

Al~Ayyam Al~Jamilah

الأيام الجميلة





12 Fêtes Galore!

Across the continent, from Austin to Houston and from Toronto to Rossmoor, Calif., Aramcons celebrated the holiday season. Striking their traditional pose at the Austin party are Marge Johannson (center) and (from left) her daughters Gen, Karin and Julie, with Julie's husband, Tom Doody.



14 Crown Prince Pays Visit

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, left, admires the gift of antique silver spurs, symbolizing his work to advance the kingdom's growth, that he received from Saudi Aramco at a reception in Houston on April 7, with guests including some 40 retirees. To his left are retired Aramco CEO Frank Jungers; Khalid Al-Falih, minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources; and Nasser Al-Nafisee, executive director, Saudi Aramco Public Affairs.

18 103-Year-Old Retiree Cherishes Memories

When Johnnie Merritt landed in Dhahran in 1948, she had no place to stay. "Since my name was Johnnie, Personnel wouldn't believe a woman was coming," she recalls. But she stayed for 22 years, welcoming new employees when they arrived at the Dhahran Airport.



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.

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22 AramcoWorld Garners Accolade

Brownbook, a stylish, Dubai-based cultural publication, featured two former Aramcons among interviewees in an 80-page tribute to *AramcoWorld*, praising the magazine for its work "to piece together a cultural and historical narrative of the Middle East."



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24 First Brat?

Who was the first Aramco Brat? There are several candidates, including John Roy Kessinger, born in Dhahran on Aug. 8, 1940. The son of Arthur and Beatrice Kessinger and the first American child born in Saudi Arabia, he's high on the list of "First Brat" contenders.

26 Aramco Offspring Make Waves

The posters sum it up: Filmmaker Todd Nims and sustainable-business mentor Carrie Norton are charting creative career paths by working with others. They've both boldly built eye-opening professions.



29 Embassy Thanks Nine Antiquities Donors

Marian Ferguson was among nine participants in Saudi Aramco's Antiquities Homecoming Project who received certificates of appreciation and learned anew about Saudi traditions at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C., in November.



Welcome, *Alaela* Subscribers

This is the first issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* for subscribers to *Alaela*, Aramco Overseas Company's regional retiree magazine, which was recently discontinued to serve the company's global annuitant community through a single publication. We welcome all our new readers. Feel free to communicate through our "Mail Center" section. If you have stories to contribute, please send queries to Arthur Clark at arthur.clark@aramcoservices.com. Send subscription queries to Melissa Altman at melissa.altman@aramcoservices.com. The current issue and past issues of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* are online at <http://www.aramcoservices.com/publications/al-ayyam-al-jamilah.aspx>.

Aramco Overseas Company, London, published *Alaela* for regional retirees from 2010-16. The last issue featured the 2016 UK Aramcons Reunion.

Cover: Crown Prince Mohammed ibn Salman posed with Aramco retirees and Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid Al-Falih, left front, in Houston on April 7. He met Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on March 7 and President Donald Trump in the White House on March 20.

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saudi aramco





THE INDEPENDENT IN 2017 CALLED BRISTOL, ON THE SOUTHWEST COAST OF ENGLAND, "THE BEST PLACE IN THE U.K. TO SPEND A WEEKEND." THE TIMES VOTED IT THE U.K.'S "BEST PLACE TO LIVE" THREE OUT OF THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

That was good enough for 2018 UKaramcons Reunion cohosts Jimmy and Veronica Anderson and Mike and Sue Higgins, who announced in January that the seventh biennial get-together will be held at the Bristol Hotel, in the heart of the city, Sept. 21-22.

"We're looking forward to meeting and greeting you all and spending time with special friends to create another memorable UKaramcons Reunion," they said.

The Tom Henderson Memorial Golf Tournament, named after the late reunion founder who hosted the first five reunions with his wife, Elaine, will take place Sept. 21. The reunion dinner, hosted by Aramco Overseas Company, London, will be Sept. 22.

Bristol is "one of the U.K.'s most exciting cities," said the hosts. The waterfront hotel offers easy access to theaters, museums and art galleries, as well as shopping.

Foodies will find a wealth of restaurants on the harbor side just across from the hotel. There are also markets with jewelry, clothing, books, art, food stalls and local produce.

Guests with a sense of adventure can try a hot-air balloon ride. Those looking for relaxation can enjoy a leisurely cruise on the Kennett and Avon canal.

Anyone with an interest in wildlife will love the Bristol Aquarium and Bristol Zoo,

plus the Wild Place Project.

Attendees with an architectural bent may visit Tyntesfield, a Victorian country house just outside Bristol, Bristol Cathedral and Llandoger Trow, a pub dating to 1664.

Bristol's Temple Meads Station, with high-speed connections to all major U.K. cities, is a 15-minute walk from the hotel. The Bristol Airport is close by and there is shuttlebus service from the airport to the station.

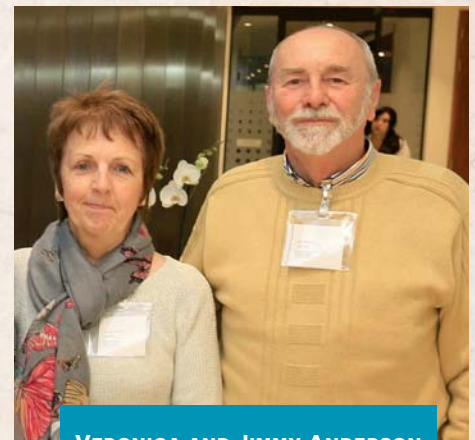
Hotel prices (including breakfast) for Sept. 21 are £100 single, and £110 double; on Sept. 22, prices are £135 and £145.

Seventy rooms have been held for the reunion, but attendees must secure reservations with a credit card before Aug. 31. To book a room, ring the Bristol Hotel at 01179 23 0333, dial 1 for reservations and quote "UKaramcons reunion 2018."

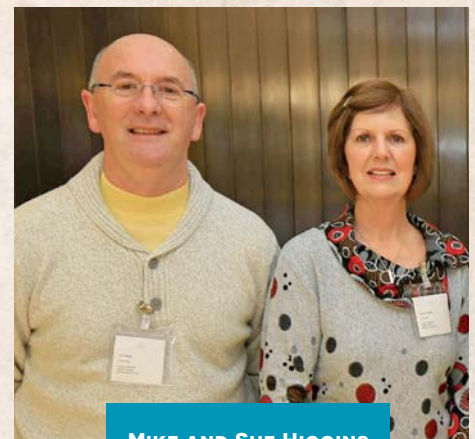
After reserving a room attendees should e-mail reunionuk2016@aol.com or phone the Andersons at 01249 783389 to reserve a place at the dinner.

Those who live near Bristol and do not stay at the hotel are welcome to join all reunion activities, but to attend the dinner they should make a reservation by calling the Andersons.

There is an NCP car park beside the hotel. Hotel guests pay £5 per day. Those attending the dinner only may receive a 50



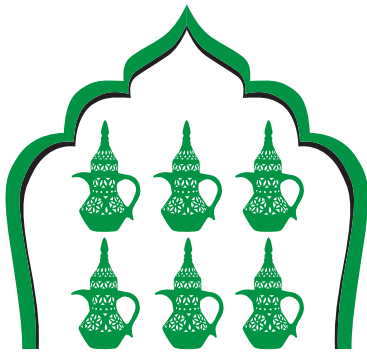
VERONICA AND JIMMY ANDERSON



MIKE AND SUE HIGGINS

percent discount for the evening.

Golf tournament details and information about an outing the night of Sept. 21 will be available at <https://aramcoexpats.com/events/7th-uk-aramcons-reunion/> as soon as they are finalized.



Austin Hafla 2018 A 'Family' Affair

When talking to friends about our experiences working for Saudi Aramco, we are often asked what it was like living and working in the kingdom. We always reply that one of the things we liked best was that we could pick our own family.

Not only did we find new “brothers” and “sisters,” but our children found new “cousins,” “aunts” and “uncles”—meaning we had new “nephews” and “nieces.” So we always look forward to attending the biennial Annuitants Reunions and spending time with our “family,” as well as other former Aramcons with whom we can share our experiences and memories.

It will be our great pleasure and honor to cohost the Austin Hafla 2018 from Sept. 16-19 at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa in Cedar Creek, Texas, 17 miles east of Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

Registration has already begun for the reunion and for rooms at the Hyatt at discounted rates. To receive the discounted rates, in addition to making hotel reservations you must complete the required Registration forms and submit the \$250 registration fee, as well as fees for golf, trapshooting or bridge if you want to participate in those activities. Registration forms, hotel-reservation information and a list of attendees are at <https://www.aramcoexpats.com/events/2018->

aramco-hafla-annuitants-reunion/.

Discounted hotel rates will also be available Sept. 12-15 and Sept. 19-22 for those who wish to spend more time in the Austin/Central Texas Area. Austin is the “live music capital of the world,” as well as home to many other attractions.

We chose the reunion venue because of the wide variety of activities and comfortable rooms it offers. If you just want to relax and enjoy your time with friends, you probably won’t even have to venture outdoors because most of the hotel rooms, meeting rooms and dining facilities are in the same building.

On the other hand, there are many other activities you may find of interest. In addition to the free s’mores prepared each evening, there are highly rated spa facilities, free bicycles to ride around the resort, and swimming, kayaking, rafting, golfing and horseback riding. If zip-lining or hiking are on your bucket list, the resort is adjacent to the McKinney Roughs Nature Park, with free shuttles provided.

While we are still in the process of finalizing the schedule for the Hafla, here are some of the lined-up activities.

- ★ Sept. 15: Early registration begins in the afternoon.
- ★ Sept. 16: Registration continues, an ecumenical service will take place in the afternoon and the Exhibits will open. There will be an Austin country casual evening—a social hour followed by a Chuckwagon Buffet and music and dancing.
- ★ Sept. 17: A breakfast buffet will be provided. Registration and Exhibits continue. Golf, trapshooting and a bridge tournament are planned. There will be several presentations about the history of the company, the 2019 KSA Reunion, the history of Austin and other topics. A photographer will take individual and group photos in the afternoon and evening. Aramco Services Company will host the Gala Banquet, with a speaker from the company and music.
- ★ Sept. 18: A breakfast buffet will be



David and Vicki Jessich



Judy and Bill Walker

provided. Tours of the Austin area will be featured and Exhibits will continue. After the social hour, there will be a Middle Eastern Buffet, followed by music and dancing.

- ★ Sept. 19: Farewell!

If you have any questions, please contact us at austinhafla2018@gmail.com. Please check aramcoexpats.com for further Hafla updates.

Your Hosts,

*Judy and Bill Walker and
Vicki and David Jessich*



BY *Alison Hooker*

Are you still looking for good reasons to sign up for the Fourth KSA Saudi Aramco Annuitants Reunion next year?

You each have special reasons, of course. They range from renewing ties with precious friends and revisiting the places where you grew and played, to seeing how the company in which you invested your skills and knowledge has grown into a state-of-the-art, global petrochemicals enterprise, furthering the development of a sophisticated, modern society that is proud of its rich cultural heritage.

Planning is well under way for the event, which rolls out March 11-21, 2019. Registration for first-time attendees began April 1 at ksa-reunion.com. Those who have attended past in-kingdom reunions are invited to sign up starting Oct. 1.

Retirees, spouses, children and grandchildren are welcome. You will need to know the employee's badge number to register. If you do not know your badge number, you may call Alight Aramco Benefits Center at 855-604-6220.

"The 2019 Reunion Committee is committed to ensuring that our visitors find and see what they particularly want in Saudi Arabia, the country of oil, the desert and the camel, bearing in mind that

the kingdom is different now than what they previously knew," says Ali Baluchi, the driving force behind all the KSA reunions. "We want our visitors to enjoy their memories in the context of a modern, civilized country with a deep history."

Some things never change, and attendees are guaranteed the best of traditional Saudi hospitality. The committee's Events team is working with the Aramco community and the community at large to create a full and varied daily program for all to enjoy.

Attendees will be special guests of President and CEO Amin Nasser at a Welcome event. Another reunion highlight will be a visit to the new King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture and the adjacent Energy Center in Dhahran.

There will be day trips to company facilities such as Shaybah and to local tourist areas including al-Hasa, plus overnight trips to Asir, Jiddah, Madain Salih and Riyadh. Some trips will have a charge for accommodation, guides and transportation, but the committee is working to keep costs competitive.

When planning your itinerary, remember to schedule time to enjoy local activities, shop or just a walk around company communities. You will be amazed to see how al-Khobar has changed and developed! And there will still be time to play a round of golf, browse at a Mall Day in ad-Diwan in Dhahran or an art gallery in Dammam, experience a hearty Saudi breakfast, or visit Munira Al Ashgar's lovely home and museum.

You can stay up-to-date on reunion planning through the Facebook page "2019 KSA Reunion." You may sign up for activities when the opportunity arises.

The committee is arranging discounts with airlines. Dammam is the local airport.

The committee is also negotiating favorable rates with new four- and five-star hotels near the Mall of Dhahran to create an efficient bus-transportation system between the hotels and Dhahran. Attendees who choose not stay at a suggested hotel will need to provide for their own transportation.

Details about hotels and airlines will be posted on Facebook when confirmed.

There is no spare housing in Dhahran due to ongoing community works. If attendees plan to stay with a friend or a family in Dhahran, hosts must receive permission in advance from Housing.

As at previous gatherings, a "Reunion House" in Dhahran will be the base for guests. You will be able to relax over coffee, connect with friends, catch up on reunion news and access wi-fi. A team of volunteers will welcome and help you.

Have you been convinced to attend the reunion? Then here's what you need to do:

Register as early as possible, based on previous-reunion attendance. There is a nonrefundable registration fee of \$150 per person. Some activities will also have fees, but all events are optional so there will be a reunion schedule to fit every budget.

Make sure your passport has at least six-months validity when you enter Saudi Arabia in March. If it expires in or before August 2019, you will need a new one. The committee will make arrangements for visas. They cannot be issued until late January or February to be valid for the reunion.

We look forward to welcoming you home in 2019!

Opposite: Pictures from reunions past, in 2009 and 2015, offer an idea of the camaraderie and opportunities to discover Saudi Aramco and Saudi Arabia anew. If past is prelude, 2019 returnees will have a very good time.



Monarch or Painted Lady? The Painted Lady (top), a breeding migrant in the Eastern Province, might easily be mistaken for the Monarch (bottom), which is unrecorded in the region.

Monarchs in Saudi Arabia?

November 13, 2017

In the annals of Aramco is there mention of a swarm of Monarch butterflies in Abqaiq one day between 1966 and 1970? Those were the years Bob Luttrell's family was living there and the Luttrell's eldest daughter, Robin, swears she saw them all over the yard. Robin is a reliable source because she and I went to the same college and we were close neighbors in Dhahran, Atlanta and now in Decatur, Georgia! I hope there is a record of the butterflies.

Ann Rhea
abrhea@att.net

NOTE: Robin Luttrell checked with a friend and wrote: "Someone else remembers the butterflies, in Ras Tanura. You didn't imagine it." The date was "either 1967 or 1968" and it was said the butterflies "were blown off course

from migrating from Europe to Africa." However, Chris Boland, a leader in compiling Saudi Aramco's Field Guide to the Biodiversity of Dhahran, and retiree Jim Mandaville, who reviewed the guide in the Fall 2017 issue, doubt that Monarchs ever visited the Eastern Province. "I suspect that the beautiful butterflies Ann refers to are probably either the Plain Tiger or Painted Lady," Boland wrote. "Painted Lady is remarkable—it migrates 14,000 kilometers (7,000 north and 7,000 south over the course of six generations)!" Mandaville could find no record of Monarchs in Saudi Arabia, adding, "If it IS the Monarch...it would be a very noteworthy discovery for that area."

