



Steve Ping
Erach Tarapore
Mike Venie

KASRA
Co-Presidents

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Do you know a retiree who has not signed up for the VEBA? Suggest they call the Delta Fund Administrators toll-free at (888) 344-8322 or email VEBA@deltafund.com.

Kaiser Aluminum Salaried Retirees Association

A MESSAGE FROM THE KASRA PRESIDENT

We are saddened to announce that our former colleague and KASRA President

Doug Mann passed away on February 13. He will be sorely missed. A memorial service is planned for him on March 10 at 2 p.m. at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane, in Moraga, CA.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of KASRA, so we thought it appropriate to do a brief recap of the history of KASRA. A much more comprehensive account is available in the excellent retrospective “KASRA – Past, Present & Future,” written by Ed Westerman, available on the website at www.e-kasra.com.

In early 1988, policy changes at KACC appeared to threaten life insurance and medical benefits for Kaiser retirees. A group of retirees in the San Francisco Bay Area decided that it would be worthwhile to engage an attorney to get a legal opinion on the rights of the retirees. About 300 of them collected \$5,000 to cover the legal fees. The attorney told them that, though they had rights, they would have to “get organized” in order to protect those rights. This led to the formation of an organizing committee to charter KASRA.

During KASRA’s first year, salaried retirees were actively recruited from around the country to ensure broad representation in the organization. Membership grew to 2,640 and funds grew to \$68,000

by the end of the year. KASRA was on its way.

Directors focused on familiarizing themselves with medical insurance issues for retirees. They pressed politicians for legislation protecting retiree benefits. They corresponded with AARP and other retiree groups to gain awareness of conflicts amongst other large companies and their retirees in other parts of the country. By 1996, KASRA’s cash balance had reached \$228,000. This war chest helped defray legal costs, which had mounted to \$58,000 by 1999.

All this foresight, preparation and organization paid off when, in 2002, Kaiser initiated Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. Legal counsel representing KASRA before the bankruptcy judge sought to protect the claims of retirees as one of the various creditors in the proceedings. The resulting Settlement Agreement in 2006 included funding for a Voluntary Employees’ Beneficiary Association (VEBA), which has provided benefits on a tax-exempt basis to all salaried retirees ever since. The VEBA benefit of \$4,200 in 2017 went a long way towards defraying the medical insurance costs for many salaried retirees and surviving spouses last year. More than 90% of eligible Kaiser retirees are enrolled in VEBA, a proportion that has stubbornly refused to improve, despite our best efforts. We strongly encourage all eligible KACC retirees to remain connected with VEBA and inform KASRA and VEBA (at the contact info provided in every issue of this newsletter) of address changes so that they can continue to receive this benefit.

A recent letter from a member asked us

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Accomplishments . . .

After 16 plus years as the Chairman of the Business Administration Department at Bristol Community College, **Cecil E. Leonard** (Trenton, RI) recently retired from “my very satisfying” second career in academia. Post Kaiser, Cecil spent about 11 years working in the wire and cable equipment manufacturing field in sales and marketing, as well as serving in positions of general management. During that time, he “traveled to 31 different countries as well as working in Germany for four years. It was only after that that I had the chance to start my second career.

Congratulations to **Chris Laszcz-Davis** (Orinda, CA) on her recognition by the 7th Senatorial District at a December



Chris Laszcz-Davis hiked in the lovely southern Australia mountain ranges over the Christmas holidays with (L-R) her son-in-law James, daughter Lauren and (far right) son Grant.

West Coast Regional Environmental, Health and Safety conference. The recognition was authored by State Senator Steven M. Glazer and recognized Chris’s remarkable career and civic contributions. On a personal note, Chris writes how she spent a wonderful holiday with her adult children exploring Australia.

Anniversaries . . .

2018 will be the 50th anniversary for **Ken Kaufman** (Kalispell, MT) and his wife. Congrats to the couple who also just enjoyed a visit from another “Kaiser couple,” Roger and Carol Hamm. Ken, who last worked at Kaiser, Tacoma, has been involved in wood turning for the last three years. He belongs to the Columbia Falls, MT., wood turning club which sponsors events throughout the year and also assists in a wood crafting class for home schoolers on Wednesdays. That activity serves about 12 students. Ken’s wife notes, “He started with an old lathe from the plant, but naturally had to upgrade.” Ken also serves on the facility committee and is in charge of vehicle maintenance for his church. The Kaufman’s last family vacation was in 2016 when they rented a cabin on the Mogollon Plateau near Overgaard, AZ.: “The kids and grandkids enjoyed kayaking, fishing and horseback riding.”

