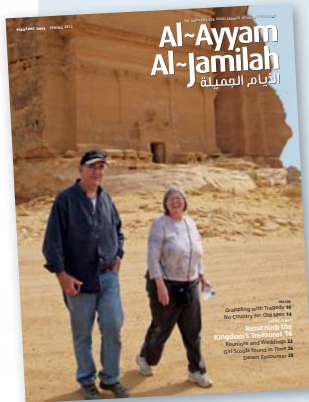
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## A New Look!

*Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* ("Pleasant Days"), the company's magazine for retirees and their families, is sporting a new look and expanded coverage with this issue. Founded in 1956 "for Aramco, AOC and Tapline annuitants," the publication has seen many changes over the years. Readers can take a stroll down memory lane online by going to [www.aramcoservices.com](http://www.aramcoservices.com) > News & Events > Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah > Back Issues.

You will see that *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* is widening its coverage to include more news about the activities of the Saudi Aramco family around the world—in Europe, India and Pakistan in particular in this issue. The expanded focus of the magazine reflects Saudi Aramco's evolution into an integrated global energy enterprise. Through a variety of stories and photographs, it offers annuitants and their offspring the opportunity to "get together" wherever they live.

*Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* welcomes your contributions. Share your memories and let old friends know what you are doing today.

Editor Jack G. Hosmer put it well in the inaugural issue 56 years ago. "We want the title to mean that this magazine will help you keep up with your Aramco associations and will therefore continue the pleasant days ... with the company," he wrote. "... give us lots of information about yourself so we can pass it on to your friends. Certainly you all have some pictures you can send us. We look forward to getting a flood of mail about These Pleasant Days."

That's as true today as it was then: Your old neighbors in the company's worldwide community want to keep in touch. What better way than through the pages of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*?

—The Editor



## 10 Close-Knit Family, Friends Grapple with Tragedy

Losing a loved one is hard. The extended family of Les and Lee Thiel knows first-hand about that. Strong internal and external bonds, including those forged in the kingdom, are helping them weather the storm. The Thiels first moved to Dhahran in 1975 with their two young daughters, Lori (pictured with her own family below) and Lisa. Now Lori's gone, and the work of healing has begun.



Cover photo: Tim Barger and Sally Duncan stroll by one of the great Nabataean tombs at Madain Salih—a stop for former Aramcons and family members honored in February for returning archeological artifacts to the kingdom. Photograph by Arthur Clark.

### Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah

"Pleasant Days," is produced for annuitants, families and friends of Aramco, now Saudi Aramco, and its associated companies by Aramco Services Company and Aramco Overseas Company.

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## Hadrian's Wall— 'No Country For Old Men'

Retirees take a walk—a long walk—along a wall built on the English frontier some 1,900 years ago. Undaunted by menacing cattle, lightning and “processed grass,” they finish their trek, tired but smiling, beckoning other adventurers to follow. Indeed, they promise “a wonderful experience” walking the wall to anyone who would risk sore feet.



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## Returning The Kingdom's Treasures

Two dozen individuals with close company connections are warmly received in Riyadh and Dhahran at ceremonies honoring them or their parents (or grandparents) for preserving and donating archeological antiquities to the kingdom. “We considered it a privilege to enjoy them and are glad they will be enjoyed by all who find the ancient history of Saudi Arabia important and interesting,” one honoree says.

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## Reunions and Weddings

Former Aramcons and family members reunite from Florida to Pakistan, and from Houston to India, to enjoy each other's company and support one another. Weddings are celebrated, too.

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## Dhahran Girl Scouts Found In *Time*

This year marks the centenary of the Girl Scout organization in the United States. Although the first troop in the kingdom didn't start until 1946, scouts celebrated at Saudi Aramco as well as elsewhere

around the world, as highlighted by a display in *Time* magazine.



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## Desert Encounter

Pioneer geologist Nestor Sander, who died Feb. 11 at age 97, was an educator at heart. He not only enjoyed imparting wisdom, he liked learning himself. He penned this story about meeting a Bedouin cameleer while prospecting on what became known as the Ghawar field one late-summer's day in 1940.



# TUCSON 'HAFLA' 2012



## DEAR ANNUITANTS,

We are closing in on Tucson “Hafla” 2012, the 28th Annuity Reunion! The dates are Oct. 5-8, 2012, so mark your calendars, spread the word and make plans to attend.

We are excited to be hosting this event, which promises to be a memorable one. We’re sharing some photos of the reunion venue, the J.W. Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa—located in a quiet area near Tucson Mountain Park and only 15 minutes from the airport—to give you an idea of what to expect.

As you may have read, Éva-Kinga Farnsworth, our hostess at the Orlando 2010 “Hafla,” passed away last October; we are missing her and her expert guidance in arranging this event. Together with the other members of the Biennial “Hafla” Organizing Committee, we will do our very best to make this reunion a great experience for everybody. The current committee members are: Fred and Maggie Shoemaker, Bill and Judy Walker, and your hosts Rick and Rianne Chimblo.

Our keynote speaker will be Abdulla A. Al Naim, Saudi Aramco’s vice president of Exploration. He will be telling us all about the latest developments in the company. A high-level representative of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities also plans to be with us. He’ll discuss the kingdom’s efforts to encourage Saudis and expatriates to donate antiquities in private collections to the kingdom.

Please make your hotel reservation as soon as possible to be sure you receive the special, negotiated room rate, which includes a full breakfast buffet. Also, please complete the Hafla registration form, which you can find at [www.AramcoExpats.com](http://www.AramcoExpats.com), and mail it to us. If you prefer, you may contact Edna Catchings at [ek.catchings@aramcoservices.com](mailto:ek.catchings@aramcoservices.com) or 713-432-8640 to receive a packet by mail, or you can e-mail us at [rchimblo@hotmail.com](mailto:rchimblo@hotmail.com) and we will e-mail you a copy.

We would like to take this opportunity to note, once again, that Tucson is a wonderful town in which to spend some time. In addition to the usual activities of golf, tennis and bridge, trips to the nearby Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Old Tucson Studios and the International Wildlife Museum can be arranged. Our hotel will also organize guided hiking trips for any of us who are a bit more adventurous!

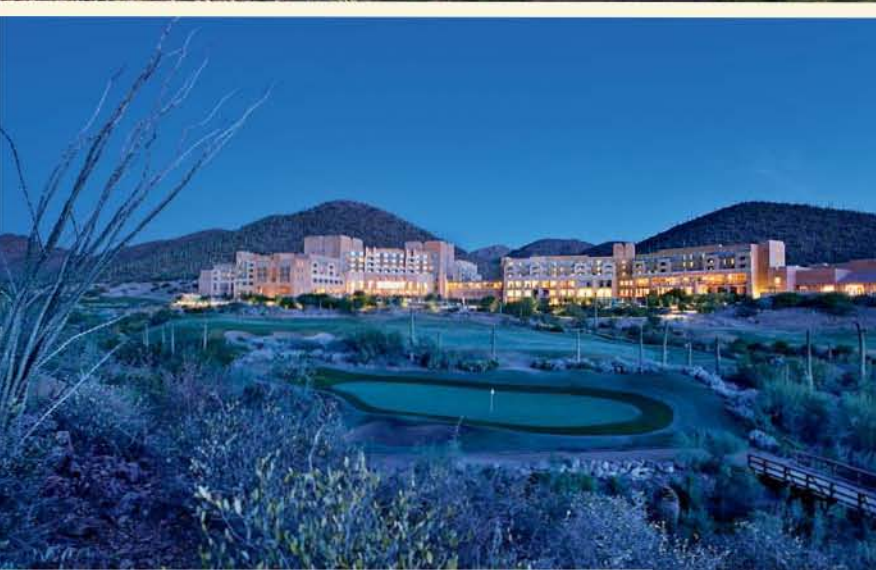
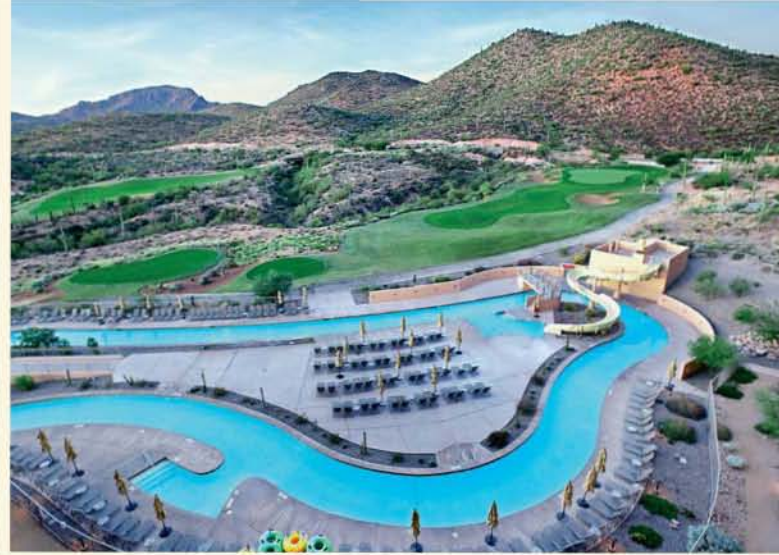
We hope you will take the time to come to relax and visit with your Aramco family here in October. We are looking forward to welcoming you, and we’re sure we will all have a GREAT time! Please note that if you plan ahead, you’ll be able to stay up to three days before and three days after the actual reunion dates at the same group rates that apply for the reunion.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us by e-mail or call us at 520-668-6463—we’ll be happy to talk to you!

Sincerely,

Rick and Rianne Chimblo





## Photo Donor Recalls Old Colleagues

November 8, 2011

I went to Dhahran in October 1963 and worked in Exploration. At that time I was Betty Gosfield, Badge No. 90677. My immediate supervisors were Brock Powers and Syd Bowers. Occasionally, I worked with Ali Naimi and Lee Ramirez.

I met Robert H. Davis before he transferred to Tapline. We kept in touch and eventually we were married in Beirut in 1965. The photographs were all



This undated hand-colored print from eastern Saudi Arabia was among those collected by retiree Bob Davis.

taken before I met Bob, and I have no idea why he never showed them to me....

Syd and Bob got along well, so when Syd was in Beirut we'd have him over for dinner. We stayed in touch and after we retired he'd visit us once in awhile....

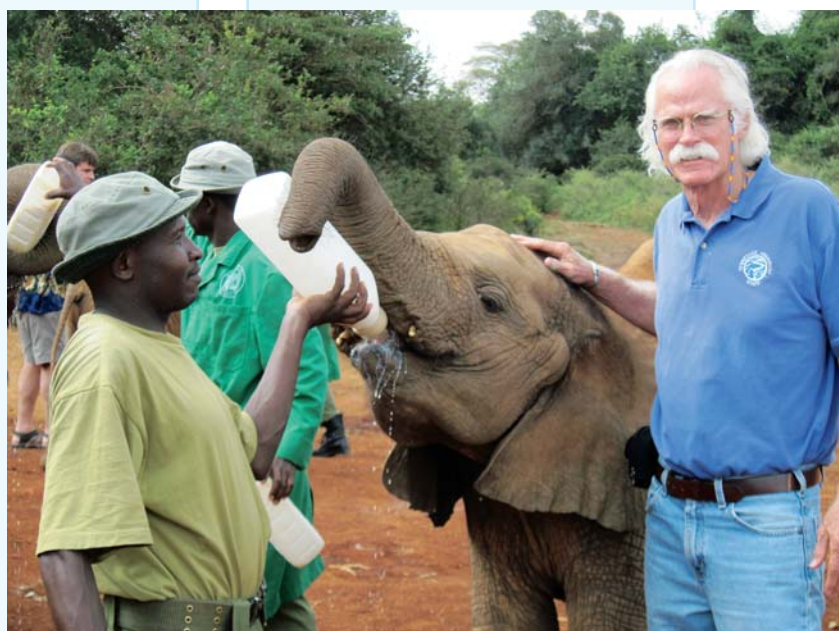
We had a small penthouse apartment opposite the back door of the French Embassy ... just down the street from AUB. It was interesting living in Beirut, but it was still a city. Too many people. I had loved the desert. I had felt instantly at home when I moved to Dhahran. Not the compound per se, but out in the desert.

I left Beirut in '71 to take care of Bob's mother and to build our retirement home. This was out in the country about 45 minutes drive east of Fayetteville, N.C. His mother died in '72 and Bob took an early retirement. We lived there until '87. Bob's health gradually declined and we needed to

be closer to the hospital so we moved into Fayetteville. He died in '99 and in '04 I moved into a Retirement Village which is walking distance from where we lived.

**Betty Davis**  
bldavis2001@gmail.com

*NOTE: Betty sent her message with Bob's photo collection, which she donated to the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture's archives section. If you have photos or items related to the history of the company that you would like to donate, please contact The Editor, Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah: arthur.clark@aramcoservices.com.*



Lou Spencer oversaw a bottle-feeding at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Elephant Orphanage in Nairobi, where he led a group of retirees last year.

and went to Nepal trekking with me.

I returned from Kenya several weeks ago. We took 43 Aramco employees on safari for the Hajj holidays and had a great time. My next trip will be to Nepal and Tibet in August 2012.

**Lou Spencer**  
louis.spencer@yahoo.com

## Dutch Apple Pie Secret Sought

November 14, 2011

When growing up in Dhahran, 1952-'62, my favorite dessert was the Dining Hall's Dutch apple pie. I returned to work in Abqaiq and Dhahran from 1972-'77 and the pie was as good as I remembered.

During this latter period, a cookbook was published with Dining Hall and Commissary recipes. I had a copy, but lost it during one of my many moves both within the USA and overseas. I would greatly enjoy getting a copy of this cookbook or a copy of the recipe.

**Jack Manderscheid**  
jcmander@yahoo.com

## Travelin' Man

December 2, 2011

I received my copy of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* yesterday and saw the picture of me in Iran and the letter about [former student] Kinda Hibrawi. Thanks for including those stories....

The baseball story about Trevor Conner and Cord Heine was also personal. They both were in my sixth-grade class

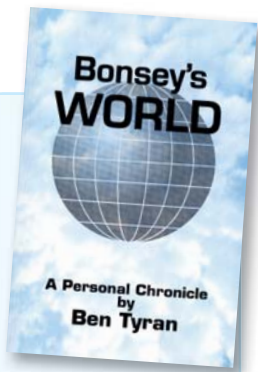
## Memory Message Appreciated

December 5, 2011

My brothers and I were delighted to read the words about our father [Benjamin Tyran] in the memory section of the latest Aramco Alumni publication. Thank you for including my dad.

**Cindy Tyran**  
340 A St.  
Suite 101  
Ashland, OR 97520

*NOTE: Benjamin Tyran published Bonsey's World: A Personal Chronicle (Minuteman Press) in 2002. He was an accountant in Dhahran from 1944-'47, when he transferred to company headquarters in New York, N.Y. Bonsey's World highlighted his career in the international oil business, including coping with Dhahran summertime temperatures of "about 135 degrees F day in and day out." To get some rest, many*



men would go to the pool with a bed sheet, dunk it in the water and wrap up in it. "Then we would find a spot at the pool and sleep there for the night," he wrote. "It worked!"