Remembering Pete

December 15, 2017

Thank you for letting me do the piece about Pete Ballard (Fall 2017) and for how it looked. Thanks for the word about my novel [*The Last Innocent Hour*], but really the whole magazine was terrific.

Margot Abbott
memargot@yahoo.com

NOTE: Abbott wrote about her friend and mentor, Pete Ballard, who died last year. The daughter of Aramcons Fred and Jeanne Abbott, she also wrote "The Picture in the Desert," (Fall 2012) about her family's sojourn in the kingdom. It focused on the time when her parents and siblings, Carol and Fred, figured in a 1949 Life magazine story. Margot Abbot was born in 1949, so missed out.

'Ras Tanura Memories' a Hit

December 15, 2017

Our copy of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* arrived yesterday and it was wonderful to read "Ras Tanura Photo Brings Back Memories."

As my husband Dale read the article

last night, he wondered if you knew about the very short film clip in color from the Aramco archives that is part of the "trailer" to the film *The Kingdom*, made several years ago. It is in the very beginning of the film, which has several other scenes of Dhahran, including the pool.

Our part is of my sister and me leaving our barracks apartment with our little black lamb and running down the beach. I assume it was taken the same day as Mr. Richie's black-and-white photo.

Judy Bauer
judywbauer@gmail.com

NOTE: The story featured a photo of Judy Webster and her sister, Sue, ages eight and five. Robert Yarnall Richie shot the picture. Another Richie photo, taken at the same time, included a third little girl (far right) whose identity is unknown. Does anyone recognize her?



Sue and Judy Webster stand left next to an unknown little girl in this photo taken at Ras Tanura in 1946, shortly after they arrived with their mother, Mildred, to join their father, Ken.

Mom Would Have Enjoyed Issue

January 2, 2018

I enjoyed "Ras Tanura Photo Brings Back Memories!" How I wish Mom had lived to enjoy this special tribute.

I was also happy to see "Aramco Expats.com Turns 15." Vicci Turner has been wonderful, allowing me to publish the letters of my grandparents, Ken

and Mildred Webster, on *AramcoEx-pats.com*. She just published Chapter 18 and it looks great. My goal is to publish a hardcover book illustrated with my grandmother's photos and other images saved by my family.

I met Vicci when I went to a reunion of "The Geezers"—an informal group of original Aramco Brats—in Seattle nearly 10 years ago. Aunt Judy invited me and I spent several days with those great folks and learned more about her, my mother and my grandparents and Aunt Judy. They made me an "official" Geezer, too!

Ken Slavin

kslavin@satx.rr.com

NOTE: Ken Slavin's mother, Sue, died last year before the publication of the story. His compilation of his grandparents' letters and photos starts at <https://aramcoexpats.com/articles/dear-folks-chapter-1/>.

Houston Brat Recounts Harvey's Toll

December 17, 2017

I am writing...regarding your desire to connect with Brats (I am Class of '87) who were affected by Harvey.

I don't know that I would use the term friendly, but, unfortunately, Harvey and my wife and I became acquainted due to a foot of water in my home. Our home in the Bear Creek area of Houston not only received a foot of water, but the water did not recede for a week. We carried no flood insurance (we do now) and only received funds from FEMA. With those funds and our savings, thankfully, we were able to return to our home after almost 90 days.

Unfortunately, we lost 90 percent of our furniture and have only been able to replace a few pieces. Harvey has broken us financially, but not broken our spirit and we are happy at least to be back in our home. We have found that the kindness of others still exists and have welcomed that help, as well as tried our best to pay it forward.

Ronald Langan

16034 Hidden Acres Dr
Houston TX 77084

Stories on Photos and Papers Appreciated

December 21, 2017

I read the Fall 2017 issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* with great interest, not only for the Ayesha Malik story, "Aramco: Above the Oil Fields," but also for the story about Tom Barger's papers, "Rich Photo Collections Help Preserve Heritage."

I just finished Barger's *Into the Blue*, which I enjoyed very much. He was a natural and expressive writer and created a fascinating portrait of Saudi Arabia in the '30s. I'm headed to Georgetown on a research trip sometime in the new year. I wonder if his papers will be there?

Keija Parsinen

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Bob Rigsby is Missed

January 27, 2018

It is very sad to know through *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* about Bob Rigsby's death. Please accept my best condolences on his departure. Prayers are for him and to all the family to bear the loss.

I worked at West Pier with Bob Yates from 1973 to 1985 when I retired and Bob Rigsby was our superintendent of Offshore Drilling. I have a lot of good memories of that Golden Period, and saw offshore drilling progress from a division to become a department. I can go on with lots of success.

I joined Aramco in July 1973 and was posted to the Abqaiq Drilling Toolhouse. After a few months I was transferred to Bob Rigsby's division. At that time, there were only two Aramco-owned offshore rigs and one contract rig in operation.

When I joined Aramco I was 24 years old and a very shy person with very little experience of life. Luckily, I had very experienced associates from Texas who taught me a lot and I learned very fast, too. Later on, I was more Texan than Pakistani (especially on the phone and on radio).

I married and raised four children—two daughters and two sons—during my Aramco tenure.

I appreciate the kind of services you

are providing to old Aramcons by publishing *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.

Rais Akhtar

rais.akhtar2012@gmail.com

ASC Flood Move Completes 'Full Circle'

February 3, 2018



Bob Gabler, right, and his son, Michael, relished Scuba-diving in the Gulf. He spent a year in Dhahran with his family, in 1984-85.

Recent events brought back memories of my 25-year career in Houston. It started at the Milam Building, then to Two Allen Center and then to our own building at 9009 West Loop South. Now, due to several very damaging floods, ASC has moved back to Two Allen Center...thus completing a full circle of venues.

Joining ASC in 1976 was one of the best decisions in my entire life. I met and have many good friends from there, including a number of Saudis. Notable among them was Aziz D. Al-Falih, whose son Khalid is now the minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, succeeding Ali Al-Naimi.

Among my top experiences was an assignment in Dhahran in 1984-85 with my wife, Joan, and our children, Michael and Susan. While there, they were able to visit China with the Dhahran Outing Group. My son and I got

MAIL CENTER

Scuba-certified at the Third St. pool and dove in the Arabian Gulf.

In Houston I was a member of the ASC team that went to Nuremberg, Germany, to purchase a previously owned Hawker Jet Air Ambulance for the Aviation Dept. In Dhahran I was also involved in purchasing five new Boeing 737-400 airliners for Aramco. Another one of my responsibilities at ASC was to escort young, upcoming Saudi professionals and managers on visits to some of our major suppliers.

With modern technology, I've been able to maintain contact with great company friends in Dhahran, The Hague and a number of states and in the Houston area.

I sincerely thank ASC and Saudi Aramco for a very rewarding and enjoyable career.

Bob Gabler

rlgabler2001@yahoo.com

Thanks for Posting Picture

February 16, 2018

Thank you so much for posting my request for more information [about geologist Lionel von Hornlein] in the letters section of your lovely magazine for Aramco expats! I received an interesting request from Aqeel Alonazi, a former media adviser at Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, in regard to that letter.

He wrote: "I would be very grateful if you would send me some stories and images about the era when your father lived in Saudi Arabia as I am starting to write a book about the oil epic during the early days and the heroes that created this great history. Of course, your father was one of them."

Also, I found this picture taken after my dad grew a beard in 1939 or 1940 and took to wearing more sensible Saudi headwear to protect himself from the sun while doing fieldwork. I thought you might enjoy it. I believe he is standing outside one of the *barastis* in Dhahran.

A-Lan Reynolds

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NOTE: Reynolds wrote (Spring '17) seeking information about her father's



Top: Geologist Lionel von Hornlein adapted to conditions in the kingdom in the late 1930s. *Above:* He's shown in a 1941 passport photo stamped in Baghdad.

time with the company. Alonazi regularly reads Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah at <http://www.aramcoservices.com/Publications/Al-Ayyam-Al-Jamilah.aspx>. In 2009 he replied to a Mail Center query by Mike Keller about how to reach his father's coworker in Abqaiq, Sa'ad al-Shammari. Alonazi contacted his relatives in Abqaiq to track down al-Shammari, and Keller, his mother and sister reunited with him during the 2009 Expatriates Reunion (Spring '09) after a 41-year hiatus.

Gander Story Follow Up

March 5, 2018

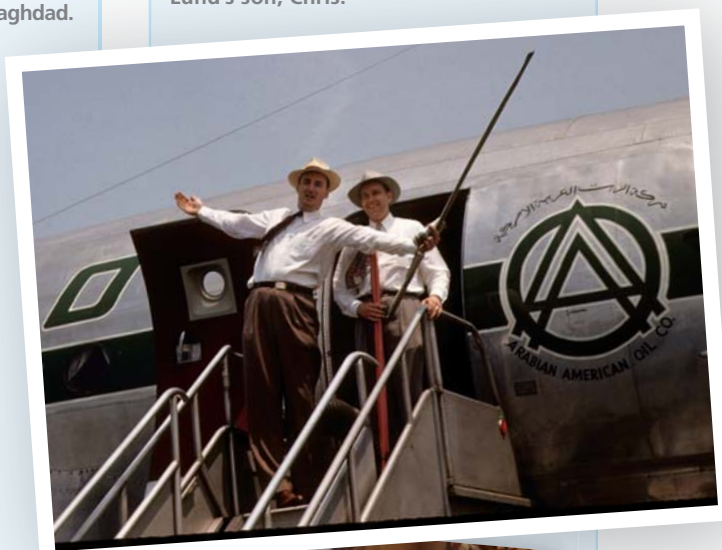
Ancillary to the Gander story ("Mail Center," Fall '17) my father, pilot Christian J. Lund, received a Dutch-made,

Delft-style humidor in the late '50s. I guess that the humidor was presented by the maintenance corps in Gandar, Newfoundland [a refueling stop for Aramco aircraft], as a token of friendship when the international flights were discontinued in late 1960. My dad was relocated from the New York office to Dhahran. The second photo shows navigator Bob Fenton (left) with my father, c. 1955, at the doorway of an Aramco DC-6. Fenton is showing the size of the fish that got away on their Newfoundland fishing trip. As I recall there were three crewmembers (pilot, copilot and navigator) and two stewardesses on the international flights.

Chris Lund

christianlund1@gmail.com

Anglers among Aramco's international flight crews in the 1940s and '50s repaired to the Honey Bucketette and Rod Club on their Newfoundland stop. Navigator Bob Fenton departs a plane, fishing rod in hand, as pilot Christian Lund watches. "I think they would ride up on an Aramco flight, spend a few days fishing, and then ride back to Idlewild. Ah, those were more carefree, almost inconceivable, days," says Lund's son, Chris.



AMIN AND WAINE CAPTURE TOP PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZES

Two former company photographers, Shaikh Amin and Adrian Waine, won top prizes in U.S., Greek and U.K. forums in 2017 for pictures ranging from the sublime to the technically challenging.

Amin, who lives in Islamabad, Pakistan, added to his substantial chest of

gold medals from U.S. and other competitions. He retired as chief photographer in 1985 after a 37-year career, and returned to shoot on special assignments for a decade after that.

Amin won a gold medal from the Fifth Olympic Photo Circuit in Greece for his nature-category entry, "Birds Resting in Fog." He won another gold from the 26th annual Georgia Southern Circuit in Atlanta for "Enjoying Pure Drink-2," portraying an ant on a flower petal.

Waine, who worked at the Photo Unit from 1988-95, won the "Best Professional Photographer" prize in December in the "Made in Britain, Loved by the World" competition sponsored by the Engineering Employers' Federation. He received the honor in Parliament in London, where he was shortlisted for the award in 2015 and runner-up in 2016.

He won the top prize for a photo of a huge water-cooled industrial compressor powering stone-cutting equipment in Derbyshire in North-Central England. Derbyshire is next door

to Cheshire, home to Waine's company, Photography for Industry.

The Times and *The Daily Telegraph* published stories about the award. Waine called that a good omen for his future, "especially as British manufacturing is on the up."



Shaikh Amin's "Enjoying Pure Drink-2" won a gold medal at the 2017 Georgia Southern Circuits competition.



Adrian Waine received his "Made in Britain, Loved by the World" top prize in London in December.

ARAMCONS ACHIEVE NONAGENARIAN MILESTONES

Two former Aramcons celebrated nonagenarian birthdays late last year, winning good wishes at special cake-cuttings in Texas.



Doris Bedrossian Bobb

95

Doris Bedrossian Bobb, who turned 95 on Dec. 2, was treated to dinner at Ciao Bello in Houston. Twenty family members came from California, Washington, Florida and Pennsylvania to help her celebrate.

She traveled to Dhahran with her husband, Dr. Arthur Bobb, and their sons, Fred, Alan and Andrew, in 1963, and returned to her home in Drexel, Penn., in 1980.

"I'm doing fine from the neck up," she said with a laugh. "I use a walker to prevent falling. No driving anymore!"

However, she did some dancing—without a walker—at a New Year's Eve party in Houston where she wore an embroidered blue-and-gold Saudi gown and a necklace displaying a gold coin minted by United States in the mid-1940s to pay for oil purchases in Saudi Arabia—special souvenirs of her years in Saudi Arabia.

Marion Rich DeFord, who lived in Dhahran during the 1970s with her first husband, the late Bill Rich, celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends, including her daughter, Lisa

Hunter, on Nov. 6 at the Austin Club in Austin.

In 1933, at age five, she and her mother moved to Palestine, where her father, John Wier, worked for Sony Vacuum—which became an Aramco shareholder and was later renamed Mobil. She met Bill Rich when she was a clerk at Gulf Oil in Venezuela. Lisa and her brother, Stephen, were born there when their dad worked for Mobil in the 1950s.

"Mom loved living abroad in Venezuela, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and experiencing other cultures and sites," Lisa said.

One of her favorite Saudi experiences occurred in Waco, Texas, in 2002 when she was among a group of retirees who met Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz at the airport when he arrived to visit President George W.

Bush. The crown prince noticed she was wearing a necklace with her name in Arabic and said, "Hello, Marion," when he shook her hand.

"Mom told me it was an absolute honor and highlight of her life to be included in that event and the subsequent dinner in the prince's honor in Houston," her daughter said.

Marion Rich DeFord

90



AUTHOR ADDS NEW BOOK

Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm, the wife of late Aramcon Norman Boehm, has added a new book to her list of English and Polish titles with publication this year of *Untold Stories of Polish Heroes from World War II* by University Press of America. She has won several literary awards.

Untold Stories consists of biographies of men and women who struggled against Germany and the U.S.S.R. during the war, including the father of former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski called Ziolkowska-Boehm's 2013 book, *The Polish Experience through World War II*, "a remarkable and highly personal account of the...suffering the victims of both Hitlerism and Stalinism had to endure...beyond the comprehension of most Americans."

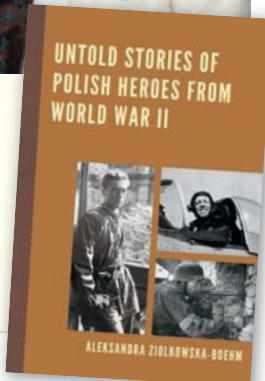
Her other books include *Kaia, Heroine of the 1944 Warsaw Rising*; *Open Wounds, A Native American Heritage*; *On the Road with Suzy, From Cat to Companion*; and *Ingrid Bergman and Her American Relatives*.

The Bergman book was inspired by her husband's link to the Swedish actress: Her father and Norman Boehm's paternal grandmother were siblings, making him and Bergman first cousins once removed. He wrote about meeting his famous cousin in "Bachelor Days" in the Winter 2002 issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.

Boehm joined Aramco in 1952 and worked in the kingdom and the New York office, transferring to Exxon in 1974.



