



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](mailto:VEBA@deltafund.com).

*Kaiser Aluminum Salaried Retirees Association*  
**A MESSAGE FROM THE KASRA PRESIDENT**

Dear Fellow Retirees / Surviving Spouses:

Greetings from California where our winter, we are told, is normal in terms of both temperature and rainfall. We have had so many years now that have not been normal, that we do not remember what normal was, so it is nice that the weather pundits are keeping track and reminding us of what normal used to be. We guess that this is the new normal in the era of climate change. We are grateful for the rain and the emerging signs of spring flowers just ahead.

We hope you continue to enjoy the Newsletter, which is the principal means of communication amongst all of us. We would like to thank Ed Coyne and Sally Hogarty for their efforts in planning, compiling and editing each newsletter before it goes to the printer. If there is a topic that you would like to see covered in a future edition of the newsletter, please send us your feedback at [mdb@e-kasra.com](mailto:mdb@e-kasra.com).

VEBA – This is to remind you that you have until the end of this year (December 2019) to file for your VEBA benefits for the 2018 calendar year. So it may be a good time to collect all those necessary documents from last year and send off your re-

quest for reimbursement to the VEBA. Remember that the maximum benefit for each Family Unit in 2018 was \$4,700. If you have questions, please contact the VEBA by phone at the toll-free number of 1(888) 344-8322 or by email at [VEBA@deltafund.com](mailto:VEBA@deltafund.com).

We encourage you to send in pictures you have taken recently on vacations or backyard barbecues along with your What's Going On forms. Please identify everyone in your photos to make the pictures more meaningful to your fellow readers of KASRA News. Please send photos to Sally Hogarty, our Newsletter Editor, at [sallyhogarty@gmail.com](mailto:sallyhogarty@gmail.com) or by mail to the address on your What's Going On form.

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

All the best!

*Erach*

*Michael Venie*

*Steve Ping*

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

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### Accomplishments . . .

**Chris Laszcz-Davis** (Orinda, CA) was VP Environmental, Health, Safety and Product Stewardship at corporate in Oakland. She presented and chaired sessions at a December, 2018, California Environmental, Health & Safety Conference in San Diego. Chris was honored with another recognition of her expertise when she became one of 24 individuals globally asked to contribute a think piece about “Future Global Work and Emerging Trends” as part of the 100-year anniversary in 2019 of the “International Labour Organization” (ILO), headquartered out of Geneva, Switzerland. Chris and her family spent the Christmas holidays in “magnificent Banff, Canada,” skiing, snowshoeing and dog sledding. She waggishly adds, “Dog sledding is a new adventure for the family—an absolute hoot.”



**Chris LD:** Chris Laszcz-Davis and family spent the xmas holidays in magnificent Banff, Canada skiing, snowshoeing and dog sledding.

**Stephanie (“Stevie”) L. Mann** (Henderson, NV), surviving spouse of **Doug Mann**, moved from the San Francisco Bay Area to Henderson, just outside of Las Vegas, when Doug passed a little over a year ago. Stephanie, who wanted to be closer to her daughter, loves her new home. For 40 years, a prime pursuit of hers has involved the plight of chil-



**Stephanie Mann** (peaking out behind her daughter Susan) and her family. Stephanie is the surviving spouse of former KASRA President Doug Mann.

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

dren. A crime and violence prevention consultant, she started the Safe Kids Now National Network 14 years ago to provide a united voice for kids. Stephanie, whose travels include business conferences and a trip to L.A. recently to seek sponsors, also has a new book coming out soon: *Empowerment Parenting: How to Raise Resilient Children to Become Happy Self-reliant Adults*. She concludes, "I have been busy building my network of friends and neighbors and have a new website, [www.safekidsnow.com](http://www.safekidsnow.com), in addition to my book."

#### **Birthdays and Anniversaries . . .**

**Danny Petrus, Jr.** (Spokane, WA) will turn 86 in April. Danny, who enjoys watching TV and who serves as a representative of retirees at the local Cathy Inn, worked at Kaiser-Mead in Spokane. Danny also retired after clerking at Lilac Plaza, a retirement community in Spo-

kane, where he lives. He recently visited Las Vegas, NV, "to see my oldest daughter and my money."

**Cecil Leonard** (Tiverton, RI) recently celebrated his 80th birthday. In addition to local family, many nieces, grand nieces and great grand nieces and nephews attended by digital connections. Cecil last worked at the Portsmouth, RI, electrical product's plant.

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

**Amos R. Curry** (Bradenton, FL), a veteran of Ravenswood, loves watching football. He does, however, return to West Virginia to enjoy Ravenswood summers.

