



Chris Laszcz-Davis  
KASRA President

Visit website at  
[www.e-kasra.com](http://www.e-kasra.com)

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### *Kaiser Aluminum Salaried Retirees Association*

#### **A MESSAGE FROM THE KASRA PRESIDENT**

Dear Fellow Retirees/Surviving Spouses:

Every year in July, we hold our annual membership drive. Each of you will have received a letter from me accompanying the hard copy of the July newsletter indicating your current dues status. For those who already are KASRA members, we thank you for your continued support.

If you will be submitting a dues payment, please remember to indicate any change of contact information on the green "dues renewal" form provided. In this way, we can be sure to keep you informed on any matters arising on both KASRA and the VEBA. We invite those of you who have allowed your membership to lapse to rejoin us. We also encourage those who have not been KASRA members to join.

The Board Members and Regional Directors of the Kaiser Aluminum Salaried Retirees Association (KASRA) are all volunteers. I'd like to thank them for their time, skill and enthusiasm in keeping things moving and interesting. Our Board Members include: **Klaus Adler, Steve Ping, Ed Quinnan, Erach Tarapore and John Schnittker**. Without their help, none of our objectives this past year could have been met. Board members who retired at the end of last year, **Doug Mann and Ed Westerman**, continue to serve the Board tirelessly in a strategic advisory capacity.

Others who directly assist the KASRA efforts in a number of ways include: **Carlos**

**Xavier, Dick Kauffman, Steve Abernathy, Joanne Gutierrez, Sally Hogarty, Kari Dahlen, Sharon Fraetis and Michelle Alviso** of A-Mailing.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention and thank the regional directors and reporters – **Charlie Alexandre** (Bristol), **Tom Summerson** (Spokane), **Tim Healy** (Erie), **Dan Petruss** (Mead), Bob Mohr (Tacoma), **Bob Eisenbach** (Baton Rouge), **Norm Manger** (Los Angeles), **Chuck Schimmel** (New Orleans), **Bill Snider** (Newark), and **Dave Whitman** (Ravenswood) -- for keeping the Board informed of news in their respective regions and for their efforts in providing us photos of their regional events for the KASRA website. And finally, thank you to the many KASRA members who have shared their lives with us in the "What's Going On" section of the newsletter.

By now, all eligible and enrolled members of the Kaiser Aluminum Salaried Retirees VEBA will have received a letter from the VEBA Board of Trustees advising them of the \$2,800 maximum qualified benefit for the year 2014. You have until December 31, 2015 to file your claim for the 2014 benefit. We take this opportunity to thank the volunteer VEBA Trustees **Art Donaldson, Jed Daniel and Doug Allen**.

Please also remember you have until December 31, 2014 to file your claim for the 2013 maximum benefit of \$2,250. If you have a change in your mailing information, please advise not only KASRA, but also the VEBA administration, as this is

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### Accomplishment . . .

On May 2, the French Republic honored **Alfred “Al” Zucker** (Sunrise, FL) and 21 other Florida veterans of World War II with the *Legeon of Honore* medal. The ceremony took place aboard the USS New York at Port Everglades, FL, during Broward Fleet Week. A reception and tour of the ship followed – all captured by the local television station. Subsequently, on May 31, Al joined 40 World War II veterans, their guardians and various officials on board the “Honor Flight.” The annual flight takes veterans to Washington, D.C., to see their war memorials, Arlington National Cemetery and other historic military sites at no cost to the participants. “These two exceptional experiences were especially rewarding to me as we remember and honor Memorial Day, the Normandy Invasion and victory in Europe,” says Al, who worked as a design engineer at Kaiser’s Extrusion Division in Woodbury, NY.

### Birthdays and Anniversaries . . .

**Jerry Lambert** (Covington, LA) and his wife LeRene celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary in June. “We met during our sophomore and junior year in college and some people said our relationship would never last,” says Jerry. Guess those people were wrong! Jerry was recently elected to his third two-year term as president of the Volunteer/Auxiliary Group of the Lakeview Regional Medical Center. He also volunteers at the Covington Unit of the Mary Bird Cancer Center and is the chairman of the Church Council of the First United Methodist Church. In addition, he finds time to serve as the vice chair of the local drainage district, works at his golf game and keeps up with his five, very busy, grandchildren both in Louisiana and out of state. But moving around has always appealed to the



**Al Zucker was honored by the French Republic for his service in World War II.**

former Alumina Business Unit employee who, over the years, worked for Kaiser at Gramercy, LA, Ravenswood, WV, Oakland, CA, and Chalmette, LA.

