

# CH2MHILL® ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023 Edition

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## Publisher's Note

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Greetings everyone,

For years, you have seen Gordon Koblitz's smiling face along with the Publisher's Note. This time, you see only a caricature of Gordon. Last fall, he unexpectedly left his many friends as he made his way to the great beyond. His sparkling personality will be missed by many. You can read more about Gordon in the "Goodbye, Old Friends" section.

Gordon was a longstanding member of the CH2M history group, whose roots go back to Jim Howland. That team evolved into the beginnings of more comprehensive alumni organization as the firm backed away from sponsoring CH2M HILL alumni reunions.

Gordon was a founding member of the current CH2M HILL Alumni Association. He was the first president of the new non-profit corporation and served on the Board of Directors and the Alumni History Committee. Last year, he led the successful charge to recover artifacts from old CH2M HILL offices that are now occupied by Jacobs.

But above all, Gordon loved the Newsletter. He was the Board Sponsor, editor-in-chief, newshawk, cub reporter, and publisher. He was always looking for the next story and hoping for a good photograph. A couple of years ago, Gordon decided that it was time to step back from some of his CHAA activities, so he vacated his President's position and continued with the Newsletter, his true love.

In surveys and discussions with CH2M HILL alumni, the twice-yearly newsletters always rank high in value. The news they impart and the connections they provide deliver a sense of belonging long after the end of our beloved firm. People are happy to contribute interesting articles and are quick to send kudos for a job well done. We are now left with that legacy and are forging a new way forward. We are fortunate that the production team of Angie Kruse, Sarah Harter, and Dan Largomarsino remain ready to do their part.



Mary Boyle

We are now developing a new Newsletter team and are very fortunate that several people at the Atlanta Reunion volunteered their services. We are organizing them into a regional network to get closer to the news as it happens. We will provide a description of the new organization in the next newsletter. We are very happy that Mary Boyle stepped up to serve as the Editor for this first post-Gordon newsletter. She has been a great leader in preparing and publishing this edition. She will be a valuable member of the team that develops the new publishing program for the future. A hardy "Hat's Off" to Mary and the entire news staff!!

We ask all CHAA members to please continue to share your updates, stories, photos, hobbies, and ideas for more news. No story is too big, too small, or too in between. We would also appreciate any suggestions that you may have for improving the newsletter. Drop us a note at [ch2mhillaa@gmail.com](mailto:ch2mhillaa@gmail.com).

Always good news and a smile!



# CH2M HILL Alumni Association President's Corner

By Rick Luebbers ([rluebber@hotmail.com](mailto:rluebber@hotmail.com))

## Greetings everyone!



The Year 2022 saw significant accomplishments, occasional setbacks, and some surprises for the CH2M HILL Alumni Association. Overall, the organization is in a better place as 2023 begins but we are aware of the many challenges ahead. This report provides a quick review of last year and a look at the new year ahead.

### 2022 In Review

At the 2022 Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors approved updates to the Strategic Plan and Bylaws, and retained the Board's Standing Committees for Governance, Membership, Activities and History. The Local Groups Task Force was also retained, but the concept of Pay-It-Forward was left on hold due to limitations on available resources.

Over the year, significant progress was made in retrieving CH2M HILL artifacts from Jacobs' offices and finding good homes for as many as possible. Through a parallel effort, a kiosk was assembled and installed at the CH2M HILL Alumni Center at Oregon State University to provide an interactive, web-based overview of the history of CH2M and its ties to OSU. As always, the Alumni History Committee continued to add biographies and historic articles about CH2M HILL activities to the CHAA website.

Work continued throughout the year to retain existing CHAA members and add new ones. We are pleased to end the year with 395 active members and another 117 expiring or pending members, but we always reach out to try to add more. Please continue to renew your membership, either annually or through one of our special multi-year programs. And please encourage your colleagues who are not yet members to sign up and join the CH2M HILL alumni community. See the CHAA website for details (<https://ch2mhillalumni.org/>).

In two separate Board tasks, searching for local gatherings of CH2M HILL alumni and developing a Value Proposition for CHAA membership, we were surprised to stumble upon the obvious. We should have seen this earlier but finally recognized that the people who have worked at CH2M HILL over the years are generally in two groups. One group includes the pioneers who spread across the country to grow the company and expand its services. The other group includes the professionals who joined CH2M HILL to deliver projects in new locations and with new technologies. While not exclusively true, members of the first group tend to be older and enjoy global alumni reunions to reconnect with old friends. Members of the latter group tend to be younger and have a greater affinity for people in their geographic area (or for a previous company). The recognition of these groups has set our Local Groups Task Force on a quest to find the many local gatherings of CH2M HILL alumni across the country. Please let us know if you are aware of a group of CH2M HILL alumni who meet regularly at some local hot spot. The differing needs of the two groups will help shape plans for the Pay-It-Forward program we plan to develop in 2023. It may also influence the type of location of future alumni reunions.

Speaking of reunions, the originally planned 2020 Reunion in Atlanta was postponed due to COVID. It was finally carried off as a great success in late October 2022. The Reunion was attended by about 50 full-time registrants and another 45 attendees at the formal banquet. Many thanks to Bob Chapman and his team for staying with the planning and negotiations for 4 long years. See the article in this Newsletter for more information. During the Reunion, one of the invited speakers, John Mellott, spoke of his time as editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, as the printed newspaper business slowly declined. He said that it was like being on hospice watch. To some degree, that is what CHAA has been doing, but those comments certainly stirred our thinking about plans for the future of CHAA.

Regarding setbacks over the year, the most serious is always the loss of our CH2M HILL compatriots. There are always too many, but perhaps the biggest one last year was the unexpected passing of Gordon Koblitz. He was a founder of the CHAA organization, its original President, a long-standing member of the alumni history group, the leader of the artifact recovery team, and the champion and editor of the CHAA Newsletter. There are many holes to fill without Gordon's presence.