## Fairchild 71 Mystery Continues

December 5, 2011

In the 1970s to 1990s I used to walk around Dhahran quite a bit. At some point between those years I

discovered an interesting thing.... Behind what I call "houseboy camp hill," I discovered the frame of an old single-engine airplane. It was made of aluminum tubing and there were still remnants of two instruments in the panel.

This was not the Norseman (a later single-engined Aramco plane). It was a much smaller and earlier one (I have, briefly, flown Cessnas). I have always thought that this might be the original Fairchild of Aramco, ca. 1933. Why the little hulk was brought up into Dhahran camp itself I do not know.

Perhaps someone realized its significance and didn't want it lost. No wings. No tail sections. Just the fuselage. I used to climb into it (how tiny!). Later, the plane got covered in earth.

The company seemed to have decided to fill in this spot until I realized it was about three feet underground.

Jim Mandaville  
zygot@dakotacom.net

December 6, 2012

Actually, I have seen pix of NC13902 post-Casoc.... Briefly, it wound up being sold to the Argentine Navy by a broker in New York, N.Y. It was probably shipped [by barge] up the Suez to Alexandria and loaded on a ship for South America.

A modeler acquaintance in Alaska, whom I met through an aviation-history buff in Chicago, sent pix of the Fairchild in Argentine Navy livery, both in its standard configuration and following its conversion to floats. Its subsequent history and ultimate fate are unfortunately not known by the folks I've been talking to.

Mike Gerow  
mike@welcomm.com

## Badanah Veteran Seeks 'Line' Friends

December 11, 2012

I am a former Tipliner: 1968-'71. We were stationed on the "Line" and I was in Government Relations. My badge number was (problem of memory starts to play) either 9709 or 9706.



The final destination of the company's first aircraft, the Fairchild 71 (serial number NC13902)—shown top in Jubail in 1934 and above with Max Steineke alighting—has been the subject of much discussion since it flew mapping surveys in the kingdom in 1934-'35. Retiree Jim Mandaville and Mike Gerow traded information on the subject late last year. Gerow's father Russ was the Fairchild mechanic and a photographer on the plane.

Badanah Pump Station, 1952



# MAIL CENTER

My wife Birgit and I are retired and live in the south of France. We would like to get in touch with former Tapliners.

We were young to be on the Line. Our son was born to a Danish mother and an American father in Badanah in 1969. We named him Karsten after Karsten Niebuhr, the 18th-century explorer of Arabia Felix.

His name was outlandish in Arabic, so someone named him Hassan and we became Um and Abu Hassan.

If any of the medical staff attending Birgit is still around, please get in touch. We owe you a lot...

We assume that most of our friends who were older are deceased but ... there may be a few we can contact.

Patrick K. Robbins  
patandbirgit@gmail.com

## 'Dear Friend' Sparks India Trip

December 13, 2011

Thank you so much for the Fall 2011 issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* with the article about our dear, dear friend Elinor Nichols. Although we were only in Dhahran from 1963-'67, we traveled and roamed the desert with Elinor and Roger Nichols, exploring. Our sons consider those four years as their wild adventures.

We are setting off for India in a few days with two grandsons—inspired to go because of Elinor. She grew up in India and we have heard stories of her childhood. She is an amazing woman. She and Roger have been our treasured friends ever since those four years—regrettably, he died too young.

Wylene and Angus Graham  
8012 1st Ave. W  
Bradenton, FL 34209-2113

## Amin Wins More Photo Prizes

January 10, 2012

You will be happy to know that I received a gold medal from The Photoart Society of Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia, in conjunction with the society's 25th anniversary in 2011. This was my invitational participation in the Third



Top: A photo shot on Inle Lake, Myanmar, was among four images of various subjects that won Shaikh Amin a gold medal from the Photoart Society. "This lake is very calm and quiet and

not very deep and I saw hundreds of fishermen busy in their daily chores," said Amin, who lives in Islamabad, Pakistan. Left: Amin received a plaque at the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, in November honoring him for seven years of voluntary photographic service to the university.

International Photoart Exhibition of the world's top photographers. I sent my four prints for exhibition in July 2011 and I got my prints back with gold medal and a beautiful catalog.

Shaikh Amin  
shaikh.mamin@yahoo.com

*NOTE: Shaikh Amin, former Aramco chief photographer, also got word early this year that he had received a Certificate of Merit from the Photolovers Eighth International Digital Circuit in the Phototravel section. In*

*addition, he received a Judge's Choice Amusing Award for his entry in the Asian Happy Childhood Photographic 2011 Contest held by the Federation of Asian Photographic Art in Hong Kong and Macau.*



## 'A Great Five Years'

March 6, 2012

My wife Lois and Marian Ferguson [are cousins] and talk back and forth. Marian and Ken Ferguson [who lived in Dhahran from 1950s to 1970] encouraged me to go to Saudi Arabia in July 1956. I had taught five years by then and saw an opportunity with Aramco for which I've never been sorry; it was a great five-year experience!

I spent the next 25 years as a principal [in Massachusetts] before retiring in 1986. I've kept up on Middle East affairs, held many slide shows and am in touch with a Kuwaiti friend who stayed with us while in the States as a Blair Academy student and later, to Carnegie Mellon. He is a grandfather now and resides in Kuwait.

I'm enclosing a copy of an *Aramco World* magazine cover dated August-September 1960, when I taught in the Senior Staff School. Also, when I began teaching in July 1956 at the ITC in Dhahran the *Sun and Flare* had an article about all us new teachers who taught Saudi employees.

**Norman W. May**  
2500 Hinkle Dr., Apt. 45  
Denton, TX 76201-0702

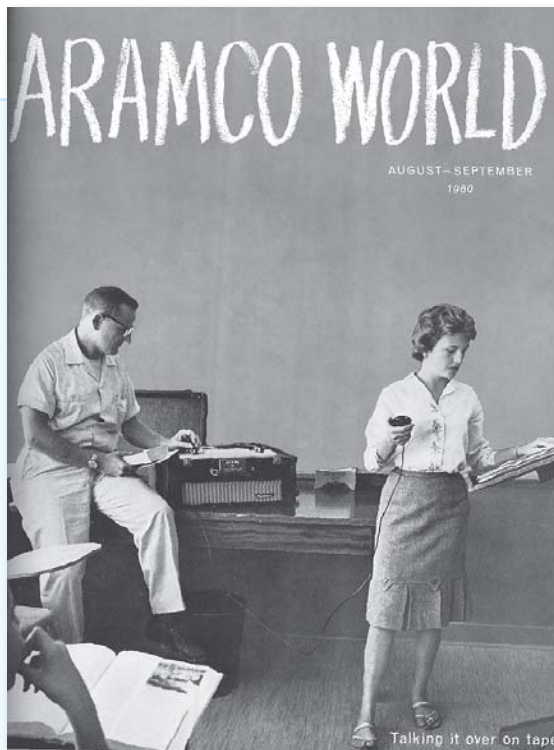
## Family Searches for Kidney Donor

March 21, 2012

My husband Vijay and I have one son, Robert, a 1989 graduate of Dhahran and from high school in Bahrain in 1993.

Robert is losing kidney function and the nephrologist has told us to prepare for dialysis. He is on a transplant list, but there is about a three-year wait.

We thought Robert's kidney could make it until then but it seems he will need to go on dialysis. We have been trying to think of what else we can do and realized there is another option—finding a live donor.... If you hear of anyone who would be willing to donate



Norman May adjusts the tape recorder as Dhahran student Gray LaFrenz "talks" to her counterparts at Cascade (Ore.) Junior High School. Cascade students posed questions on tape and students in Dhahran replied. The Oregon students "pored over each word they heard ... and we felt satisfied that we really had a much better understanding of Saudi Arabia, the Arabs and the Middle East in general," said their teacher Philip Janz.

a kidney to Robert, please let us know.

They will not accept anyone with high blood pressure or diabetes. (Vijay was ruled out because of blood pressure and I was ruled out because of age—for Robert ideally the donor should be less than 58).

Potential donors would be thoroughly screened to make sure they are healthy enough to live with one kidney. We would appreciate it if you would keep your ears open among your circle of friends and if you hear of a potential donor, please let us know. Miracles do happen....

**Tonie and Vijay Maheshwari**  
toniemaheshwari@gmail.com

## Thanks for 'Missing Magazine'

March 25, 2012

Thank you so much for sending the Fall issue! I believe it is the only one we have ever missed!!!!!!

We lived in Dhahran from June

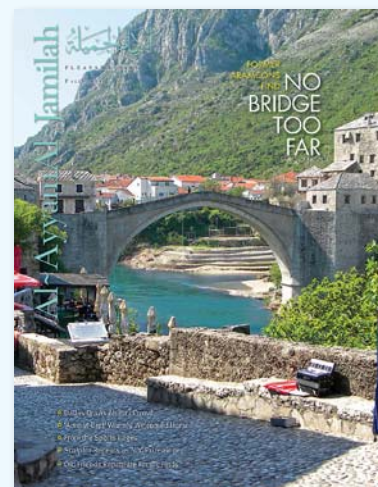
1977 until June of 1996! Best years of my life as I absolutely loved living over there!!!!!! My husband Paul was a pilot and flew the Gulfstream all over the world...!

My youngest son Cory and I went back for the first reunion in 2000 and Paul, Cory, and I went to the one in 2009! Shall see what happens in 2015. It is "home!!!!!!!"

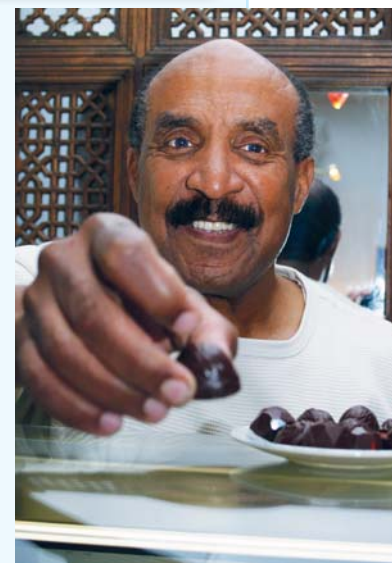
The Spring issue of 2011 got me reconnected with Michael Canady, the chocolatier, so I was able to have my favorite product of his, dark chocolate covered orange slices, at Christmas and again just this month! My mouth waters just writing about it!

We now live on a lake in Minnesota, and my husband is still flying! Thank you again, and we look forward to many more issues!

**Sharon Krueger**  
sharonkrueger37@msn.com



The rebuilt bridge at Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, featured on the cover of the "missing" Fall 2011 issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*. Former Aramcon Benny Cespedes shot the photo in the spring of 2011. Right: Retiree Michael Canady, Chicago chocolatier, was featured in the Spring 2011 issue.



## Asekun Named to Oklahoma Soccer Hall of Fame

The Oklahoma Soccer Association (OSA) named Sol Asekun to its Hall of Fame in January. He was among six men picked for their refereeing, coaching or playing skills.

The retired petroleum engineer hails from Iperu, Nigeria. He was Oklahoma's first U.S. Soccer Federation National referee.



Sol Asekun

Asekun moved to Oklahoma from London in the early '70s and "found that his soccer skills honed in play-

ing for the Nigerian Green Eagles [in Lagos] were useful in East Tulsa's Soccer Club," the OSA said.

By 1980—the year he joined Aramco—Asekun had earned the National Referee badge and officiated matches in the North American Soccer League. In Dhahran, he officiated at Aramco Youth Soccer Association games, as well as in al-Khobar and Abqaiq. He and his wife Gillian retired in 2000 and live in Citrus Hills, Fla.

Asekun calls soccer "one of the greatest games ever played.... It builds team spirit, character and respect for oneself. I recommend it strongly to youths of today if they have the opportunity."

The 72-year-old returns often to Nigeria, but says he's "too old to kick a soccer ball around." In 2010, he and his wife watched the World Cup in South Africa.

His most memorable refereeing moment came in 1980. "I was the linesman on the New York Cosmos vs. The Rest of the World team that was actually an event to honor the retirement of Franz Beckenbauer," he says. "Pele came out of retirement to play in that match and I was there on the line."

## Aramco World Inspires Artist

When Joan Bunting and her husband Jack lived in Beirut and Dhahran from 1952-'60, she developed a love for the region's intricately worked dresses—a passion reignited many years later by a story in *Aramco World*. She recently shared the resulting artwork, and some of her company background, with *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.

Jack had joined Aramco's Aviation Dept. in New York, N.Y. in 1948, and was working as a purser on the *Flying Camel* and *Flying Gazelle* when he met Joan's sister Norma. She'd gone to work as a secretary in Dhahran in 1951. Norma introduced Joan to Jack.

They married in 1952 and lived in Beirut for 1 1/2 years, and then in Dhahran until late 1960. Jack joined Aramco Services Company (ASC) in Houston, Texas, in 1977 and retired in 1987, returning to ASC for a couple of years in the early '90s. The Buntings live in Houston.

A graduate of New York's Pratt Institute Art School and Columbia University, Joan loved the colorful dresses of the area.

"While living in Dhahran, I purchased prints of Palestinian wedding dresses done by another artist that were widely sold in the region," she says. But something was missing.

When she saw a March/April 1997 *Aramco World* story about Palestinian dresses called "These Stitches Speak" she realized it was "the dresses' elaborate, intricate embroidery. I was truly enthralled as I love detailed work."

Then she patterned her own gouache paintings on what she saw in the story's photos. "I prefer to use a simple palette of primary colors—yellow, blue and red—plus white," she says.

Since producing those paintings in 1997, she's concentrated on traditional patterned attire, from Libya to Kazakhstan to Peru, "continuing to paint and draw in pen and ink, sometimes combining a variety of media," she says.



One of Joan Bunting's paintings of Palestinian dress appears to the right of the 1967 *Aramco World* photo on which it was patterned.

## Wrights Win Elite Explorers Club Honor

Former Aramcons Ken and Ruth Wright received the Lowell Thomas Award from the Explorers Club in New York, N.Y., in October for their pioneering paleohydrological research. The couple met in Dhahran when they worked for the company in the 1950s.

Explorers Club President Lorie Karnath said she was "especially proud to acknowledge and honor this impressive pair with this award."

"The Wrights emerged as joint leaders in the field of paleohydrology, starting with their multidisciplinary archaeological research on the water-supply system at the Peruvian Incan settlement, Machu Picchu," Karnath said.



Ken and Ruth Wright, center and second from right, pose with their Explorers Club award.