A surprise party helped **Allen Lightner** (Ponchatoula, LA) celebrate his 88th birthday recently. The party took place in Slidell, LA, with 31 friends and neighbors attending. When not celebrating such important milestones, the former pot repair worker at Chalmette, LA, does gardening and goes fishing.

**Carl Holland** (Bay Minette, AL) and his wife Betty celebrated 62 years of marriage on June 2. The two like to travel to Winchester, OH, where they have a summer home and many friends to visit. In addition to Betty, music makes Carl happy. “I have a small country/bluegrass band called Southern Sunshine, and we play at the Veteran’s Home, local nursing homes and church functions,” he says.

Former Pleasanton, CA, employee **Liz Simon** (San Francisco, CA) and her

*(What's Going On, from Page 2)*

husband Jan celebrated their 30th anniversary with a trip to Japan in June and will continue celebrating in August when they visit the United Kingdom. When not traveling, Liz manages communications at California State Automobile Association Insurance Group in Walnut Creek, CA. "Whatever happened with the Micromill technology and plant in Reno, NV?" she asks. "Was it ultimately successful?" If anyone has an answer, email Liz at elizabeth.simon@csaa.com.

### Traveling Near and Far . . .

**Tony Procanik** (Ormand Beach, FL) just returned from visiting his son Jim and daughter-in-law Lyndia in Phytet, Thailand. "We love the ambiance of Thailand's limestone islands and, of course, visiting Jim and his family," says Tony. When back home in Florida, Tony pursues a career in voiceovers for radio and television.

Also visiting family in foreign lands was **Robert Mazur** (Parkersburg, WV). He traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, to visit his



**Judy Kirby** took this photo of a beautiful cathedral in Segovia, Spain.

daughter Laure and her husband Lt. Col Mark Datson. While there, he took time for a river cruise from Budapest, Hungary, to Kohn, Germany. When back in West Virginia, the former Ravenswood, WV, worker does grounds cleanup at North Hills Swim and Racquet Club as well as security patrol at a subdivision in Nokomis, FL. Robert also finds time to keep up with his railroading hobby, swimming, biking, beach walking and gardening.

A trip to Spain in May made for a wonderful experience for **Judy Kirby** (Sherman, TX). "We visited Madrid, Avila, Segovia and Toledo during our week-long trip to Spain," says the former Extrusions employee. Since leaving Kaiser, Judy has worked as the Regulatory Affairs Manager at Grayon Collin Communications in Van Alstyne, TX. She plans to retire by the end of 2014.

**Ann and Gene Miller** (Baton Rouge, LA) spent part of June cruising up the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, Canada, to Nova Scotia, Canada, and then down the New England Coast to Boston, MA. Ann, who previously worked at Ravenswood, WV, Fabrication, and Gene, who



**Tony Procanik** (Left) in Thailand with his son **Jim** and daughter-in-law **Lyndia**.

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worked at the Alumina Business Unit, enjoyed the May luncheon with the Baton Rouge, LA, area retirees, otherwise known as the Kaiser Old Timers Society.

**A Little of This, A Little of That . . .**

Former Trentwood, WA, worker **William Nadwornick** (Greenacres, WA) spends his spare time as an amateur radio operator and traveling around Washington, while **Betty Lou Koska** (Winnemucca, NV) hopes to help out at her annual local fair.

Betty took some time recently to visit her daughter and to visit Austin, NV, where she grew up. Meanwhile, **Aprina Leavy** (Oakland, CA) keeps busy exercising and baking.

**Karen Arnsmeier** (Spring, TX), the surviving spouse of **Ron Arnsmeier**, traveled to Houston, TX, over Christmas to visit her daughter and 2 ½-year-old grandson. Unfortunately, she was hospitalized on the second day of her vacation and had to have major heart surgery. She's doing well and decided to relocate to the Houston area. "It's nice to be close to my daughter and grandson, and I was finally able to sell my home in Arizona. Karen keeps busy making cards, gardening and traveling to see her other daughter and two other grandchildren.

**Best Wishes . . .**

Former Chalmette, LA, employee **Anthony Gerace** (Madisonville, LA) has been in ill health recently. The 92-year-old, however, still helps care for his wife of 68 years who has dementia. "I do miss everybody from the Chalmette, LA, plant," he says. "I also enjoy reading the KASRA newsletter and really enjoyed the



**Howard Anderson and Joe Drennan catch up with each other at Chalmette, LA's June luncheon.**

comments made by **Ed Coyne** in the last issue.