## Looking Ahead to 2023

CHAA's vision in the new year will be shaped by two things. One is the CHAA Strategic Plan that will be updated to reflect new directions and activities. We plan to establish a Task Force to explore options and opportunities for CHAA in the future. The other is the feedback to surveys of the Board of Directors and the Reunion attendees. Here is what we heard in the surveys:

- Continued connections of CH2M HILL alumni through the CHAA website, newsletters and reunions are very important.
- Retaining existing CHAA members and attracting new members is difficult, but it is critical for the long term health of the organization.
- Implementing a wide variety of planned activities requires a substantial amount of work by the Board members. We encourage involvement by CHAA members on committees and other activities.
- Interest appears to be growing for local gatherings and regional reunions that are less formal and easier to attend.
- The concept of Paying Forward the legacy and values of CH2M HILL seems to be gaining momentum.
- We need to look beyond CHAA's current limits and consider a long-term strategy that can expand CHAA's reach and extend its life, even though the future organization may be quite different than it is today.

### Initial Activities for 2023 will include:

- We welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors: Sheldon Barker, Steve Wanders, and Mike Mynhier.

### Closing Comments

It is becoming increasingly clear that CHAA, as currently organized and focused, has a limited lifespan. Now is the time to carefully consider what we want the organization to be in the long term. This will be an interesting activity that will be both refreshing and uncomfortable for CHAA members, but it is essential for the future vitality of the organization.

As Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else."

As the future of CHAA is re-envisioned, we hope to make the organization more attractive to more CH2M HILL alumni and perhaps to a wider range of people in the industry beyond. In the process, we will revisit our goals, mission, and value proposition. Membership in CHAA must provide some intrinsic values for current, and especially prospective, members. We hope to take positive steps in this direction through our emerging Pay-It-Forward program.

And finally, the CH2M HILL Alumni Association is only the sum of its members, and they are the only reason for it to exist. We strive to serve the members well, but we also need to expand the participation of members in CHAA activities. There are many ways in which members may apply their talents and interests to support CHAA. You may serve on the Board of Directors, on a committee or a task force. You can help publish the Newsletter or maintain the website. New activities may include webinars and outreach programs. Please consider stepping up to volunteer. Just send a note to CHAA at [ch2mhillaa@gmail.com](mailto:ch2mhillaa@gmail.com).

Thank you. Be safe. Stay well.

Rick Luebbers  
CHAA President

- We plan to retain the basic structure of CHAA but may realign some Board committees to improve efficiency and take on new challenges.
- Maintain the CHAA website and reconfigure the CHAA Newsletter program.
- Launch a regionally based network to address local gatherings and regional reunions.
- Initiate a Task Force to investigate options for growing the CHAA organization and sharing the CH2M HILL legacy more broadly.

### Year-Long Activities

- Implement a regional network to get closer to current and potential CHAA members.
- Merge the planning for national reunions and regional reunions.
- Develop the Pay It Forward program and prepare a plan for implementing it. This may include joint activities with some of Jacobs' employee programs.
- Work hard to retain existing CHAA memberships and add new ones, perhaps through new options for dues and donations.
- Consider the establishment of an endowed scholarship program of family members of CH2M HILL alumni who are enrolled in a STEAM program at the university level. If you think this is a good idea, please drop us a note at [ch2mhillaa@gmail.com](mailto:ch2mhillaa@gmail.com).
- Incorporate input from working groups to update and reshape the Strategic Plan to focus on high priority activities, enhance emerging ventures and extend the longevity of CHAA.



## Retirees/Alumni News

### REUNION BIRTHDAY IN SINGAPORE

By Gordon Nicholson ([gordonnicholson1@me.com](mailto:gordonnicholson1@me.com))



*Gordon and Lay Chin celebrating Gordon's milestone birthday in Singapore.*

My wife, Lay Chin, and I recently traveled to Singapore where I initiated and hosted a 14-year Changi Water Reclamation Plant (CWRP) Team Reunion. Not happenstance, but the Reunion coincided with a major birthday milestone for me (my wife's idea!).

The Reunion was attended by 38 colleagues and friends; 19 from the Singapore Public Utilities Board (PUB), our client, and 19 from CH2M and our subconsultants, most noticeably CPG. Attendees were from all levels of the respective organizations; from directors to junior engineers to project assistants. Though some of the more senior attendees are now retired, many junior engineers on CWRP are currently leading major PUB water projects.

While in Singapore I had the opportunity to tour the SGD\$2-billion Tuas Water Reclamation Plant Project (TWRP), the CWRP "sister" project on the west side of Singapore, where I also met some of the previous CWRP contractors and many of the CH2M CWRP staff now in key TWRP project roles.



*CWRP Team Reunion attendees in Singapore.*

## CH2M OHIO REUNION

By Steve Wanders ([stevewanders8@gmail.com](mailto:stevewanders8@gmail.com))



The idea of getting back together began this past summer, initially as a small group of guys playing golf. Then it grew to a larger golf outing, and a social gathering of many former colleagues from the Dayton, Cincinnati, and Columbus offices. Eventually we generated a list of names and contact info for 45 folks to whom we reached out.

On September 30, the Ohio reunion began with a fun morning of golf with three foursomes (12 golfers) at the Golf Club at Yankee Trace in Centerville (part of the greater Dayton metropolitan area). We played a friendly “scramble” where all players had a chance to participate in the team score. While we attempted to make up the pairings as evenly as possible, the group of Shawn Thompson, Rob Frank, Rob Hook, and Taj Bakare dominated the field with an impressive 10-under par! We could not have asked for better weather or a more fun bunch of guys!

Later that afternoon, we gathered at Chappys Social House in Centerville for a light buffet, a few beverages, and lots of laughs. Of the 45 CH2Mers, 23 were able to join us. Along with 12 guests, we had a group of 35 people who appeared to have a great time getting caught up with stories of family, careers, and life in general.



For those who were not able to join us, the fun we had was captured in the photographs taken by our supremely talented friend and colleague, Ned Pennock. For a complete set of photos from the reunion, please see Ned’s website at [www.nedpennockphotography.com](http://www.nedpennockphotography.com). On his homepage, click “EVENTS” on the menu bar to get to the Recent Events tab with the photo gallery CH2M-DAY.

