

TSRA NEWSLETTER

Publication of the Textron Systems Retirees Association

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www.tsretirees.org

2018 Annual Fall Luncheon Highlights

The annual Fall Luncheon was held at Angelica's Restaurant on October 18 in the Mediterranean Room. What has become a consistent experience — fine food, good drinks, great service, and a very comfortable setting — were all on display for members and guests to enjoy.

Some unusual entertainment was on hand as well. Following some organization announcements after lunch by Vice-President **Charlie Neckyfarow**, a professional magician, Eddie Gardner, took the stage and performed a captivating magic show featuring tricks, illusion, mentalism, and a lot of comedy. Mr. Gardner has received recognition and numerous awards both locally and nationally. His performance was amazing and further enhanced by audience participation with the likes of **Carol Coombs, Dottie Dryden, Carol Vautrinot, Bob Ricles** and many others. Several requests to reveal at least one of his secrets went unheeded, and subsequent inspection of **Steve Wisotsky's** hi-resolution luncheon photos for clues was also futile.



*Attention, everyone! Now take out your magic wands and say, "Abracadabra"!
Entertainment was provided by Magician
Eddie Gardner.*

During lunch, a running slide show developed by **John Lescher** and Steve Wisotsky featured photos from the year's earlier social events. Afterwards, door prize drawings for \$25 gift certificates went to Dottie Dryden, **Pat Gurry** (picked up by **Rosalie Crowley**), **Naomi Nelson**, **Tom O'Connor**, and **Chris Towle** (picked up by **Jo Ann Wisotsky**).

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Beginning with the Spring Luncheon in May 2019 and for all future TSRA social events, flyers will be sent only via email.

The TSRA Newsletter will continue to be sent to all members via snail mail. They will also continue to be posted on the TSRA website at www.tsretirees.org.

If you do not have email or would prefer to receive your flyers via snail mail, please indicate this preference by emailing tsramembership@tsretirees.org or sending a letter to:

TSRA
P.O. Box 6936
Holliston, MA 01746

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2018 Fall Luncheon Highlights (continued from page 1)

Dottie's win was controversial and required an instant replay review. Her false start to claiming the fourth drawing prize cast great doubt when she jumped up again to claim the fifth and final prize. But to everyone's surprise, it proved true and she was vindicated.

Sometime before 3:00 p.m., when all fun and festivities had come to a close, a magic wand waved and – poof!! – everyone disappeared.



Hogwarts students Gordon Dryden, Dottie Dryden, Rick Shaw and Maureen Lee.

Visit the TSRA Website for many more luncheon photos taken by Steve Wisotsky!

(Joe Martino)

TSRA Annual Cape Cod Cruise Friends, Fun and Food! (Jim Stamboni)

TSRA's annual Cape Cod Cruise took place Thursday, September 6. A group of nine TSRA members departed from Sesuit Harbor, Dennis, MA promptly at 1:00 p.m. on a spectacular Cape Cod day. The gang consisted of **Carol Vautrinot, Ron Milauskas, and Joe Martino** who made the trip down from Boston, and **Joel and Sandy Bernstein, Jeff Picard, Jim Stamboni, and Guy and Marie Berube** who are all Cape Cod residents.

Guy has organized this annual event since its inception five years ago.

While we shared this cruise with non-Textron members due to the limited turnout, the beautiful weather, blue skies, calm waters, and terrific scenery made for a very special time. As the ship left the dock the gang assembled on the top deck to take in the scenery, enjoy a cocktail, reflect on old times and memories and catch up on the new.

At about 1:45, the signal was given that lunch was being served in the galley. Faster than a speeding bullet, everyone took off downstairs to the dining area. We had two tables reserved for the TSRA contingent. Of the nine attendees, eight ordered the ship's "world famous" (alright maybe only Cape Cod's most famous!) Lobster Roll, while our ninth member (who didn't get the memo, I guess) ordered a Chicken Caesar Salad. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their lunch and the conversations that occurred during our extended meal.