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

Timothy J. Gorman (Morgantown, WV) enjoys working on his model train set and following the Pittsburgh Steelers. **Fred Chambers, Jr.** (Waynesboro, GA), who last worked at Kaiser Agricultural Chemicals. in Waynesboro, enjoys hunting and fishing and, at the age of 89, resting. Fred adds, “Then I have to do what my wife Martha plans for me.” He travels to keep up with his 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren scattered in Geor-

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gia, South Carolina and Florida. Fred also notes that "I attend church regularly."

History buff and surviving spouse of **Theron L. Carothers, Geraldine "Gerry" C. Carothers** (Danville, CA) spent the Christmas holidays with her grandson and his wife in Macon, GA, where she visited many places with Civil War connections. "I also stopped by the Whistle Stop Café in Juliette, GA, and had fried green tomatoes." Retired from the Bank of America after 28 years, Gerry still proctors the California State Bar Exam twice a year and is active in her church and the Diablo Dance Club. The busy lady has also volunteered for the past 15 years at Walnut Creek, CA, Kaiser Hospital and been a part of the Women's Health Initiative Health Research Program for the past 22 years.

Traveling Near and Far . . .

Gary Carpenter (Perry, UT) and his wife Susan are serving an 18-month mission in Ukraine for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. Gary worked in the Tax Department. **Ursula Seifert** (Castro Valley, CA), who last worked at Pleasanton, spent five months from April to October on Vancouver Island, Canada. She also enjoyed a cruise to Norway, Iceland, Scotland and England for her husband's 85th birthday. The former Administrative Assistant volunteers for Meals on Wheels and enjoys participating in yoga, playing golf, reading books and playing bridge. **Chet Ferdun** (Alamo, CA), whose last transfer location was with Oakland Kaiser location Packaging Sales, enlightened us about his recent visit to Iowa over the holidays to be with his wife's family: "It was what we expected, with cold and snow over the holidays but, on the other hand, nice and cozy indoors. I knew all this since Iowa was part of my Kaiser sales



Trentwood Kaiser retirees & spouses met for lunch and fun in the snow at Mt. Spokane in January. (L-R) Les Stone, Tracy Fundine, Dave Williams, Bette Brattebo, Mary Dorosh, John Dorosh, Gus Schmauch, Gary Smauch, Joe Roberts and (seated) Tom Brattebo.

territory out of the Omaha location many years ago."

Best Wishes . . .

The wife of **James C. Johnson** (Westwego, LA), who last worked at Gramercy, says her husband is now in a nursing home but is improving from a number of setbacks during rehabilitation since a triple bypass a year ago January.

Leonard Sedlin (Baton Rouge, LA) was flooded out of his house by the August, 2016, "Great Flood" in Baton Rouge. Leonard, who last worked at Raw Materials for Kaiser and still enjoys woodworking, reading and "repairing stuff," shares a story that even includes a touching bit of help from a fellow Kaiser employee: "We lived in temporary accommodations, including the garage-apartment behind Kaiser retiree Jack Carmena's home. We moved into and lived in a FEMA trailer from January until September, 2017. Our house had been completely gutted inside, but we are now back in it. It is restored inside, but will take a long time for us to add more furniture as we also complete

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MEMBER PROFILE: Sam Manaktala

This issue we offer retirees something a bit different from our usual profile piece. Sam Manaktala, who retired from Kaiser as Vice President of Kaiser International and is still very involved in the aluminum industry, discusses the industry changes that brought about the decline of Kaiser Aluminum and other aluminum manufacturing companies in the U.S., Europe and Australia.



Sam Manaktala in a recent photo.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was born in India and have intermittently lived in the U.S. from the age of 14. I attended the University of Maryland where I earned degrees in both Industrial Education and Chemical Engineering.

Presently, I live in a small fishing village on the North Coast of California and enjoy the small-town life amongst the Redwoods and the Pacific Coast. I have three grown daughters and two grandsons. Although the family is scattered on the West and East Coasts, the family reunions are very much looked forward to and planned as often as possible.

When did you start work at Kaiser?

I joined Kaiser at the Mead smelter in Spokane, WA, in 1960 and enjoyed career assignments at several locations including: Hindalco (India); Ravenswood, WV; Oakland, CA; Valco, Ghana; Anglesey, Wales; Russia and the corporate office in Pleasanton, CA. I retired from Kaiser in 1997 after 37 years of service.

Tell us about your work with Kaiser.

It was focused on primary aluminum manufacturing technology, but the last decade involved marketing Kaiser Technology and identifying potential business development opportunities for

the company on a global basis. During this final decade with Kaiser, I travelled to many parts of the world including: China, India, Australia, Middle East, Soviet Union/Russia, EU countries, Africa and South America. These travels provided an international perspective of the aluminum industry and its vulnerability to global supply demand imbalance as well as evolving regional political, economic and social drivers.

What have you been doing since your retirement from Kaiser?