The firm first began work for the City of Dayton in the 1950s when Black, Crow & Eidsness (BC&E) began assisting the Department of Water with the development and management of its Miami River and Mad River Well Fields, and its raw water treatment facilities. In 1985, responsibility for the Dayton area projects was transferred from the Gainesville, FL region to the Great Lakes Office region (Milwaukee). That year, a small project office was established in Dayton to support the construction of the Miami Water Treatment Plant Expansion Project.

Over the following years, CH2M HILL continued to grow throughout the Ohio region with work ranging from environmental, water and sewer, transportation including airport, roadways and bridges and OMI work. What began as a very small office, has now grown today to a total staff count of about 500 in Ohio (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati), including 115 legacy CH2M staff. *[NOTE: The complete history of the Ohio region can be found on the CHAA website under Alumni History/Expansions, Dayton, Ohio.]*





## VOLUNTEER PROJECT MANAGER AND OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR A RETREAT CENTER

By Mike Mynhier ([mmynhier@bellsouth.net](mailto:mmynhier@bellsouth.net))

I would like to share a bit about a very interesting and fulfilling experience I recently had when I and a civil engineer buddy, John Didicher, volunteered to be “PM/owner’s representatives” for the design and construction of the McKanna-Sandrock Retreat Center (MSRC), and associated site improvements and utility systems for NovusWay Ministries. John and I had previously served together on many volunteer projects, including building above-ground composting toilets and installing efficient vented wood burning stoves into rural villages in Guatemala, hurricane and flood relief response, and home improvements in Appalachia. But this was very special – it leveraged the project management, client management, and project delivery skills I learned (and re-learned) during my 37-year career with our beloved CH2M for the benefit of an organization that also means very much to me. This “work” began in mid-2011, about 18 months after my retirement, and continued until the dedication ceremony of the new retreat building and site improvements in the Fall of 2017. I remain involved with NovusWay in various ways.



*Mike and John.*

NovusWay is a nonprofit ministry affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and is headquartered in Arden, North Carolina (near Asheville). They operate four camp and conference/retreat centers located in North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida where they offer programmed retreats and summer camps for youth and adults as well as hosting meeting and conferences. In 2009 they acquired 520 acres of beautiful rolling woodlands and pastureland (having two small lakes, two houses, and a large horse stable complex) in western Georgia, for the purpose of developing a new camp and retreat center campus, Lutheranch. It is located 70 miles west of Atlanta near the small town of Tallapoosa, Georgia, which until 1860 was named Possum Snout. Tallapoosa hosts a very popular New Year’s celebration by dropping a possum (stuffed) from a pole at midnight. But I digress, that is another story (Google it!).

The facilities completed in the initial phase of the overall Master Plan for Lutheranch included the MSRC building (24,000 square feet, 41 guest rooms, commercial kitchen, multipurpose dining room, three conference rooms, several breakout areas, covered patio overlooking a lake, and a reception/check-in area); as well as an access road, parking, a potable water service line, a wastewater system, a lakeside outdoor worship area, walking trails, a labyrinth, and an exercise course. The Master Plan also identifies many other facilities such as cabins, yurts, and a campground to be built later when funding is available. The stable is being used for trail rides, riding lessons, and horse boarding. The Lutheranch facilities are being used by church groups, the local community, and businesses.



*Lutheranch entrance.*



*The MSRC.*

John and I worked together, and he took the lead for the site improvements elements of the work because of his experience with the civil engineering, land development, and surveying company he previously owned and, as a member of the team that identified and evaluated this property, he was very familiar with the site. I took the lead for the other project components. We used various delivery methods to complete the project.

We interviewed, selected, and managed all engineers and professionals for design and construction of the site clearing and grading, the access road, the 8-inch potable water service line, and the EPA permitted onsite community wastewater system.

We interviewed and selected an operations company for the wastewater system. In addition, we coordinated with Carroll EMC, Haralson County Water Authority, and Georgia Environmental Protection Division to obtain site power and access road lighting, a potable water service connection, and assisted in obtaining the wastewater system permit.

For the design and construction of the MSRC we interviewed and selected the architect and construction manager to work together in a construction management at-risk relationship and managed them during the schematics, detailed design, and guaranteed maximum price phases. We then acted as owner's representatives during construction including periodic site visits; joint architect, contractor, and owner construction coordination meetings; change order administration; testing; and project closeout.

The entire project was completed in a timely manner within the available funding budget at a total cost approximately \$5,933,200. Change orders for the MSRC construction portion were \$27,700 (0.6 %) of the \$4,952,300 GMP construction cost.

The lessons I learned from this experience included:

- I became aware, once again, of how truly fortunate we were at CH2M HILL to have experts in so many aspects of our work just a phone call or quick visit away when needed.
- The responsibility for budget and schedule performance is so much "dearer" when you are the client and when you and your friends are financially supporting the endeavor.
- Having a talented buddy like John Didicher working "shoulder to shoulder" with you is a real blessing.
- It is very satisfying being part of a project to benefit the mission of an organization you support.
- This was a very fulfilling and meaningful way to "pay forward" my career experiences with CH2M HILL – I recommend it!

## **CH2M HILL MILWAUKEE OFFICE REUNION**

*By Mike Jury ([mjury331@gmail.com](mailto:mjury331@gmail.com))*

Planning is underway to hold a CH2M HILL Milwaukee office alumni reunion this summer. The event will be held the afternoon and evening of Saturday, July 29 at the Fish Hatchery Building in Delafield. Further details will be sent out by email in March. Save the date!

## CH2M HILL Alumni Association News

By Don Marske ([donmarske@gmail.com](mailto:donmarske@gmail.com))



Greetings all...

Thanks to all of you, 2022 was another good year for the Association!

Our Master Roster of CH2M HILL alumni stands at 1,203 where it has been for most of 2022. All regions saw a stable roster except the northeast region where we saw a significant increase that may be attributed to the Reunion outreach.

As of February 6, 2023, we are 400 paid members! This is up from 360 in 2021. It does not include 100 2021 subscriptions that expired in 2022 that have yet to renew. Thank you all who joined and renewed.