Aleksandra Ziolkowska-Boehm and her husband, the late Aramcon Norman Boehm, celebrated at his high-school class reunion in Washington, N.J., in 1990.



Ken Wright, standing back right with his wife, Ruth (in red jacket), along with Dr. Ramiro Matos of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (left center, in gray jacket), celebrated with Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives at the dedication of the ancient Inca Road system as an International Historical Civil Engineering Landmark on Nov. 7 at Rumicolca, near Cusco, Peru.

WRIGHTS PUT ANCIENT INCA ROAD ON NEW CIVIL-ENGINEERING MAP

The ancient Inca Road system linking Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina gained memorial status late last year with some help from former Aramcons Ken and Ruth Wright.

The Wrights, both 89, worked for Aramco in the early 1950s. They joined Dr. Ramiro Matos of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Peruvian diplomat Marita Landaveri and others at ceremonies in Cusco, Peru, from Nov. 5-7, to celebrate the 500-year-old road system's designation as an International Historical Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

The Wrights nominated the 24,000-mile highway for the honor on behalf of Peru's Ministry of Culture and represented the ASCE.

The road system tied the Inca Empire together in pre-Columbian times and Peru lay at the intersection of its four main arteries. The ASCE ceremony took place at Rumicolca, the ancient gate to Cusco.

On Nov. 7, at a ceremony with the mayor of Cusco at the National University of St. Anthony, the Wrights received academic honors for their years of research in Peru on native technology and the Inca Road system.

Ken Wright heads Wright Water Engineers in Denver and Ruth Wright is an attorney. They operate the Wright

Paleohydrological Institute (www.wrightpaleo.com), whose mission is "to further the knowledge of past civilizations through the study of ancient water management and practices."

The Wrights met Landaveri when she served as Peru's consul-general in Denver. They worked with Matos when they were preparing a scholarly article for the exhibition, "The Great Inca Road: Engineering an Empire," that runs through mid-2020 at the NMAI.

The Wrights' interest in the road dates to the 1990s when they discovered a long-lost section exiting Machu Picchu, Peru, and extending toward the Amazon.

"The more we learned about the Inca Road system, the more interested we became," Ken said. Along with serving an economic role moving goods and people, the road system was "a display of the empire's centralized power and led to the empire's capital at Cusco."

He said that the couple's time in Dhahran "contributed to our interests in ancient cultures. I was given the opportunity to freely travel around al-Hasa and to understand the importance of even primitive roads to tie communities together and to provide opportunities for interurban communication and activity. The relics of the early Portuguese influence in the area, coupled with Saudi culture, piqued my interest in other civilizations."

ÉMIGRÉS MAKE RETURN TRIP TO PAKISTAN FOR VALIMA RECEPTION

Shahab Shaikh, an Indian who moved with his family to Toronto, Canada, when he retired from the Ras Tanura Producing Dept. (RTPD) in 2011, traveled to Karachi, Pakistan, with his wife Rehana to attend the wedding of a family member early this year.

The Shaikhs have four sons and a daughter who live in Canada. Their son Junaid, his wife and two daughters, and their son Danish met them in Karachi near the end of the trip.

The Shaikhs performed *'umrah* in Makkah in November before traveling to Pakistan. Shahab's brother, Tahir, who retired from the E-W Pipelines Dept. in 2017, traveled from Riyadh see them. The Shaikhs also visited Madinah before flying to Karachi to visit Rehana's relatives, and then traveled to Lahore.

The Shaikhs attended the *valima* wedding reception for Rehana's nephew in Karachi on Jan. 15. There they met several old friends from the kingdom, including Iqbal Ahmed Khan, another RTDP retiree. Shaikh replaced Khan in his position in the department when he retired in 2006.

"It was a pleasure meeting Shahab Shaikh and his sons after a long time," said Khan, a director of the Ex-Saudi Aramco Employees Assn. in Karachi.



Shahab Shaikh, center right, poses with his sons, Danish, left, and Junaid, right, and former Ras Tanura Producing Dept. colleague Iqbal Ahmed Khan, at the *valima* wedding reception for his wife's nephew in Karachi.

'ENCOURAGING' TURNOUT AT SAEEA EVENT IN KARACHI

The Saudi Aramco Ex-Employees Assn. (SAEEA) held its 18th get-together at the Arena Club in Karachi on March 3, with a strong turnout of 131 retirees and family members.

"The number of attendees was very encouraging," said SAEAA Vice President Iqbal Ahmed Khan. "Attendees met with their old buddies and enjoyed the event."

Khan's son-in-law, Dr. Ata Ur Rehman, delivered a well-received talk about diabetes.

Anwarul Hai, Abdul Hakeem and Memona Anwar joined the SAEAA, boosting membership to 234. The SAEAA was established in 2010.

President Kamal Farooqui expressed his sorrow at the deaths of two members, Ateeq Ur Rehman Khan and Anwar Mirza, since the previous gathering in July. He thanked the attendees for making the event a success.

Guest Atauddin Qureshi showed off his one-and-a-half-year-old grandchild, Memona, at the SAEAA gathering March 3.



NANCES' 'BEDOUIN ARTS' EXHIBITION VISITS TEXAS

"Traditional Arts of the Bedouin," a traveling display of Arabian artifacts from the collection of Paul Nance and his wife, Colleen, engaged young and old at Texas A&M University in College Station during a

two-month run at the Wayne Stark Galleries that concluded March 14.

When the Nances retired from Aramco after Paul's 31-year career in 1985, they established the Nance Museum in Kingsville, Mo., to teach visitors about the places they had lived or visited in the Arab world and Asia. They also introduced children to Saudi culture by taking selections of the collection's artifacts to schools.

In 2002 they gave the Nance Collection—the largest of its kind outside the Middle East—to the University of Central

This belled Bedouin hair ornament was among the approximately 50 objects drawn from the Nance Collection that featured in "Traditional Arts of the Bedouin," a show that ran for two months this winter at Texas A&M University.

Missouri in Warrensburg. The touring show consists of around 50 artifacts and artworks drawn from the collection.

"Paul's dream was to someday have the extensive contents of the Nance Collection displayed in a permanent building in his hometown of Kansas City or at the university, for continuing promotion of education and understanding of Saudi culture," said his son, Mark, who grew up in the kingdom and worked for Aramco in the 1970s and '80s. "I'm sure he would be pleased at the university's effort at the interim outreach programs."

The exhibition will tour through the spring of 2019. Its next stop is at the Arlington (Texas) Museum of Art from June 16-Aug. 11.



FÊTES Galore!

Company Says “THANK YOU” at Texas Holiday Parties

Nearly 160 retirees and family members celebrated at Christmas parties in Austin and Houston in mid-December, receiving warm wishes and thanks for their service from ASC executives.

AUSTIN

The Central Texas Annuitants Christmas Party, held Dec. 11 at the Austin Club, a few blocks from the gaily lit capitol, drew a record 102 guests from across central Texas. David and Vicki Jessich hosted the dinner event, which ASC President and CEO Basil Abul-Hamayel and Public Affairs Director Jamal Khudair attended.

“We’re here simply to say, “Thank you,”” Abul-Hamayel told attendees. “Aramco would not be one of the world’s leading energy and chemicals companies without the strong foundation that you established. Your continued support and positive career experiences tell the world what a great company Aramco is.”

He pointed to recent developments in the company and the kingdom as encouraging signs for the future. They included the company’s planned IPO and the plans to allow women to drive in 2018.

He also noted reports that the kingdom’s visa policy had been relaxed to allow Saudi travel agencies to issue tourist visas, adding: “Maybe soon I will see some of you on vacation in Saudi Arabia.”

Guests ranged from 95-year-old Marte Powers, who retired with her husband, Brock, in 1979, to John Wolf, who completed a 37-year career just 11 days before the party.

Powers joined her husband in Dhahran in 1953. A geologist, he served as president of Aramco from 1973 to 1978, and then was elected vice chairman of the board of directors.

Wolf was born in 1957 in Dhahran, where his father, Harry, had arrived in 1951. Harry retired with his wife, Joyce, in 1989, but John—who joined the company in 1980—stayed on. He spent his last 13 years in Drilling and Workover.

The party was part reunion. Mike Erspamer and Mike Kavalski, who worked in Terminal Operations and Terminal Maintenance, respectively, shared tales of two decades together in Ras Tanura—often with a laugh.

They remembered a test-and-inspection on Sea Island No. 3 in 1987 when the galley ran low on cooking oil and the fish served tasted sour. The joke was that someone had substituted more readily available hydraulic oil for cooking oil, Erspamer said. Nobody had a problem like that with the Christmas party fare!

Brats shared in the festivities. The youngest was Scott Squires (DH04), who accompanied his parents, Jeff and Lisa Squires.

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HOUSTON

Jamal Khudair brought a similar message of appreciation to the Houston-Area Retirees Holiday Luncheon, cohosted by Bill Smart and Bonnie App at the Briar Club on Dec. 13. More than 50 guests attended.

He paid tribute to retirees for serving as “ambassadors” for the company and the kingdom in their communities. He added that he was struck during the holiday season by the sacrifices that the company’s early American employees and their families had made to work in Saudi Arabia. He said he would have found it difficult to live in such isolated communities.

Khudair noted that things had changed a lot in recent decades, and joked that he might be able to see *It’s a Wonderful Life* in al-Khobar with attendees the next time they visited, given plans to open cinemas in the kingdom as part of Saudi Arabia’s fast-paced transformation program.

The hosts extended a warm “season’s greetings” to all and Smart thanked the members of the group who had hosted monthly luncheons in 2017: Sally Johnson, Paul Daffin, Freddie Wong, Najwa Hajjar and Markey Howell, Stan and Peggy McGinley and Verne Stueber, and Bruce Olsen.

Mike Sawran, who attended with his wife Linda—and wore his trademark red-and-white Santa hat—summed up a feeling among all the attendees, saying, “We enjoyed catching up with people we hadn’t seen for a while.”



AUSTIN (top): Marte Powers, 95, who joined her husband, Brock, in Dhahran in 1953, shared her story with ASC President and CEO Basil Abul-Hamayel. Above: Mike Erspamer, left, and Mike Kavalski traded tales of old times at Ras Tanura. **HOUSTON** (below): Nancy Rosen, Mike Omar and Jim Karna made a happy threesome. Bottom: Joining the fun were cohost Bill Smart and Edna and James Catchings.





FOURTH TORONTO REUNION BRINGS BACK FOND MEMORIES

“Aramco reunions are always fun as they bring back wonderful memories of our lives in Saudi Arabia,” reported Yasmin Khoury and Jasmine Carvalho, who organized the Fourth Toronto Reunion on Dec. 3.

The party drew 41 former Aramcons who live in the Toronto area, and one—Ahmed Munir—who came all the way from Cleveland, Ohio.

The event took place at the Bombay Palace Hotel in Brampton in suburban Toronto. “Toronto’s winter weather had still not set in and in fact was very pleasant,” said the hosts.

“Aramcons enjoyed meeting, greeting and catching up with news of fellow Aramcons. The place was abuzz with excitement. The large lunch buffet was delicious, from appetizers to the desserts,” they said.

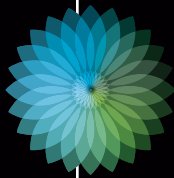
Guests played games like Word Search and Word Jumble, prepared by Tanaz (Khory) Jivraj, and bingo, prepared by Carvalho,



Toronto guests were: Buvana & Vanson Ananthnarayanan, Farhat Begum & Anwar Baig, Aida & Mark Bowhay, Cathy & Fraser Brown, Jasmine & Wilfred Carvalho & son Marc, Farida Yasmin & Hamid Javaid, Tanaz (Khory) Jivraj & baby Kian Jivraj, Anwar Khan, Khalda & Masroor Khan, Yasmin & Farouk Khory, Ada & Wing Kwan, Kiran & Jay Lal, Maher Al-Maher, Ahmed Munir, Nabila & Shahid Naeem, Sabiha & Nishad Pasha, Bibi & Mohamed Patel, Nita & Shivani Sharma, Farzana & Yousef Sheikh, Gul Sheikh, Fareeda & Yousef Syed, Ghonee & Don Thew and Savitri & Karan Yadav.

“reminding them of the places they lived, worked or visited, the terms like *inshallah* that they learned or the great food like *kabsa* that they ate,” Khoury said.

The next reunion is planned in September, Khoury announced. She urged everyone at the gathering to attend with other Aramcons who live in or around the area.



‘SWINGING SINGLES’ FROM ‘50S REUNITE IN CALIFORNIA

The Swinging Singles Group, whose members struck up friendships in Dhahran in the early 1950s, gathered at Carol Keyes-Rader’s home in Rossmoor, Calif., on Jan. 7 to welcome the arrival of 2018.

Her guests were Nancy Etherton Rushmer, Fran Grant, and Ken and Ruth Wright, along with Brats Doug Grant (RT71) and Jennifer Rader (RT70), who attended with her husband. They toasted absentee Verne Stueber of Houston, who was unable to attend the gourmet lunch and take part in conversation filled with fond memories.

The Wrights brought copies of their 2018 “Engineering Marvels” calendar featuring photos of Pompeii in Italy and Machu Picchu in Peru, some of the latter shot by Ruth Wright during the couple’s work at the famous Inca city.

Prior to the reunion the Wrights attended the annual meeting of the Institute for Andean Studies at the University of



Front: Ken Wright, Doug Grant (RT71) and Jennifer Rader (RT70). Back: Nancy Etherton Rushmer, Ruth Wright, Fran Grant, Carol Keyes-Rader and Klaus Kutz, Jennifer Rader’s husband.

California, Berkeley, where Ken presented a poster on the collapse of 500-year-old walls at the Inca site of Saqsaywaman, near Cusco, Peru.

The hostess entertained the group by describing her “flying-carpet” wedding to Jack Rushmer in Iran after he moved

there to help restart production following the 1950s shutdown.

Grant shared stories about sailing in Half Moon Bay with her late husband, Bob, who was commodore of the sailing club at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York in 1951.