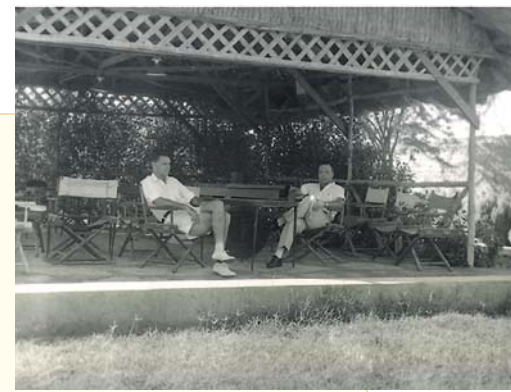
## Home Sweet Home

**F**ran Turner, whose father George Fobes featured in a story in the Fall 2011 *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*, recently got in touch with the son of her dad's original housemate, Charles Homewood. The two lived in 1635A in Dhahran from 1943 until Homewood vacated the house when Fobes's bride Margaret arrived in 1945.

Charles Homewood's son Don was born in Dhahran in 1948 and returned with his wife Ellie to work there in 1981. They have two children, Erin and Andrew. Don retired in 1998.

"My father went to Arabia in 1938 right after oil was discovered ... as a radio operator," Don wrote. "He had an electrical-engineering degree from U.C. Berkeley, but due to the Depression this was the only job he could get. He learned Morse Code and radios in the Boy Scouts and had a ham radio license.

"My father told of how ... housing was so short that the single men shared bunks and when one man got up for his shift another man would get into the



Left: Charles Homewood, chief safety engineer, checks gauges on a GOSP in his 1973 retirement-story photo. Right: Homewood, left, and housemate George Fobes relax in Dhahran in the mid-1940s.

same bed for his sleep time."

"He spent WWII in Arabia, married my mother in 1945 and ... my sister (six months old) and my mother went out to Arabia [in 1946] on a ship full of nurses that got off in Italy to inspect the health of Italian war brides returning with U.S. soldiers.

"My dad moved to the Safety Department and retired as the chief safety officer for Aramco in 1973. Mom and Dad left Arabia on the day the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War started and landed in Beirut with ... fighters shooting at each other all around them."

Don lauded the workers like his dad

who helped lay the foundation for the company's success.

"To think that they did all this without the infrastructure we take for granted now such as electrical power, paved roads, shops etc.," he wrote. "Aramco had to build the complete infrastructure in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and spent a lot of time and money trying to encourage, train and support local Saudis to start businesses to allow Aramco to get back to the oil business and out of baking, road building, setting up power grids, drilling water wells, and importing fresh fruit and vegetables."

## Allen is Active Arizona Educator

**T**om Allen, who worked for the company's international marketing subsidiaries and for Vela International Marine Limited during a 20-year career he completed in 2007, has turned himself into an Arizona educator.

He's a Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations (PCFR) director, where he's eager to recruit high-caliber speakers from Saudi Arabia. He and his wife Sandy live in Scottsdale.

About a quarter of the PCFR's speakers during the last 2 1/2 years discussed subjects related to the Middle East and the Muslim World. They included ambassadors from Palestine, Turkey and elsewhere in the area.

Allen says his "best" retirement activity has been volunteering as a court-appointed special advocate for abused or neglected children. He's also guest lecturer for a course called Global Trade in Real Time at Arizona State University in Tempe. In addition, he tutors third graders in reading in Scottsdale.



Tom Allen is pictured with some of his students at Arizona State University.

## Khan Awarded Top Dentistry Lectureship

**D**r. Adeel Qutub Khan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ghulam Qutub-Uddin Khan, was awarded the Faculty of Dental Surgery Honorary Lectureship at the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSE) in London in January—becoming the first Pakistani to receive the honor. His father is a Saudi Aramco retiree and lives with his wife in Karachi.

He won the lectureship in recognition of his "major contribution" to the faculty's Education Department, the RCSE said.

He was born in Dhahran and lived in the kingdom for 17 years. He earned a bachelor's degree in dental surgery in 2002 in Karachi. In 2006, he moved to Britain to work in National Health Service hospitals.



Dr. Adeel Qutub Khan

# Close-Knit Family, Friends

## GRAPPLE WITH TRAGEDY

BY PAUL SAUSER



**Happy Days:** Above, Lee and Les Thiel, right, pose with daughters Lisa (far left) and Lori and their husbands Gary Collins and Mike Simpson in Rapid City, S.D., in 2006. Right and far right: Lori, left, Lee and Lisa catch the afternoon sun at their First St. home in Dhahrán, and Lee and Lori visit the Jabal al-Qara caves near Hofuf, in 1976.

Lori and Mike Simpson, and their children Shila, Jake and Jessa savor the flowers in South Dakota's Black Hills in 2010.



**L**es and Lee Thiel are driving west across a long, flat stretch of South Dakota. In the back of their Honda Pilot, lying on an inflatable mattress, are daughters Lori and Lisa.

Lori and Lisa are not little girls. Indeed, it has been some time since they were children growing up in Dhahran, and they now have husbands and children of their own. The sisters huddle over hundreds of photos from a recent family visit to the Eastern Province, where Lisa, her husband Gary Collins and their boys AJ and Drew live. The trip to Arabia was a first for Lori's daughters Shila and Jessa, though her son Jake and her husband Mike Simpson had been there before.

This is a family for which family means just about everything. But despite the joy they feel at this moment, a shadow follows them: Lori has just finished a punishing series of radiation and chemotherapy treatments at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., for a brain tumor found a couple of months earlier.

Les is an engineer. His working life has been all about controlling conditions to design the best outcomes. Lee is a tiger mom. She'll fight anyone and anything to protect her family. But against Lori's cancer they feel helpless.

Their family story began when Les and Lee met in Rapid City, S.D., where Les was a student at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. They married after he graduated in 1967 with a degree in mechanical engineering. Their links to Aramco began in 1975, when Lori was 8 1/2 years old and Lisa was 1 1/2.

"We had a friend hire on with Aramco," Les says. "He wrote us a letter; we called Houston, had an interview and went for it," moving first to the al-Firdos compound on the edge of al-Khobar.

Les started as a cost engineer in the

*'Our plan was always to come back to raise our girls here, for them to find their South Dakota boys.'*

Resources Planning Department. As it turned out, most of his career would be in cost engineering for Project Management.

Lee found life at al-Firdos somewhat confining. "The only buses were the work bus and school bus," she says. "It took all day to do a load of clothes because the water pressure there was so bad.... Any fruits and vegetables were rinsed in bleach and rinsed in clear water before they were eaten. There was no milk, [just] powdered milk."

There were hardships, but for the family-oriented Thiels, it was worth it. "The kids were happy," Lee says. "You know, kids are happy anywhere Mom is happy."

With the company in a growth spurt, housing was short, but in just a few months they were in Dhahran in a new portable housing unit, meeting folks who would become lifelong friends.

And that, except for an 18-month assignment in Houston, was their life, for a time.

When Lori graduated from the ninth grade in 1982, the Thiels returned to Rapid City, where they planned to stay. "Our plan when we went was always to come back to raise our girls here," Lee says, "for them to find their South Dakota boys. They both found wonderful hus-

bands, and 15-20 years later you can say, 'Wow, that was a good decision.'"

Again, there were hardships. Though Les had part-time income from the National Guard, it took him 18 months to find full-time work in Rapid City. Lee worked full time to make ends meet, and any big expenses came out of their savings.

Still, they always believed they'd made the right decision.

During this time, an idea hatched 10

years earlier was about to bear fruit. In the early 1980s, their Aramco colleague Jon Foster could see that, through retirements and departures, it wouldn't be long before the old gang of friends broke up. To ensure that didn't happen, he dreamed up a plan:

Members would each put \$500 into a fund to be invested in gold and IBM stocks. To get their money back, they had to show up at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas on New Year's Eve 1990. Forty-two couples signed up, and 32 made the appointment. They called it the 1990 Club.

After that, reunions came every five years and then every two.

In 1991, their family grew when Lori met and married Mike. Later still, with Lori married and Lisa entering college, Les and Lee found themselves assessing their situation. With the girls grown and their income failing to grow, they concluded

community and reminded them of their early days in Dhahran. "We spent Thursday and Friday following AJ [who was born in Hofuf in June 2003] around 'Udhailiyah, wherever he toddled," Lee says.

In 2006, Les turned 60 and retired. The Thiels returned to a home in Rapid City, one that Lori had found for them. It's bigger than anything two retired people need, but they maintain it for their extended family.

"We love this place," Lee says. "Lori came up here once on a stormy, icky afternoon and said, 'You know, there's just not a bad day up here, is there?' She was right. Except now, there are some bad days up here."



Clockwise from left: Lori Simpson, center, and family members including (l-r) her children Jake, Jessa and Shila, and their cousins AJ and Drew Collins, visit the Hofuf camel market in 2010; the Simpsons enjoy Disney World in Florida in 2009; and Mike Simpson gets greetings from his daughters and AJ and Drew Collins at last year's New York City Marathon.



that it was time to return to the kingdom. So they called a friend at Aramco Services Company in Houston, and in March 1993 they were back in Dhahran.

In 1997, the Thiels were on an assignment in Los Angeles when Lisa married Gary. It wasn't long before Gary, a teacher, and Lisa were living in 'Udhailiyah.

It was another family-centered time for the Thiels. Lee frequently took the bus to 'Udhailiyah on Tuesday evenings, and Les, who was working at the Qurayyah Seawater Treatment Plant, would join them on Wednesday nights.

'Udhailiyah was a close-knit

Lori was experiencing some health difficulties and, in May 2011, was being treated for vertigo. Soon, she started having dizziness in the night and headaches that would "bring her to her knees," Lee says. On June 28, an MRI revealed a tumor in her right frontal lobe that crossed the midline.

After much anxiety, testing and consultations in Rapid City and a brain biopsy in St. Paul, Minn., doctors concluded she had a glioblastoma. "We were hoping for a terrible diagnosis," Lee says. "We got a horrific one."

Survival rates for glioblastomas are very low, and in Lori's situation, surgery

was deemed too risky. But whatever happened, they were going to go through it as a family. "So every doctor's visit was, 'Can you get more chairs, please?'" Lee says.

Friends from around the world followed Lori's progress through a Facebook page set up by Lisa and Linda Kovarik, one of Lori's high-school friends. Lori was going to Mayo Clinic on Aug. 9 and the family threw a party for her. "Lisa just put an open invitation on Facebook," Lee says.

They got a huge response. The family is deeply involved in hockey, and Lori's hockey friends were there. Lori was a board member of Suncatchers, a nonprofit group that enables disabled and disadvantaged children to ride horses. (Lori learned to ride in Dhahran, on her horse Ashgar.) Her fellow Suncatcher board members were there. High-school friends whom she hadn't seen for years were there.

"It was a very smart thing to do, a very

realistic thing to do,” Lee says. “It was also very hard because Lori was having a very bad day that day.”

Lori underwent radiation and chemotherapy at Mayo Clinic for six weeks. As expected, her white-blood-cell count plummeted. “Supposedly,” says Les, “after they stopped the chemo, eventually her body would build that blood level back up.”

So that’s what Lori and her family were looking for as they drove back across South Dakota in the

“She was one of those rare individuals who can just walk in and light up a room,” Les says, “I don’t care if it’s our 65-year-old Republican retired friends or hockey kids, she just charmed ‘em all.”

“This ripple effect has been unbelievable,” Lee says.

People arrived from far and wide for

whose father had been diagnosed with glioblastoma.

Family and friends now look back with wonder on the fact that Mike Simpson was set to raise money in the New York City Marathon for those with brain tumors—even before his wife was diagnosed with one.

Plans were to make the New York

*“You helped our family heal by raising almost \$10,000 for brain-cancer research. From tragedy, we made something special.”*



Pilot. The hard treatments were over, and it was time to build Lori back up.

Under normal circumstances, the closeness of mother, father and daughters during their stay in Rochester and the trip home would have been good times. “Someday, that will be a wonderful memory for me,” Lee says. “Right now, it just sucks.”

They got back to Rapid City the evening of Sept. 21. “She was just very, very, very weak,” Les says. He remembers thinking, “Now the rebuilding can start.”

The next morning, Mike took the kids to school, and Lisa came by to look after Lori. She found her “a little unresponsive.” Lori was taken to the emergency room and admitted to the hospital. “She didn’t have any white cells to fight [an infection] and passed away the next morning at seven,” Lee says. She was 43.

her funeral. Former Saudi Aramco friends came from Texas, Massachusetts, Florida and Colorado. Many of them had been planning to be there for the 1990 Club reunion that Les and Lee were planning before Lori became ill. Family came from Minnesota, Illinois, California and Louisiana. “There were a lot of hockey jerseys at that service, too,” says Lee.

Lori’s story doesn’t stop there, however.

Earlier, back in April, before Lori had any symptoms, Mike had qualified for the Nov. 6 New York City Marathon. He planned to run as a member of the Tug McGraw Foundation team, which is dedicated to quality-of-life issues for those with brain trauma and tumors. He had been encouraged to do so by a friend

trip a family vacation, but Lori’s death intervened. “She never gave up, and she never quit smiling,” Mike said of Lori on the Tug McGraw website. “She was simply the greatest person I have ever known. She would have wanted us to continue on with life and especially to try to make life better for others.”

So in spite of her death, the family loaded up for New York to cheer Mike on. Lisa, Gary and their two boys came from Saudi Arabia.

“It was bittersweet,” Lee says. “Mike ran it in 3:32, 3:34 or something like that, stopping three times for hugs and kisses from the family” and high-fiving countless people along the way.

In a thank-you letter to the Tug McGraw Foundation, Mike says he felt Lori’s presence all through the race. “It really did feel like, if only for a short time, we were doing something together again.”

Among those who supported Mike on his fundraising run were old friends and classmates of the Thiels from Saudi Aramco.