I've had many post retirement endeavors include working as senior advisor to a Russian Oligarch and, subsequently, forming an aluminum consulting company along with fellow Kaiser employee, Siegfried Prangenberg. This company, Aluminum Consulting Engineers LLC (ACE), is based in Spokane, WA, and has participated in projects around the world including China, Vietnam, India, Ghana, Romania, Italy, U.S., UK, Russia and Azerbaijan. We focus on signing up retirees with deep and marketable experience in all facets of aluminum manufacturing from bauxite to finished products. About 100 consultants have signed up with ACE.

My international experience with Kaiser

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and my association with the industry since retiring has provided first-hand knowledge of many international aluminum producers as China, Russia and the Middle East have become the new primary aluminum manufacturing hubs.

From your perspective, give us an overview of the aluminum industry.

Kaiser, once a rising star among the North American aluminum producers, reached its peak in the early 1980s. In addition to substantial domestic assets, the company had significant equity interest in many international aluminum plants in Australia, New Zealand, India, Bahrain, Germany, UK and Jamaica. Kaiser's global manufacturing reach covered the entire spectrum of aluminum operations including; bauxite, alumina, primary metal and finished products.

Beginning in the '90s, the aluminum manufacturing balance started to shift from the developed economies such as the U.S., EU and Australia to developing economies, particularly China, Middle East and Russia. This developing shift created an oversupply of primary metal and triggered the prolonged price down cycle that plagued the industry for nearly two decades.

This drop in metal prices, when coupled with the high cost of production in the developed economies, put many Western producers into a prolonged loss making position. On the other hand, the developing economies that were expanding their footprint in the aluminum industry had a lower cost structure due to subsidized energy costs, favorable tax regimes, favorable financing terms and low labor costs. The meteoric rise in Chinese production from one million tons in 1990 to more than 32 million

tons today provides the framework for the global shift in the aluminum manufacturing hub. China's capacity now represents over 50% of the global primary output.

How did these new players on the global market affect Kaiser?

This mega-shift in the geographic and economic platforms for aluminum production and the consequential oversupply claimed Kaiser as the first casualty among the producers within developed economies. Kaiser was the most vulnerable because of a weak balance sheet, high debt and high cost. Additionally, because of curtailment in capital investment, the physical assets became less competitive and technologically lagging. Due to the pressure on the balance sheet, most of the international assets were sold off at a deep discount and many domestic plants were severely curtailed or shutdown.

Although Kaiser was the first casualty, it was clearly not the last. As the China production juggernaut continued and low cost Middle East capacity increased, the pressure on aluminum prices due to

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.

* Photos encouraged.



Sam Manaktala with his daughters (L-R) Gita, Shobha and Asha.

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oversupply persisted and finally claimed or damaged other Western producers. The principal casualties included: Reynolds, Noranda, Southwire, Alcan and Alcoa.

Severe capacity shutdowns claimed over two million tons of primary capacity in North America and over one million tons in the EU. Among the iconic North American producers, both Alcoa and Alcan underwent major re-structuring including the sale of Alcan to Rio Tinto and splitting of Alcoa into two separate upstream and downstream companies. Primary capacity was forced to shut down due to high cost, pressure from cheaper imports and environmental pressures.

What does this mean for the future of the industry?

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other small projects. Still, we work to resume 'normal' activities." Sedlin serves as chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee of the USS Kidd – Louisiana Veteran's Museum. He was appointed as

Retrospectively, it is now clear that Kaiser's retreat was a precursor to the global tsunami that engulfed and altered the world aluminum markets on a long-term basis. Further down the horizon, even the downstream Western capacity is expected to be challenged by the recently commissioned Chinese mega rolling mills capable of producing very high end downstream products.

It is speculated that the Western producers, with the exception of hydro powered Canadian smelters, will need to re-evaluate their primary capacity and focus on production of very high value downstream products. This is the market niche that is the current focus of Kaiser's remaining restructured assets in order to significantly improve their sustainability.

a commissioner by the state's governor and is particularly fond of the Kidd, a WW II destroyer. Finally, Leonard is also a "certified mentor" of the Baton Rouge SCORE Association.



Ravenswood Kaiser Retirees enjoyed a fun Christmas luncheon at Greenhills Country Club in Ravenswood, WV.