Part of
TRI-CONTINENT
TOUR

CROWN PRINCE

Attends
Reception

with

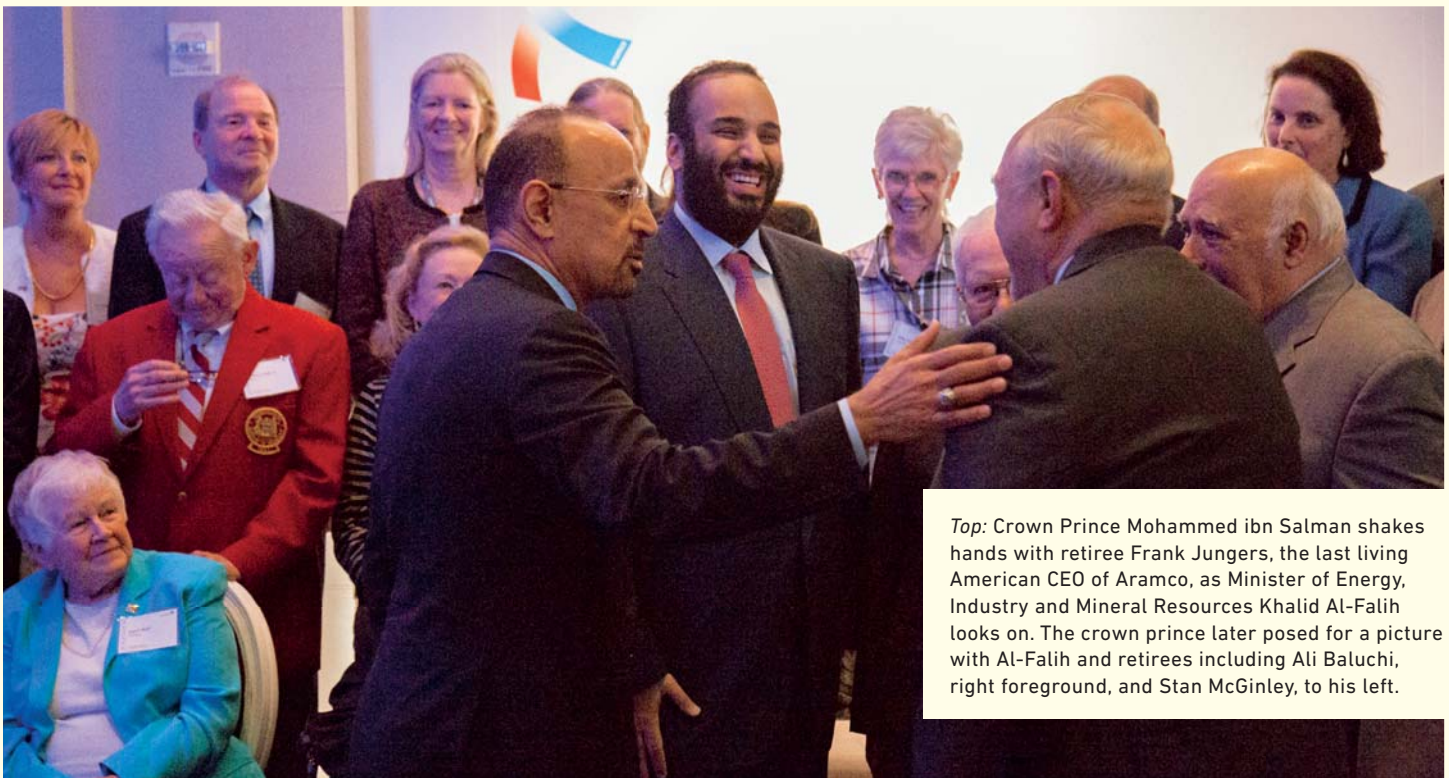
RETIREES *in* HOUSTON

by
ARTHUR CLARK



Mohammed ibn Salman, Saudi Arabia's crown prince, capped a three-week tour of the United States with a whirlwind visit to Houston on April 7, where he made a final stop at a reception whose guests included around 40 Aramco retirees and family members.

In welcoming remarks, Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid Al-Falih praised the contributions of the “American men and women who helped to build Aramco over many decades.” Later one of the retirees gave the crown prince a gift on behalf of Saudi Aramco: a pair of antique silver spurs symbolizing his fast-paced drive to diversify and expand the



Top: Crown Prince Mohammed ibn Salman shakes hands with retiree Frank Jungers, the last living American CEO of Aramco, as Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid Al-Falih looks on. The crown prince later posed for a picture with Al-Falih and retirees including Ali Baluchi, right foreground, and Stan McGinley, to his left.

TOP: RICHARD DOUGHTY; BOTTOM: JOHNNY HANSON

kingdom's economy through Vision 2030.

The crown prince's daylong stay in Houston was part of a three-continent tour to boost investments and encourage innovation in Saudi Arabia. By visiting Houston, he was following in the footsteps of his uncle, the late King Abdullah, who traveled to the Bayou City, home of Saudi Aramco's U.S. headquarters, and met retirees in 2002 when he was crown prince.

Before traveling to the United States, Crown Prince Mohammed visited Cairo and London.

He met Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace on March 7 and was hosted at a dinner by Prince Charles, later seeing senior government officials and business representatives. He met President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C., on March 20 at the start of his cross-country U.S. trip, during which he also met Saudi students and captains of business, media and entertainment. Following his U.S. tour he flew to Paris to start a visit to France.

In Houston, he spent part of the day with former Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush.

Later he visited the company's Houston Research Center, where scientists from that facility and sister centers in Boston and Detroit—part of Saudi Aramco's global research-and-development effort—discussed advances they have made in fields such as clean-engine technology.

In addition, he traveled to a neighborhood in northeastern Houston that the company had helped recover from Hurricane Harvey in 2017 through a major donation to Habitat for Humanity. There he met one of the families that had benefited from the donation, along with Saudi student volunteers who responded to Houston-based Aramco Services Company's call to help in the hurricane-response effort.

"Even if I'm not from here, I want to give back to the community," said a female Saudi volunteer in a video screened at the reception. "Helping others...is a beautiful thing to do," said another volunteer.

The crown prince also attended a gathering hosted by the Saudi Basic Industries Corp. (SABIC), where he learned about the Riyadh-based petrochemical manufacturer's plans to enlarge its American foot-

print. U.S. Secretary of Energy and former Texas Governor Rick Perry, and Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant, attended the SABIC event.

At Saudi Aramco's reception for the crown prince, Al-Falih highlighted the strong links between the kingdom and the United States. "Some of the most powerful and enduring relationships are those that exist between individual Saudis and Americans, whether they are between business colleagues and counterparts, fellow scientists and researchers, professors and students, volunteers and community organizers, or simply friends and neighbors," he said.

Those ties got a potential boost at the reception as the crown prince oversaw the signing of memorandums of understanding by Saudi Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser and the heads of Technip FMC and Honeywell UOP to study multibillion-dollar projects linked to Motiva Enterprises, a company subsidiary, that would increase Saudi Aramco's global petrochemicals operation. Motiva's refinery in Port Arthur, Texas, which recently completed a major expansion to process more

Some 40 retirees and family members attended the reception for the crown prince in downtown Houston. *Clockwise, from top left:* Jane Borst, Helen Streaker and Bonnie App made up a smiling threesome; Verne Stueber looked forward to a *finjan* of coffee; former *AramcoWorld* editors Rob Arndt and Bill Tracy, right and left, posed with Arndt's wife, Nadine Payn, left, and *AramcoWorld* contributor Jane Grutz; Ali Baluchi, who flew in specially from Saudi Arabia for the reception, greeted Johnnie Merritt, 103—who knew him as an office boy in Dhahran in the late 1940s.



TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT: JOHNNY HANSON; BOTTOM RIGHT: RICHARD DOUGHTY

than 600,000 barrels of crude oil per day, is the largest in the United States.

In a live video link to the reception, Jeff Funkhauser, the refinery's onsite production manager, expressed his thanks for the expansion. When the Motiva staff signed off with a hearty *Shokrun jazeelan!* ("Thanks very much"), the crown prince responded with a big smile.

He also laughed and smiled when Frank Jungers, CEO of Aramco in the 1970s, gave him a framed set of spurs and retiree Bill Tracy explained their significance.

"These spurs are particularly interesting because they are genuine silver and over 100 years old," Tracy said. "As you may know, Texas horsemen had spurs on their boots so they could urge their horses to go faster and faster. The symbolism here is that you are working to move Saudi Arabia into the future at a faster pace."

Tracy also noted that, as a 12-year-old in Dhahran in 1947, he'd shaken hands with the crown prince's grandfather, King Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud, and that he'd also shaken hands with his father, King Salman ibn Abdulaziz, in Washington, D.C., in 2015. "So now that you're here this evening," he told Crown Prince Mohammed, "I've met three generations of Saudi royalty."

Al-Falih made a similar point in his remarks. "Our company's roots lie in a Saudi-American partnership that began in the 1930s and is reflected in the name of the company, the Arabian American Oil Company, or Aramco," he said.

"We appreciate the dedication of American men and women who helped to build Aramco over many decades and who made a lasting contribution to our national prosperity in the kingdom...."

"This afternoon, we celebrate a bilater-



Top: Posing in front of a logo highlighting the company's ties with Texas are, from left: Stan and Peggy McGinley, Eric and Janice Madsen, and Tom and Kathy Owen. Above: A film screened at the reception showed Saudi students in Houston who pitched in to help homeowners hard hit by Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

al relationship...which continues to grow, develop and diversify as we continue to work together as a single community."

Jungers, who joined the company in 1947 and is Aramco's last living American CEO, echoed that remark. "It was very nice for the crown prince to visit the company's Houston offices," he said after the reception. "It is very important for Aramco and the older Aramcons—and I'm happy to be part of that group."

Ali Baluchi was equally pleased to be among the guests at the reception. The al-Khobar native joined Aramco in 1949 and retired as manager of Community Services in 1970. He has led three "homecoming" reunions in the kingdom for expatriate retirees and their families, and is planning the fourth.

"It was nice to see so many friends in Houston," he said. "I was able to whisper in the crown prince's ear about the 2019 reunion in Saudi Arabia. He said, 'Very nice!'"

The oldest retiree at the event was

Johnnie Merritt, 103, of San Antonio (see story, p. 18). She joined the company in 1948 and retired in 1970, whereupon she married a fellow retiree. "I'm so happy to be here!" she said.

Harry and Joyce Wolf also appreciated reconnecting with Saudi Arabia through the crown prince's visit. Harry joined Aramco in 1951, and met and married Joyce in 1956 in the United States.

"I was six months pregnant when we left for Saudi Arabia in the summer of 1957," Joyce said. "My mother was having a fit."

The day they arrived in the kingdom, "We drove to Ras Tanura in a taxi without air conditioning," she said. "I knew if I could survive that, I could survive anything."

In fact, their son, John, joined the company himself and recently became a retiree, just like his parents.

Life in Saudi Arabia "was easy—it was an adventure," said Harry. "Everybody loves an adventure," Joyce chimed in. "I think it was a very good journey for us at the beginning of our marriage."

"That's why I'm here today," she said. "I support the crown prince in his journey."

Harry and Joyce Wolf, whose time with the company dates to the 1950s, enjoyed the reception. "I support the crown prince in his journey," Joyce said.



TOP: ROBERT ALLRED; BELOW: RICHARD DOUGHTY; BOTTOM: JOHNNY HANSON

UNIQUE Messages Mark 80th ANNIVERSARY of First Oil Strike

BY ARTHUR CLARK

When Daniel Yergin, founder of Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA), welcomed Saudi Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser to CERAweek by IHS Markit on March 5, he wished him a happy 80th anniversary of the kingdom's first commercial oil strike, quoting from two little-known letters that shed new light on the discovery at Dammam Well No. 7.

CERAweek is the premier annual gathering of energy experts and officials in the United States, and the letters highlighted a remarkable development in the oil world.

"While 'one swallow does not make a Spring,' I am rather encouraged to feel that in this instance one oil well will make an oilfield..." Standard Oil of California (Socal) President W. H. Berg wrote to R.W. Hanna, a Socal vice president, on March 14, 1938. The California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc), established by Socal to operate its concession in the kingdom, had struck oil at Dammam No. 7 on March 3, 1938.

Nasser, who delivered a keynote address titled "The Real Future Facing the Petroleum Industry," thanked Yergin for "reminding us of that historic breakthrough 80 years ago this week." He pointed to the early American-Saudi partnership that enabled the company to achieve success near today's Dhahran.

Berg's letter and another by a Casoc representative describing King Abdulaziz Al-Sa'ud's reaction upon receiving news of the

discovery, came from the archives of Chevron, Socal's successor.

"There is nothing out of the ordinary occurring here in the general course of our business," Berg told Hanna. "However, we are all very much hopped up over the results of tests made on our deep drilling in Arabia." At 4,726 feet, Dammam No. 7 had tested "at the rate of 5,800 barrels per day..."

"We are now preparing to deepen some of the shallower wells which are somewhat distant from the new well to determine the extent of the field," he wrote.

Yergin also quoted from a letter by William J. Lenahan, Casoc's government liaison in Jiddah, to Lloyd N. Hamilton, the Socal lawyer who had negotiated the oil Concession Agreement in 1933. On Oct. 30, 1938, Lenahan said he had visited King Abdulaziz to inform him of the commercial oil strike. "Some of my people have been telling me that oil in large quantities would never be found in my country...but I always thought they were wrong," the king replied.

"The Americans had even more important news," Yergin said, drawing from the letter. "Saudi Arabia was now shipping 5,000 barrels of oil per day [from al-Khobar to Bahrain]...and the greatest news was that Saudi Arabia had become the 22nd-largest oil producer in the world."

"Well, I think we could all agree it's gone higher—much higher," Yergin quipped as he welcomed Nasser to the podium.

Nasser told Yergin that success in the



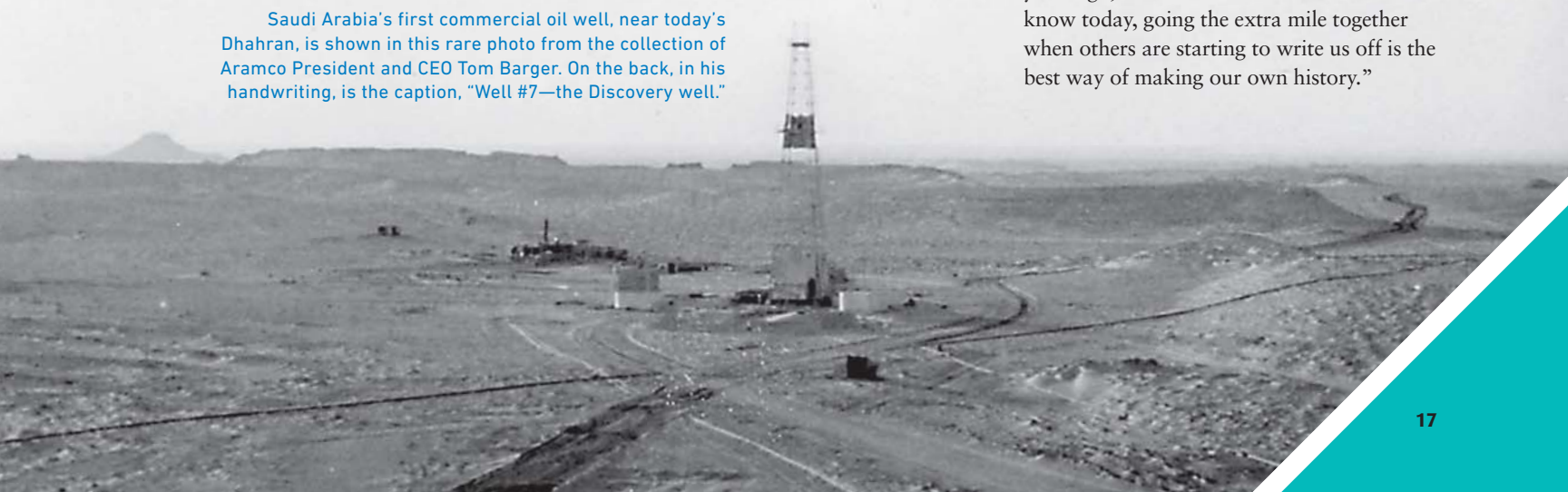
CERA founder Daniel Yergin (left) welcomes Saudi Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser to the podium at CERAweek by IHS Markit on March 5, eighty years to the week after the discovery at Dammam No. 7.

kingdom in 1938 was "only possible because of an incredible partnership between an American geologist, Max Steineke, and his Bedouin guide, Khamis ibn Rimthan. They always seemed to know where to go next and what it would take to get there."

He went on to discuss the challenges facing today's petroleum business, calling it "an industry at the heart of the much larger global economy." And he offered solutions including expanded exploration, investment in infrastructure and enhancing and developing technologies, as well as challenging assumptions about the speed with which alternatives will penetrate markets. In closing, he hearkened back to the spirit that brought in Dammam No. 7.

"Ours is the industry of Spindletop and shale, of Manifa and Ghawar, of Steineke and Khamis," he said. "As they knew 80 years ago, and as Americans and Saudis know today, going the extra mile together when others are starting to write us off is the best way of making our own history."

Saudi Arabia's first commercial oil well, near today's Dhahran, is shown in this rare photo from the collection of Aramco President and CEO Tom Barger. On the back, in his handwriting, is the caption, "Well #7—the Discovery well."