#### **Traveling Near and Far . . .**

**Virginia Thiesies** (The Dalles, OR) a veteran of Trentwood in Spokane, WA, "loves our seniors!" For four years, she's been delivering Meals on Wheels once a week in the Dalles, the largest city in Wasco County, Oregon. Virginia also loves to travel to visit her children. She spent Thanksgiving with her daughter Deb in Snohomish, WA, and rode a train for the first time to Denver, CO, at Christmas to spend two weeks with daughter Diane and family. She has four children, seven grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

#### **Best Wishes . . .**

Condolences to the family of surviving spouse **Rose "Elaine" Belshay** (Puyallup, WA) who died Nov. 27, 2018. Rose was the surviving spouse of **Steve Belshay**, who was general foreman on Line 5 in Tacoma, WA, and who became a master gardener after his retirement from Kaiser. Elaine, who enjoyed travels to Germany, Africa and New Orleans, LA, is survived by her five children, 10 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.



**Cliff Rider (L) visited Rob Pratt (R) this past holiday season on the Niles Canyon Railway in Sunol, CA. Rob plays Santa Claus each year for the railway's holiday festivities.**

## MEMBER PROFILE: Ron Rhody



Ron in front of one of the locations in his novel "The King of Crow."

**Ron Rhody** worked for Kaiser Aluminum for over 21 years – first in Ravenswood and then in New York before finishing his career at Kaiser’s Corporate office in Oakland, CA. He and his wife Patsy live in Pinehurst, North Carolina, where Ron spends his time writing (he just started work on a new book) and fly fishing. He and Patsy have three daughters living in the San Francisco Bay Area in California and a son who has a law firm in Denver, CO. The couple has eight grandchildren.

### Where are you from?

The garden spot of the world, seat of culture and learning, Kentucky. Frankfort, KY, to be exact. I went to school there and played football at Georgetown College before transferring to the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

### How did you start working for Kaiser?

After finishing the University of Kentucky, I worked at Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources writing for their magazine and doing a weekly radio and television show. Looking for more opportunity, I learned that a company called Kaiser, which I had never heard of, had just finished building a big plant over in West Virginia in Ravenswood, which I also didn’t know existed.

I was, however, looking for a new opportunity. So, four years out of school, I applied. During that time, I had also worked as a sportscaster and reporter and had done some public relations work in government. Kaiser seemed to find my background interesting and signed me on as a public relations representative for

Ravenswood in 1959. I eventually ended up as Corporate VP of Public Relations and Advertising at corporate headquarters in Oakland before I took early retirement in 1983.

### What were the biggest challenges working for Kaiser?

A really challenging aspect was staying on top of the action. During the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s and even moving into ‘80s, we were doing so much. We had plants and new businesses all over the world, which made it a remarkably enjoyable job and very exciting. We worked with the national and international press and also needed to stay on top of internal communications needs. Helping support marketing activities and the various challenges that came to us from the countless communities always made for interesting work. Though fun to work through, many scenarios were quite challenging.

### What did you find most rewarding during your career?

I’ve been very lucky in my career, but I think the luckiest part of it was being hired by Kaiser Aluminum. Even though I’ve worked with words most of my life,



Bill Hobbs (left) and Ron Rhody at Carnarvan Castle in Wales after a trip to Anglesey Aluminum.

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there was something really special about Kaiser that I still can't quite find the right words to describe.

Kaiser not only treated its own people well, it was a really principled company, which was run by people and manned by people who, without any doubt, had a clear feeling that their responsibilities exceeded the bottom line. They met responsibilities to their employees, the communities in which they operated and to the environment.

The company had character. Henry Kaiser was still there when I first signed on, and his principles permeated the company, a fact that continued for a very long period. I remember wonderful CEO's like Thomas Ready and then Cornell Maier. Cornell, the person I worked most with during my time at Kaiser, revised the corporate system. He eliminated the pyramid system and had all key managers report directly to him rather than to intermediaries. He knew what was happening in his own company from the guys who were immediately responsible, an unusual step at the time.

During my career, I've directed public relations and advertising programs for two major American corporations. I've worked as a consultant with a number of Fortune 500 CEOs and universities in this country and the world, and I have never anywhere found a culture or a group of people so fine to work with as I did at Kaiser. It was just a pleasure to be there and that was the most rewarding part of the job.

### **Tell us about Henry Kaiser?**

Mr. Kaiser lived in Hawaii then. I had been promoted from Ravenswood to New York, where we had a public relations office on Park Avenue, right across the

street from the Waldorf Hotel. Very different from being in Ravenswood. Great fun!