For 2023 we are budgeting a membership goal of 532. This is clearly a stretch goal for us, but for the first time, we have an expanded Membership Committee with high expectations. With the execution of the membership plan and a few more generous donations, prospects for a another financially sound year look good. In 2023, annual dues will remain at \$20. Five year \$100 subscriptions will continue to be available as will the \$500 Lifetime memberships for those who want to avoid that pesky renewal each year.

Financially, the Association remains in good shape. Yearend income was \$22,000 against expenses of \$17,300 leaving a net balance of \$4,700. We ended the year with a bank balance of \$25,400 that includes a \$10,000 Reserve Fund.

For 2023 the Board has approved a budget calling for a total income of \$11,800 reflecting the aggressive membership goal. Likewise, expenses are estimated to be \$11,200. We are left with a slim \$600 set aside for surprises (contingencies).

Our CHAA website, <https://ch2mhillalumni.org/>, continues to get rave reviews. If you have not jumped on yet, and I say this again, we think you will agree it is one-of-a-kind in our industry. In the coming months we expect to add some new tools to help us navigate the many features easier. We encourage you to browse now and then as we strive to keep it fresh.

If you have any questions about the Alumni Association membership, renewals, or its programs, please feel free to contact me at [ch2mhillaa@gmail.com](mailto:ch2mhillaa@gmail.com).

Again, thank you to all who have joined, renewed, and donated in 2022.

Don Marske  
CHAA Director, Treasurer

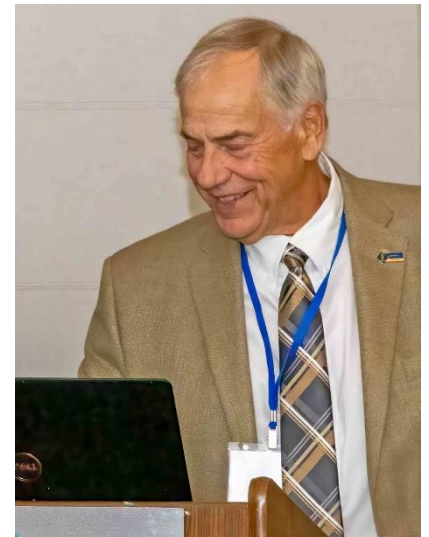


## 2022 CHAA Reunion Bash Enjoyed in Atlanta



After 2 years of COVID 19-related delays, many alumni and spouses gathered and enjoyed our latest national reunion. The 3-day event featured:

- An Embassy Suites venue in downtown Atlanta was in walking distance to many interesting attractions and has a large atrium ideal for socializing.
- Organized, no-host “Dutch treat” dinner parties provided further socializing outside of the formal program meals.
- A Jacobs executive in the Atlanta office made a welcoming presentation with enlightening commentary; an alum who now manages a successful Atlanta-based minority-owned business, spoke on his “Experiences for Success Gained from CH2M HILL.”
- A banquet-night gala with a program which traced the firm’s amazing growth from west to east.
- There were several very entertaining and interesting excursions. Most popular were the exceptional “Behind the Seas” tours of the Georgia Aquarium, and the Atlanta History Museum.
- There was free time to tour local area attractions on attendees’ free time.
- Two speakers provided informative and thought-provoking presentations.
- The Saturday session was led by Rick Luebbers, who collected and summarized perspectives of attendees on the value and future of our Alumni Association and reunions.



*Rick Luebbers, President of CHAA, was back by popular demand to be the moderator of the 3-day event.*



A few photos follow. Many more are included on our association website, with thanks to David Dunagan who volunteered to be the “official photographer” for the event: <https://ch2mhillalumni.org/2022-reunion-summary/#>



*Throughout the Reunion, old friends enjoyed informal socializing in the hotel atrium.*



*The most popular event was the Thursday night banquet, which attracted over 100 participants*

## Special Announcements

### BEWARE EMAIL SCAMS

*By Don Marske*

We just learned that one of our group, Rick Luebbers, was the object of another phishing expedition seeking donations for veterans under hospice care. Be assured this is bogus and you can ignore. You may already know how to recognize a scam, but there are things that are typical tip-offs. Most importantly, check the email address! Often, it may not be correct. Check grammar and spelling. And be careful not to click on links. Stay safe!

## CHAA History Corner

### STATUS OF CH2M HILL ARTIFACTS RECOVERY, JANUARY 2023

For the past 2 years Gordon Koblitz led an effort to collect artifacts from the offices of CH2M HILL before Jacobs removed/disposed of them. The Denver office was first. Dave Evans led a team to review not only the office artifacts, but also documents that had been stored in the Iron Mountain depository. This effort resulted in recovering several valuable items including the Pakistani rug we received for services rendered. Since then, other teams have visited Corvallis, Portland, Redding, San Diego, Atlanta, and Toronto. The objective for each visit was to assess the artifacts and decide whether to keep for further consideration or to send to the dumpster.

As it turned out, there were several options for further consideration, including:

**Benton County Historical Society Museum.** Corvallis is the site for the new museum. Our very own Mike Schweizer is on their Board and was the project manager for the museum. Thanks to his contacts with the museum director, they have agreed to take several “hard” artifacts for a feature exhibit on the history of the firm (*see following article*).

**CHAA Alums.** Thanks to the duplicity of items across the various offices, the teams were able to offer some alums an item that held a personal attachment for them.

**Atlanta Reunion.** Again, thanks to duplicity, several items were shipped to Atlanta for viewing by attendees. The items not picked up by attendees was trashed.

**Alumni History Committee.** Excepting any hard items, all other items not housed otherwise have been referred to the AH Committee, my desk, for consideration for addition to the website. There is currently a large amount of material accumulated already and it is expected to grow as the teams complete their reviews. The committee will get to it as time and resources allow.

**Scanning of Historical Publications.** In a parallel activity to the foregoing, Dave Evans led a project to scan several banker boxes of hard copy publications to a digital record. A commercial scanner, for an unbelievable low cost, produced:

- An indexed and searchable.pdf and Word document for all Annual Reports from 1966-2007. Two thumb drives plus a link to the files are the deliverable. The documents were shredded upon completion (freeing up Dave's garage storage).
- An indexed and searchable.pdf and Word document for all Quarterly Reports from 1963-2001. Two thumb drives (PW – Ch2m\_2022) plus a link to the files are the deliverable. The documents were also shredded upon completion.
- An unindexed searchable.pdf document for an estimated 17,000 pages (two banker boxes!) of project separates and discipline tech papers, project capabilities, and brochures. Two thumb drives (PW – Hill\_2022) plus a link to the files are the deliverable. The documents were also shredded upon completion.