103

Year-Old

RETIREE RECALLS

OLD PLACES

AND FACES

By Arthur Clark



S

he shook hands with Sa'ud ibn Abdulaziz when he was crown prince and again when he was king, watched pearl divers pull treasures from the Gulf and has a "favorite memory" of walking through al-Khobar's sandy streets on Fridays off from work in Dhahran.

Now 103-year-old retiree Johnnie Merritt is aiming to remake company connections at the Annuitants Reunion in Austin, Texas, in September—and perhaps at the Expatriates Reunion in Saudi Arabia next year.

Merritt, who worked in Dhahran from 1948-70, read about the reunions in the last issue of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*. “Her first comment was, ‘Do you think there might be any way to attend?’” said Judy Herman, a friend who put her in touch with the magazine.

A filmed interview followed at Merritt’s retirement facility in San Antonio.

That redoubled her interest in reconnecting with people from the place she had landed seven decades ago.

Merritt and her husband, Jim, a retired Aramco pilot, met Judy and her spouse, Bill, at a campground in California on New Year’s Eve 1997. Despite the generation-wide gap in their ages, they kept in touch over the years—especially after the Merritts moved to San Antonio,

Top: At her interview in San Antonio, Texas, in January, Johnnie Merritt wore a brooch made with a pearl she purchased while working in Government Relations. Right: She joined Aramco in 1948.



TOP: ARTHUR CLARK



Hailing from Oklahoma City, Merritt “always wanted to see the world,” a dream she made come true as an Aramco employee.

“Men wanted for Saudi Arabia,” she recalled. “I said to myself, ‘Hmm, I always wanted to see the world.’ It said ‘Men,’ but I thought, ‘Surely they’re going to be taking in women.’”

So she hopped in her car and drove to Tulsa for an interview. When she finally

found the Aramco recruiters, they hired her. “Within a short period, something over a month, I had to report to New York and then to Saudi Arabia on a charter flight,” she said.

Her family was taken aback by her decision. “They couldn’t believe I was going,” she said. “They never expressed their opinion, but I could tell they were scared.”

Merritt said she’d “always been a dreamer of travel and read a lot of books instead of doing other things when I was young. I always wanted to see the world to know what it’s like on the other side... and it’s been a wonderful trip.”

Even her first flight to the kingdom was exceptional: She was the only woman on a plane with around 60 construction workers. “I was treated very nicely!” she said.

When she finally landed in Dhahran, no one was there to welcome a new female employee. “Since my name was Johnnie, Personnel in Dhahran wouldn’t believe that a woman was coming in on that flight, which arrived at midnight,” she said.

Fortunately, another Oklahoma City girl who was already working in Dhahran was able to help her. Merritt spent the first night in her new friend’s quarters before moving into a five-woman residence, later graduating to an efficiency apartment.

“There was always quite a turnover in the occupants of company quarters,” she

found. “Women were either going home or out to the districts to be employed.” Merritt spent her entire career in Dhahran, however, something she does not regret.

“We could make our own meals in our accommodations,” she said, adding that she usually “went to the Dining Hall, with only an occasional special meal when we were inviting someone into our dorms or apartments. I did too much overtime to stay in the kitchen.

“The Dining Hall food was delicious” and in the early days free, making the “long walk” there after work worthwhile.

Early in her career, employees only got Friday off. When Merritt had the chance, she enjoyed “shooing” with fellow employees in the desert.

“We’d find some friends who, luckily, could get a little old car and we’d go prowling in the desert to find pottery shards. I loved the freedom of all those open spaces. You kept your eyes on the ground to see what interesting things you could find—the remnants of other people who lived there.”

Photos of Dhahran, past and present, stirred many memories during Merritt’s interview with *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah*.



a four-and-a-half-hour drive north of the Hermans’ home in McAllen.

Jim Merritt, who flew for the company from 1955-70, died in 2015, and the Hermans and Johnnie Merritt have become even closer friends since then.

“Johnnie mentioned that she recognized individuals in the photo that accompanied the article about the Expatriates Reunion,” said Judy. One was Ali Baluchi, who joined Aramco in 1949 and retired as general manager of Community Services in 1990.

“He was a little office boy, carrying papers and things around and running errands [when I knew him],” said Merritt, who worked first in the steno pool, then moved to Engineering, Personnel and Government Relations.

She also remembered Ali Al-Naimi, who was an office boy around the same time as Baluchi, rose to the positions of president and CEO, and became minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources.

“I had less contact with him because he had his nose to the grindstone all the time when you went by his desk, it seemed,” she said. “I didn’t talk to him much.”

Merritt was 33-year-old widow with experience as a teacher and in the newspaper business when she joined Aramco as Johnnie Rusher.

“I was reading the paper one Sunday in Oklahoma City and just by chance I looked at the want ads and one said,



The camels have it: Merritt (right) and her colleague, Lillian Robertson, visited the Pyramids by camel in 1958; and this 1960 Dhahran Airfield "officer's mess" card, with a camel logo, brings back fond memories.

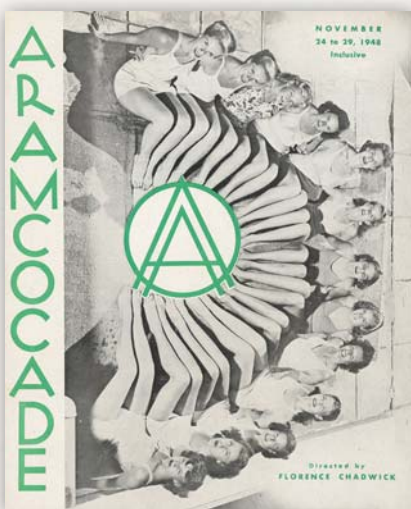
She also participated in the women's synchronized swimming team coached by fellow employee Florence Chadwick, who became the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions—from England to France in 1950 and from France to England in 1951.

Chadwick was "all business" in the pool, said Merritt, but the results—exhibited to the public at the Aramcocode—were worth the hard work.

Merritt first served as secretary to the head of the Engineering Dept. When she moved to Personnel, she worked for Walter Reese. In Government Relations, her boss was John R. Jones.

One of her assignments in Personnel was to greet new employees at the airport. That was a company "first," she said.

Merritt joined the synchronized swimming team in Dhahran. She is fourth from left, top, on the 1948 Aramcocode cover.



Only men had done that job before.

She helped new arrivals clear Customs and introduced them to their departments. "Meeting the people and getting out of the compound into the community" were the best parts of the job, she said. "You felt like you were part of the community when you went down there. [It gave me] a closer love of the country."

Part of that love was kindled when she met Crown Prince Sa'ud in the Dhahran Theater in the late 1940s. She met him on another occasion in the Dining Hall when he hosted women who had earlier invited him for tea. "That was the time he took me by the hand with both of his hands, held mine and shook hands," she remembered with a smile. "It was a very warm greeting."

"When he came to the compound it was always very interesting to observe the routines...and to look at the falcons sitting on the lawn at the guest house with their trainers," she said.

After Sa'ud became king, Merritt went with a group of executives' wives accompanying their husbands to Riyadh in "one of the first groups of women ever invited to the palace," she said. "We all put on our long sleeves and longest dresses we had."

She particularly enjoyed taking a company bus to al-Khobar and riding the train from the station near Dhahran's old main gate "all the way to the end" of the tracks in Dammam in the early 1950s to fish from the Dammam Pier.

"Al-Khobar was our favorite place," she said. "It was the only place to shop, but I did more walking around and look-

ing and investigating things than I did buying things."

Among her favorite memories of al-Khobar are "walking through the sand streets...having to pull my feet out of the sand to make the next step. I can still see the little merchant sitting in his little kiosk with a shutter that pulled down to close his shop when he went home at night.

"I also loved being able to walk along the al-Khobar beach and the lovely Gulf waterfront, to walk in the sand and dip my finger in the water. We'd take a sandwich and have lunch sometimes out there.

"We would also go in groups down to Aziziyah Beach and to Half Moon Bay for recreation—walking through the dunes, getting in the water with the boats and trying out the Gulf."

Sometimes the Gulf came to Merritt.

Jim Merritt flew Beaver, DC-3 and F-27 aircraft during his 15-year Aramco career. Opposite: The Merritts delighted in meeting old friends at the Annuitants Reunion in Coronado, Calif., in 1972.



When she spoke to *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* in January, she wore the fruit of such a rendezvous on her lapel: a pearl she had purchased in Dhahran from a merchant named Khalifa. A jeweler in Amsterdam later mounted it as the “blossom” nestled in white-gold leaves sparkling with tiny diamonds.

“Pearl merchants came through our offices in Government Relations, sat by my desk, watched me type and asked me a question once in a while,” she said. “They made themselves comfortable because they loved my boss and therefore were always nice to me.

“After a bit, they would pull out a pack of pearls and just lay them out. I liked the shape of this one.”

Arab “storytellers” also spent time in the offices. They came from different parts of Saudi Arabia, “verbally giving directions, names and helping to identify places in areas of the country” to assist in mapmaking, she said. “They always fascinated me.”

Merritt’s connection to the kingdom went deeper than meeting pearl merchants or storytellers. She recalled a trip aboard a dhow where she and her companions sat on the deck “watching divers holding onto a rope go down to the bottom of the Gulf and pick up shells in a bucket and bring them in. Then we would look at them separate the pearls from the shells.”

Merritt’s jewelry told other tales, too. On her left hand she wore a large, beautifully cut Qaisumah diamond she’d found on a trip to the town north of Dhahran at the head of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline.

There, on a little hill covered with pieces of quartz crystals, “you’d just see sparkles, sparkles, like diamonds,” she recalled.

On her right hand she wore a smaller ring inscribed with “Johnnie” in Arabic, acquired on her first trip outside the kingdom in 1949. That’s when she took a ferry to Basra, at the head of the Gulf, and met a little boy who put her name on the ring.

“He was sitting by himself when the ferry landed and he didn’t know a word of English,” she said. They still managed to communicate, but she almost missed the return trip when, just as the lad was finishing his work, the ferry captain started furiously tooting his horn to depart.

She also has a deep affection for Egypt. She traveled there with a secretary named Lillian Robertson in 1958, as captured in a picture of the pair on camels in front of the Pyramids.

When they arrived around midnight at the Mena House, next to the Pyramids, “I said, ‘Before we go to bed we’d better pull these drapes and see what’s there.’ We opened them and there was the Sphinx!”

Cairo is especially close to Merritt’s heart, perhaps because an Aramco employee there escorted her and Robertson on that trip. “He traveled with us and showed us all the different things, even a nightclub, which we thoroughly enjoyed,” she remembers.

Going to the Dhahran Airport one day in April 1955 to meet a planeload of new arrivals turned into something close to her heart, too. One new employee was Jim Merritt, fresh out of the Marine Corps. He had been in the last flight of U.S. fighter-bombers to cross the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas just before the armistice in 1953.

Though she won’t be drawn on the question of whether it was “love at first sight,” it’s obvious that the pilot impressed her. After he’d finished his orientation they stayed in touch and became good friends through social channels at Aramco.

“We made our own activities in the company,” Merritt said. “We had lots of get-togethers in our little apartments, inviting in newcomers.” She and the pilot shared a love of the desert and outings there gave them some “personal time.”

Upon their retirement in June 1970, they traveled to Bahrain and got married. Then, as luck would have it, a plane “came along and the pilot had kicked his



Johnnie Merritt celebrated her 103rd birthday—her first birthday party ever—with 135 guests in San Antonio on Aug. 22, 2017.

help out of the jump seat, [so he] put us into his plane and flew us to Shiraz, the City of Roses” she said.

That was a very pretty part of a travel trajectory that took her around the world eight times and to 64 countries, she reckoned.

Merritt never got to the Sahara Desert, as she’d planned, so did not have the chance to see the sands that would have reminded her of Saudi Arabia. But she and her husband did attend the 1972 Annuitants Reunion in Coronado, Calif., hosted by Warren and Myrle Hodges, which brought back pleasant memories.

“We had a chance to see people we’d known and reminisce,” she said.

If it is not possible to do that again in Dhahran next March, when she will be 104, then she has already penciled in a couple of days at the Annuitants Reunion in Austin this September.

That will likely spark memories of the “marvelous experience” she had in the kingdom and reinforce “a beautiful feeling about the whole number of years I spent there,” she said.

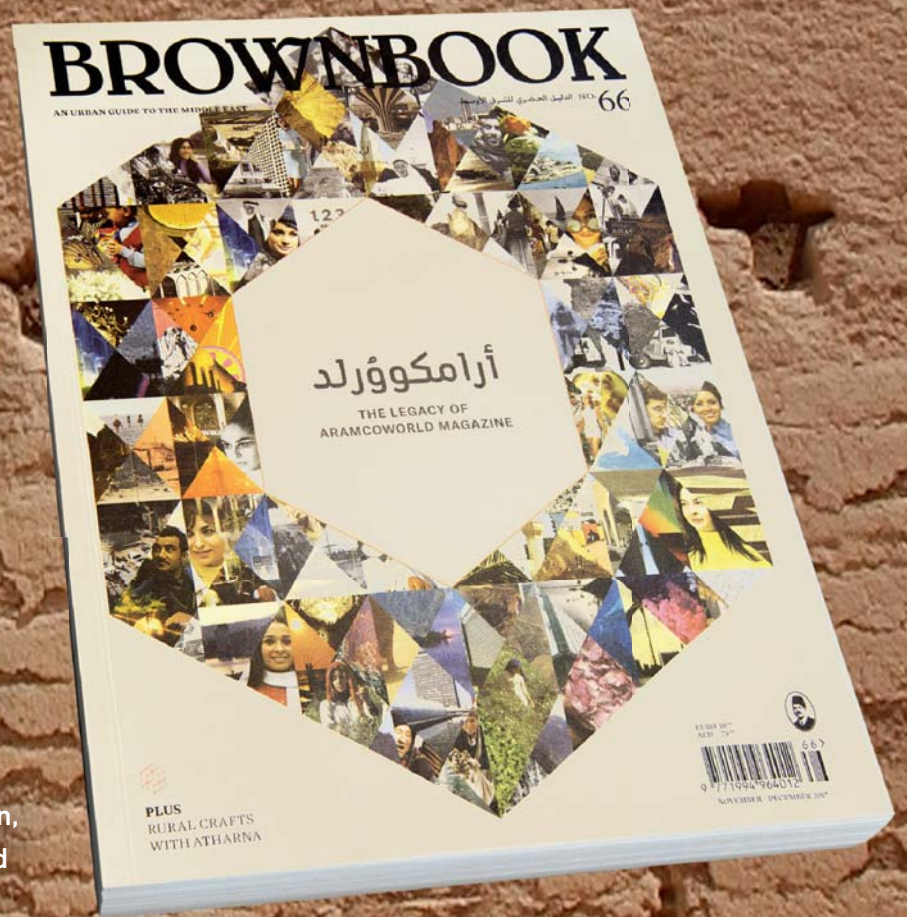
“I often think about the whole story [of my time at Aramco] and it feels like a dream...about people getting along,” she added, pointing to the deep Saudi-American connections forged in the kingdom. “I wish that would continue because together we have done a wonderful thing for the whole world by producing this bonanza of oil that Saudi Arabia has. I hope we can always be friends.”

TOP: JUDY HERMAN



Company Alumni Feature in *AramcoWorld* Accolade

Two former Aramcons recently featured in a tribute to *AramcoWorld* by *Brownbook*, a hip, Dubai-based magazine that calls itself “an urban guide to the Middle East and North Africa.” *Brownbook* dedicated its November-December 2017 issue to Saudi Aramco’s flagship publication, praising its work “to piece together a cultural and historical narrative of the Middle East.”