As in past years, Guy raffled off an extra Lobster Roll lunch. He had a stack of nine quarters, one with a unique marking. He let us all select one quarter, in search of the marking. Guy took the last quarter remaining (hmmm, should have been suspicious right then and there!). Well, you'll never guess who had the unique quarter, but there is a full-scale investigation now under way by retired TXT security. In any event, Guy said he would give Marie a bite of his winnings! WOW, what a sport!

We concluded the investigation just as the ship pulled back into its berth, promptly at 3:00 p.m. Once again, those of us who participated in this cruise had a great day in the company of wonderful people. It's really too bad that we don't get a significantly larger group to attend this event, especially since there are so many year-round and seasonal residents. Why? Maybe next time?

Once again, we must thank Guy Berube for organizing and coordinating this enjoyable annual get together. Thanks Guy!

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TSRA Annual Cape Cod Cruise (continued from page 2)



Ron Milauskas and Jim Stamboni enjoy refreshments before the main event.

Editor's Note: Another Cruise is planned for September. Watch the TSRA website for details as they become available and consider joining your fellow members for another fun event!

After Big Bang! **(Musings of laser activities at the AVCO Everett Research Laboratory)** **(Volume 1)** *(Daniel W. Trainor, Ph.D.)*

I don't know when Big Bang first existed at AERL, but it was before I arrived in 1972. Big Bang (in contrast to "the big bang") was a high energy, single pulse, carbon dioxide laser which, when the output beam was focused in the room, generated air breakdown and an accompanying loud bang. As a newbie I found this most impressive. I got to AERL via my thesis advisor, Professor Fred Kaufman, who was a consultant to AERL. He thought the lab would be a good match for my skill set and the lab management seemed to agree. My interview followed a well-established track: one-on-one meetings with staff members, a lab-wide presentation on my dissertation details, grilling by the attendees, and a tour of the facility.

The tour provided an opportunity for the administrative staff to check me out and vice-versa. I don't know about them, but I was very impressed.

Starting day, I met **J. J. Ewing** in the lobby, also reporting for his first day. As rookie research associates, as opposed to established staff members, we doubled up as roommates and remain friends to this day. J.J. went on to fame and glory for his work with **Charlie Brau** on rare gas halide lasers, e.g., Excimers. They would excite a mixture of rare gases and halogen molecules with a high energy electron beam and out would come laser light! These lasers include: XeF, KrF, ArF, and XeBr. Interestingly, ArF is routinely used today for eye-corrective surgery, whereas our funding was to develop a short wavelength laser for "star war" applications!

Scaling lasers to higher and higher energy per pulse, designing hardware permitting them to run repetitively pulsed and with excellent beam quality, provided many opportunities for creative science and engineering. Big Bang led to "Thumper", a favorite of **Jack Daugherty**, so named because when it produced high energy pulses, in a string lasting a few seconds, everyone in the building could hear the thump, thump, thump like the bunny in Bambi. Ask Jack sometime about his interview with a local Boston TV station reporter about what a high power laser could do to "things". Let's just say a turkey would have been a better choice!

In the late 70's, the industry focused on the development of gas lasers: carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrogen fluoride, deuterium fluoride, and the aforementioned rare gas halides. The AVCO development team represented by **Donna Northam, Dave Ahouse, John Boness, Rudy Limpaecher, Jonah Jacob, Joe Mangano**, and yours truly kept very busy during this highly competitive, but well-funded period and produced some significant AVCO "firsts". For example, the Team tackled "thermal blooming" generated by atmospheric absorption and subsequent heating of the air as the high power beam propagated to its target.

It also devised techniques for achieving near-perfect beam quality from lasers whose gaseous medium was subjected to intense, non-uniform heating during the laser "pumping".

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After Big Bang! (continued from page 3)

Tackling these and other related issues drew heavily on the committees: Optics (**Irv Itzkan**), Atomic and Molecular Physics (**Chaz von Rosenberg**), Aero Physics (**Dick Patrick**), and several more.