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In Memoriam

*Burton (Burt) J. Beadle
Baton Rouge LA*

*Edwin C. Bianco
Walnut Creek, CA*

*Edward S. Brezniak
Mobile, AL*

*Okey T. Elkins
Elizabeth, WV*

*Dell W. Ferguson
Slidell, LA*

*Charles (Chuck) E. Foster
Buckhead, GA*

*Floyd W. Guy
Walker, LA*

*Cletus J. Hemmelgarn
Burkettsville, OH*

*James (Jim) B. Hobby
Medford, Or*

*John (Jack) Holtzapple
Walnut Creek, CA*

*David Charles Hogg
Kirkland, OH*

*Dean A. Jensen
Palm Coast, FL*

*Ronald L. Kappes
Nashport, OH*

*Henry (Hank) W. Loyer
Sacramento, CA*

*Douglas "Doug" J. Mann
Orinda, CA*

*Jacques R. Martinet
Danville, CA*

*Doris M. Miller
Walnut Creek, CA*

*Joseph (Joe) E. Neely
Los Gatos, CA*

*Maria T. Pessano
Danville, CA*

*Lester M. Rapp
Baton Rouge, LA*

*Joseph M. Ruiz
Savanna, GA*

*Harry E. Wilthew
Baton Rouge, LA*

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what action needed to be taken upon the death of a VEBA beneficiary by the surviving spouse or other family member. We recommended that both KASRA and VEBA be contacted with notice of the death. These instructions should be saved along with other important documents. In addition, it would be helpful to save a copy of your most recent VEBA submission in the same set of documents, to help your surviving spouse through the VEBA process at such a difficult time. Of course, the people at VEBA are also available for assistance in filling out the application form. You can contact the plan administrator Delta Fund at 888-344-8322, or through their website at VEBA@deltafund.com.

We wish everyone good health and look forward to hearing from as many of you as possible during the year with "What's Going On."

All the best!

Crach. Michael Venie Erach Tarapore Steve Ping

Erach Tarapore, Mike Venie and
Steve Ping
Co-Presidents, KASRA



Marce Kieou and Joanne Gutierrez at the Bay Area Holiday luncheon at the San Ramon Golf Course.

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.

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

P.O. Box 1171
Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 685-1313

E-Mail:
news@e-kasra.com

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See us at:

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Baton Rouge Apr 18

Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Oak Lodge, 2834 South Sherwood Forest Blvd., Email Bob Presson at leilap3@cox.net, or Bob Schoen at bobschoen@cox.net, or call Bob Schoen at (225) 937-2984.

Belpre Apr 27

Breakfast at 9 a.m. at Shoney's, Garfield Ave., Parkersburg. Contact Betty Blair at (304) 489-1337 or email bettylou13@suddenlink.net.

Chalmette Mar 7 Jun 6

Lunch at 11 a.m. at NOLA Lagniappe, 1375 Gause Blvd., Slidell. Cost \$20. Contact Chuck Schimmel at (985) 643-0437 or email schimcol@aol.com.

Erie Mar 17 Apr 21 May 19

Breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at Peggy's, 3512 Liberty Street., Erie. Contact Tim Healy at (814) 402-1062 or email thealy1931@gmail.com.

Los Angeles Apr 2 May 7

Lunch at noon at Marie Callendar's, 540 N. Euclid, West Anaheim. Contact Bob O'Leary at (714) 898-7463 or email robemmet39@gmail.com.

Mead Mar 8 Apr 12 May 10

Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Cathay Inn, North Division St. - Contact Danny Petruss at (509) 483-2171 or email dpjr70@comcast.net.

Newark Apr 10 Jun 12

Lunch at 11a.m. at Stacey's Hometown



Carol and Roger Hamm at Tacoma Retirees Holiday luncheon.

Buffet, Heath. Lunch paid for by the Newark plant. Contact Bill Snider at (740) 403-8328 or email colbill44@roadrunner.com.

Ravenswood Apr 19

Noon, Cedar Lakes. Confirm with Pete Westenhaver at (304) 266-4109 or email Pete26164@gmail.com or call Lee Corder at (304) 273-9457.

Tacoma Jun 6

Lunch at 12 noon at Johnny's Dock, 1900 East B St., Tacoma. Contact Bob Mohr at (253) 820-6569 or bob-mohr1942@gmail.com or call Roy Brennan at (253) 535-4942.

Trentwood Mar 20 Apr 17

Meet at 11 a.m. Meal served at 11:30 a.m. Valley Eagles, 16801 E. Sprague Ave. Contact Steve Harvey at (509) 924-1132 or email slharv3y@comcast.net or call TJ Summerson at (509) 448-1228 or email tsummerson@aol.com.

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Condolences . . .

Nancy Holtzapple, the widow of **John "Jack" Holtzapple** (Walnut Creek, CA), who worked as Kaiser NW Power Manager, informed us that her husband died at home January 8: "He had been on oxygen for many years, but until recently, we continued to travel, play bridge, go to

plays and dinner and enjoy family."

Condolences also to **James Falk**, whose wife Ann passed away Dec. 11 and to the families of surviving spouses **Julia M. Hayes**, **Eulilia Eubanks** and **Mary M. Jenkins**.