

Retirees newsletter

March 2001

“In the Tense and Troubled West Bank, an Oregonian Takes Calculated Risks”

Last August the "Portland Oregonian" carried a story with the above headline. It was about Collie and Dottie Martin, long time CH2M HILL people that many of you retirees know. On behalf of the company they have moved around a lot since Collie started in SEA in 1968. Just back from Israel the Martins are now in the process of moving to Beijing, China.

To the West Bank part of our story. While the Martins were there alerts



would come through from the U.S. Council's Security Office in Tel Aviv full of phrases like "are planning mass demonstrations," "likely to cause disruption," "possibly violent," "tension rising," "avoid travel to the West Bank." There was Collie and Dottie living right in the middle of the West Bank in Ramallah, and Collie working at a variety of West Bank locations on water system improvements and in Bethlehem to improve some 5 miles of streets and roads.

Ramallah is in a Palestinian controlled area as defined in the Camp David Accord. However, Collie reports that in the West Bank Areas supposedly under Palestinian control, as well as in the areas of joint control, and Israeli control, the Israelis see that they have the final say on most things. Collie expresses a lot of sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians.

Collie mentioned that there's a saying, "In Haifa they work, in Tel Aviv they play, in Jerusalem they pray." Collie reports that they were not too uncomfortable living in the West Bank, but he was certainly sensitive to the best route to drive home each day. He felt that it is safer for individuals who

are not seen as targets. They planned their travels to stay away from hot spots. For the most part they had a feel for where violence might occur; the refugee camps for example. Collie noted that if anybody is going to throw rocks, it will be near the refugee camps.

The Martins feel that most of the Palestinians and Israelis want peace. In joint meetings with presidents of Israeli and Palestinian engineering firms Collie found them talking about future opportunities to work together "when things become more secure."

In connection with the current wave of violence, the expatriates were hurriedly moved out of the West Bank to a hotel, and the office continued to be operated by the remaining staff; keeping in touch by phone, fax, and e-mail. The Martins had to leave some of their things in their flat in Ramallah. When Collie phoned one of the people in the office and asked that he go to their flat and send Dottie's sewing machine to the hotel, the reply was, "What is a sewing machine."

In addition to the Martins, other expatriates that spent time in Ramallah were George Powell, former president of Gore and Storie, Larry Belken formerly OMI, Mick Yallop (currently in Ukraine), Ross Sproul (GNV), Don Olson (MKE), Otto Vydra (COR), Gary Weil (WDC), Dan Wendell (SFO) and Chris Thomas (WDC).

The Beijing waste treatment project which takes the Martins to China is to be financed by the World Bank, but the Bank has not yet given the go ahead. To get it moving is part of Collie's job. Our proposal was submitted by CH2M/EHS. EHS is a Hong Kong firm in which CH2M HILL owns a majority interest. The managing director is Sarah Liao.

2/7/01 e-mail from Collie: "I am in Beijing now and Dottie will join me next week. It is cold and one of the first lessons I learned is that there are two taxi rates. One is 1.2 Yuan per km and the other 1.6. The difference is because the more expensive ones have a better heater."