Beside lasers for military applications, AERL developed tunable dye lasers (liquid) to successfully separate isotopes. **Sarge Janes, Len Litzenger, Mark Kovacs, Henry Aldag**, and a large supporting staff pulled it off. The program had patents and an interest from Exxon to build a prototype facility in the state of Washington, but national politics, national laboratories, and concern for proliferation caused the effort to be terminated at AERL and Exxon's facility in Washington – but not elsewhere – Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, for example.

Non-laser activities were also cutting edge: coal gasification, magneto-hydrodynamics, and artificial heart development. These diverse pursuits made the lunch room a great place for cross-fertilization and interesting conversations – even the place mats were graph paper! One cannot skip the Real Time Optical System (RTOS) that did interesting things, but no one could talk about most of them. You could torture **Steve Wisotsky** today and he still won't tell you anything!

AERL's selection to pursue the horse race in the Star War's completion was a repetitively pulsed xenon fluoride laser with a moniker of EMRLD. This kept dozens of folks busy for years including: Jack Daugherty, **Bob Feinberg**, John Boness, **Herb Friedman**, and a large support team. A prototype was built, installed, and operated at White Sands in New Mexico, but the project was competing against the political clout of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory causing most funding to be diverted to their concept of "brilliant pebbles." So it goes...

Somewhere in this time frame, Textron acquired AVCO, AERL was up for sale, and eventually the building was closed and some of the on-going efforts were moved to Wilmington, but all the big lasers were abandoned in place.

They were too expensive to move compared to the contract dollars (profit) they generated. So, we did what we were trained to do – reinvent ourselves in newer laser technology – solid state lasers! A couple of notable contributors were **Alex Mandl** and **Dan Klimek** but that's another story!

Getting to Know Bob Ricles (Steve Wisotsky)

Recently, I had the opportunity to chat with Bob Ricles. Many of us know Bob as the Treasurer of TSRA, but not as many are familiar with his varied careers. Over a pleasant lunch, we talked about what brought him to Textron.

Bob grew up in Brighton, MA and attended Boston Latin. He graduated early and, at the "ripe old age" of sixteen, went to California to further his education. He attended the California Aero Institute in Pasadena, CA and received a certificate in Aeronautical Engineering.

After that, he decided he needed a "real" degree and enrolled in Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering. Then it was back to California to work for Douglas Aircraft as an aerodynamicist in the Missile Aerodynamics Section. He stayed there for five years, specializing in the Nike anti-aircraft missile.

While working for Douglas, he attended UCLA and received a Master's Degree in General Engineering. He transferred to the Airplane Aerodynamics Section where he met **Mac Adams, Baron George, Pete Rose** and **Fred Riddell**. Bob worked with Baron on the aerodynamic design for the DC-8 flap. Soon after, Mac, Baron, Pete and Fred went east to found AVCO Everett Research Laboratory (AERL) with **Arthur Kantrowitz**.

Bob might have stayed on the West Coast longer if not for a fortuitous lunch with his friend from Douglas. Bob was visiting his mother in Boston and met with Mac, who explained that they were setting up a new division and suggested that Bob go down to Bridgeport, CT to chat about it.

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Getting to Know Bob Ricles

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After some resistance, Bob allowed Mac to arrange an appointment. In his discussion with **Jack Kyger** and **Jack Silver**, he learned that the new division would utilize the fascinating work being done at AERL and offered him a good salary... one he didn't believe. It was 33% higher than what he was earning at Douglas.

So, he came back east to head up the Aero Design Group. Of course, at that time, the Wilmington facility had not been constructed. He began working on the Copper Kettle program for ICBM heatshields in CT, then Lawrence, MA, and finally at Wilmington.

Bob started with AVCO in 1955 and hired **Phil Fote** in 1956, but that is a story for another day.

While working at Wilmington, he went to a luncheon meeting with Arthur Kantrowitz and **Werner von Braun**, who was a regular consultant to AERL. As lunch was winding down, someone was playing with the melted butter and the word "ablation" came up. That was the end of the Copper Kettle approach and the beginning of a successful re-entry business.