**David Douglas** (Gerton, NC) recently moved from his home to Universal Healthcare in Fletcher, NC. His wife Rose Ann now lives with their children. "Nothing to worry about – just getting old. Love and regards to everyone," he adds.

The KASRA board sends condolences to the family of **Margaret Burr** (Pleasant Hill, CA), who passed away on March 26 at the age of 95. Margaret was the surviving spouse of **John Burr**, who retired from Kaiser Aluminum in 1983 and passed away in 1984.

**Calling on Veterans**

We would like to put together a special November 2014 issue of the KASRA Newsletter for Veteran's Day. If you served your country in any of the armed services, we'd like to hear about your experiences. Please send your story and photos (please!) to Sally Hogarty, P.O. Box 84, Canyon, CA 94516 or via email to [sallyhogarty@gmail.com](mailto:sallyhogarty@gmail.com) by October 1.

## MEMBER PROFILE: Steven Ping

Although he retired from Kaiser in 2001, Steven Ping has remained very active in his field of metallurgy, often traveling to Europe to consult on various projects. He and his wife Wendy, who also worked for Kaiser, live in Pleasanton, CA. They have two grown children and are renowned for their Ping Fling, a reunion of Center for Technology (CFT) workers held every year. Steve is also on the KASRA Board of Directors as the secretary.

### When did you start working for Kaiser?

I was one of the first metallurgists hired right out of college in late 1976 after a prolonged hiring freeze caused by the recession in the early 1970's. I worked at CFT in Pleasanton, CA, for almost 25 years until 2001 when I had the unenviable job of closing it down. I retired from the position as Manager of R&D.

### What did you do for Kaiser?

I started working in the Metallography Group, and it gave me a great opportunity to learn the whole aluminum fabrication business because, in addition to research and development (R&D), we did a lot of problem solving of plant non-conformities and customer complaints.

From the broad initial training, I moved into advanced materials development, focused on aerospace and military applications. Seven years later, I moved back into the Metallography Group to head it and, in subsequent years, headed many other CFT service groups.

### What about Kaiser made it a good place to work?

Taking the job with Kaiser was a golden opportunity to learn really fast from icons of the industry. At 22 years of age,



Steve Ping (2nd from right) enjoys a traditional Greek meal with Greek friends.

I found myself surrounded by people who had 15 to 40 years experience – each with a very deep knowledge of different technologies in the industry. I can't name them all, but there were great engineers, scientists and chemists who were instrumental in my mentoring. People like **Fran Krill, Don Beerntsen, Jim Hess, Irv Broverman, Ed Westerman, Ralph Dorward, Larry Barker, Ed Eichhorn, Wayne Helfrich, Walt Finnigan, Ralph Woods, John Lullo, Tom Summerson, Bud Balmer, Jerry Dassel, Sid Roberts, Jeff Bailey, Stu Spalding, Bruce Riggs, Gordon Gane, Bob Dickenson, Bill Mohondro, Kevin Brown, Ken Hasse, Ian Smith and Bill Boyer**, along with many of their team members, were all important teachers. I was also surrounded with amazingly gifted technicians and administrative assistants. Technical people in the plants were my mentors as well. Being raised in a small farming community and working in the Kaiser organization were similar to me in that the inherent closeness and caring for one another was obvious.

**Sounds like you were working for Kaiser during a pretty exciting time.**

### Send KASRA Your News & Pictures

Write us your news, travels, stories... humorous tales welcome. Send a note to Sally Hogarty, P.O. Box 84, Canyon, CA 94516 or [sallyhogarty@gmail.com](mailto:sallyhogarty@gmail.com).

\* Photos encouraged.

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Definitely, the second half of the 1970s was a real growth time in the industry. Replacing other materials with aluminum was still happening and all the international companies had big research centers.

As an example, during the oil embargos in the 1970's, the price of fuel increased fast, causing car companies to look at using lighter materials. CFT had many automotive-related development projects, some of which were commercially successful, like forged wheels/hubs and brazing sheet.

Environmental concerns also came to prominence during this time, causing a shift in R&D. So in general, CFT moved from developing new alloys and processes to refining what we already had, making them more efficient,

effective and cleaner.