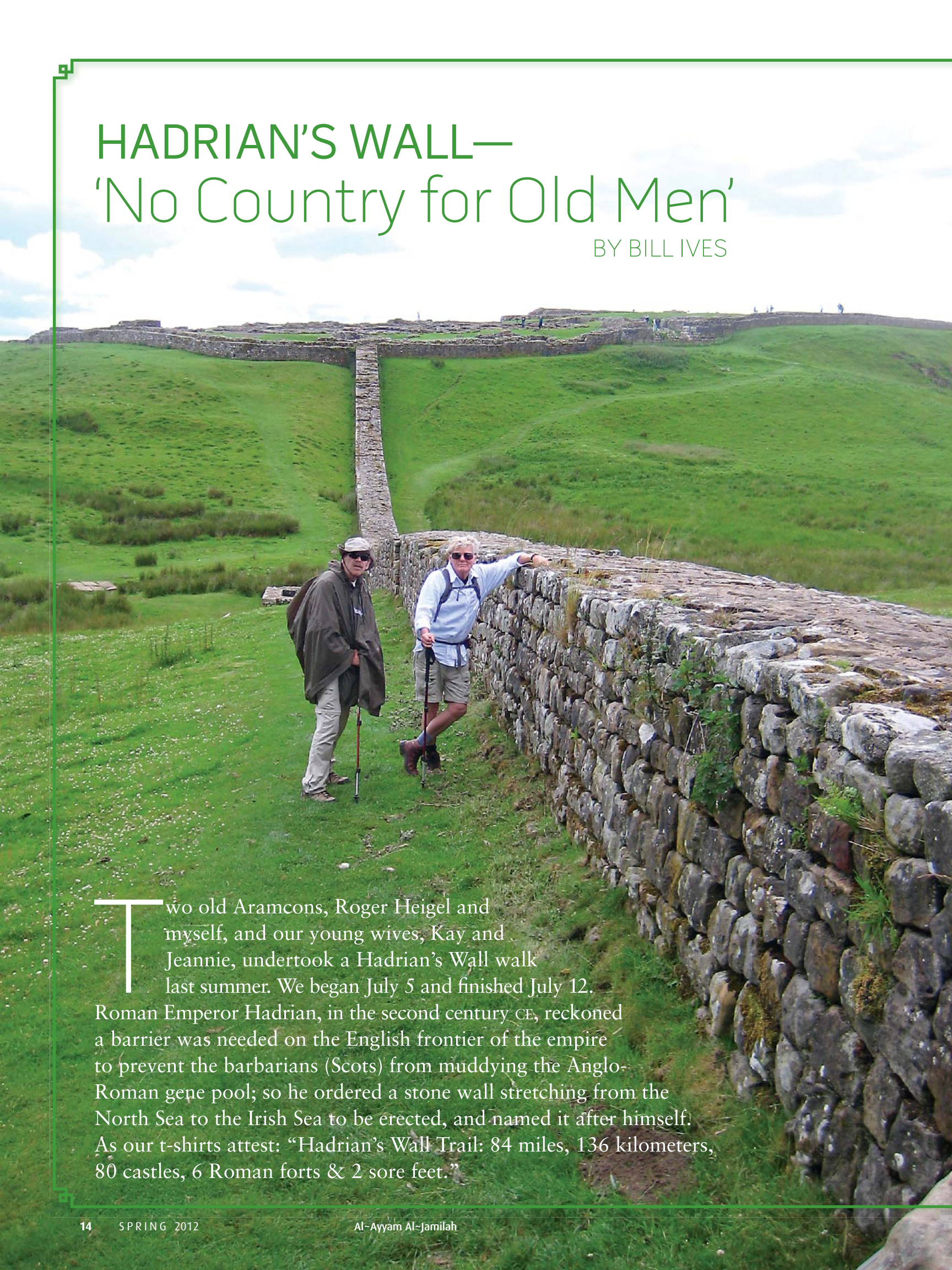
“We know the Thiel Family from Arabia, did many things together and watched Lori grow up,” said Sue and Jon Foster of the 1990 Club on the foundation’s website. “We also attended your wedding over 20 years ago. We send out very deepest sympathies to you and your family.”

“In memory of Lori, member of Dhahran Class of 1982, and dear friend. Mike, have a great run: Distant and even unknown friends are behind you,” said Dhahran classmate William Bain.

“I read somewhere that the best cure for depression and grief is to help someone else who is hurting,” Mike wrote in response to those who gave. “This is so true. You helped our family heal by helping us raise almost \$10,000 for brain-cancer research. From a tragedy, we made something special.”

# HADRIAN'S WALL— 'No Country for Old Men'

BY BILL IVES

A photograph showing two hikers on Hadrian's Wall. The hiker on the left is wearing a brown poncho and a hat, while the hiker on the right is wearing a light blue shirt and shorts. They are standing on a grassy path next to the stone wall. The wall stretches across the landscape, which is a mix of green grass and rocky terrain. In the background, more of the wall is visible, along with some distant figures of people.

**T**wo old Aramcons, Roger Heigel and myself, and our young wives, Kay and Jeannie, undertook a Hadrian's Wall walk last summer. We began July 5 and finished July 12.

Roman Emperor Hadrian, in the second century CE, reckoned a barrier was needed on the English frontier of the empire to prevent the barbarians (Scots) from muddying the Anglo-Roman gene pool; so he ordered a stone wall stretching from the North Sea to the Irish Sea to be erected, and named it after himself. As our t-shirts attest: "Hadrian's Wall Trail: 84 miles, 136 kilometers, 80 castles, 6 Roman forts & 2 sore feet."



It's actually eight sore feet. We acquired all the requisite "kit," including virtually every product Dr. Scholl's produces, trained (some) and headed for Wallsend, the east end of the trail. We carried day packs with our rain gear, lunch, water and an indispensable Hadrian's Wall book with maps.

We stayed in B&Bs or small hotels which varied from nice to splendid—although I must say the United Kingdom, which has about one-sixth the population of the United States, seems to size its showers on the same ratio. The rest of our stuff was portered between hotels by our booking service.

The first two days we marched 15 miles each. The first day we walked through Newcastle along the River Tyne. We stopped at a coffee shop and had the best darned espresso we've ever tasted.

The second day, we left the city behind and entered the magnificent Northumberland countryside. Although preferable to the city, along about 11 a.m. we began to crave that caffeine fix. Then, lo and behold, in the middle of farmland, like he dropped from the sky, stood a coffee monger with a vending truck the size of a Smart car.

The vagaries of English weather had us continually donning and doffing our slickers. For Bill (in his crossing-guard orange rainproof) and Roger (in a Poncho that billowed like a *burqa* in a shamal), utility trumped fashion. Kay, however, managed to achieve both. But we soon learned we could actually "control" the weather: rain gear on—soaked in sun; rain gear off—soaked.

Although the original Wall remains intact for only about a third of the trail, it is an impressive stroll through history as it gracefully snakes its way over the hills and dales of



the picturesque bucolic British midsection. The trail traces the Wall, or what was the Wall, right through farms (apparently the public rights-of-way often predate centuries-old farms) and, occasionally, people's backyards.

We climbed scores of stiles, kissed at "kissing gates," got close up and personal with hundreds of sheep and cows—slinking past the menacing glare of the occasional bull—and billeted our way through their minefields of "processed grass." Roger, the farm boy, certainly has "a way" with sheep: He'd just look at them and they'd run away.

We met interesting people from several countries and hikers of all ages. The prize for the youngest must go to "Poppy," a six-month-old, 20-pound girl whose intrepid parents carried her and her necessary paraphernalia on their backs the entire 84 miles.

We also encountered interesting signs warning of the risks walking the wall. A sobering road sign read, "Hikers; Drive Carefully," but the "r" and "v" had been removed from "drive." My favorite, as we approached a homestead, read: "BEWARE OF CHILDREN!" We gave that one a wide berth.

Jeannie opted for the abbreviated Hadrian hike. She hiked on Days 3 and 5 (both splendid for weather) and skipped the other five. On her days off, she found local buses to get her to the next overnight and waited for us at the local public house.

Day 4 will be well remembered. The hills encountered were particularly steep.

Approaching one, Kay elected a circuitous path, avoiding the hill, while we "old men" doggedly, and rashly, kept to the steep trail paralleling the Wall. As we descended, a violent thunderstorm struck with gale-force winds driving the rain horizontally.

As the pelting rain began to sting, we realized it had turned to hail. We couldn't locate Kay anywhere.

Frantic, Roger and I began running

all over the hill looking for her. Just then, a deafening, simultaneous thunder clap and lightning flash hit, right on top of us. Our hearts racing, we ran down the hill and discovered Kay calmly waiting at a stile on the trail ahead.

Turns out, she wasn't lost. We were.

About 150 yards from where we had been, we discovered seven sheep just electrocuted by the bolt that nearly got us. As we neared the end of Day 4, slogging through mud two inches deep, we



Above: Roger Heigel, left, and author Bill Ives, right, take sustenance on their 84-mile, eight-day Hadrian's Wall trek with wives Kay and Jeannie. Opposite: The hikers take the measure of the Wall.

wondered what more this trail could throw at us. That's when Kay reminded us, "We paid good money to do this."

As we moved west, the North Country brogue thickened and "Ts" at the end of words began to go missing. ("Fancy but-er on your pota-oes?") Likewise, the remnants of the Wall became less and less apparent as we approached the end.

Arrived at the finish at Bowness-on-Solway on the Irish Sea, we celebrated our triumph at the Kings Arms and gave a cheer for Hadrian.

After eight days detached from the digital world, we emerged to discover it no better adjusted than when we'd left. But it was a thoroughly enjoyable week. Everyone we met was delightful. I recommend it for anyone who would risk sore feet for a wonderful experience.





Khalid A. Al-Falih

## A Special Message from the President and CEO

### Dear Annuitants and Families:

*Salam alaikum!*

As many of you know, a national drive is under way here to repatriate Saudi archeological artifacts and other relics that over time have become part of personal collections around the world. The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture at Saudi Aramco, in cooperation with the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, reached out to our annuitant and expat communities around the globe for help in locating such objects of national historical interest.

And as always, our retirees and their families came through.

Former Aramcons began to contact Aramco Services Company in Houston, and significant artifacts were soon on their way home—in the hands of 23 donors and family members who, as special guests of the kingdom, were treated as heroes at a reception in their honor at the National Museum in Riyadh in February.

It was a homecoming as well for these annuitants and dependents, some of whom had departed the kingdom many decades ago—like Bob Ackerman of Pennsylvania, formerly a refinery engineer in Ras Tanura; Elinor Nichols of Massachusetts, whose late husband Roger had led the Aramco/Harvard School of Public Health Trachoma Research Project in Dhahran; and Tim Barger, son of former Aramco CEO Tom Barger.

Before official museums were established in the Kingdom, desert-excursion discoveries like pottery and stone implements were shipped home with expats' personal effects. By safekeeping treasured mementoes of their time in Saudi Arabia, these Aramcons helped preserve a portion of the Kingdom's heritage that otherwise might well have been lost.

The major collection amassed by the late Tom Barger over his 32 years in the Kingdom and conserved in the United States expressly for donation to the National Museum (which took place in 2001) is an excellent example of items saved during a time of nation-building.

With appropriate repositories now in place, artifacts such as these can help illustrate and interpret the Kingdom's history for the edification and cultural enrichment of Saudis and visitors from around the world.

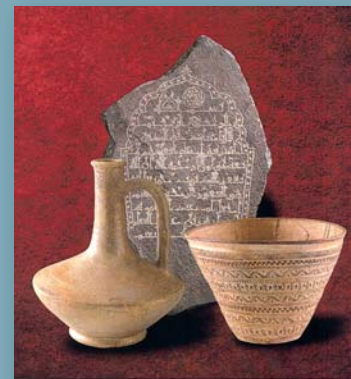
I'd like to express my deep personal thanks to those who joined us for this recognition ceremony, and to those who have responded to this drive.

Let me also take this opportunity to ask *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* readers everywhere to spread the word about this effort. Repatriated artifacts will be permanently catalogued and displayed with donor names, in appreciation of their efforts to safeguard these treasures.

My friends, Saudi Arabia is a dynamic, young nation—but we are an ancient land.

Even as we grow and transform for the benefit of our citizens and of people everywhere, our past is the foundation on which our achievements and aspirations are built. It is important to honor this legacy that is intrinsic to our national identity.

Thank you for helping us to find, preserve and share these wonderful emblems of the Kingdom's heritage.



Saudi Arabian Antiquities Recovered from Within the Kingdom and Abroad

Antiquities honorees posing with recognition certificates in Dhahran are (l-r): Bill Tracy, Tyler Swartz and Carter Swartz II, Bob Ackerman, Tim Barger, Elinor Nichols, Warren Burkholder, Jim Mandaville, Rebecca Eichelberger, Ann Boon Rhea, Gordon Golding, Sally Duncan, Marian Ferguson and Pat Oertley. They were hosted by a Saudi Aramco delegation including Khalid Abubshait, executive director, Saudi Aramco Affairs, (seventh from right) and Nassir Nafisee, then general manager, Public Affairs, (seventh from left) on Feb. 15.



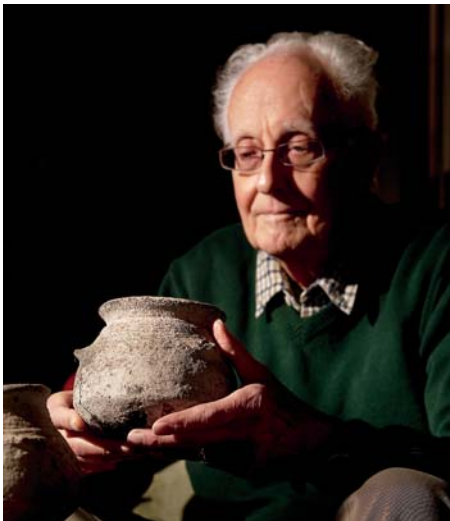
# Returning the Kingdom's Treasures

## ANTIQUITIES DONORS HONORED IN RIYADH AND DHAHRAN

BY ARTHUR CLARK

Bob Ackerman found his archeological treasures—three clay pots about the diameter of a CD at the mouth—just beneath the surface of the sand while picnicking near Jubail. Bev Swartz's discoveries came on camping trips out of Dhahran with family and friends. Pat Oertley made her find in a *wadi* in the southwestern part of the kingdom, where it had fallen from a cliff face.

The late Marny Golding and Grace Burkholder parlayed their discoveries, including those of 'Ubaid pottery dating as far back as 5000 BCE, into avocations



**Bob Ackerman, 86, holds one of the pots he discovered near Jubail more than 40 years ago and recently returned to the kingdom.**

that brought them renown in halls usually reserved for explorers with a "Ph.D." after their names. They passed on their fascination with the past to their offspring.

Those five were among 13 former Aramcons who were honored, in person or through family members, in Riyadh in February by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) for donating significant archeological artifacts they had collected in the kingdom. In all, the SCTA, headed by Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn Abdulaziz, invited 23 Americans with company connections to ceremonies in the capital's striking National Museum to celebrate the recovery of some 14,000 items. They joined some 80 Saudis and a handful of other expatriates who also had donated artifacts.

During their weeklong stay, the visitors received certificates of recognition and personal thanks from Prince Sultan, toured the National Museum where a number of their finds were on display, and took part in a two-day international symposium about work to protect archeological heritage, especially in the developing world. They also toured other museums and archeological sites in central, western and eastern Saudi Arabia. The program dovetailed with the 27th annual Heritage Festival at Janadriyah, near Riyadh.

Their last part of their trip included a stop in Dhahran, where they were greeted and thanked by a high-level delegation. The name of each donor will appear on a plaque in the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran.

"I'm very happy to see people and their children bringing back important treasures," Prince Sultan told Aramco honorees on Feb. 11. He said he was grateful they had cared for and returned artifacts found before the establishment of a kingdom-wide network of museums.

"We are experiencing the golden age of antiquities and heritage in Saudi Arabia," said Prince Sultan, who is the only Saudi to fly in space—on the U.S. Space Shuttle in 1985—and is now responsible for protecting and presenting the kingdom's past. Noting that King Abdullah is sponsoring a multibillion-dollar project to establish 11 new regional museums, he told his guests: "You are not just giving back artifacts. Really, you are being part of a major heritage initiative of this country."

Princess Adela bint Abdullah, King Abdullah's daughter, met the women in the group two days later. Many of the recovered objects "were acquired

by people who appreciated, valued and preserved them," said the princess, who chairs the National Museum's Consultation Committee. Returning artifacts "shows a great appreciation for the history of our nation. I believe the gesture was a great one as after keeping them for a long time some would feel that those pieces were part of their lives."