Bob became project manager of Nosecone Projects, which looked at advanced ideas and, of course, follow-on contracts. At the same time, he was working on his doctorate at MIT in Course 16 – Aeronautics and Astronautics. Unfortunately, he could not afford the full-time residence required by the Institute and left with an "ABD" – all but dissertation. (Note from the author – this is a story with which I am very familiar.) Since he had attended both Georgia Tech and MIT, I asked how he would compare the schools. Bob immediately answered: Georgia Tech taught how to be a working engineer; MIT how to be an academic.

Once more, a friend provided the impetus to change jobs. He got a phone call from a pal at Republic Aviation on Long Island. Republic wanted him to head up a proposal to NASA Langley. Bob decided the move was a good one and took the job.

Under his leadership, Republic won the contract for Project Fire, the predecessor to the manned lunar program. The launch of the first nose cone was so successful that there was no need to utilize the second one. After four years, the contract was complete and was awarded the NASA Group Achievement Award. Then, Bob came back to AVCO.

As an interesting side-note, Bob's AVCO badge number was 203 and the numbering system began at 101.

When Bob came to AVCO Space Division, he met **Dick Millman**, who would also go onto bigger and better things. Bob worked on Program Pilgrim, which was a sub-contract to the Harvard Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. They were charting the Earth's magnetic field. As part of his tasks, he spent time at Ft. Churchill, Manitoba which is on Hudson's Bay. Of course, for those of us familiar with business travel, the trip was in February. The small airplane landed in a terrible snowstorm and, upon landing, Bob mentioned to the pilot that it was a good thing they had instruments. He was shocked when the pilot replied, "This aircraft has no instruments."



Bob shows off his lovely stained glass projects at a recent TSRA luncheon.

Next, he worked on the Tri-Service Laser project; **Walt Schafer** was the program director. After the first system was delivered, Walt decided to launch his own company and Schafer Associates was born.

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Getting to Know Bob Ricles (continued from page 5)

Bob left AVCO to join the start-up and was placed in charge of commercial programs, as well as, finance and administration. He mentioned to Walt that he had not done any finance work before, but Walt said that he trusted him to handle the money. One of their successful commercial products was a system for converting manual drawings to CAD/CAM. They used scanners to enter the drawings and later edit the resultant computer files.

At one point, the Israeli government was interested in acquiring high-power lasers. So Bob and Schafer Associates put together a program that would be 50% Israeli government and 50% United States investors. In order for the program to run, they had to raise \$2.5 million in the US. Friends came through, again, for Bob. Connections were made and Bob got a check for \$1 million. This was enough to get things rolling.

The resulting project became Metal Working Lasers International, Ltd. Bob had many trips to Israel as part of this activity.



Bob and his wife, Gloria, enjoying a great time at the Fall Luncheon!

At that point, Bob came back to AVCO for the third time. By then, the company had become Textron and Bob worked on Peacekeeper under **Jules Siegel**. Following that, he participated in the MILSTAR project, a constellation of military communications satellites.

Of course, Bob was never one to sit still. He saw an advertisement for a new law school in Andover called the Massachusetts School of Law. Since they did not require the LSAT exam, Bob decided to apply. His acceptance began three years of working full time and going to school at night. Upon passing the Bar on his first try, he left AVCO (again) and went into partnership practicing general law in Danvers.

Bob went on to open his own law firm and is currently practicing law out of his home in Framingham. He has held elective office on the Newton School Committee. He has been Chair of the North Andover and Newton Democratic Committees and a twenty-year member of the Boston, Ward 19 Democratic Committee.

Bob has been very active in TSRA and does great work for the organization. We have all seen exhibits of his beautiful stained glass artwork at TSRA luncheons.

Editor's Note: Shortly before this newsletter issue went to print, Bob's wife Gloria passed away. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Bob and his family during this difficult time.

Nashoba Valley Winery & Orchards (Joe Martino)

On a fine crisp autumn day, TSRA members and guests gathered at Nashoba Winery & Orchards for a private wine tour, tasting and lunch. Nashoba produces over 60 grape and fruit wines and some distilled spirits that are offered for sale at their extensive shop and wine tasting bar. In addition to grapes, Nashoba grows many varieties of apples and peaches as well as other fruits.