Mr. Kaiser came to visit us once at the New York office, and I was assigned to be his gopher. He worked out of Kaiser's apartment in the Waldorf Towers and was on the phone most of the afternoon. I sat there trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. He would ask me questions about what I did and how I liked it, and he seemed truly interested though I was truly intimidated by his fame. He was such a legend and exuded power even at that age. At that time, almost everyone smoked, although Mr. Kaiser didn't. I asked him if he'd mind if I smoked. I remember him saying, "Son, don't smoke; it's not good for you." I stopped smoking. Not right then, but I eventually took his word for it.

### **What was it like working in Ravenswood?**

Ravenswood was a bucolic town when Kaiser decided to build a plant there. We got to know the people in the community both socially and politically. Kaiser didn't want it to become a company town, so we worked in partnership with the

### **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.



**The management team after a meeting of the Management Committee at Pebble Beach. (left to right: front row) Al Holbrook, Newc Warbuton, Ira Davidson, Dick Knipe, Ron Rhody, Tim Yee and Cornell Maier. Edgar Kaiser is in the 3rd row wearing sunglasses. How many others can you identify?**

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community and tried to make sure our people became involved with the town to the extent they were able. Most did. Many participated with local organizations and clubs. There had been some resistance, anger and resentment at first when some perceived the change “as these California guys” coming into their well-established West Virginia town and suggesting how things could be better. It took a while, but things worked out just fine. Kaiser did some things that only Kaiser could do. For instance, the school was inadequate, so we built a new grade school and leased it to the county for a \$1 a year. We also helped to get some roads and housing built, working in cooperation with the town leadership.

While we were there, we were a young family – my wife and I had two young daughters, one in grade school. She went to the new school. It was a fine place, and we made fast friends that we still have. Then, we moved to New York and from there to Oakland.

#### **Tell us about Kaiser’s Public Relations program.**

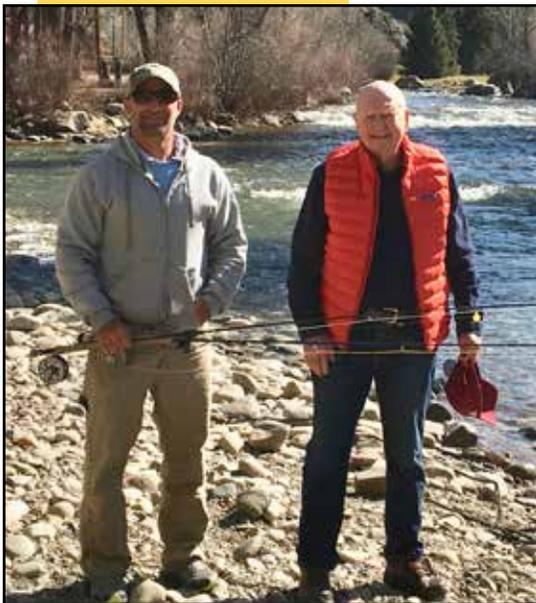
It was super, the most innovative program in the industry with some of the most talented people in the country. Bob Sandberg was the architect and director of the program. The external effort was focused on the dimensions and management of change and on the importance of creativity. The thrust was all aimed at seeding the idea that Kaiser Aluminum was a leader in all those areas and was the company with which the public wanted to do business.

The company magazine, “Kaiser News,” edited by Don Fabun, was a beautifully written and designed publication, totally different from anything anyone in the industry was doing. There were three hard cover books published, “The Dynamics of Change,” “The Dimensions of Change,” and “Three Roads to Awareness,” that found their way into school libraries and onto customer desks.

We did a short feature film with Saul Bass titled “Why Man Creates” that won an Academy Award. We also produced a feature film on aluminum and its uses titled “Light, Strong and Beautiful.” It ran as a short feature in movie theatres and had an extended run in the educational film world.

We took on ABC-TV after Geraldo Rivera did a piece on the prime-time show 20/20 charging Kaiser Aluminum with intentionally marketing a product (aluminum electrical wiring) that caused fires and killed people. His sensational conclusion was wrong on both counts. Against the advice of almost everyone in the industry, with Cornell at the forefront, we demanded, and ultimately received, unedited response time -- in prime-time TV -- to make our rebuttal. That had never happened before. I’m not sure it’s happened since. The affair became a business school case study – the “Trial by Television.”

We had regional public relations offices in Charleston, WV, headed by Warren Cooper; in Spokane, WA, by Bruce McPhaden; in Washington D.C., by Hank Cunningham, and in New Orleans, LA, by Billy Brown. Billy was an Olympic athlete at L.S.U. He was so popular in Louisiana that he probably could have run for governor and been elected. And,



Ron fishing with a guide at the headwaters of the Gallatin in Colorado.

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we had a London office to handle Europe, manned by Tony Fearn. Dick Spees headed the Corporate Governmental Affairs operation out of Kaiser Center in Oakland. Also, the big plants had their own community relations and public relations people.

It was a grand group of people – bright, energetic, talented. It was a pure pleasure to be on that team. That was the thing about Kaiser Aluminum: the people.