Saudi Aramco joined in the SCTA's ongoing antiquities-recovery effort late last year, through the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture. More than two dozen individuals or families responded to the Antiquities Homecoming Project launched by Aramco Services Company in Houston, Texas, and Aramco Overseas Company's London office. Donated items ranged from deftly chipped arrowheads to hefty grindstones, clay pots and potsherds to delicate glass vessels, and elegantly inscribed building cornerstones to small weights made from ostrich eggshells.



**Prince Sultan ibn Salman, SCTA president, addresses antiquities donors and family members in Riyadh.**

Along with Golding and Burkholder, Aramco honorees who had previously donated artifacts to the National Museum included Tom Barger and Ann Boon Rhea.

Barger's son Tim represented his late father, who joined the company in 1938 and went on to become Aramco president and CEO. In a speech prepared for the ceremonies in Riyadh, Barger credited Golding, the wife of retiree Bert Golding, and Burkholder, who taught grade school in Dhahran for 22 years, for "reaching the height of professional expertise" among amateur archeologists.

"Exploring more than 20 different sites in the Eastern Province, they made groundbreaking discoveries of potsherds from the 'Ubaid period [named after the pottery's point of origin in Mes-

opotamia] that began 7,000 years ago and ended 1,500 years later," Barger said. In 1970, Golding and Burkholder won praise at an international conference in Bahrain when they revealed the first finds of 'Ubaid ware in the region. They both donated their finds of 'Ubaid pottery and other items to the government.

Barger said his father "read anything he could find about the archeology of Arabia and collected about a dozen significant pieces." His major find, a two-foot stele carved with Greek letters, came in 1968 at Madain Salih in northwestern Saudi Arabia. Dating from the second century CE, it signaled the presence of a Roman legion in the Arabian Peninsula—farther south than previously known.

After he retired in 1969, Tom Barger placed the stele and nine other artifacts he'd discovered in the Semitic Museum at Harvard University until arrangements could be made to transfer them to the kingdom. That happened in 2001, when the T.C. Barger Collection arrived at the National Museum. In a prescient statement, Saad al-Rashid, then deputy minister for Antiquities and Museums, said the Barger donation "may open the way for American friends to return artifacts they obtained in Saudi Arabia."

Gordon Golding represented his mother at the ceremony in Riyadh. Warren

Returning artifacts 'shows a great appreciation for the history of our nation. I believe the gesture was a great one as ... some would feel that those pieces were part of their lives.'

—Princess Adela bint Abdullah

Burkholder, his wife Janice and their daughter Dr. Jo Ellen Burkholder—an archeologist and an anthropology professor at the University of Wisconsin in Whitewater—represented Grace Burkholder.

Prof. Burkholder said her grandmother's interest in archeology—passed on to her—stemmed from "the contagious enthusiasm of friends she made while working in Dhahran, as well as her innate curiosity and her sense of adventure. She was not

someone who could be content with merely picking up interesting pieces of ceramics and stone. She wanted to understand where they came from and who made them."

"I think the repatriating of private collections so that they can be studied by native scholars is without doubt the right thing to do," Burkholder told symposium attendees. But she added that "there may

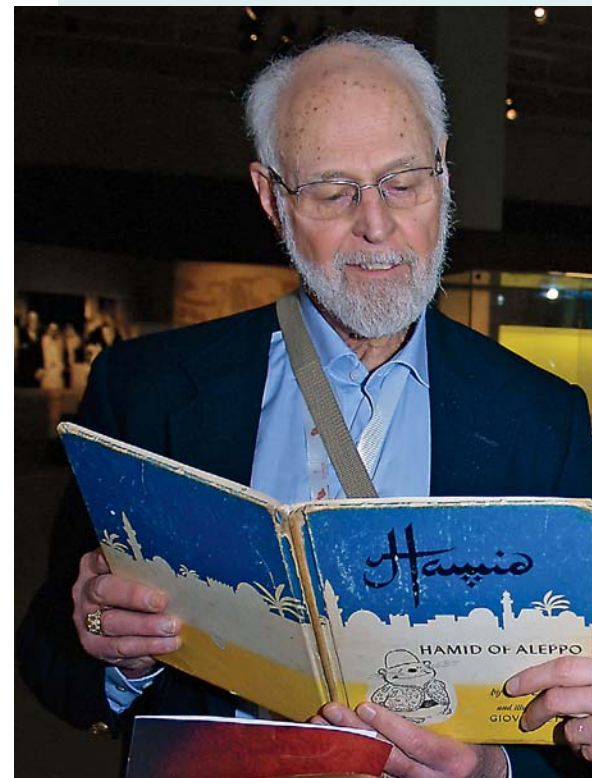
be times and places where private collecting can serve the public good...."

Burkholder noted that her grandmother pointed out in her book *An Arabian Collection: Artifacts from the Eastern Province* that "it was clear to her ... that the surface materials which identified and dated sites were unlikely to survive" until the time that local professionals could carry out their work. She "collected in order to save the past, rather than merely admire it."

Gordon Golding, 1 1/2 years old when his family came to the kingdom in 1956, brought along a little book called *Hamid of Aleppo* that his mother had read to him as a child. "It's about a Syrian golden hamster who finds many archeological treasures as he digs his home in the desert ... and one day travels very far to find someone who can tell him what they are," Golding said.

Instead of taking archeological finds away from home, Marny and Bert Golding invited noted archeologists to their home in Dhahran. "Slowly but surely, as these people came, a picture of the past began to appear," said her son. The Goldings didn't restrict their guest list to foreigners: Abdullah Masry spent one summer at the Goldings' home in Dhahran en route to becoming the kingdom's first professional archeologist.

In 1984, the year Bert retired, the

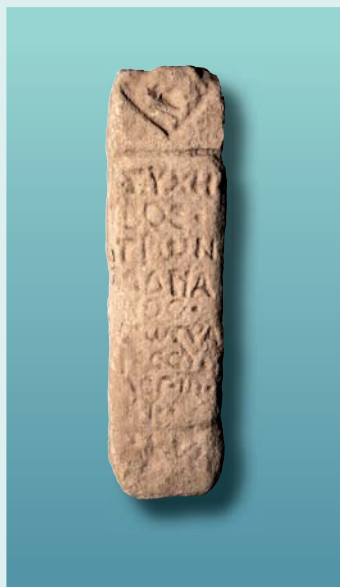




Above, left: Ann Boon Rhea stands beside several artifacts she donated, on display at the National Museum. Above: Dr. Jo Ellen Burkholder engages with a colleague at one of many meetings in Riyadh.



Above: Gordon Golding, right, shares with Bill Tracy the "archeology" book his mother Marny read to him as a child. Right, above and below: Pat Oertley donated this camel petroglyph, found on a pile of rubble in Wadi al-Faw. Likewise, Tom Barger collected from a well at Madain Salih this remarkable, two-foot-tall, Greek-lettered stele dating to the second century CE.



couple received a letter from Masry, then assistant deputy minister of education, thanking them for their "unquestioning realization that the physical results of your investigations belong to the Saudi people and should be entrusted to them."

Ann Boon Rhea developed a Middle East studies program for the Dhahran School when she lived in the kingdom with her husband, the late Dr. James W. Rhea, from 1964-'76. "Walking the desert and finding old beads ... became a favorite pastime for me," she said. "Occasionally, we mothers would get a taxi as soon as the children left for school and walk the empty places near al-Khobar and Dammam for an hour or so before getting back to fix lunch for our families."

Rhea, who attended the ceremonies with her son Russell, had earlier donated most of her finds to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and the King Fahd Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Several years ago, as she was packing to move, she discovered a number of pottery vessels that she had overlooked and sent them to the National Museum in Riyadh. "My hopes are that the two university museums in the United States holding part of your ancient culture and history will work with this awesome new museum [in Riyadh] to educate Americans and Saudis alike," she said.

Honoree Marian Ferguson spent several years with her husband Ken at the U.S. Consulate in Dhahran before he joined Aramco in 1953. They stayed until 1970 and spent many weekends "pot-picking and picnicking," said their son Ken, who accompanied his mother to the kingdom.

"They took these little expeditions looking for broken bracelets and potsherds as a way of occupying their children on weekends," he said, adding that they collected their surface finds "before any laws of decrees were issued restricting such activities."

One of the objects Ferguson donated was a clay bowl she found near Jubail. Daniel Potts, a noted scholar of Arabian archeology, viewed photos of the vessel in 1991 and said he was almost certain it was a Mesopotamian bevil-rim bowl dating to 3400-3000 BC "and, if so, the first one to turn up in the Eastern Province." He called it "a very important find."

Ferguson, who turned a spry 89 on the trip, had decided to approach the Smithsonian Institution about donating her artifacts when news of the Antiquities Homecoming

OPPOSITE BOTTOM AND TOP LEFT AND RIGHT: ARTHUR CLARK

Project arrived. “They belong better in Saudi Arabia,” she said.

Sally Duncan and her sister Rebecca Eichelberger represented their mother Virginia Onnen in donating colorful pieces of Roman-era glass bracelets from near Jubail, a clay jar from Yabrin and arrowheads and scrapers from the Rub’ al-Khali—all found on family camping trips beginning in the 1960s. The Onnens had earlier donated most of their finds to the museum in Riyadh, but the jar “might have been packed by accident or kept as a memorial to happy times ... in the deserts of Saudi Arabia,” Duncan said.

She noted that her father John Onnen had “wanted to return the jar since he retired in 1983,” but died before he could accomplish that. “The invitation to the ceremonies ... was a wonderful and fortuitous offer,” she said.

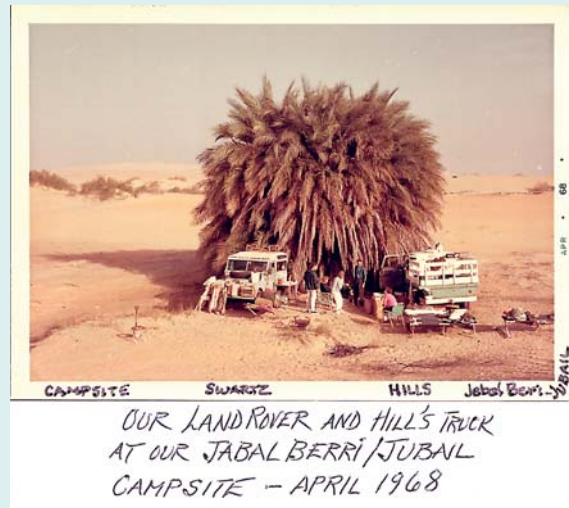
Jim Mandaville and Bill Tracy, friends from their days as youngsters in Ras Tanura just after WWII, and later employees themselves, donated arrowheads, scrapers and grinding stones they found in the Rub’ al-Khali. Tracy also donated small weights made of clay, stone and ostrich eggshell, and pieces of pottery from the pre-Islamic site of Thaj near the Gulf.

Tracy, whose sister Susan accompanied him to the ceremonies, camped with friends near the Arabian Gulf coast, in the deserts west of Abqaiq, east of al-Hasa and south of Haradh, and west and south of Riyadh.

“Frequently, near our campsites, we would find arrowheads, stone blades and axe heads,” he said. “We only picked up exposed artifacts on the surface, many of them near or alongside unpaved trails or rough tracks where they might easily be crushed or crumbled by passing Bedouin trucks. We would photograph the artifacts, display them to friends and store them safely away. I’m very pleased to have the opportunity to return them to their land of origin.”

Mandaville noted his “great personal interest in archeology as a student and in his earlier years as an Aramco employee, beginning in 1957.” He said he had visited a number of then-unstudied field sites and collected surface artifacts “for study and publication by international experts in the years before Saudi Arabia had an antiquities organization or museum.” His special interests were Thaj and Neolithic sites in the northwestern Rub’ al-Khali.

He said the SCA’s antiquities-retrieval project resolved a question he’d been trying



Above: Virginia Onnen, represented by daughters Sally Duncan and Rebecca Eichelberger, found these glass bracelet pieces near Jubail. Right: Beverly Swartz donated these millennia-old examples of worked stone, found on many off-road family camping trips.





Far left: Like most of the donors, Beverly Swartz loved exploring with her family and friends. Here is a Swartz-Liston Hills family campsite. Left: Jim Mandaville found these ostrich eggshells at a Neolithic site in the Rub' al-Khali. "It would be interesting to get radiocarbon dates for these," he said.

to answer about finding a "safe and reliable way" to return the artifacts he still held.

Pat Oertley was a wanderer, too. She arrived in Ras Tanura in 1959 and married Dr. Bob Oertley there in 1966. "From then until we retired in 1982 our favorite recreation was joining friends on weekends and Fridays for long Land Rover trips through the desert," she said.

On one of those trips, she found a petroglyph of camel on a pile of rubble in Wadi al-Faw in southwestern Saudi Arabia. "Above, on the cliff wall, were other figures—mostly animals and a few stick figures," she said. "I'm very pleased to return the camel—but I will miss him."

Bob Ackerman will also miss his artifacts. He came to the ceremonies with his daughter Julia Glenister, who was five months old when she arrived in the kingdom with her mother Margaret and her dad in 1960. Ackerman donated pots he discovered when picnicking with his family and friends around 1970 near a stone tower at Jubail called "the Portuguese Fort."

"For some reason I don't understand and never will, some impulse caused me to bend over and scratch the sandy surface of this windblown area with my finger. I immediately touched the bottom of an intact small pot," he recalled. "I found nine small pots buried only inches below the surface ... forming a ring around a larger pot located in the center. All were buried upside down and packed solidly with sand."

Ackerman coated the three pots he salvaged with shellac to prevent breakage and shipped them with him to the United States when he left in 1975. He believes they are around 4,000 years old. "They're not gems or gold, but historically they have a value..." he told the Pittsburgh (Penn.) *Tribune-Review*. "They belong in Saudi Arabia."

Beverly Swartz was represented by her son Carter II and her grandson Tyler in Riyadh and Elinor Nichols was invited with her son-in-law Buckner Creel. The women arrived in Dhahran within a few years of each other in the 1950s and stayed until 1970 and 1984, respectively. They sent a total of 15 cases of items to the SCTA in 2009-'10. Schwartz dispatched the most pieces—some 1,400—and Nichols the heaviest, including limestone and basalt grinding stones and a two-foot-long stone from near Tayma carved in Taymanitic script and dated to the sixth century BCE.

Swartz said that she, her husband Carter and the couple's children loved exploring the desert. "Coming across a pristine, undiscovered and untouched site littered with arrowheads and stone-age tools was an unequaled, heart-thumping thrill, no matter how many times we experienced it," she noted.

"When we started our desert excursions and artifact collecting, the kingdom was not yet focused on discovering and preserving archeological sites and what they contained. We not only enjoyed our finds, but we felt we were saving them for eventual recognition and identification."

She said she decided to return her artifacts because of advancing age, explaining that when she and her children were gone, "future generations would not have the connection" to appreciate them.