The Alumni History Committee considers the foregoing scans one of its most valuable assets. Being able to remove several banker boxes of hard copy from storage and move it to an electronic form makes it possible for some future history committee persons to easily produce a history of the discipline system and a collage of our major projects. We just need to find a team who has a discipline system itch to scratch to take this on.

### PRECIOUS CH2M HILL ARTIFACTS ARCHIVED IN CORVALLIS

By Bob Chapman ([bobchap43@gmail.com](mailto:bobchap43@gmail.com))

A remarkable milestone was achieved in March 2023 regarding CHAA's history preservation quest. Some of our firm's most precious and iconic artifacts have been accepted and will be professionally archived by the Benton County Historical Society (BCHS).

BCHS operates under vigorous guidelines, focused on preserving the history of Benton County, which certainly includes the founding of CH2M HILL. A letter received from Mary Gallagher, collections manager, included the following statement: "The Collection Committee met recently and was delighted to accept the following item(s) for the Museum collection. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the community, and researchers, I would like to thank you for this gift to the Society." The archived materials will be accessible by researchers routinely, and will be displayed periodically in the museum in the future.

The following are Mary's descriptions of the collection of materials from CH2M HILL:

- Thirteen portraits of the founders and the first time employees along with the oral histories of the same
- Six photographic prints of CH2M
- Fred Merryfield's CH2M family album
- Program for Dr. Linus Pauling's 90th birthday
- Four DVDs that provide history of CH2M HILL
- E. Anne Merryfield reception guest book (1993) and objects, including 6 Willing Water lapel and tie pins.
- One framed photograph
- One CD with the riverfront photographs
- One commemorative album, "Remembering Jim Howland"
- One CD, "Orla History of CH2M HILL"
- One photocopy, "Jim Howland, the story of the man who really built CH2M HILL"





*The original BCHS museum, now the society's Research Museum, in historic building in Philomath, formerly St. Mary's College. Behind this building is the society's state-of-the-art collections center.*

Bob Chapman first broached the idea of working with the museum over 5 years ago, with an old friend who was then on the BCHS Board. It was later discovered that Mike Schweizer, long-time CH2M architecture guru, was a prominent volunteer. He was BCHS's project manager for design and construction of the new museum, is currently on the Board, and his wife Sheila is also an active volunteer at the Collection Center. Mike became active in the archive retrieval initiative championed by Gordon Koblitz during a "yikes" moment when he realized that many artifacts were being lost after the transition to Jacobs, amplified by office space downsizing during COVID-19. (That whole process merits a follow-up story in the next newsletter, including the many treasures that have and are being digitally preserved, accessible through our website.)

Special kudos to Mike and Sheila who have been at the heart of achieving this milestone!



*BCSS's beautiful new museum on 2nd Street in Corvallis.*

More information about BCHS is available through their [website](#), where you can make a "thank you" donation, should you feel the urge.

## Meet Your CH2M HILL Alumni Association Members!

We are especially pleased to introduce our continuing and new members of the CHAA as of February 12, 2023! We also like to include all the spouses of our deceased alumni who, by the way, receive their complimentary membership free of charge. If you know others who qualify, please let us know. We hope you all will look over the list: 410 now! And this does not include the 98 members who forgot to renew. We know who you are. 😊

It's obviously longer than the previous lists, so we attached it as a [PDF](#) to save a couple pages of the newsletter. Open and enjoy checking the list of your friends and colleagues. If you DON'T see some of your good friends or colleagues, reach out to them and encourage them to join. If any of our readers haven't yet joined (or need to renew) and would like to support our CHAA family goals and activities, please contact Don Marske at [CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com](mailto:CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com) or go to our CHAA website: <https://CH2MHILLalumni.org/> and click on **MEMBERSHIP to Join or Donate and follow the prompts. To Renew go to the ACCOUNT tab in the upper righthand corner of the homepage and follow the prompts.**

Here are a few new faces:



**Rosanne Prager, Gainesville, Florida** – Welcome new Alumni Member Roseanne! Roseanne joined CH2M HILL on July 2, 1990. She had been working for other Environmental and Engineering firms in Tampa, FL for 10 years when a friend at CH (Rick Gorsira) convinced her to come over and at least talk with Don Holmes and Jim Bays. Rosanne did and now 32 years later she retired on February 4, 2022. Her long career as a biologist/environmental scientist was made even more rewarding because of the fantastic people worked with at CH, especially those fun times in the field. Rosanne’s work was mainly focused on wetlands, wildlife (the gopher tortoise in particular), mitigation and permitting. She’s enjoying retirement with her husband Joe, daughter Sarah and family and friends.



**Janet Bolduc, Gainesville, Florida** – A warm CHAA welcome to Janet Bolduc. Before retiring in April 2021, she worked at the firm for over 40 years. She started in the Gainesville office when it was still Black, Crow and Eidsness (BC&E). The firm was purchased by Hercules, then CH2M HILL, and eventually Jacobs while Janet was employed. She started as a PBX Operator and in the first few years worked in Accounts Payable, Procurement, Building Maintenance, and Office Services before finally landing in Facility Operations/Real Estate where she spent 30+ years working in various roles and retired as an Eastern US Facility Operations Manager. Janet loved her job even though it often required that she coordinate and implement office changes and office relocations. Every day brought new challenges and things were never dull. Janet worked with teams all over the Eastern US and enjoyed the many opportunities and long-standing relationships that came her way.

Husband EJ (Elroy) and Janet reside in Gainesville. She especially enjoys time with family and friends, along with reading, gardening, college sports, hiking and travel. They spend time in Switzerland each year and hope to extend those stays once EJ retires.