### **How has PR changed over the year?**

It has absolutely changed materially, with its techniques and tools. The principle tool that drives so much now is social media. Our basic focus used to be mass media in order to reach a vast audience.

But what hasn't changed are the fundamentals. Organizations still have to recognize that their most important asset is their reputation. And they must protect and enhance it. Tell the truth. Try to do the right thing. Don't dance around trying fancy footwork to dazzle your publics. Fess up if you've screwed up. These are the fundamentals. Stripped to its essentials, the essence of the game is to inform, educate, motivate, and persuade. It's about trying to get people to do something, not do something, or let you do something ... because they can see value in what you're trying to do."

### **What did you do after leaving Kaiser?**

I moved across the Bay from Oakland to San Francisco where Bank of America's headquarters were and headed BofA's public relations efforts working with CEO Tom Clausen and then Dick Rosenberg for about 10 years (1983-93). I retired from there in 1993 to open my own consultancy and ran that until 2008. Then, I "took down my shingle," and my wife Patsy and I moved to Pinehurst, North

*(Member Profile, continued Page 8)*

## *In Memoriam*



*Mildred "Millie" Ankrum  
Easley, SC*

*Raymond "Ray" Burkart  
Hammond, LA*

*Kerney Craft  
Covington, LA*

*Lynn Dixon  
Prairieville, LA*

*Bernardo Esposito  
Bristol, RI*

*Melvin 'Mel' Flannum  
Apple Valley, CA*

*William "Rocky" Ernest Hill  
Surprise, AZ*

*Bobbie Mazurie-Mabry  
Georgetown, TX*

*Peter A. "Pete" Miranda  
Plaquemine, LA*

*L. Frederic 'Fred' Muller  
Chico, CA*

*Kenneth Ritchie  
Calypso, NC*

*David C. Thomas  
Port Charlotte, FL*

*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.*

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We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
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**Baton Rouge** **Apr 17**  
Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Juban's Restaurant, 3729 Perkin's Road. Email Bob Presson at leilap3@cox.net, or Bob Schoen at bobschoen@cox.net, or call Bob Schoen at (225) 937-2984.

**Belpre** **Apr 26**  
Breakfast 9 a.m. at Shoneys, Garfield Ave. Parkersburg. Contact Betty Blair at (304) 489-1337 or email bettylou13@suddenlink.net.

**Chalmette** **Mar 13, Jun 5, Sep 4**  
Lunch at 11 a.m. at NOLA Lagniappe, 1375 Gause Blvd., Slidell. Cost \$21. Contact Chuck Schimmel at (985) 643-0437 or email schimcol@aol.com.

**Erie** **Feb 16, Mar 16, Apr 20**  
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** **Mar 4, Apr 8, May 6**  
Lunch, 11:30 am, at Marie Calendar's 540 North Euclid, West Anaheim. Contact Bob O'Leary at (714) 898-7463 or email robemmet39@gmail.com.

**Mead** **Feb 14, Mar 14, Apr 11**  
Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Cathay Inn, North Division St. Contact Danny Petrus at (509) 218-4730 or email dpjr70@comcast.net.



Rosemary Clark, Mary Alice Donaldson and Art Donaldson enjoyed catching up at the KARLA holiday luncheon at the San Ramon, CA, golf club.

**Newark** **Mar 3, Apr 7, May 5**  
Lunches will now join with Hourly Retires at 11 a.m., Cottage Pizza, Route 79. First Monday of every month. Contact Bill Snider at (740) 403-8328 or email colbill44@roadrunner.com.

**Ravenswood** **Apr 18**  
Noon, Cedar Lakes. Contact Pete Westenhaver at (304) 266-4109 or email Pete26164@gmail.com or call Lee Corder at (304) 273-9457.

**Tacoma** **Jun 5**  
Lunch at noon at Johnny's Dock, 1900 East B St., Tacoma. Contact Bob Mohr at (253) 820-6569 or bobmohr1942@gmail.com or call Roy Brennan at (253) 535-4942.

**Trentwood** **Mar 19, Apr 16**  
Meet 11a.m. Meal served at 11:30 a.m. Valley Eagles 16801 E. Sprague Ave. Contact Steve Harvey at (509) 939-7132 or email slharv3y@comcast.net.

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Carolina, about nine years ago. Since then, I've been concentrating on writing and fishing for trout. I love fly fishing.

I've written four novels, two works of non-fiction, and a text on public relations. I also have a new book, just published in November that's sort of a memoir masquerading as a story. It's called Our Little Fictions.

#### **Anything else?**

No. Just my thanks for the pleasure of the company of people it was my good fortune to know and work with, and the pride I still have for having been part of the Kaiser Aluminum team.