Nichols, who also enjoyed camping with her family, found herself in a similar situation. Her late husband Roger was a physician who had been a key player in the company's project with Harvard University to combat trachoma. He had learned about "fortresses" atop *jabals* on al-Sarrar Escarpment in the Eastern Province. He

'When we started our desert excursions and artifact collecting, the kingdom was not yet focused on discovering and preserving archeological sites. We felt we were saving [antiquities] for eventual recognition.'

—Beverly Swartz

and friends climbed the *jabals* and lowered grindstones found on top. To those finds, the couple added more from Madain Salih and from near Tayma.

"We brought them with us when we left the kingdom and enjoyed looking at them around our home south of Boston," Nichols said. "As time passed, I realized they should all be returned to Saudi Arabia."

Nichols could have been speaking for all the Aramco donors when she said, "We considered it a privilege to enjoy them and are glad that they will be enjoyed by all who find the ancient history of Saudi Arabia important and interesting."



Above: Elinor Nichols is all smiles as she receives a certificate of appreciation from Prince Sultan bin Salman at ceremonies in the National Museum. Top: She donated several basalt grinding stones, found at Madain Salih.

MIDDLE: ARTHUR CLARK

# Reunions and Weddings Galore

## REUNION IN TAMPA A HIT!

BY ANNELIESE TEDESCHI AND JUDY BUTLER



Top: Attendees assemble on the porch of the Tampa Palms Golf and Country Club. Above: Bob Morrow, 88, takes the microphone after winning the “oldest attendee” prize and the prize for the lowest badge number: 17123.

A small but lively group of 49 Aramco expatriates, including a few newcomers, met for the biennial Florida Reunion over a delicious lunch at the Tampa Palms Golf and Country Club on Nov. 6. The setting was as beautiful as we remembered from past gatherings, with great views of the surrounding golf course.

A number of “regulars” expressed regrets at having to miss this joyous occasion, but said they hoped to attend future gatherings.

In fact, festivities started Nov. 5 under the direction of Pete and Gayle Dorris. The evening was filled with lively discussions.

Aramco expats are definitely special, for even if we haven’t seen each other for years as soon as we get together it’s like yesterday. We bond instantly by chatting and laughing and reminiscing. Aramco gave us an experience we treasure for a lifetime.

On Nov. 6, we had exactly an hour to visit with our friends before sitting down to a buffet. Peter Cunningham welcomed our intimate group and thanked Anneliese Tedeschi and Judy Butler for organizing the event.

After lunch, we were treated to “This happened to me in Saudi Arabia” stories. Some were so hilarious that we couldn’t stop laughing—especially those by Fred Bobb, Fred Killgore, Sol Asekun and Jim Milliken. Others, like Sharon O’Brien’s “Life in Aramco Now” as a visiting grandmother or Ann Tandlich’s adventure of arriving in Arabia in 1962, were more informative.

Bob Banta demonstrated a talent that you can teach yourself in retirement. He left us puzzled and awestruck with his many magic tricks.

The program included an exciting question-and-answer game, with prizes of Middle Eastern foods for special attendees.

Bill Morrow, 88, won the lowest-badge-number prize by waving Badge No. 17123, issued to him in 1952. He also won the “oldest attendee” prize.

Bob Radford won “the longest service with Aramco” prize—30 years, mostly outside the kingdom.

Gene and Sharon O’Brien won “the most recent retirees” prize. They retired to Florida in 2003.

Fred Bobb and his father Arthur and Pete and Gayle Dorris tied for the “traveled-the-farthest” award, arriving from the east coast of state (Palm City and Tequesta, respectively).

The program concluded with thanks to Gene Stenov for taking photos at the gathering, Mary Stenov for her lovely art composition on our welcome table and their daughter Lisa for preparing nametags and checking guests. After a group picture, we promised to meet again.

To make the 2013 get-together a success, please help by sending names, addresses and, particularly, e-mail addresses of Florida Aramcons to: Judy Butler at [judithbb\\_98@yahoo.com](mailto:judithbb_98@yahoo.com), tel: 813-979-2125; or Anneliese Tedeschi at [daveht@juno.com](mailto:daveht@juno.com), tel: 727-544-8233.



## TEXAS HILL COUNTRY CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 2011 Texas Hill Country Christmas Party unrolled at a new venue, the mansion-like premises of Green Pastures in downtown Austin, on Dec. 12.

The event featured a buffet dinner and lots of conversation. It drew 92 Aramco and Saudi Aramco retirees and family members. The event has been held “for at least 25 years,” according to Jack Meyer, one of the hosts.

He and his wife Ellen, David and Vicki Jessich, Edie and Dale Offield and Barbara and Hutch Hutchinson organized the holiday get-together.



Above (l-r): Party organizers Hutch and Barbara Hutchinson, David and Vicki Jessich, Dale and Edie Offield, and Ellen and Jack Meyer pause for a picture. Right and far right: Mary Norton, Sally Aslan and Bonnie App, and Scott and Judy Miller, are decked out for the holidays.



## HOUSTON AREA ARAMCO/ASC RETIREES HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

The Houston Area Aramco/ASC Retirees Holiday Luncheon, held Dec. 13, featured a fine repast topped by a wealth of reminiscing. Forty-three retirees and spouses (and one golden retriever) attended.

The Aramco/ASC Retirees group holds monthly luncheons and a special holiday event at Christmastime. The group has been meeting since the early 1980s.

Retirees Verne Stueber and Bill Smart organized the get-together and Stueber emceed the event, as he has for many years.



Above: Mike Sawran, left, sporting his trademark Santa hat, and his wife Linda, in equally seasonal attire, pose with John and Carol Quayle, center, and Carol and Leonard Gonzales. Left: Harry and Joyce Wolf brought along a special golden retriever guest.





Friends from the '50s (l-r) Carol Keyes Rader, Fran Grant, Ken and Ruth Wright and Nancy Etherton Rushmere smile for the camera at their California reunion in January.

## CALIFORNIA REFLECTIONS

BY KEN WRIGHT

The annual California reunion of Aramco's Swinging Singles of the early 1950s was held in January at the Walnut Creek home of Carol Keyes Rader, whose father R.L. Keyes was Aramco president from 1952-'57. Joining her were Fran Grant, Nancy Etherton Rushmere and Ken and Ruth Wright.

A slide show took the group back to the Saudi Arabia of that time, highlighting activities including desert camping, sailing, travel and lots of hard work. All agreed that Aramco was the greatest place for young, energetic professionals to begin their careers.

Following a fine lunch prepared by Fran and Carol, the discussion turned to modern Saudi Aramco and the 2009 company reunion in Saudi Arabia so ably organized by Ali Baluchi. Carol, Ken and Ruth agreed that the two-week reunion was a wonderful and enriching experience from beginning to end.

## 'OIL FAMILY' CELEBRATES 2012

An "oil family" of around 20 members that's been meeting for more than 10 years at the home of Kathy and Pat Laabs in The Woodlands, Texas, to bring in the New Year with a smile, held another successful celebration to kick off 2012, reports Ray Stevens. Fifty percent of the "family" has worked with Aramco or Saudi Aramco and the others have "near-miss stories related to that great experience," he said.

Twin sisters Kathy Laabs and Karen Smith, who moved to Saudi Arabia with their husbands Pat and Terry in the mid-1970s, form the core of the group.

Former Aramcons at the gathering were Joe and Adri Bormans, Pat and Kathy Laabs, Bill and Beverly Mathe, Terry and Karen Smith, and Ray and Sheila Stevens.

"The senior people add to the event with their stories showing how the oil business has changed, but is probably the greatest business of the last 100 years—the manufacturing plant runs 24/7 and very few employees ever see the product," Stevens said.



"Oil Family" ladies are, back row, from left: Teran Smith, Janet Herseim, Judy Lambert, Sheila Stevens, Michelle Grant and Beverly Mathe. Front row: Kathy Laabs, Karen Smith, Adri Bormans and Barbara Causey.

## FORMER ARAMCONS UNITE IN HYDERABAD



Hyderabad Ex-Saudi Aramco Employees Association members include (l-r): Syed Habeebuddin, vice president; Syed Abdus Subhan, president; Mohammed Yousuff; Mohammed Ifteqaruddin, general secretary; and Shaikh Khan Mohammed, executive member.

Thirteen former employees from India with a total of three centuries of service have formed the Ex-Saudi Aramco Employees Association in Hyderabad to boost social, educational and recreational activities among members and their families. Six members worked for the company for 30 years or more.

Officers include Syed Abdus Subhan, president, a 32-year veteran; Syed Habeebuddin, vice president (30 years); Mohammed Ifteqaruddin, general secretary (33 years); and Fazal Mohammed, treasurer (12 years).

"The aims and objectives of the association are to create a social, educational and recreational platform for former employees of Saudi Aramco and their families, as well as conduct seminars, debates and get-together activities in the city of Hyderabad," said Ifteqaruddin.

"Whenever we meet, we revive the sweet memories of golden days we have spent in the Saudi Aramco," he added. "I see big smiles on the [members'] faces when they greet each other."

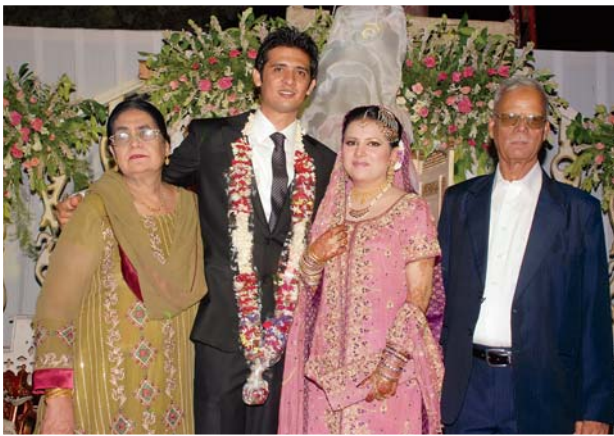
## HAPPENINGS AROUND THE WORLD



**BRATS CONVENE:** Aramco Brats Reunion Committee members (l-r) Hirath Ghori (DH'75), Erica Ryrholm (chairperson, DH'72), John Prugh (RT'66), Colette Philip (DH'69), Donna Yiannakakis (spouse) and Alex Yiannakakis (RT'74) recently kicked off planning for the group's 14th biennial get-together, set for May 23-27 at the Westin La Paloma in Tucson, Ariz. Information is available at [www.aramco-brats.com](http://www.aramco-brats.com) or from the committee at [reunion2013@aramco-brats.com](mailto:reunion2013@aramco-brats.com).



The Saudi Aramco Ex-Employees Association (SAEEA) in Pakistan's Sindh area celebrated its fourth reunion luncheon March 4 in Karachi, with 93 men, 55 women and five children attending. Kamal Ahmed Farooqi, SAEAA president, opened the event and several speakers updated members about association activities, including the Marriage Bureau project. Seated from left are: Kamal Farooqi, Iqbal Khan, SAEAA vice president, and Owais Ahmed. Standing are: Shafiq Khan, Shafiq Bhatti, Sami Khan, Saeed Khan and Jan Mohammed.



Farhan Saeed Rajput, the son of retiree Saeed Ul Hassan, married Zahara Pervaiz Khan in July in Karachi, Pakistan. He is pictured with his bride, his father—who worked in the Tanajib Offshore Producing Maintenance Div. for more than 25 years—and his mother at the couple's marriage reception July 9. The bride's parents live in Riyadh and the newlyweds have fond memories of Saudi Aramco.



Newlywed Omer Saleem, third from left, is pictured with his father, former Aramcon Saleemullah Hussain, right, at the *valima* marriage reception in Karachi, Pakistan, on Nov. 22. Left and second from left are retirees Javed Ahmed and Iqbal Ahmed Khan, and fourth and fifth from left are S.W. Fakhri and Saeed Bin Arif. The groom and his bride Fareha Sajjad live in Canada.



Bilal Ahmed married Musira Bilal on Nov. 18, in Karachi, Pakistan. He is the son of Irfan Ahmed, left, who worked for shipping accounting in Ras Tanura from 1975-'86. The couple's *valima* reception, attended by a number of former Aramco and Saudi Aramco employees and their families, took place Nov. 20. The groom's mother is seated right.



The Saudi Aramco Former Employees Association in Lahore, Pakistan, held its quarterly gathering at a local restaurant April 8. Twenty-eight members—with a total of 1,026 years of service with the company—posed for this photo. The association was established in 1986 with 105 members and by 2010 membership stood at 233. President Abbas Malik stands left and Secretary Muhammad Ashfaq is sixth from left. Photographer Shaikh Amin smiles between the two officers.

# Dhahran Girl Scouts Found in *Time*

The March 12 issue of *Time* caught the eyes of a number of readers. In it was a photo of Dhahran Girl Scouts Joan Uhl and Karen Ferguson listening intently to Aramco guide Sa'ad ibn Fahd Qahtani as they strolled over rocky terrain.

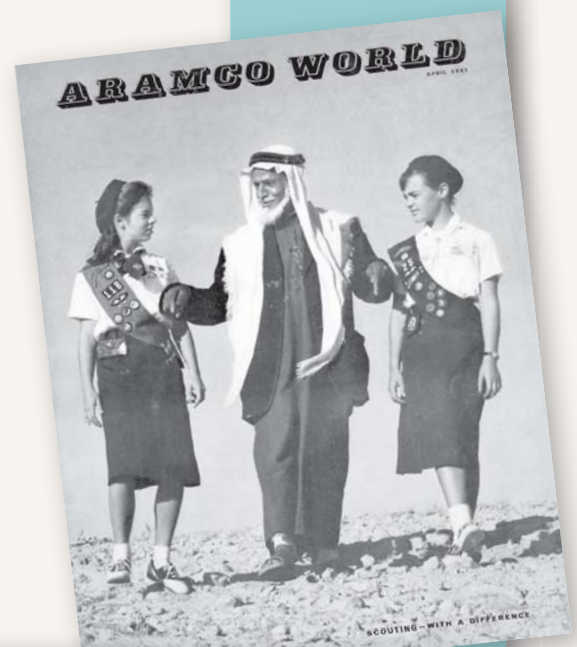
The picture, in an ad section celebrating the centenary of Girl Scouts, was shot by Aramco photographer V.K. Antony. It appeared on the cover of the April 1961 issue of *Aramco World*, which carried the story "Scouting with a Difference." More pictures showed scouts Katoon Awami, Janice Cyr, Linda Ozment, Fadia Basrawi and Linda Hanschin, to name a few.

Fast forward to March this year and you'd find a scout photo not only in *Time*, but also in *The Arabian Sun*. The March 14 issue showed a contingent of local scouts, with Laura Solano, age nine, handing President and CEO Khalid A. Al-Falih a copy of the latest Girl Scout calendar.

She is a member of Dhahran Troop 80 and hails from Colombia. She sold more calendars—33—than any other scout.

Making and selling calendars is a tradition with local Girl Scout troops, dating to the 1950s. Funds raised by calendar sales help members pay for activities, as well as supplies and equipment. Recent activities have included campouts, visits to Switzerland and 'Asir Province, and diving in the Red Sea.