At CFT in the '80s and even more so in the '90s, we worked more closely with production plants which I really liked. Getting close to the action (in a business sense) was my opportunity to learn more about fabrication and sales. It was during that time that Kaiser had financial troubles and the

company had to downsize to save money. This really focused us in R&D to work on high business value projects.

**How has working for Kaiser helped**

**you in your current occupation as a consultant?**

Using a high business value perspective to prioritize projects has made a big difference. This experience at CFT helped me understand the business world, not just technically, but financially too. It's helped me a lot as a consultant because I can consultant on more of a strategic level.

**What is it you've been doing since you left Kaiser?**

Early on, I was encouraged to consult part-time with a few companies that either make aluminum or use aluminum in their products. Many of my early clients were located in Europe, but over the last 13 years, I have worked with technical teams all over the world. It is both exciting and rewarding working with young people from many cultures. I train metallurgists, set up metallography laboratories, do metallurgical analysis, and help set up technology strategies.

**Tell us about your long-term job in Greece.**

A company in Athens, Greece, hired me in 2006. It's a family business -- a fabricator with about 20 plant sites -- kind of like the Henry Kaiser of Greece! They make mostly construction materials -- steel, copper/brass, zinc and aluminum. They are a multi-billion dollar sales company that didn't launch a research center until 2003.

I realized right away that the R&D center would never be successful without knowing the other companies' strategic business plans. This was something the family had never done. As it turned out, my three-year contract extended to seven years, but when I left the companies, they had written strategies and the R&D group



**Wendy Ping (R) with a friend and the Acropolis in the background.**



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was integrated into them.

My wife, Wendy, and I lived in a little house at the north base of the Acropolis. The Acropolis is lit up at night so we could always find our way home! Wendy could only be there 60% of the time because she spent lots of time with her mom, who was nearly 100 at the time and in an assisted living facility in Livermore, CA. Wendy basically lived out of a suitcase, going back and forth between her mom and me. Luckily, her mom was very healthy and had a nice circle of friends, so Wendy could pretty much schedule her trips well in advance.

### **Is it different working in Europe now as opposed to when you worked for Kaiser?**

I think so, maybe because of the last four years of extreme austerity measures and societal unrest. But my perspective may have been skewed because I didn't work with other expats when working for this Greek company.

Kaiser, like other U.S.-based companies who had built up international businesses, wanted their U.S. workers and their families to feel "at home." Often, the expats lived in the same area and even had a commissary that stocked foods from the U.S. This was great for anyone with food sensitivities, but bringing as much of the US and its culture to a foreign location was not what Wendy and I wanted to experience.

In Greece and now in China, where I'm currently working part time, I live among the population and eat the local food and get more into the local culture. I know U.S. expats working in China who stay in a little hotel built for them with a restaurant that stocks foods similar

to what they'd get in America. They rarely eat Chinese food and aren't as interested as I am about the local culture. This isn't bad, it's just different from what excites me.

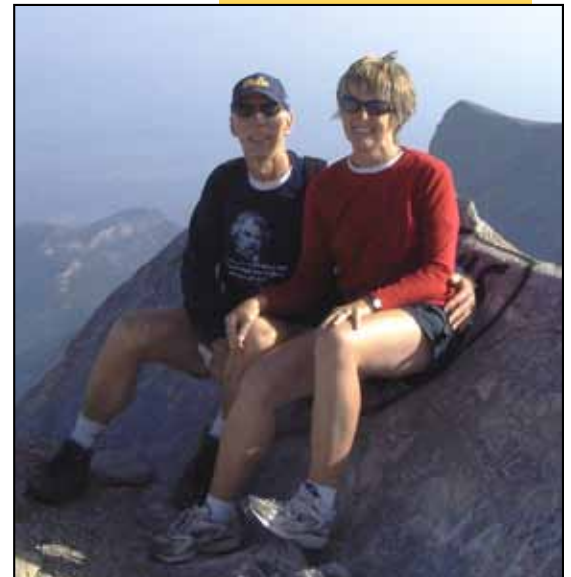
### **Being on your own in Greece must have been a bit of a challenge.**

There were three major cultural shocks for Wendy and me. First, we'd never lived in the heart of a major city and Athens is very densely populated. It's a great walking city with an efficient metro (when not closed because of strikes!), so we parked the car and used public transit systems often.