In addition to profiling *AramcoWorld*, the magazine republished 17 stories from the 1960s to the 1990s exactly as they appeared. *Brownbook* is a cultural bi-monthly like *AramcoWorld*, but—just a decade old—it is a newcomer compared with Saudi Aramco’s 69-year-old journal.

“In a publishing environment where column inches are increasingly dominated by the region’s politics, *AramcoWorld*’s thoughtful, lyrical long-form articles instead consider such subjects as the history of Arabic-language newspaper presses in New York or the art of perfume making on a jasmine plantation just outside Cairo,” wrote a *Brownbook* editor.

Along with a conversation with *AramcoWorld* Editor Richard Doughty, the issue published interviews with contributors including retiree Bill Tracy, a former assistant editor, and poet Nimah Nawwab, a former Aramcon. Her father, the late Ismail Nawwab, helped guide the magazine toward its modern form when he was manager of Public Relations in Dhahran in the 1970s and ‘80s and then general manager of Public Affairs.

Nawwab said her involvement with

the magazine as a writer, reviewer and reader, was intense. “It was like we were working on a book project,” she said. “You breathed it, you lived it, you dreamt of it at night.”

Today, along with the print edition, which has 50,000 subscribers in 125 countries, *AramcoWorld* publishes online at www.aramcoworld.com and produces a biweekly e-mail newsletter. It also presents translations of its stories in five languages and offers access to back issues and images.

Brownbook traced the magazine’s story from its birth as a four-page in-house newsletter at New York headquarters in 1949. “As the oil company’s American workforce in Saudi Arabia grew,” it said, *AramcoWorld* “began running articles to introduce them to their new surroundings.”

Longtime *AramcoWorld* writer, reviewer and reader Nimah Nawwab compared her association with the magazine to “working on a book project.”

In the 1960s and ‘70s *AramcoWorld* began to explore Saudi Arabia through the photography of men like Aramco’s chief photographer, Burnie Moody, and Khalil Abou El Nasr, a Palestinian who worked in the Photo Unit before setting up as a freelancer in Beirut.



Brownbook traced the magazine's transformation from local to global to its move from New York to Beirut in 1964 and the arrival of Paul Hoye as editor. Tracy signed on assistant editor in 1967, keeping the job for a decade.

The magazine moved to Aramco Overseas Company in Holland in the mid-1970s, during the civil war in Lebanon. Rob Arndt took over as editor after Hoye died in 1986 and directed the magazine's move to Aramco Services Company in Houston in 1990.

Brownbook quoted from Tracy's story marking the magazine's 50th anniversary in 1999 to highlight its "intercultural" focus. "Nobody at the time [it was established] was thinking in terms of 'cultural diversity,'" Tracy wrote. "In retrospect, it is remarkable that that the foundation of *AramcoWorld*'s intercultural approach was so soundly laid so early on. Then, as today, the magazine's message was that people are not all the same, but that their differences are of mutual interest."

AramcoWorld in the '60s built a network of contributors by "word of mouth and friends of friends," Tracy said, a pat-

AramcoWorld Editor Richard Doughty, left, printer's representative Curtis Weeks and graphic designer Matthew Bromley check an issue of the bimonthly magazine at the printing plant in Houston.

tern that continues today online and via social media.

Tracy wrote as well as edited at *AramcoWorld*, and his travels as an author half a century ago would put him in harm's way today. "I went far out into the desert of Syria, to Palmyra," he said. "It was a full day's drive away from most of Syria's big towns on the coast.

"Back in the 1960s it was an adventure. I camped the first time I went because there were only small hotels and none of them had free rooms. "I also traveled in Saudi Arabia's



Asir Province, back before they had a paved highway, and the Rub' al-Khali Desert. I went to Yemen and toured all

the places along the border with Saudi Arabia. In those days people would go back and forth across the border without even thinking about it."

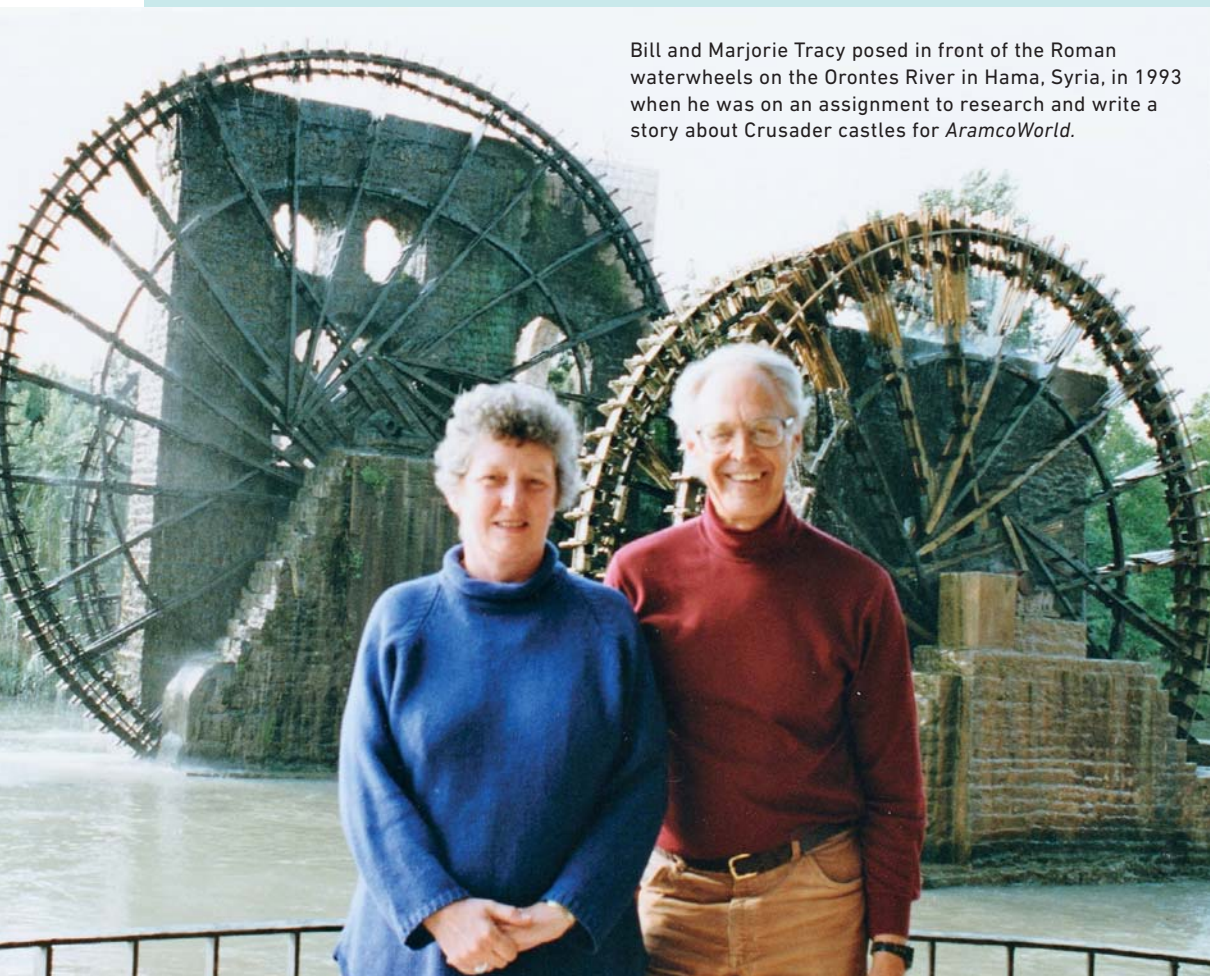
Tracy and his wife, Marjorie, have retired to Spokane, Wash., but he still keeps his hand in at *AramcoWorld*. The last story he wrote, in 1993, was about Crusader castles in Syria.

"I still write [book] reviews fairly often and I get to keep the book, which is fun," he told *Brownbook*. "I just reviewed a new autobiography by Ali Al-Naimi, who joined the company at age 12 and wound up becoming its first Saudi president."

"We're both 82, so I followed his career—I knew him and talked to him and saw him blossom and grow."

He might well have said the same thing about *AramcoWorld*.

Bill and Marjorie Tracy posed in front of the Roman waterwheels on the Orontes River in Hama, Syria, in 1993 when he was on an assignment to research and write a story about Crusader castles for *AramcoWorld*.



Who was the 'First Brat'?

By ARTHUR CLARK



Who was the original “Brat?” It’s not as clear as you might think.

Based on date of arrival, four kids could qualify. *The Energy Within*, Saudi Aramco’s photo-history book, says Mari Lou “Mitzi” Henry, Marilyn Witherspoon, and Marian and Maxine Steineke were the first expatriate youngsters to live in eastern Saudi Arabia. They landed with their mothers at al-Khobar Pier to rejoin their dads in September 1937.

Based on birth in the kingdom, John R. Kessinger takes the cake. The son of Arthur and Beatrice Kessinger, he was the first baby born in Dhahran’s original hospital, across the street from the old baseball diamond on King’s Road, on Aug. 8, 1940. (Janet Norma Harryman, the daughter of Joe and Ferne Harryman, was born there later that year, becoming the first American girl born in Dhahran.)

Charlie Rodstrom has a more tangential “birthright” claim. The son of Charles (“Rod”) and Alice Rodstrom, he was born in 1936 in Bahrain. His direct company connection dates to 1939.

Mitzi Henry

The youngest of the “first Brat” quartet was Mitzi Henry, age two. A story about her published in *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* in 2000 said she was “the first American child to live in Dhahran.”



Her parents were Annette and Schuyler B. “Krug” Henry. He and Robert “Bert” Miller, pioneered exploration by Standard Oil of California (Socal) in Saudi Arabia in September 1933. He met Annette Rabil in July 1934 in Dhour el-Choueir in the mountains of Lebanon, where geologists had retreated from the Saudi heat after their first season in the kingdom to study their notes. They married in Beirut that summer.

Neither Mitzi Henry nor the other girls who arrived in 1937 (nor John Kessinger nor Charlie Rodstrom) stayed long in the region.

Shortly after the company struck oil at Dammam No. 7 in 1938, Krug Henry went to work for Standard Oil in Cairo. In 1939, Mitzi’s brother, Michael, was born in Beirut.

In October 1940, after an Italian warplane headed for Bahrain bombed Dhahran by mistake, the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc), operating for Socal in Saudi Arabia, evacuated many of its expatriate employees and all dependents. Mitzi and her family returned to kingdom after World War II, and she appears in photos of the ninth-grade class in Ras Tanura in 1949 and Girl Scout activities.

She died in 2000, survived by her mother (who died two years later), and two children, Mimi and Matt.

John Kessinger

John Kessinger was not only the first baby born in Dhahran, but also the first U.S. citizen born in the kingdom. Bill Lenahan, head of Casoc’s Jiddah office, sent a telegram to the Kessingers on Aug. 8, 1940, congratulating them “on the occasion of the birth of your son—the first American child to be born in Saudi Arabia.”

A document headed “CASOC HOSPITAL, Dhahran” testifies to John’s birth. A birth certificate from the U.S. Consulate in Baghdad dated Nov. 10, 1940, formalized the matter.

Top: Mitzi Henry sits bottom left at a Girl Scout-Boy Scout picnic at Ras Tanura in October 1949. Standing (l-r) are: Nancy Bradfield, Dottie Mayfield, Jane Fraser and Jon Mandaville. Judy Mandaville is middle left. *Left:* Mitzi is pictured with her parents, Krug and Annette Henry.



Far left: John Kessinger, the first American born in Saudi Arabia, on Aug. 8, 1940, is held by his father, Arthur. Left: John Kessinger, a Florida retiree.

After Dhahran was bombed in 1940, the Kessingers moved to California, where John's brother, Ronald, and twin sisters, Jettie and Ethel, were born in 1941 and 1943, respectively.

Following assignments with Socal affiliates there and in Venezuela and Egypt, Arthur Kessinger—a driller—transferred back to Dhahran in 1949. His family joined him in 1951.

John, a retired banker who lives with his wife, Sara, in Dunedin, Fla., recalls his surprise when men planted plugs of grass in the yard of his family's Dhahran duplex—508B. "I was amazed how quickly the dirt yard became a lawn," he says.

He also remembers his days as a Boy Scout, the first year of Little League baseball in Dhahran in 1953, attacks by locust swarms and the time his father brought home a jerboa he'd found in the field.

"My mother came home from visiting the neighbors and woke my brother and me up and asked us what was in the can that had been covered by the screen, which was now lying on the floor," he says. "When we replied it was a jerboa, or a kangaroo rat, she immediately went into the kitchen and climbed in a chair, claiming she wouldn't get down until the jerboa was out of the house. Needless to say, the jerboa became an outside pet."

The Kessingers departed Dhahran—sans jerboa—when Arthur Kessinger retired in 1958.

Charlie Rodstrom

Charlie Rodstrom didn't actually arrive in Dhahran until 1946, but he has the deepest family roots in the region. He calls his time there "the adventure of my life."

His father, Rod, moved from Socal's San Francisco headquarters to Bahrain in 1932—the year before Socal signed the Concession Agreement to search for oil in the kingdom. In 1939 he started his company career as the Casoc

representative in Bahrain.

Charlie's sister, Muriel, was born that same year in the United States during a family stay and his brother, Bob, was born in 1940 after the family returned to Bahrain to rejoin Rod. En route by sea from California his mother was arrested as a spy in Kobe, Japan, for taking pictures, Charlie remembers. But she pleaded that she'd left her children on a ship in the harbor and was released.

In 1941 Alice and her children returned to the United States after the Italian bombing raid. Charlie, his mom and his brother traveled back to Bahrain to rejoin Rod Rodstrom in 1945. His sister had died in a tragic accident when their father was visiting in 1942.

The family's return trip on the liner *Gripsholm* turned into an adventure after it hit a mine in the Mediterranean Sea and "limped into" in Naples, says Charlie, recalling that he made friends with fellow passenger Miles Snyder, who had evacuated from Saudi Arabia with his family in 1940. "Miles and I formed a club on the ship called 'The Useless Lump of Legless Landlubbers,'" he remembers with a chuckle.

All finally got places on a former troop ship to Alexandria, Egypt, traveling on to Cairo and flying to Bahrain. The family spent 1946-47 in Dhahran, where Rod managed the Residential and Personal Services Dept. A highlight of that time was King Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud's visit to Dhahran in November 1947, when Charlie used his Brownie camera to take pictures of the

Above: Charlie Rodstrom appeared in a *Life* magazine story about King Abdulaziz Al Sa'ud's visit to Dhahran in November 1947. Right: He posed, right, with his brother, Bob, and his wife, Fran, and his old friend, Miles Snyder (seated), at an event honoring King Salman's visit to Washington, D.C., in 2015.

visit alongside *Life* magazine photographer David Douglas Duncan.

In 1948 Rod Rodstrom transferred to Aramco's New York office when Charlie completed the ninth grade in Bahrain. He retired in 1971.

Today, Charlie and his wife, Brenda, live in Wilmington, N.C. His brother, Bob, lives in Springfield, Ore., with his wife, Fran.

In talks about his time in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, Charlie likes to capture the attention of listeners by explaining that he "experienced a bombing raid, had my mother arrested as spy, was onboard a ship that hit a mine and got to tag along with a *Life* photographer" chasing a king before he'd even turned 12. "That's hard to top," he says.

So, who was the "original Brat?" You couldn't go wrong by picking all of the above.



YOUNG CAMERAMAN, Charles Rodstrom, son of oilworker, photographs king's bodyguard. Camera fans had field day when the king proved to be a willing subject.





By Arthur Clark

BRAT'S RETURN TRIP *to* the KINGDOM WINDS *through* HOLLYWOOD

The path from Houston back to Saudi Arabia transits Hollywood—if you are filmmaker Todd Nims.