Top and right: The cover photo from the April 1961 *Aramco World*, showing Girl Scouts Joan Uhl (left) and Karen Ferguson with Aramco guide Sa'ad ibn Fahd Qahtani, was featured in a *Time* magazine this March. Below: Happy scouts celebrate during a visit to Shaybah in January 2008.



The first meeting of the Girl Scout organization in the United States took place in 1912 and Girl Scouts Inc. was set up in 1915, according to the *Time* section. The Dhahran Girl Scouts are affiliated with the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

The first Girl Scout troop in the kingdom was established in Dhahran in 1946 with just two members and a leader. A visit by Amir Fahd ibn Abdulaziz, the future king, and acceptance of the Girl Scouts as an official group by the Aramco Employees Association were highlights of 1940s, according to a 1996 golden-anniversary

## Two events marked the centennial of Girl Scouting: one in the Hills Park in Dhahran and one in Riyadh capped by a celebration at the U.S. Embassy.

in 1955. Today, there are more than 250 Girl Scouts, along with leaders, co-leaders and volunteers.

To mark the centennial of Girl Scouting this year, local scouts lined up two events: one in the Hills Park in Dhahran and one in Riyadh capped by a celebration at the U.S. Embassy.

Scouts in company communities retain

in the Gulf on a *dhow*, a ship little changed over two millennia. Ditto for local tracking skills, taught by guide Sa'ad ibn Fahd Qahtani.

Local scouts had exceptional opportunities to see and engage with the wider world, too. "Some of the Girl Scouts tour Europe and the Far East as casually as their sister scouts in Pennsylvania go to New York or Washington," reported *Aramco World*.

They also assisted in projects to help youngsters in need elsewhere in their neighborhood. "Several years ago they 'adopted' Dar el-Tifl ... Arab orphanage in Palestine," *Aramco World* continued. "The various Girl Scout groups raise money (they collected \$700 one year), round up



exhibition held at the Heritage Gallery.

Sales of Girl Scout cookies commenced in the kingdom in 1950. In the 1960s, Girl Scout Week became an annual function. In the '70s, a new badge called "Girl of the Desert" (*Bint is-Sahraa*) was granted to the Lone Troop of Dhahran to enable scouts to learn about the life of an 11-year-old Bedouin girl.

In the 1980s, the two highest awards in Girl Scouting were introduced: the Silver (for scouts in 6th-8th grades) and the Gold (for scouts in 9th-12th grades). Daisy Scouts, for five-year-olds, was also established.

On the golden anniversary of Girl Scouting in the kingdom there were 246 scouts and 60 leaders, up from 160 scouts

Above, left: Saudi Aramco President and CEO Khalid A. Al-Falih receives a 2012 Girl Scout calendar from Laura Solano as members of the Dhahran Girl Scouts and scout leaders look on. Right: Scouts collect clothes for Dar al-Tifl orphanage in Palestine in August 1955.

some key advantages pointed out in the *Aramco World* story, which opened with a look at their annual campout.

"To a Girl Scout in Ohio, an *amir* exists only in the world of storybooks," the story said. Then it noted that near the Dhahran scouts' campsite stood the tent of a soldier assigned to guard them by a real *amir*, Sa'ud ibn Jiluwi, governor of the Eastern Province.

The story pointed out that ancient history was also close at hand. On the afternoon of their campout, the girls got first-hand taste of the past when they sailed

toys, and gather and ship clothing for the refugee orphans."

That spirit of service continues: In 2008, a project by the Dhahran Girl Scouts to support an elementary school in Thailand received a "certificate of recognition" at the 33rd World Conference of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in South Africa. Scouts collected and delivered books in English for the school; they also started a recycling and environmental project, benefiting both the school and the community.

# DESERT ENCOUNTER



Eastern Saudi Arabia, al-Hasa, was baking under the harassing heat of late summer. The searing sun blazed pitilessly in a pale, whitish sky, cloudless and windless. The mirage, a shimmering blue lake, danced far off marking the distant horizon of a barren plain.

BY NESTOR SANDER

visage. The thin lips were straight above a bare, receding jaw. In a barely sketched smile his features evinced self-confidence.

He offered me his right hand formally, saying, “Salaam alaikum.” I took it, and replied as custom demanded, “Wa alaikum es-salaam” (And upon thee be peace). His palm was cool, the grip firm, but brief. He smelled of smoke, probably from burning dried camel dung, the usual fuel in the high desert.

“Shizmik?” I questioned.

He answered, (r’s rolled like a Scot) “Ana Murra.” Not his own name, but that of the tribe.

Although a newcomer to the desert, I had heard of the Murra, the only tribe among the many in Arabia to spend most of the year in the Rub’ al-Khali—the Empty Quarter—a barren, desiccated waste invaded by monumental dunes, a land where a few deep, hand-dug wells, their brackish water polluted by camel stalings, made nomadic existence possible.

There, living was truly arduous and life itself precarious. Of the same descent as the king, these hardy folk were proud of their lineage, although for more than a decade the monarch had prohibited *ghazzu*, the time-honored raids on their cousins to the north, and had also forbidden molestation of *Ferenghi*, among them, me.

‘Ain Haradh was an ancient well, certainly pre-Islamic because its dressed-stone coping and lining betokened a culture far different from that of the nomads of today and yesterday. Now it is near a station on the railroad from Dammam to Riyadh. Then it was 150 difficult and partly trackless miles south of the base at Dhahran, but still a good 50 miles north of the great dunes of *ar-ramla*—the sands—as tribesmen called the forbidding tract.

That torrid October day of 1940 was close to the end of my second twelvemonth in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, opened only seven years earlier to exploration for oil. Much of my work had been carrying out geological duties related to mapping the contours of marker beds that might define the existence of an oil-bearing structure.

I had planted the stake to mark the place where a small drilling rig would begin the week-long task of penetrating about 1,000 feet of rock on the east flank of a broad, flat-topped fold. As geological supervisor of a program of near-surface studies, I had traced the fold, an “anticline,” for more than 175 miles from north to south without finding a downturn in the southward-rising strata that would show

this huge linear feature to be a potential trap for oil, and hence a valid site for deep exploratory drilling, a “wildcat.” (This great anticline was later named Ghawar.)

I wanted to make friends with my unexpected visitor, for we Americans had been instructed to attempt to foster goodwill in our hosts.

“Kef halek?” I inquired.

He replied, “Tayib, zain, wa enta?” (OK, good, and you?)

Not the traditional language of his first ritual phrase, but the jargon used to converse with us ignorant ones.

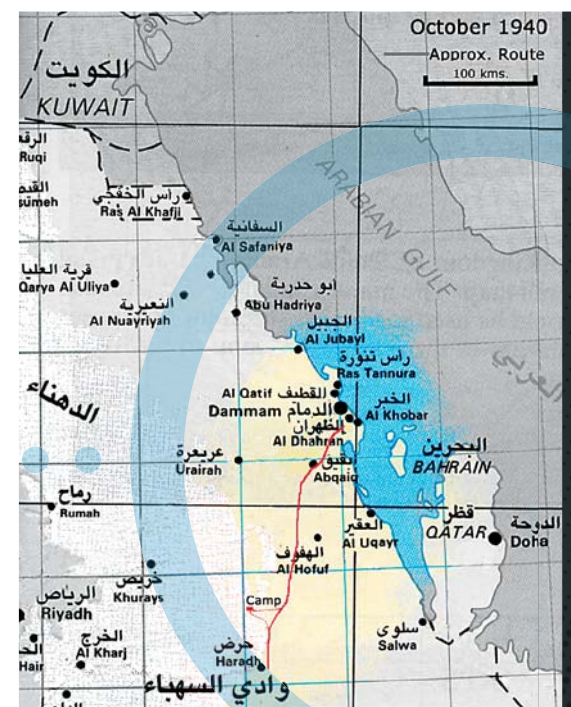
I was not fluent in Arabic and was at a loss to continue the conversation. Too, my mouth was dry after working in the

I was on my knees pounding a wooden stake into the hardpan with my geological hammer. Sweat dripped from my face to form dark spots on the pebbly silt. Behind me the burbling groan of a camel resounded in the quiet that had been broken only by the thump of the hammer. Startled, I got to my feet and turned, lifting the dark glasses from my peeling nose burned by months of exposure to wind and sun.

A lone rider was close by. Astride behind the hump of a trotting dromedary, he would have taken me unawares had his beast not decided to give voice. But he rode by me and stopped his camel a short distance away near the low stone coping of an ancient well, ‘Ain Haradh. He ordered his mount to couch, then hobbled it by folding back and tying a foreleg of the mildly complaining *dhalul* (female riding camel).

The rider was young, slender and short, but obviously fit. He wore a red and-white-checked headcloth, the badge of the king’s followers. It was held in place by the black wool cirlet of the *iqal*, its two cords falling below the ends of four heavy black plaits dangling halfway to his waist. He wore a once-white, long-sleeved, shirt-like robe that fell to his ankles. Encircling his waist a scuffed leather belt held the scabbard of a long, thin dagger. His feet were bare.

As he came nearer, I saw that his frame was wiry but well-muscled. His unlined, aquiline, tan face sported a small, sparse moustache below a prominent nose and thick eyebrows that all but joined. His eyes, fixed on me, were dark brown, rather large and widely spaced on the narrow



Haradh, now the site of a huge gas plant, was where Nestor Sander met his Bedouin rider. Opposite: A saddle-sore Sander atop a camel earlier in his career.

heat of the searing air. I wanted a drink from the thermos in the station wagon. Perhaps he too was thirsty, maybe hungry?

“Ma?” I asked, accompanying the word with the gesture, palm upward and out from under the chin, universal among the Bedu when asking for water. “Aynam!” he exclaimed, beaming. But thirsty or not, he only sipped the water in the cap of my gallon thermos, protesting its coolness with, “Barid!”

However, he was ecstatic over the halves of canned peaches that I kept for an emergency—a car breakdown or a sandstorm. After the first one, he grabbed them from the can, licking the syrup from

his fingers. I brushed the flies from my face and fanned them away from the peaches, but my guest ignored the pests although they clustered around his eyes seeking moisture.

After finishing the peaches, I suppose as a gesture of thanks, he went to his she-camel and with emphatic beckoning gestures urged me to approach. As I came near her, he removed the hobble from the doubled foreleg and repeated “Umaniya!” several times.

(I learned later that this word was the name of a renowned breed of riding camels, famous for speed and endurance.)

“R-R-RGH!” he commanded, and the animal rose clumsily like all camels. She was not one of the heavy, plodding, fawn- or reddish-colored beasts of burden I had seen carrying bales of dates, but was dark-brown, long-legged and lean, with a small head. She did not seem to have the bad temper reputed in all camels.

My visitor pulled a date from a small sack attached to his U-shaped, padded-cloth saddle and offered it to the large-eyed creature who, turning her head toward him, took it gently with prehensile lips. I was pleased at this evidence of an understanding.

In an effort to establish a closer relation between us humans, I again asked his name and that of his family: “Shizmik? Enta minain?”

He was Abdullah ibn Khalid, but the names of his grandfather and great-grandfather, or perhaps of his sept, or clan, I have forgotten. He was intent on showing me what must have been a cherished possession—an ancient Enfield rifle, still in fair condition and carefully wrapped in leather—goat?—with a tassel at the muzzle end.

I gave the required exclamation of envy of his property, and he then asked me if I would like to ride his *dhalul*. Was she even more precious than his rifle?

Would I like a ride? No, thank you! I remembered the swaying motion, the aching muscles, the chafed thighs—painful results of a two-hour jaunt. Perhaps on this paragon the equivalent of a gallop would be bearable, maybe even pleasant, but at a walk and seated on that inadequate cushion (although it looked more comfortable than the padded wooden frame spanning the hump that had tortured me).

“La, Memnoon.” (No, thank you), I said. It was time to part. “Fi aman illah” exchanged. No handshake. “Go in the

peace of God,” a fitting goodbye, for neither of us knew what was in store. He was up and away in a flash. My last view of him was a silhouette of the camel, its head and neck horizontal as he rode flat out into the loom of the mirage.

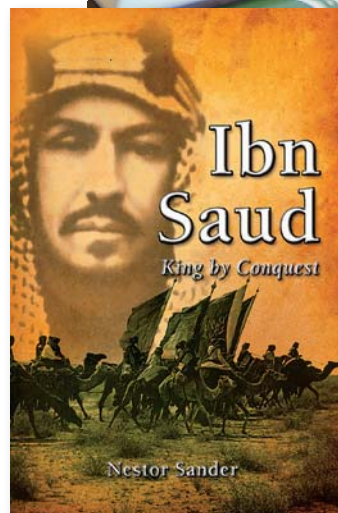
How had he learned of my presence? I had found that a five-minute stop almost anywhere in al-Hasa produced a caller, usually a ragged child-shepherd, but occasionally an old man who asked for tittin (tobacco). None of my other visitors had been mounted. Perhaps Abdullah had seen the column of dust raised by my car, or perhaps the desert telegraph was functioning, lightning fast as usual. Had he a motive other than curiosity? Probably not.

Pondering thus, I gathered up and threw into the station wagon the heavy, burning-hot, 40-foot chain I had towed as a spoor, or track, for Ali, the driver of the D-7 caterpillar tractor. The “cat” pulled a V-shaped frame of steel I-beams, the trail-making drag. Its eight-foot trace would remain until blowing sand obliterated it, long after the hole-drilling rig had come and gone.

As I was scorching my fingers on the metal handle of the Ford door, my eyes fell on the dressed stone granite coping of the well. Dressed stone was anomalous in a country where only important wells were protected by sun-dried brick, the others marked only by rope-cut grooves in the rocks edging their lips.

How deep was it? My pebble fell for more than two seconds before the faint sound of the splash—about 100 feet to water. How had the ancients been able to work so far down in a hand-dug well not six feet in diameter?

Thinking about that I almost blistered my rump on the leatherette seat as I started back to camp, some 30 miles



Nestor Sander, who died Feb. 11, posed for this photo, with his book *Ibn Saud, King by Conquest*, in his home office in Modesto, Calif., in 2007.

north. The flies would leave soon, and the spine-rattling bumps would be fewer when I found Ali and the drag, for the first users of the

smoothed path could cruise at 20 miles an hour. There was still work to do: check and collate the findings of the day by my fellow geologists, record the results in an approved format and transmit important findings in voice code to Dhahran.

Recollections of that routine—the occasional pleasure from a job well done or the confirmation of a prediction; the daily discomfort of unwashed sweat, heat, sand and flies; the real danger of working in an environment implacably punitive to error—now arouse only melancholy for lost youth, but the unusual visitor of that day has remained undimmed in my memory for more than 60 years.



# IN MEMORIAM

## CHARLES E. ADAMS

**March 25, 2012**

Survived by his wife Marianne Margaret (Maggie), son Kevin and daughters Deborah and Rebekka. He joined Aramco in 1959 and worked as general manager, Production P/L and Communications Projects in Dhahran, and served as executive vice president of Aramco Overseas Company in The Hague in the mid-1980s. He retired in 1994. Correspondence may be sent to Maggie at 22992 Black Bear Trail, Conifer, CO 80433.