Second, the language was a big challenge. We never became fluent but could go off on weekends and communicate well enough to find lodging/food and read street signs, etc. We communicated in English at work; so I didn't need to become fluent in Greek. Wendy was much better learning the language. She used it nearly every day because she had to deal with local vendors who often didn't speak English. Learning steel, copper/brass and zinc metallurgy became the third challenge. I looked at it as a chance to energize my brain. I basically developed all of their expat systems. This experience has helped me in China because they also had no systems set up for expats in Beijing.

### **Did you travel outside of Greece?**

Wendy and I love learning about different cultures, and we traveled as much as we could when I was with Kaiser and now with my consulting contracts. All



**Steve and Wendy enjoy the view high above Greece from Mt. Olympus.**

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of the countries we've gone to are so very different. It's a great chance to study human behavior and sample many different foods. While the research center was in Athens, the company had plants throughout Greece, plus international plants in Bulgaria, Romania, Germany and the U.K. I traveled to all of them and worked closely with their technical teams. I also interacted with a metal supplier out of Russia. I had always heard about the Kaiser teams that went to Siberia to help make the smelters more efficient. It was exciting to experience that too.



Steve (6th from the left) dines out in Beijing with members of the R&D group he's working with.

### **What are you doing now in China?**

I'm upgrading an R&D laboratory that was only started in 2013. The focus isn't towards production process or improvement of a product,

just basic science right now. By the end of next year, the commercial company that owns the R&D facility will be producing forgings and extrusions with sheet and plate production.

The founder of the company has built up a massive diverse group of companies. He subscribes to Henry Kaiser's philosophy of "find a need and fill it." He started one business, and if he needed a constant supply of something, he'd buy or build the supply chain.

### **What's it like working in China?**

First of all, the new generation of workers is free to work anywhere they want. Ten or 15 years ago, Chinese workers (with or without a college degree) were told by the government what job they would do. You can imagine the blossoming ambitions of the younger generation and even some of the older ones.

I stay in a Chinese-style hotel in Beijing and eat only Chinese food. It's a huge city with really bad air pollution when there is no wind. Their coal-fired electricity plants, as well as many other factories, don't have effective particulate or noxious gases scrubbers, which contributes heavily to the pollution. I wear a mask all the time I'm outside. On my first 2014 trip, I was on the 12th floor of a hotel and couldn't see the ground or the building next to me due to the smog!

I don't rent a car, but public transportation makes it easy to get around; also the company has a driver I can sometimes use. There are over 3,000 miles of high-speed trains in China, but a relatively poorly developed air transportation system with too few airports and planes. They have a tremendous demand for fabricated materials in the transportation industry.

The people in China have been very welcoming. They all want to know what it's like "out there," and they freely share everything about their lives. Lots of changes are going on in the government as well. Many government-owned businesses will be privatized and owning land may even be allowed. They're also dealing with corrupt public officials very harshly and have even applied the death penalty for some white collar crimes.

*(Member Profile, continued Page 9)*



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### **How do you train people when you don't know the language?**

I communicate a lot with drawings, pictures and my hands! Two of the 31 employees I'm working with have received graduate degrees in the U.S., but the rest are pretty weak in English or cannot speak it at all. I use the English-speaking engineers as interpreters when necessary. At the plant sites there are full time interpreters available to help the foreign contractors and suppliers. However, their knowledge of technical jargon is often really weak.

### **Tell us a little about your family.**

My wife, Wendy, had a full career as a materials engineer until she "retired" while I was working in Greece. She worked 10 years for Kaiser Refractories and Kaiser Chemicals, mostly in an R&D position at CFT, but also for a few years in sales. She has been involved with

Girl Scouts for decades. Now, she's also active with the American Association of University Women (AAUW), focusing on programs that support science and math learning for girls.

Our daughter, Shawna, lives on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. She's a registered nurse and loves the tropics. When she's not doing water sports, she's running trails through the mountains. Our son, Eric, is a chemical engineer. He just got married to Andria, also a chemical engineer, in June. They live in a northern suburb of Denver, CO.

### **What's next for you?**

I hope to cut back on work and do more volunteering. But I still have several weeks of work in China plus some weddings to attend in Greece. If you've never been to a Greek wedding, I highly recommend it.

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*(President's Message, from Page 1)*

key to ensuring you are kept informed of VEBA matters. Their address is as follows: Delta Fund Administrators, LLC, P.O. Box 2308, Stockton, CA 95201 – 2308, Telephone: (Toll Free) (888) 344-8322, Email: [VEBA@Deltafund.com](mailto:VEBA@Deltafund.com).