## Hats Off to Our CHAA Donors!

In this issue we offer our special thanks to our new 2022 members and current members who kindly went above and beyond their annual membership fee by contributing an extra amount to help us with our mission into the coming year! We wish to acknowledge our donors, and we appreciate every gift given.

Listed below are our 2022 donors to date through February 12, 2023, at the different levels we established. This is voluntary, of course, and can be done anonymously, if desired. Please note that all members who have donated at the “Booster” Level and above are acknowledged annually in the January newsletter. Donations are accrued. Members who attain the “Sustainers” level and above will receive a lifetime membership and recognition in every issue as a small token of our appreciation.

A major portion of the donations are used to continue upgrading our CHAA website (accessibility, content, security, and enjoyment) and maintenance, our continuing outreach efforts for legacy colleagues, and help to promote local member groups across the country. Updates regarding these efforts will be included each newsletter. Again, thank you all for your generosity!!

### 2022 CHAA Supporters: \$1–\$99

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### CHAA Benefactors (Lifetime Members/Recognition) – \$5,000+

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### CHAA Champions (Lifetime Membership/Recognition) – \$10,000+

Well, we need to be optimistic and aim high for the long haul! 😊

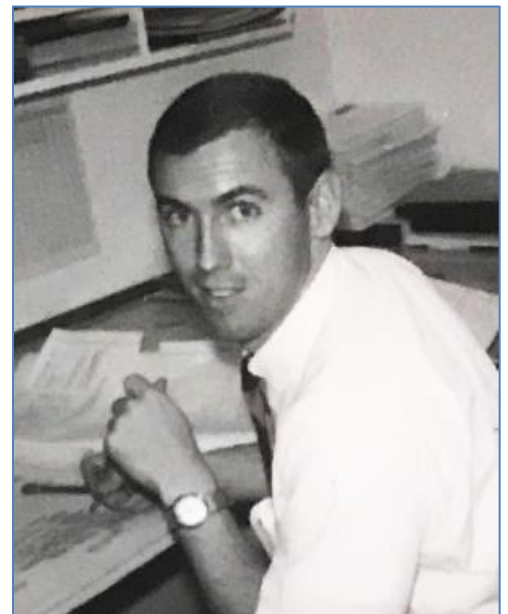
## Goodbye, Old Friends

### GORDON KOBLITZ

August 23, 1941 – November 4, 2022

Early morning on November 3, Gordon experienced a massive brain aneurysm. Tragically, he was unable to regain consciousness, but thankfully Gordon's immediate family (wife, daughters, and grandchildren) were able to be at his side to love and affirm him before he passed away peacefully on November 4. Gordon was the family's role model and ROCK and so very loved and admired. This was a sudden, unexpected, and overwhelming loss for all.

Gordon was born in Seattle, Washington to Ted and Mable (Dickenson) Koblitz. He had many boyhood vacation adventures at their family historic log cabin on Camano Island. In the 1950s the family moved to Anaheim, California, where they lived on their orange grove acreage. Gordon raised chickens, selling the eggs for spending money and spent many happy hours in his personal hobby room where he created electronics. He developed a love of exercise and became a summer lifeguard. These experiences established a lifelong passion for all sports: tennis, pickleball, biking, scuba diving and disciplined workouts being his favorites.



Gordon graduated from Anaheim High and proceeded to California State Long Beach earning a BS in civil engineering in January 1966 and an MS in science and civil engineering the following year. He was a founder and president of the Tau Beta Phi engineering honor society. He balanced this busy time with marrying his college love (Mary) and being an involved dad to their first child (Trina) so that Mary could also complete her degree. Gordon worked at North American Aviation in a college unit that designed stress gauges for the Apollo spacecraft.



Upon graduation, Gordon wanted to move back to the Northwest and interviewed with CH2M HILL founder Fred Merryfield, landing his forever and most fulfilling job. Gordon began his career in Corvallis with his first wastewater design in Bend, Oregon. He then moved to Portland and designed the national award-winning Maui Kihei treatment plant. While in Hawaii, he enjoyed tennis and scuba diving with the locals. Gordon was then transferred to Dallas, Texas, where he set up the Texas CH2M presence from the Dallas/Austin offices. His problem solving, listening skills, easy demeanor, quick wit, and work ethic endeared him to the firm and clients. His loving, affirming compassion, infectious laugh and contagious smile endeared him to his family and friends. Gordon lived his life loving people, learning, and serving. He fulfilled this talent by carrying on the CH2M HILL Alumni Newsletter as Editor and enjoying every article submitted by the firms Alumni.

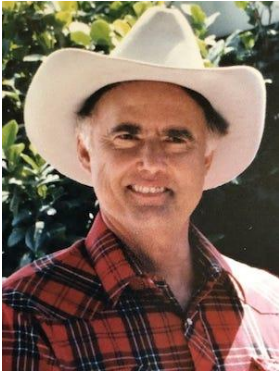


Gordon was a great husband, father, and friend. He leaves behind his wife of 58 years (Mary), 2 daughters Trina Lewis (husband, Blaine) and Tricia Westman, along with a very large and adoring family of 4 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Along with Mary, Gordon's family includes grandson Tyler Tisdale, granddaughter Teagan Tisdale, grandsons Cole and Caden Westman and two great grandchildren Ellie and Elijah Tisdale, an older brother Craig and his two sons Ken (Lauren) and Dave (Angela) Koblitz.

Gordon sought to make this world a better place by serving and contributing to meaningful projects. If you feel called to commemorate Gordon, please express your love/support to a cause of value to you.

*"I want to thank everyone who helped plan and attend the Atlanta CH2M Alumni Conference. Gordon left feeling uplifted and valued for his work and contributions and encouraged that the association had a future. I thank you for doing this for him before he passed, he was a very special man." –Mary Koblitz*

## ALAN HILL



On October 12, 2022, Alan Thomas Hill passed away peacefully with his family by his side. He was born June 5, 1938, in Woodland, California, to Clair and Joan Hill. He graduated from the University of Nevada-Reno with a BS in civil engineering and began working for Clair A. Hill & Associates as a staff engineer. Following college graduation, Alan married the love of his life Beverly Bibbens on June 15, 1963. Their life together started in Forest Hills/Placer County. After more than a year of marriage, Alan and Bev moved back to Redding. As a staff engineer and project manager/supervisor for Clair A. Hill & Associates, Alan was responsible for hydroelectric project surveys for dams, powerhouses, tunnels, access roads, and transmission lines. During this time, he secured a private pilot's license, which broadened the scope and location of his projects. Following a merger between CH2M and Clair A. Hill & Associates, Alan served as a division manager and discipline director for surveying and photogrammetric mapping

throughout the CH2M offices nationwide. He was promoted to vice president of the CH2M Redding office, then to vice president/regional manager of Alaska operations.