## CORINNE ALISCH

**March 26, 2012**

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Henry Alisch, and survived by her daughter Judith Webster and son Kendall. She worked for Standard Oil of California in San Francisco from 1947-'49, transferring to the Aramco Accounting Dept. in Dhahran in January 1950, where she met her future husband, an Aviation Dept. employee. Correspondence may be sent to Judith at 3301 Neamar Dr., Grants Pass, OR 97527.

## JANAAN ANDERSON

**November 8, 2011**

Survived by her brother Robert Koehler. She joined Aramco in 1978 as an in-service nursing trainer in Dhahran and retired in 1988.

## DANIEL BARBEE

**March 12, 2012**

Survived by his wife Ruth and children Scott, and Carol Barbree Majjers. He joined Aramco as a construction engineer in 1964, leaving two years later to teach mechanical engineering at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and then Texas A&M in College Station. He rejoined the company in 1972 to pursue a career in the Engineering Services Organization, leaving Dhahran for a year in 1975 to serve as manager of the Projects Department at Aramco Overseas Company in The Hague. He became vice president of Crude and Infrastructure Project Management in 1981, leading critical expansion work in that arena, and he retired in 1988. Correspondence may be sent to Ruth at 1809 Bee Creek Dr., College Station, TX 77840.

## DR. VIVIAN MAURICE (BARRY) BARRETTO

**April 1, 2012**

Survived by his children Anil, Girin, Marianne and Mario. He joined Aramco in 1957, working in Ras Tanura and then Dhahran, and retired in 1968. Correspondence may be sent to Girin at [gmc72@hotmail.com](mailto:gmc72@hotmail.com) or Marianne Prankioff at 5421 St. Charles Ave., Apt. 2A, New Orleans, LA 70115.

## AMY WARD BEIR

**July 22, 2011**

Predeceased by her husband Howard and survived by her son John. The daughter of Arabian Gulf oil pioneer Thomas E. Ward, she joined the Public Relations Dept. in New York, N.Y., in 1948, where she met Howard Beir. They married in 1952, at which time she resigned, and the couple moved briefly to Baghdad in 1954.

## RUTH BURWELL

**November 27, 2011**

Survived by her husband, retiree Ralph Burwell, and children Thomas, Margaret, Louis, Joseph and Gerald. She was very active in Dhahran art activities. Correspondence may be sent to Ralph at 1238 Alki Ave., Unit 301, Seattle, WA 98116.

## DAVID G. BYERS

**January 17, 2012**

Survived by his wife Theresa and daughters Tamara and Barbara. He worked as an environmental engineer for Aramco Services Company in Houston, Texas, and retired in 1998. Correspondence may be sent to Theresa at 300 Tanglewood Dr., Brenham, TX 77833.

## BISHARA DAOD

**September 17, 2011**

Survived by his wife Leila and children Raja, Zeina and Samir. He joined the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc), Aramco's predecessor, in 1939 and was the translator for the Casoc delegation that negotiated the supplementary Concession Agreement in May that year. He met King Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud at the negotiations, recalling him as "a hefty, imposing figure with a mild, gentle voice." He

left Casoc soon after that and returned to Beirut, where he took a position at Socony-Vacuum (predecessor of Mobil). He retired from Mobil in 1976. Correspondence may be sent to Leila at 55 Rue du Caire, Doctor's Center 2034/7405, Ras Beirut, Lebanon.

## VIOLET DEINES

**February 3, 2012**

Predeceased by her husband Adam and survived by her daughters Barbara Deines Martin and Patricia Deines Marquart. Correspondence may be sent to Barbara at 167 Cronin Dr., Santa Clara, CA 95051.

## JOE FISHER

**January 6, 2012**

Survived by his wife Virginia (Gin) and children Kay and Steven. He worked for Aramco from 1975-'83. Correspondence may be sent to Kay at [kayt7811@yahoo.com](mailto:kayt7811@yahoo.com).

## ANTON FALKENBERG

**February 14, 2012**

Survived by his wife Nancy and sons Adam and John. He joined Aramco in 1984, retiring in 2010 as an engineering specialist in Abqaiq. Correspondence may be sent to Nancy at 9061 W. Tonopah Dr., Peoria, AZ 85382.

## ROBERT GARLAND

**January 11, 2011**

Survived by his wife Phyllis and children Ryan, Julie, Jeanne, Alan and James. He joined Aramco in 1978 and retired as foreman 1, Oil and Gas Operations, in Abqaiq in 1989. Correspondence may be sent to Phyllis at 46 Woodridge Dr., Mountain Home, AR 72653.

## LEWIS GLOVER

**January 7, 2012**

Survived by his daughters Kimberly and Janine. He joined Aramco in 1974, retiring as engineering project manager in Abqaiq in 1990. Correspondence may be sent to Kimberly at 7201 E. 32nd St., #738, Yuma, AZ 85365.

## WILLIAM F. GRAHAM

**February 16, 2012**

Survived by his children Sherry Tate and

# IN MEMORIAM

Bill Graham. He joined Aramco in 1946, retiring as a systems designer in the Materials Planning Dept. in Dhahran in 1978. Correspondence may be sent to Bill at 8988 Campus Meadows Loop NE, Lacey, WA 98516.

## RICHARD GRIMLER

**March 24, 2012**

Survived by his wife Dorothee, son Michael and daughters Catherine, Nancy Lapointe, Dorothee Falla and Caroline Drexel. He joined Aramco in 1955 and transferred to Texaco in 1969. Correspondence may be sent to Michael at 27 Seis Corazones, Espanola, NM 87532.

## GEORGE GULLIFORD

**January 28, 2012**

Survived by his wife Ruth and sons George, Jr. and Michael. He retired in 1991 as a senior inspection engineer in the Ras Tanura Project Inspection Section. Correspondence may be sent to Ruth at 5006 E. Mesquite Wood Ct., Phoenix, AZ 85044.

## LORRAINE V. JOHANSEN

**February 19, 2012**

Predeceased by her husband George and survived by her children Dagny Lord, Jay Johansen, Risë Ryan, Dana Johansen, Sidra LaBrie and Lohna O'Rourke. She joined Aramco in 1947 and met her husband-to-be in Dhahran. An avid marine mollusk collector and birder, she was instrumental in the establishment of the Arabian Natural History Assn. Correspondence may be sent to Dagny Lord at 201 Humble Hill Rd., Sequim, WA 98382.

## MADGE KNOX

**August 24, 2011**

Survived by her husband, retiree Richard Knox. Correspondence may be sent to her sister-in-law Fern Anderson at 1790 W. Placida de las Fincas, Green Valley, AZ 85622.

## ANN L. KRAUSE

**April 16, 2012**

Survived by her husband, retiree John (Jack) Kraus, sons John and Mark and daughters Lisa Tobert and Colleen McCourt. Correspondence may be sent

to Jack at 10147 Hernando Ridge Rd., Weeki Wachee, FL 34613.

## ALICE LUNDE

**December 30, 2011**

Predeceased by her husband John and survived by her children Jan, David, Paul and Marcy. Correspondence may be sent to Jan Osborne at 57322 N. Bank Rd., McKenzie Bridge, OR 97413.

## LEON McCORMICK

**December 16, 2011**

Survived by his wife Sigrid and daughters Barbara and Gwen. He joined Aramco in 1974 and retired in 1985 as a senior instrumentation technician in the Maintenance Projects Div. in 'Udhailiyah. Correspondence may be sent to Sigrid at 3645 E. Kimberly Ln., Springfield, MO 65802.

## MARIA PAST

**January 11, 2012**

Survived by her husband Dr. Ivan Past, to whom correspondence may be sent at 3605 Kentfield Rd., Austin, TX 78759.

## GRACE RICHEY (NÉE D'ANDREA)

**Oct. 28, 2011**

Predeceased by her husband O. Paul Richey and survived by her sister Josephine Clarizio. She joined Aramco in the 1950s. She worked as a nurse for six years in Dhahran, where she met her future husband. She was instrumental in the start-up of the first public clinic for new mothers in the kingdom.

## DALE ROBICHAUX

**January 31, 2012**

Survived by his wife Geraldine and children Debra, Diana, Darrell and David. He joined Aramco in 1975 and retired in 1986 as an industrial computer engineer in the Engineering Support Div. in Abqaiq. Correspondence may be sent to Geraldine at 286 Moonraker Dr., Slidell, LA 70458.

## DONALD J. SCOTT

**January 15, 2012**

Survived by his son William D. Scott. He was hired in 1952 and retired in 1986 as administrator, Material Control Services, in Dhahran. Correspondence may be

sent to William at 5525 Sierra Vista Ln., Carson City, NV 89701.

## JULIA KATHERINE (KIT) SIMON

**February 27, 2012**

Predeceased by her husband Tom and sons Paul and Michael. Survived by her daughters Rita and Katherine and her son Stephen. Correspondence may be sent to Katherine Simon at 26 Forest St., Keene, NH 03431.

## DR. CECIL SMITH

**April 16, 2012**

Survived by his wife Dorcas and daughters Suzanne and Sarah. He joined Aramco in 1954 and served as general surgeon at the Dhahran Health Center, retiring in 1981. Correspondence may be sent to Dorcas at 4395 Greenlea Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 6N1 Canada.

## FREDERICO (RICK) S. VIDAL

**April 13, 2012**

Survived by his wife Charlotte (Charlie) and children Jessica and Christopher. He joined the Government Relations Dept. in Dhahran in 1951 and retired in 1971, going on to teach anthropology at U.S. universities. For several years, beginning in 1978, he provided orientation to new employees headed for Saudi Arabia at Aramco Services Company in Houston. His book *The Oasis of al-Hasa*, published by Aramco in 1955, was the first study of the oasis and its people. He also excavated the first-century CE Jawan Tomb north of Safwa after it was discovered during company bulldozing operations in 1952. Correspondence may be sent to Christopher at 9850 Richmond Ave., Apt. 8103, Houston, TX 77042.

## REBECCA WOOD

**February 9, 2012**

Survived by her husband George and sons Richard and Ron. She was employed in the Geophysical Processing Department and was elected president of the Dhahran Women's Group in 1986. Correspondence may be sent to George at 55 Prospect Rd., Fayetteville, TN 3734, or [george\\_r\\_wood@yahoo.com](mailto:george_r_wood@yahoo.com).

## FAHMI BASRAWI: A COLORFUL CAREER

By Tom Pledge

Fahmi Basrawi, who began his colorful Aramco career in the 1940s as a teacher at the historic Jabal School for Saudi employees, died in al-Khobar on Feb. 2. He is survived by his children Ghassan, Marwan, Fadia and Fatin.

After completing six years of schooling in his hometown of Jiddah, he answered a newspaper ad for an unspecified position with Aramco. Only after he had signed a contract did the Aramco recruiter reveal that he would teach English.

"English! I don't know any English!" Basrawi exclaimed. "We'll teach you," the recruiter replied. But no one did. Instead, he taught himself, studying at night to keep ahead of his students.

Basrawi was an energetic and talented teacher, leading classes in arithmetic and English. He also organized the school's first sports teams, including a baseball team on which the kingdom's future minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Ali I. Al-Naimi, played second base.

In the early 1950s, the company awarded Basrawi a four-year college scholarship. He graduated from the American University of Beirut, one of the first Saudis to do so, and returned to Aramco to various positions in the

Training and the Public Relations departments.

In 1957, he inaugurated Aramco's television station. He hosted educational programs on Aramco TV for the next 17 years.

"Half the ladies on the Eastern Province learned to read and write Arabic from my classes," he claimed. He also hosted a Sunday evening "Tri-District" quiz show, which pitted employees from Abqaiq, Dhahran and Ras Tanura against each another for bragging rights and prizes of up to SR350.

Basrawi took time to teach children in the Saudi Aramco Schools about the kingdom. Lornis Van Loon said he charmed her third-grade students in Ras Tanura in the late 1960s during a talk about Saudi apparel.

"He captivated the kids!" she noted. "He went around the room and had the class feel his clothing and showed them the proper style to wear their headgear. When the class answered one of his questions correctly, he would comment, 'Oh, you are too smart.'



Top: Fahmi Basrawi is pictured right with Crown Prince Sa'ud ibn Abdulaziz during his visit to Dhahran in 1950. Above: He poses with his one of the Jabal School classes in 1946. Ali I. Al-Naimi is the small boy holding a ball at the right.

"When he left with his cheerful 'Fi aman Allah,' the delighted children followed him to the door and begged him to come back."

## THE LAST OF THE PIONEERS

By Tim Barger

Nestor (Sandy) Sander, was hired by the Standard Oil Company of California in 1938 and went to Saudi Arabia that year to work for its subsidiary, the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc). The last of the Casoc employees, his death on Feb. 11, 2012, brought the opening chapter of Arabian Oil to a close.

In Dhahran, he worked on defining the Abqaiq field and then headed a group assigned to map the subsurface contours of what would later be called the Ghawar field, the largest oil field in the world. He also set up the company's first micropaleontology laboratory.

During WWII, while on home leave, his fluency in French, Spanish, Italian and German and the fact he was an ROTC officer led to his mobilization into the U.S. Army. He worked in military intelligence in North

Africa, and in Paris following its liberation.

After the war, he returned to Ras Tanura to work for the newly renamed Arabian American Oil Company. While there, he completed his doctoral thesis for the Sorbonne. He left Aramco in 1955 to pursue other opportunities in the oil business.

Beginning in the late 1990s, he worked as the U.S. editor for *Carnets de Geologie/Notebooks on Geology* an online micropaleontology journal, translating French and German scientific papers. He completed his last translation just two months before his death.



Nestor Sander wearing "whites" in Ras Tanura in 1946 or '47.

In his meticulous biography of the Saudi monarch, *Ibn Saud, King by Conquest* was published in 2001.

In 2006, at age 91, he visited D-Day sites in Normandy and produced a series of YouTube videos about the invasion. Then he began a series of instructional videos about geology and microfossils, completing his 29th video last year.

He was a cheerful contributor to *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*. His last story, last year, was about meeting Nancy Hansen, the daughter of Casoc geologist

Jerry Harriss. "My little story was printed just as I wrote it. Thank you," he wrote.

PLEASANT DAYS SPRING 2012

# Al~Ayyam Al~Jamilah الأيام الجميلة

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**Good Cheer all 'Round.** Aramco Overseas Company B.V. (AOC) retirees celebrated their 13th biennial reunion in Voorschoten, the Netherlands, March 31, with 185 guests mingling with a 15-strong contingent of AOC executive-management members and employees. "I am very happy that I came over especially for this reunion from Indonesia," said retiree Karel Ottens. "We feel like a big family..." He echoed the remarks of AOC Managing Director Nabil Aldabal, who welcomed everyone and warmly expressed his desire to keep retirees involved in the Saudi Aramco community. AOC itself is this year celebrating six decades since its establishment in The Hague on Dec. 1, 1952.

**60**  
anniversary  
CATALYST FOR SUCCESS