The Riyadh-based 1995 graduate of the Dhahran Schools was in Houston visiting his parents, Don and Cherry Nims, at Christmastime when he met Dan Norton (DH79) at a gathering hosted by Norton's classmate, Amy Steindorf. Then, since he was travelling to Hollywood to see others in the film business and Norton lived in Berkeley, Calif., he arranged to meet him and about a dozen other “kids” who had grown up in or around Dhahran.

Their graduation dates ranged from 1977 to 1999. “It was wonderful to have the different generations” get together, Nims said, with a nod to his first film—*Home, The Aramco Brats' Story*—which he produced with his brother Zach (DH98) and Matt Miller (DH91).

Just one person at the Hollywood party on Jan. 11, his classmate, Sean Scarritt, appeared in *Home*. But there was good chemistry all around. In fact, Nims said meeting Norton and his generation of schoolmates provided a “missing link” for him.

“I know a lot of the much older Brats, like Bill Tracy and Steve Furman, and my own age and younger,” he said, but not many from the late '70s and

'80s. “It was fulfilling to connect more with that age group.”

Meeting filmmakers in Hollywood also proved a positive experience, enabling him to build contacts in the industry. Nims founded AB Media, a consultancy in Houston, and is a partner in the entertainment-media company Holam (“Jello”) in Riyadh. He worked as the film producer at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran from 2010-17.

In 2012 Nims produced *Push Tunisia*, a prizewinning short film about skate-

A mainly Dhahran Brat crowd gathered with Todd Nims (DH95) in Hollywood in January. He stands back right with (from left) Dawn Meyers ('77), Saudi filmmaker Aysha Ustora, Michelle Pippin ('83), Dan Norton ('79), Sylvia Kochinsky ('99), Katheryn Bwyte and Keith Nietupski ('95).

boarding in Tunisia. Shot less than a year after the revolution there, its production involved Scarritt and classmates Nathan Gray and Jake Hunter.

In 2015 he produced *Children of the World* for the Center for World Culture. It won a Silver Dolphin at the Cannes Corporate Media and TV Awards Festival and two gold medals at the New York Festival. Winning those “was really exciting,” he said.

Children of the World consists of 21 films capturing a day in the life of young people around the globe. Five episodes focused on different regions of Saudi Arabia. Other sites included the United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, Costa Rica, Australia, India, Nepal and South Korea. The demanding project had two teams filming simultaneously.

When he went solo in 2017 he “hit the ground running,” he said. *Born a King*, which he coproduced with Oscar-winner Andrés Vincent Gómez, was already well under way. The movie is about the 1919 mission to Britain by 14-year-old Prince Faisal ibn Abdulaziz to advocate for the establishment of a nation under his father, King Abdulaziz. Released this year, it was shot in Riyadh and London.

Nims is also mounting his own outreach program to promote filmmaking.

He travelled back to the kingdom immediately after visiting Hollywood to participate in the annual Winter Enrichment Program at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST),



an hour's drive north of Jiddah on the Red Sea coast. On opening day, Jan. 14, he sat for an interview and screened his elegiac film *Joud*, shot entirely in the kingdom. Then he advised groups of graduate students as they made their own films.

Nims and Abdullah Al Eyaf produced *Joud*, the first feature film by the Center for World Culture. It was made in association with The Edge Picture Company in England.

A short segment of the 70-minute film is set at KAUST, an example of "higher education and technology...in the petri dish" of modern Saudi Arabia, Nims said. So he gladly accepted the university's invitation to take part in the enrichment program.

Joud, which has no dialogue but features a dynamic musical score, won robust applause at KAUST. It is slated for release this year.

The film is patterned visually on a form of pre-Islamic verse called the *qasidah*, or ode which rhymes on the final syllable of each line. Nims called the movie "a visual poem" set to music.

"The music is very raw, very authentic and very local," he said. A combination of local Saudi tapings with electronic music, it was recorded by the London Contemporary Orchestra.

Joud "is asking you to look below the



surface of everyday experience to see how life is giving, even when some feel like it's taking away," Nims said. It portrays "the lifecycle from death to birth" rather than the other way around.

The filmmaker said he knew the film had struck a chord in his KAUST audience of more than 200 when Saudis and expatriates peppered him with questions about it afterward. He summed up the reaction of foreign students in the response of one who said he wished "people at home

Todd Nims joined with Abdullah Al Eyaf to make *Joud*, the King Abdullah Center for World Culture's first feature film, scheduled for release this year.

could see this film. *Joud* gave me a fuller appreciation of how big and wide the extremes are here."

"There's a certain magic to Saudi Arabia that you experience here with the people and places, and I think some of that comes through in the film," Nims noted.

Nims then introduced around 50 students to filmmaking and advised them on how to capture some of their own "magic" in a "Science of Storytelling" workshop in which he partnered with two KAUST Ph.D. scientists and one filmmaker. The students formed teams and each made a film in just three days.

Nims got his biggest rush when he got students to shed their

pedantic approach to problem-solving and let their imaginations take over. Such thinking led to one video called "Harry Potter and the Missing Protein." Another saw six female marine biologists marching down the hallways in Scuba gear in a "kind of weird, funny and a little quirky" way of telling their story, Nims said.

Nims hopes to take filmmaking by scientists a step farther. "I'd like to get the university involved in actually making Ph.D. students do a film as part of their

theses as a way to share their research with the world," he said.

What's on his plate now? Among other things, he wants to make *VEG*, a self-published sci-fi book by his brother, Zach, into a film and a game. Presenting *Joud* at film festivals, including Cannes, is also high up on his to-do list.

Who knows? Maybe both projects will be prizewinners.

The filmmaker presented the movie *Joud* at the Winter Enrichment Program at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology on Jan. 14. Then he teamed up with KAUST personnel to teach a filmmaking class.





NORTON *Receives* FELLOWSHIP *to Help* ENTREPRENEURS *Build* GREENER, STRONGER ENTERPRISES

By Jane Waldron Gutz

In Carrie Norton's view, environmental and social issues are closely related and can be tackled together—given the right kind of planning.

The daughter of Mary Norton and the late Howard Norton, and a 1984 Dhahran Schools graduate, Norton recently received a three-year fellowship from The Academy for Systems Change (ASC). The fellowship will help her establish a project that is not only environmentally friendly, but people-friendly as well. And Norton has just such a project in mind.

Focusing on the Central Valley of California, an area with some of the most concentrated agricultural activity in America, she will work to help would-be entrepreneurs develop business plans to make their initiatives productive, profitable and sustainable in the long term.

Norton is an entrepreneur herself. Long interested in how business can affect the environment, she established Green Business BASE CAMP in 2012.

Carrie Norton coaches a budding entrepreneur about planning a business that addresses environmental and social issues, and makes a profit, too. She established Green Business BASE CAMP in 2012 to help companies establish environmentally friendly operations.

Her work there consists largely of coordinating with companies to create business plans that are environmentally friendly and make a profit.

Norton brings a strong background in environmental studies to her work. She holds a degree from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, as well as an MBA from Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale—a school committed to promoting sustainable prosperity worldwide.

As Norton explains, a sustainable company is one that limits its use of natural resources to help reduce waste, thereby increasing profits. A good example is food production and distribution.

In the United States and many other developed countries, enormous amounts of food are thrown away by consumers

and by the food industry. That means that the chemicals and fertilizers used to grow that food are also wasted, as is the fuel used to transport it.

Overproduction, or production on a non-sustainable basis, depletes the soil and often consumes vast quantities of water, frequently causing water shortages in nearby communities.

Similarly, power generation benefits from the use of renewable fuels by helping to ensure a cleaner environment and by creating entirely new industries. Thousands of jobs have been created by switching to solar and wind energy, helping local communities and the economy as a whole, Norton says.

For a firm to take full advantage of the benefits of sustainability, however, it must develop a company-specific business plan—one that takes into account a relatively new concept called systems change, Norton explains.

The concept views businesses as a large system composed of many smaller systems. Alter one subsystem and it impacts other subsystems. Creating business plans that take this phenomenon into account helps assure long-term success, she argues.

As an ASC fellow, Norton will be able to consult with global leaders from diverse industries to help entrepreneurs create sustainable companies for the Central Valley. She hopes their success will benefit not only the entrepreneurs, but the valley as a whole, by creating a greener, healthier and more productive place for residents to work and live.

For more information about Norton's Central Valley project, visit www.greenbusinessbasecamp.com or contact her at carrie@greenbusinessbasecamp.com.



SAUDI AMBASSADOR THANKS ANTIQUITIES DONORS

Saudi Aramco's Antiquities Homecoming Project won praise from Saudi Ambassador Khalid ibn Salman after a ceremony honoring a cross-section of artifact donors at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 8. The project kicked off in 2011 and more than 40 retirees and others with ties to the company have returned archeological artifacts they collected prior to the establishment of a museum network in the kingdom. Nine donors attended the event, which coincided with the First National Antiquities Forum in Riyadh.

"We are humbled by and extend deep gratitude to [the donors] for their commitment to helping the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia safeguard its history," said Prince Khalid. "As the National Antiquities Forum underscores, the protection of historical artifacts feeds into the preservation of a country's national identity. We are thrilled to be showcasing our history for those in our country and around the world."

Prince Sultan ibn Salman, president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, hosted the three-day forum. Its opening was simulcast during a luncheon for the donors and each received a certificate of appreciation signed by Prince Sultan.

The forum aimed to "foster public awareness of the importance of national heritage and antiquities, familiarize attendees with Saudi history and make clear that the preservation of antiquities is a community responsibility," said Haya Al-Hossain, cultural liaison at the embassy.

"It is a testament to the strength of Saudi-U.S. relations that such an exchange of artifacts can take place," she told the donors. "We take immense pride in the historical and cultural legacy of our Saudi, Arab and Islamic heritage."

The honorees included individuals with ties to amateur archeologists whose work in the kingdom dated back more than half a century and included several remarkable discoveries.

Nina Myer, who donated artifacts discovered by her mother, Hope McBride, and her brother, Buzz, near Jubail and Hofuf in the 1960s, brought a 1973 letter from retired Aramco President and CEO Tom Barger. She had written to Barger

about a presentation to her archeology class at the University of California, Berkeley. "I was thrilled to receive a reply," she said.

He recommended she consult publications by Aramco geologist Hal McClure and Aramco schoolteacher Grace Burkholder. He also suggested separate publications about the necropolis at 'Ain Jawan, north of Dhahran, by Aramcons Richard Bowen and Rick Vidal.

Barger's children, Tim and Ann, returned a number of his finds to the National Museum in Riyadh in 2001. The Barger Collection there includes a stele inscribed with Greek characters, discovered at Madain Salih in 1968, that proved a Roman presence on the Arabian Peninsula farther south than previously known, some 1,900 years ago.

Honoree Mary Cashion, who taught first grade in Dhahran from 1964-72, donated two collages Burkholder had made from pottery shards, bracelet pieces and beads that she found in the Eastern Province in the 1960s and '70s.

Burkholder and Marny Golding discovered potsherds near the Gulf that showed connections with Mesopotamia's 'Ubaid civilization as far back as 5000 BCE.

Gordon Golding represented his parents, Marny and Bert Golding, at the embassy. They donated their discoveries to the National Museum in Riyadh. When Bert Golding retired in 1984 they received a letter from Minister of Education Abdullah Masry thanking them for their "unquestioning realization that the physical results of your investigations belong to the Saudi people and should be entrusted to them."

Those honored in Washington, D.C., along with Myer, Cashion and Golding, were:

Cynthia Castain, daughter of Russ and Eleanor Nicholson; Betty Kingsley, daughter of Lucille and Franklin Lynn; Kathye Dunsmore, daughter of John and Mary Neally; Kathleen Casey, whose grandmother's husband, J.S. Mason, worked for Aramco in the 1960s; Marian Ferguson, whose husband, Ken, joined Aramco in 1953; Ann Boon Rhea, who lived in Dhahran with her husband, James, from 1964-76; and Arthur Clark, editor of *Al-Ayyam Al-Jamilah* and coordinator of the Antiquities Homecoming Project. Ray Whitney, president of the Arabian Natural History Assn. in Dhahran in the 1980s, attended as a special guest.



Nine participants in Saudi Aramco's Antiquities Homecoming Project—a cross-section of some 40 artifact donors—learned more about Saudi traditions from Information Officer Maram AlKharboush at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C., in November. Honorees included (from left) Betty Kingsley, Kathye Dunsmore, Nina Myer, Cynthia Castain and Kathleen Casey.

IN MEMORIAM

MARY FRANCES ADAMS

December 17, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Ben Adams.

BETTY ANDERSON

December 17, 2017

She joined the Controller's Div. at Aramco Services Company in Houston in 1977 and retired in 1995. Survived by children Janis, Janet, Donna and Dave. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Kingwood United Methodist Church, 1799 Woodland Hills Dr., Kingwood, TX 77339.

DR. RODDY "ROD" ANDERSON

October 12, 2017

He joined Aramco in 1979 as a dentist in the Main Dental Clinic in Dhahran. In 1984 he became supervisor of the Dhahran North Dental Clinic. He retired in 1994. Survived by his wife, Cheri, and sons Anthony and Christopher. Correspondence may be sent to Cheri at P.O. Box 481, McCall, ID 83638.

LOIS BAUMANN

January 29, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Hilbert "Hib" Baumann, and survived by children Christine and Jeffrey. The family lived in Abqaiq and Dhahran for 23 years. She was a fourth-grade teacher's aide and a Girl Scout leader, earning the highest scouting-leadership award. Correspondence may be sent to Christine Baumann Lillesand, 4809 Jade Ln., Madison WI 53714.

JOHN BEARD

August 14, 2017

He joined Aramco in the early 1970s and taught sixth grade in Dhahran, transferring in 1978 to Aramco Services Company in Houston, where he retired from Human Resources in 1993. Survived by his wife, Christine, who may be contacted at 7545 West Forever View Dr., Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814, or cchristine.beard@gmail.com.

DR. ROBERT BLANKENSHIP

February 22, 2018

He worked for 17 years at Aramco. Survived by his wife, Monica, and children Erin, Kevin and Meghan, and three children from his first marriage

to Diane Bray, Leslie, Amy and Brent.

CHARLES C. BRUMLEY

December 22, 2017

He joined the company in 1980 and retired in 1991. Survived by children Cheryl, Donna and Charlotte.

ANITA J. CANDLER

October 11, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Jerry Mullin, whom she joined in the kingdom in 1953. Survived by children Mike, Kerry and Trice. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Cypress Creek Baptist Church, 21870 Northwest Fwy, Cypress, TX 77429.

KENNETH D. CAREY

January 30, 2018

He joined Aramco in 1977 as a computer operator and departed in 1985. Survived by his wife, Oriel, and children Denise, Kent and Kendra.

JAMES "JIM" CORLEY

October 11, 2017

He joined the company in 1971 and retired as a senior consulting engineer in 1991 to return to his hometown of Lucedale, Miss. There he volunteered his time and boundless energy to a variety of community projects, and he was honored Aug. 4, 2017, at Lucedale's "Jim Corley Day." Survived by his wife, Nancy, and children Steven, Michael, Brent, Carolyn, Becky, Kent and David. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Sigler Funeral Home, 4248 Main St., Lucedale, MS 39452.

JAMES ALEC DAUGHERTY

January 29, 2018

He worked in Finance and Accounting Systems in Dhahran. Correspondence may be sent to his family c/o Hudson-Phillips Funeral Service, 301 E. Main St., Holdenville, OK 74848.

LORRAINE Q. FUNKE

January 15, 2018

She worked in the San Francisco and New York offices between 1947-54. Predeceased by her husband, Walter. Correspondence may be sent to the family at funward@aol.com.