Our wine tour was conducted by a senior winemaker who educated our group on each step of the winemaking process ending up in the barrel aging room, a surprisingly large area with a capacity of 138 barrels built underground beneath a hill that is part of the natural terrain. Each barrel holds 60 gallons and yields about 300 bottles of wine. That's a lot of wine for a small unassuming winery.

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Nashoba Valley Winery & Orchards

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Along the way, the group sampled both red and white wines in attractive complimentary glasses. One outstanding red that many liked was an estate Merlot blend. But the hands-down favorite was a luscious raspberry dessert wine, and several bottles were taken home to pour over ice cream for dessert that evening.

An interesting fact was the cost of oak barrels, ranging from \$400 - \$600 for American oak to \$900 - \$1,100 for French. Eastern European oak from places like Slavonia (in Croatia) costs somewhere in between, each imparting its own unique subtle flavors.

Afterwards, a picnic lunch was served out on a private veranda from which the beautiful scenery and fine weather could be enjoyed. A translucent roof was almost completely covered with large grape vines extending to the ground.

Specialty sandwiches like the Lancaster, Beast, and Sciabarrasi, and their accompaniments were top notch and well enjoyed.

The wine and gift shop was the final stop for most. There were no hardy souls who really wanted to go apple picking in the orchards, still damp from the previous day's rain. They chose instead to buy some already picked in the store, as well as a few bottles of wine.

Now for that raspberry sundae...

In Memoriam

TSRA sends its condolences and sincere sympathy to the families of the following former AVCO/Textron employees/or spouses.

Claire D'Entremont, 05/05/18
Salvatore J. "Sam" Cottone, 05/08/18
John "Fitzie" Fitzsimons, Jr., 05/18/18
Herbert M. Kamowitz, 05/28/18
James D. "Jim" Shirton, 06/17/18
Donald D. LaFond, 10/21/18
David K. Maynard, 12/01/18
Edward T. Salesky, 12/05/18
Mary E. Roarke, 12/15/18
Theresa F. (Blais) Blanchette, 12/17/18
Isadore B. "Izzy" Goren, 12/28/18
Paul J. Ricca, 01/04/19
Theodore Gerald "Ted" Balin, 01/05/19
Noreen Meaney DeLai, 01/07/19
Joseph R. Aiello, 01/15/19
Roland "Trigger" Trignani, 01/18/19
Victor DiCristina, 01/21/19
John E. Trousdale, 02/01/19
Francis P. Ardito, Sr., 02/02/19
David Ignatius Brucato, 02/03/19
Paul F. White, 02/08/19
Henry S. Flickinger, 02/13/19
Paul G. Rolincik, Jr., 02/20/19
John F. Meehan, 03/01/19
Anna E. (Hartnett) McCabe, 03/07/19
Henry R. Aldag, 03/09/19
Brenda (Daley) Dolan, 03/15/19
William John Robinson, Jr., 03/16/19
Gary A. Kunkel, 03/20/19
Donald J. McQueen, 03/22/19
Ruth Lee Novak, 03/22/19
Shirley M. (Shipley) Hadfield, 03/27/19
Gloria (Phillips) Ricles, 03/29/19
(wife of Bob Ricles)
William Fried, 04/02/19
John P. "Jack" Foley, 04/02/19
Donald E. Lefebvre, 04/12/19

Upcoming Events

Details for the following events will be provided when they are available:

MAY 16, 2019

ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

Angelica's Restaurant & Functions, Middleton, MA
(See website for additional information.)

JUNE 11, 2019

(Rain date: **JUNE 18, 2019**)

ANNUAL J.J. MAHONEY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Hillview Country Club, N. Reading, MA

AUGUST 2019

JERSEY BOYS

North Shore Music Theatre

SEPTEMBER 2019

LOBSTER ROLL CRUISE

See our website (forthcoming) for additional information.

TSRA Newsletter

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Steve Wisotsky, JCC Chairman**

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Visit the TSRA website (www.tsretirees.org) for current and past editions of the Newsletter as well as other important information.

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