**Very important:** A recent email from a member who was cleaning out old files alerted us to the fact that many KACC personnel documents included the employee's social security number -- often on forms that today would not include such personal information. Members may want to keep this in mind, and be alert to shredding old files, rather than just tossing them in the recycle bin.

what you are doing. Please complete the enclosed "What's Going On" form and return it to us. You should note that this and other forms can be downloaded from our website ([www.e-kasra.com](http://www.e-kasra.com)). We encourage you all to visit this website which also contains other useful information, including past newsletters and photos of your fellow retirees and their spouses.

Until our next newsletter, enjoy the summer ahead!

*Chris*

Chris Laszcz-Davis  
President, KASRA

### **Surviving Spouses**

If you are unsure of what your benefit is through VEBA or have any other questions regarding the VEBA Plan, please contact the Third Party Administrator at: Delta Fund Administrators, LLC, P.O. Box 2308, Stockton, CA 95201-2308 or call toll free to (888) 344-8322 or email to [veba@deltafund.com](mailto:veba@deltafund.com).

We love to hear how you are doing and

**P.O. Box 1171  
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We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
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**July 7, Aug 4, Sept (TBD) Los Angeles**  
Lunch is usually held at Noon on the first Monday of each month at The Elephant Bar, 1403 Firestone Ave., La Mirada. Contact Bob O'Leary at (714) 898-7463 to confirm time and location.

**July 10, Aug 14, Sept 11 Mead**  
Lunch 11:30 a.m. at Cathay Inn, North Division St. Contact Danny Petruss at (509) 483-2171 or [dpjr70@comcast.net](mailto:dpjr70@comcast.net).

**July 19, Aug 16, Sept 20 Erie**  
Breakfast 8:30 a.m. at Shirley's Country Kitchen, Wattsburg Rd. Erie. Contact Tim Healy (814) 474-3536 to confirm.

**Sept 3 Chalmette**  
Lunch 11:00 a.m. at La Rosetta Tratoria, 348 Robert Blvd. Slidel. Cost \$20.00. Contact Chuck Schimmel on or before August 22 to confirm at (985) 643-0437 or [schimcol@aol.com](mailto:schimcol@aol.com).

**Aug 12 Newark**  
**Lunch 11:00 a.m. at Stacy's Hometown**  
Buffet, Heath. Note: Lunch is paid for by the Newark plant. Contact Bill Snider at (740) 403- 8328 or [colbill44@roadrunner.com](mailto:colbill44@roadrunner.com).

**Aug 21 Ravenswood**  
Picnic lunch 12:00 noon at Cedar Lakes, Ripley. Cost is \$10 per plate. Reservations requested no later than August 16.



Carol and Jim LeSaichere had fun at Chalmette's June lunch held at La Rosetta Tratoria in Slidell, LA.

Contact Lee Corder (304) 273-9457 or Dave Whitman (304) 273-5548 or [dwhitman@gmail.com](mailto:dwhitman@gmail.com) to confirm.

**Aug 23 Belpre**  
Lunch 12:00 noon at Western Sizzlin Steak House, Lubeck/Ravenswood Exit, Parkersburg. Visitors are always welcome. RSVP to Betty Blair (304) 489-1337 or [bettylou13@suddenlink.net](mailto:bettylou13@suddenlink.net).

### *In Memoriam*

*Robert N. Barker - Rathdrum, ID*  
*Mary V. Basham - Charleston, WV*  
*Ronald F. Braschler - Clawson, MI*  
*Robert Lee Cadwell - Metairie, LA*  
*Lionel H. Davies - Danville, CA*  
*J. F. Harold Fussell - Baton Rouge, LA*

*William C. Guenther - Red Bluff, CA*  
*Samuel S. Jones - Tucson, AZ*  
*Charles H. Jordan - Evans, WV*  
*Eric A. Muller - Cumming, GA*

*John Pecoraro - Baton Rouge, LA*  
*Jack Edward Martindale - Sparks, NV*  
*Jacob Jonah Trachtenberg - Houston, TX*

*Betty Lee Turner - Bedord, IN*

Please inform us of a retiree or spouse passing. Include date of death, city and state, and first name of surviving spouse. If possible, a copy or link to the obituary or name of the newspaper would be helpful. Contact Klaus Adler, 1127 Rachele Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94597 or (925) 935-2938 or [kcharlie34@comcast.net](mailto:kcharlie34@comcast.net).

The Board of Directors expresses its deepest sympathy to families and loved ones.