Eventually, in an entrepreneurial bid, Alan redirected his professional energies and launched A. T. Hill Enterprises. Through this private venture, Alan provided consulting for the remainder of his life on a wide variety of projects. He was an accomplished leader and engineer on many levels. Alan's leadership and contributory involvement in civic, local, state and federal organizations involved a local independent bank (North Valley Bank); board member and president of Mercy Medical Center Advisory Board; board member and chairman of Shasta County Private Industry Council; president of Redding Rotary; member of the Redding Elks Lodge; member of Redding Chamber of Commerce; national chairman of Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA); and board member and officer of numerous other engineering, professional and public service organizations.

Alan loved to share in laughter with others, to recall great memories with those he loved, and to discuss politics and history. He was an avid hunter who enjoyed traversing much of the western United States. Alan was also an excellent rider of horses and mules. Alan also helped bring together BCHA and US Fish and Game for the purpose of restocking lakes, among other key projects designed to inspire the public's enjoyment of the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

Alan was preceded in passing by his wife, Beverly; his parents; and his brother, Malcolm. Alan is survived by his four children and six grandchildren.

## ERIC GARNER



Eric Garner, 71, passed away on January 1, 2022 in Snellville, Georgia. He graduated from University of North Carolina Greensboro. After college, he worked for Southern Bell, until 1999, when he found his dream job working for CH2M. He worked on engineering projects in the U.S., India, China, and United Arab Emirates.

For hobbies, Eric explored interests in hiking, fly-fishing, woodturning, playing Euchre, and more. With each job and interest, he made lasting friendships.

Eric is survived by his wife, Kathy and his three daughters, 8 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

## RONALD SKABO



Ronald Skabo, age 88, passed away peacefully at home in Loveland, Colorado, on Friday, February 17, 2023, following a battle with leukemia. As a child he moved around due to his father's work, living in North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana. He graduated from Cutbank High School in 1952, and from Montana State University in 1957, with a degree in chemical engineering. In the summer of 1955, he worked as an intern at Signal Oil Company in Tioga, North Dakota, where he met the love of his life, Verona Quale, at Myrtle's Cafeteria. They were married on June 30, 1958.

Ron and Verona moved to Trenton, Michigan, in 1960 where he worked for Wyandotte Chemical. Two daughters joined their family, Randine in 1964, and Kari in 1966. A job opportunity opened up at Stearns-Roger in Denver, Colorado, and they made Lakewood their home for 49 years. During his career, he became a Professional Engineer in multiple states, was a corrosion specialist. Ron retired from CH2M in 2009. After their daughter Kari's passing in 2020, Ron & Verona moved to Loveland, Colorado to be closer to Randine and granddaughter Reanna.

Ron enjoyed music throughout his life, singing in school, church, and community choirs and the Mountain Aires Barbershop Chorus. He and his wife Verona loved to travel, time spent with family and friends, as well as his many hobbies, including woodworking. Ron is survived by his wife, Verona, daughter Randine, and granddaughter, Reanna.

## KENNETH WILLIAMS



Ken, 81, passed away on December 10, 2022. Born in Pittsburgh, he graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in civil engineering. He was married 49 years to Gretchen (Stoner) Williams. Ken was first employed by the U.S. Engineers at Harrisburg. He went back to Penn State and received his masters and then worked for various engineering firms, developing and improving sewage and water treatment plants. He retired from CH2M as a civil engineer while living in Key West, Florida. He later moved to Amelia Island in Fernandina Beach, Florida. Ken was a member of the Perseverance Lodge #21, F&AM of Pennsylvania.

He enjoyed spending time with his family, traveling, gardening and working. During his years in Pennsylvania, Ken was an avid fly fisherman, tying his own flies, and he treasured hunting trips with his dad and brother. He spent many hours flounder fishing and crabbing in his aluminum haul boat on the Assawoman Bay in Maryland. While in Florida, he was an enthusiastic saltwater fisherman. Ken was very active in his Florida communities and participated in many charity events. He was also the "van driver" to his wife's art shows up and down the East Coast. Ken loved watching sports and was a devoted Penn State football fan. He enjoyed entertaining and cooking for family and friends and was considered a grill master by his family. Ken adored and was very proud of his family.

He is survived by his wife, Gretchen, two daughters, 8 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

## JIM JODIE



Jim, 80, passed away at his home in Elm Grove, Wisconsin, on September 1, 2021. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with a civil engineering degree, majoring in sewer design transportation and environmental projects. He and his wife, Angelina Zammuto Jodie, married in 1965. He loved to travel around the world with Angie, including staying in Puerto Vallarta for over 25 years in the winter, and sailing in the British Virgin Island with close friends, along with several trips visiting Angie's family in Sicily and Europe.

Jim volunteered tirelessly with the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, and as Assessors at Alverno College. He was also passionate about and volunteered in local government and politics.

During his years in civil engineering, he worked for the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin, Jack Leisch, Inc., and CH2M (in West Palm Beach, Boise, and Chicago). In his retirement, Jim enjoyed volunteering in STEM for the School District of Waukesha and with the Elm Grove Plan Commission. His favorite hobbies were going to the symphony and plays with his wife, spending time with his children, grandchildren, friends, and relatives, and taking walks with his buddies. He is survived by his wife, Angie, 4 children, 5 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

## LON ELLEDGE



Lon passed away on February 17, 2021, in Gulfport, Mississippi. He was a Coast Guard Academy graduate and possessed a master's degree in ocean engineering from the University of Rhode Island. Lon worked with several other engineering firms in the Bay Area before joining CH2M HILL in 2008. His projects included Restoration of the Port of Gulfport, the Port of Anchorage, New Orleans Water Department and most recently, the expansion of the Port of Long Beach, CA. As a marine engineer, Lon was asked to consult with USAID on a project following the horrific 2004 tsunami in Banda Ache, Indonesia. He considered it an honor to be a part of the project and a highlight of his career.