JANIE L. HAAS

November 25, 2017

Survived by her husband, Gordon, and daughters Jenell and Jill. She was well known for her needlepoint classes in company communities. Correspondence may be sent to Gordon at JGHaas@yahoo.com.

TERRY I. HAMBLIN

December 22, 2017

He joined the company in 1973 and retired as an assistant superintendent in the Power Distribution Dept. Survived by his wife, Carol, and daughters Bonnie and Andrea.

DOUGLAS L. HAMILTON

December 3, 2017

He worked as a dentist in Dhahran from 1977-88. Survived by children Betsy, Greg and Ann.

ANN HANUSHEK

October 6, 2017

She taught fifth grade in Dhahran and retired with her husband Jim in 1998. Correspondence may be sent to Jim at jhanushek@gmail.com.

EMANUELITA "LITA" JOHNSON

August 10, 2016

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Rupert Johnson, who joined Aramco in 1948. They met and married in Rome and made their home in Abqaiq in 1955. After they moved to Dhahran in 1963, she became a well-known dressmaker. Survived by daughters Marisa Micio and Romana Johnson. Correspondence may be sent to Marisa at 767 E Pony Ln., Gilbert, AZ 85295.

RICHARD A. JOHNSON

December 18, 2017

He joined the company in 1978 and retired from Finance in 2002. Survived by his wife, Juana, and children Christopher and Melissa. Correspondence may be sent to Juana at 1890 W. 25th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405.

MAXINE JONES

January 11, 2017

She lived in Abqaiq with her husband, Ken, and children Kenneth, Dennis and Dixie, in the late 1960s.

LUCILLE LYNN

October 12, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Franklin Lynn, and survived by daughters Arleen, Betty and Carol. She participated in the company's Antiquities Homecoming Project and was honored at a ceremony by Prince Sultan ibn Salman, president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, in Washington, D.C., in 2012. Correspondence may be sent to Betty Kingsley at flandnc4@hotmail.com.

RUTH S. MAISE

July 30, 2017

Survived by her husband, retiree Dick Maise, and children Charlene and Eddie. *Dune Doings*, the couple's self-published book about their quarter-century in Saudi Arabia (1958-83), appeared in 2002. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Oak Grove United Methodist Church, 1722 Oak Grove Rd., Decatur, GA 30033.

SHEILA M. MARK

November 10, 2017

Survived by her husband, retiree Robert Mark, and daughter Kristy. She was a teacher's aide in the 'Udhailiyah, Abqaiq and Dhahran elementary schools from 1992-04. Correspondence may be sent to Robert at rdavidmark@yahoo.com.

EVELYN MCGREAL

January 17, 2018

She was a nurse in Dhahran from 1960-63, and returned to work at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh in the early 1980s. She shared memories of life in the kingdom and traveling in the region through programs in Parkville, Md. Correspondence may be sent to her niece, Patsy Beall, at Annbluegreen@aol.com.

KENNETH G. MILLER

February 9, 2018

He joined the New York office in 1951, transferring to Aramco Overseas Company in The Hague in 1953 and to Saudi Arabia in 1961, working in Abqaiq, Dhahran and Ras Tanura. He retired in 1966 as construction engineer/project manager. Survived by children Patricia, Michael, Robert and James. Correspondence may be sent to Michael at m@whirledtraveler.net.

ALPHA V. MOONEY

February 14, 2018

Predeceased by her husband, John. She joined Aramco in 1950 and worked as a keypunch operator.

NORMAN MURRELL

February 9, 2018

He joined Aramco as a schoolteacher in Dhahran in 1964 and transferred in 1974 to Aramco Services Company in Houston to establish the orientation program for new employees. He returned to Dhahran in 1978 and retired from Exploration in 1986. He was active in the Dhahran Theatre Group. Survived by his wife, Libby, and children Mitch and Mary. Correspondence may be sent to Libby at 4304 Spring View Court, Mariposa, CA 95338.

DR. ANDRAOS NICOLA

November 10, 2017

He worked as a physician at Aramco, where he met his wife, Dora. Survived by children Walid, Magda, Anwar and Andrew. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church, 2150 West Front St., Burlington, NC 27215.

JIM L. NIX

October 2, 2017

He joined Aramco in 1970, working as an engineer in Saudi Arabia and at Aramco Services Company in Houston. Survived by his wife, Betty, and children Gerry, Kim and Marilyn. Correspondence may be sent to Betty at 15915 Ellendale Ct., Cypress, TX 77430.

GUL PANJWANI

December 15, 2017

He joined Aramco in 1979 and retired as business manager, N. Area Projects, in 2002. Survived by his wife, Chandu, and children Arti and Sameer. Correspondence may be sent to Arti at artigpanjwani@gmail.com.

GEORGE PAPP

September 30, 2017

He worked as a technical writer in Dhahran for 17 years. Survived by his wife, Lillian, and daughter Sharon.

DAVID G. PATTERSON

September 2, 2017

He worked for Industrial Security from 1989-98. Survived by his wife, Leslie, and David and Lori Patterson, Frank and Daniel Polizzi, and Lisa

Kristine Jalot. Correspondence may be sent to Leslie at 15 Drakes View Circle, Greenbrae, CA 94904, or lesliepatterson513@gmail.com.

FRANK PIETROWSKI

March 13, 2018

He joined the company as a civil engineer in Dhahran 1944, moving to the San Francisco office in 1948 to assist in transferring company headquarters to New York. Later assignments took him to Sweden, Italy, Holland and Texas. He retired in 1985. In 2010 he donated a four-foot-long dhow model he had purchased in 1945 to the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran. Prior to traveling to Dhahran it appeared in the exhibition, "The Dhow, Mystery of the Monsoon," at the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies at Exeter University. Survived by sons Frank and Ray. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Earthman Funeral Directors, 8303 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX 77024.

RICHARD L. RENNER

October 9, 2017

He joined Aramco in 1972 and retired as superintendent of Offshore Operations in 1987. Survived by his wife, Francisca, and children Sandra, Mary, Lorena, Scott and Dan. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Hollenbeck-Cahill Funeral Homes, 33 South Ave., Bradford, PA 16701.

RICKY W. RITCHIE

November 11, 2017

A CPA, he worked for Aramco from 1988-16. He was director of the Dhahran chapter of the Harley Owners Group. Survived by daughter Morgan. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Deberry Funeral Home, 2025 W. University Dr., Denton, TX 76201.

JOSEPH SCHONS

November 3, 2017

A process engineer, he worked in Ras Tanura from 1962-71, the New York office (1971-73) and Dhahran (1978-85). Survived by his wife, Doris, and children Michael and Pat. Correspondence may be sent to the family at 5021 Stagecoach St., Tyler, TX 75703.

OTELA "TELA" SEIM

March 8, 2018

Survived by her husband, retiree Ted

IN MEMORIAM

Seim, and children Sherri, Stephen, Scot and Shana. She was active in the Dhahran Theatre Group. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Christ Lutheran Church, 5150 River Lakes Pkwy, Whitefish, MT 59937.

DOROTHY B. "DOTTIE" STEINHEIMER

November 2, 2017

She transferred in 1953 from the New York office to Saudi Arabia, where she met her husband, David. Survived by children Carol, Jane and Richard. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church, 1600 54th Ave. S, St. Petersburg, FL 33712.

ELLA S. TATE

September 3, 2017

Survived by her husband, Fred, and children Janet and Julie. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc., 1310 Franklin Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027.

MARIE "SISSY" THACKER

October 23, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, Jim, and survived by children Melissa, Becky, Phyllis and Amy. The family lived in the

kingdom from 1980-85.

JANET UPOLE

January 4, 2018

She worked as a staffing accounting analyst in the International Payroll Group at Aramco Services Company in Houston from 1981-04.

ANNETTE VANDERSLICE

August 7, 2012

Predeceased by her husband, retiree Jack VanDerslice, and survived by children Christine, John, Margery, Anne, Jim and Laura. Correspondence may be sent to Margery at margeryvan@gmail.com.

CHUCK WALTERS

January 14, 2018

He joined Aramco in 1957 and retired as chief engineer in 1982. Survived by his wife, Nieki (Leonie), and children Melora, Karina and Peter. Correspondence may be sent to Nieki at 201 Vanderpool Ln. #157, Houston, TX 77024, or Niekiw@gmail.com.

DORIS WANTY

January 6, 2018

Survived by her husband, Mike, who joined Aramco in 1947, and children

Diane, Christine, Carol and Merritt.

The couple met in Florence, Italy, in 1949, married and lived in Dhahran until 1951. Correspondence may be sent to the family c/o Geneva Presbyterian Church, 1229 E. Fairmont Ave., Modesto, CA 95350.

JEANETTE N. WATKINS

October 11, 2017

Predeceased by her husband, Russell, and survived by children Wade and Melanie.

NICHOLAS WIDHAMMER

October 3, 2017

He was a special teacher at Aramco from 1985-93 and returned to the kingdom from 1994-04. Correspondence may be sent to his community at Sippel Funeral Home, 1311 Thorp Street St., Cloud, WI 53079.

MARGARET (JEPSON) WILLIAMS

December 7, 2017

She joined Aramco in 1977, assigned to the steno pool, and retired in 1990 to Derbyshire, England, to join her husband-to-be, John Williams, who also had worked for Aramco.

'JEAN LOVED ARABIA'

Jean Dell'Oro, whose husband, Walt, joined Aramco as a petroleum engineer in 1947, died Oct. 10, 2017, two days after she had fled from her home in Santa Rosa, Calif., to escape a wildfire. "The home burned down without her knowing it," destroying the family's possessions from several decades in Saudi Arabia, said her son, Torr.

Walt Dell'Oro remained in Saudi Arabia for five years before moving to Canada to work for Tidewater/Getty in Regina, where he met Jean. They married in 1955 and moved to Dhahran in 1956, where they stayed until 1980 when Walt retired as manager of Exploration.

"Jean loved Arabia and its people, loved to shop in al-Khobar and bargain with the Saudi merchants in Arabic. She always won on her price," her son said. She was active in scouting, participated in the establishment of the Arabian Natural History Assn. and enjoyed camping in the desert, "always bringing food treats to Bedouins that she would meet," he added.

Along with Torr, she is survived by her daughter, Tam. Correspondence may be sent to Torr at torrdelloro@yahoo.com.

Jean Dell'Oro ventured to Dhahran with her husband, Walt, in 1956, remaining until he retired in 1980. She and her husband—like Doris Wanty, above—were members of the Aramco Old-Timers group of retired or former Aramcons who had joined the company before 1950.



TIM BARGER—A SAUDI ARAMCO-AMERICAN WITH A MISSION

By Arthur Clark

Tim Barger died Feb. 15, 2017, at his home in Vista, Calif., leaving a legacy of projects to promote an awareness and understanding of the Middle East. The son of former Aramco President and CEO Tom Barger and his wife, Kathleen, he was born in Dhahran on Sept. 18, 1947—the seventh child delivered at the Aramco hospital on King's Road.

He joined a sister, Annie, and a brother, Michael. Three sisters, Mary, Norah and Teresa, followed.

"Tim was unique," said Steve Furman, who as a nine-year-old met Barger just days after he was born and remained a close friend. Furman called him a "free spirit," noting that as a kindergartner he played hooky for a month, befriending local gardeners and construction workers and freeloading lunches. When he was found out, "his mother was livid," Furman said, escorting her son to kindergarten every day after that.

Barger recounted such tales through his teenage years in *Arabian Son, 21 Stories*, published by his Selwa Press in 2014. He also included recollections of the Saudi Arabia he saw through more mature eyes after returning from the United States in the mid-'70s to work at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh and then establish a video-electronics company Jiddah.

Barger's trademark sense of humor and his sense of history permeated his stories. Writing about his birthplace, in what became the Women's Exchange run by the Dhahran Women's Group, he said, "You can well imagine how my mother used to daydream about taking me back to the exchange for a Waring blender."

Tom Lippman, whose book, *Arabian Knight: Colonel Bill Eddy and the Rise of American Power in the Middle East*, was published by Selwa Press in 2008, said Barger wanted people to understand the place where he grew up.

"Tim didn't get into the publishing business because he expected to make a ton of money," he said. "He did it because he loved Saudi Arabia, its history, its people and the American experience there, and he wanted his fellow Americans to know about it. It wasn't just the books—the old photos that he turned into postcards and notepaper were treasures."

Barger graduated from boarding school in Wisconsin and attended Santa Clara University in California, where he met his



Tim Barger received a certificate of appreciation from Prince Sultan ibn Salman, president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, in Riyadh in 2012, for returning archeological treasures to the kingdom. "Tim expressed his joy of living in and exploring Saudi Arabia in many ways...and he will be greatly missed," Prince Sultan said upon learning of his death.

first wife, Janet MacDonald. The couple and their two children, Khamisah—named after Khamis ibn Rimthan, a Bedouin guide who assisted the first oil prospectors—and Luke (later joined brother Sam) lived in the kingdom for several years. They returned to California, where Janet died unexpectedly in 1982.

Barger later married Sydney Fate, the daughter of Aramco executive Don Fate, and they established Selwa Press. Its first book, *Out in the Blue: Letters from Arabia 1937-1940*, published in 2000, is a compilation of Tom Barger's letters to Kathleen, who had remained in America.

After Sydney died in 2002, Barger continued Selwa Press, whose new titles included *Ibn Saud, King by Conquest*, by retired Aramco geologist Nestor Sander; *The Unfurling*, by Aramcon Nimah Ismail Nawwab; and *Burning Issues, Understanding and Misunderstanding the Middle East—A 40-Year Chronicle*, whose editors included retiree Bob Norberg. Selwa Press republished *Discovery! The Search for Arabian Oil*, by Wallace Stegner, in 2007.

In 2001 Barger and his sister, Annie Hebert, were welcomed at the National Museum in Riyadh by Prince Sultan ibn Salman, president of the Saudi Commis-

sion for Tourism and National Heritage, when they returned several important artifacts collected and preserved by their father before the country had established a museum infrastructure. He returned to Riyadh in 2012 when Prince Sultan welcomed a larger group of antiquities donors with company connections.

Late in 2017 Barger donated his father's photo collection, dating to the 1930s and including some unarchived images, to Saudi Aramco. He was in the process of returning more archeological artifacts to Saudi Arabia when he died.

Barger understood the unique position of the Americans who knew Saudi Arabia firsthand, through Aramco, saying in Dhahran in 2008: "We're not Saudi-Americans, nor are we American-Saudis; maybe we are Saudi Aramco-Americans."

That status gave him a special responsibility, one that he furthered by promoting intercultural understanding in word and in deed.

He is survived by his children, Khamisah, Luke and Sam; sisters Annie Hebert, Mary Barger, Norah Barger and Teresa Barger; and brother Michael. Correspondence may be sent to Annie at ahebert3@carolina.rr.com.

PLEASANT DAYS SPRING 2018

Al~Ayyam Al~Jamilah الأيام الجميلة

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Celebrating 50 Years... By Recreating History

Annuitants Grace and Bob Banta (center and left center) celebrated their golden wedding anniversary March 16 on the cruise ship *Caribbean Princess*, reenacting their wedding 50 years before aboard a sailing yacht off Diamondhead, Hawaii, at exactly the same time as the original event (4 p.m.). Norman Lachapelle, who gave Grace away at the original wedding, stands second from right and his daughter, Celeste, left. *Caribbean Princess* Captain Marco Fortezze is right. Bob and Norman—Navy officers at the time of the wedding—dressed in the same uniforms they had worn 50 years before. The Bantas and their children, Angelique and Marlon, lived in Abqaiq (1982-85) and Dhahran (1985-00). Bob spent his career in the Mechanical Services Shops Dept.; Grace was a casual employee in Industrial Security and the Aramco Schools. They celebrated their 25th anniversary in Dhahran.