Lon was an active member of the Bay Area Whaleboat Racing Association as both a Coxswain and President of the Association. His favorite race each year was "Bridge to Bridge", starting under the Golden Gate Bridge along a dicey course ending at the Oakland Bay Bridge. He was also an Eagle Scout. Lon loved the outdoors, especially camping in our new RPod Travel Trailer and he loved to travel.

Lon is survived by his wife, Cathy, and son Jason, along with one grandson and 2 granddaughters.

## RONALD GILBERT DENNISTOUN



Ron was born and raised in Phoenix where he attended Phoenix Union High School. After graduating in 1964, he went on to attend Phoenix College and work for the Phoenix Gazette. While working for the paper he met his wife, Janice. Once married, they moved to Corvallis where they would make a home and raise their family. Shortly after coming to Corvallis, he was hired at CH2M HILL in their reprographics department where he remained for his 35-year career until retirement.

Ron is survived by his wife of 55 years, Janice, and their two daughters Candice Webb-Bowen (Todd) and Kimberly Luebbert (Trevor) and four grandchildren - Trenton, Kiersten, Allie and Payton. All of whom reside in Corvallis.

## ROBERT JOHN BORNHEIMER SR.



Robert John Bornheimer Sr., 93, of Albany, Oregon, was born November 18, 1928, in Milltown, New Jersey, the son of William and Estelle Bornheimer. He was married to Maria M. Bornheimer, sharing 53 years of wonderful adventures and memories. He retired in 1993 after 20 years of service with CH2M.

He is survived by his son Robert J. Bornheimer Jr., his daughter Kris A. Kelly, and his grandchildren Reagan, Macy, and Kellen. He was loved by many extended family members and friends. He passed peacefully at home with his family at his side on August 26, 2022, after a long battle with Parkinson's.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Our only resource regarding the passing of any retiree, alumni colleagues or their spouses comes from our members or newsletter readers.** Please forward their name, obituary or the family's contact information to [CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com](mailto:CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com) so we may respond or contact them. Thank you!! Thanks to the many of you who shared information regarding the loss of our current cherished alumni shown above.



## New Careers

### ELISA SPERANZA – EXPLORING ITALIAN CONNECTIONS IN MY ADOPTED NEW ORLEANS HOMETOWN

By Deanne Faucheux ([deanne.faucheux@jacobs.com](mailto:deanne.faucheux@jacobs.com))



Those of us who have had the privilege of working with Elisa Speranza already know of her creative, problem-solving approach to life and work. New challenges inspire and motivate her, no matter how daunting they may seem to the rest of us. Joining CH2M in 2001 as Market Segment Leader for Drinking Water, Elisa was first tasked with building relationships with key clients and leveraging relationships formed during her service in industry leadership positions, including Vice President of the American Water Works Association and Chair of the Water For People board. She later led the Utility Management Solutions team and was selected as the first woman President of Operations Management Inc. (OMI), where she presided over 6 years of profitable growth before joining the C-Suite when Jacque Hinman became CEO. She was elected to the CH2M Board of Directors in 2014 and served as President of the CH2M Foundation until her departure at the end of 2016.

A consummate industry professional, Elisa has built a portfolio of consulting, teaching, and board work since leaving the firm. She currently serves on the boards of Harris & Associates, H2O Innovation, and the Northeast Power Coordinating Council, along with local non-profit organizations in New Orleans. The more flexible schedule has allowed Elisa to focus on one of her life's true passions – her love of the written word.

Raised north of Boston in an Irish/Italian Catholic family, and educated by nuns, Elisa says she has been a writer and book nerd all her life. Her first paid job was in the children's room of her town's public library, and she was a journalist early in her career, before spending thirty-plus years in the water and critical infrastructure business. On a recent visit with CHAA member Deanne Faucheux, the two talked about how *The Italian Prisoner* came about.

*Deanne:* Your first novel, congratulations! Was authoring a story like this one always a part of your bucket list?

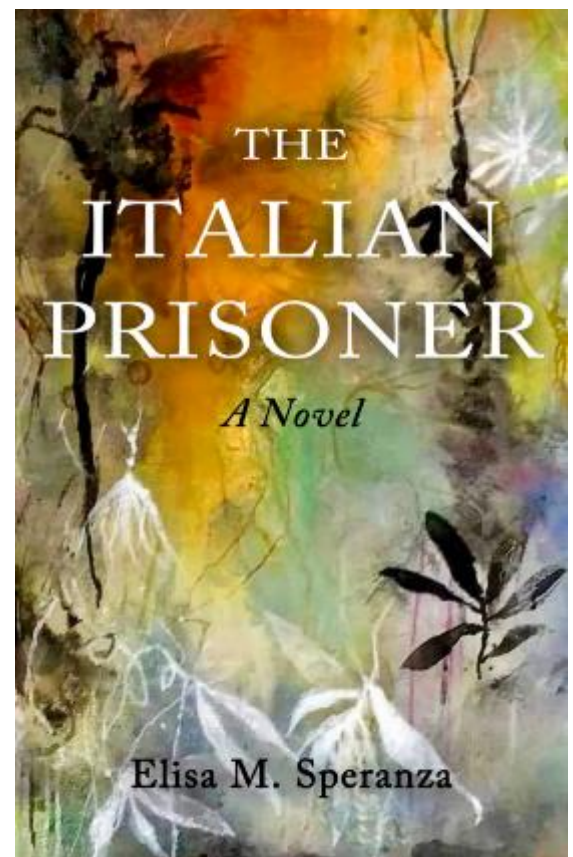
*Elisa:* In a way, yes. Many years ago, I heard a friend's story about his parents: an Italian prisoner of war and a French Quarter Sicilian woman who met during World War II in New Orleans. Fascinated by this hidden chapter in history, and having lived in New Orleans since 2002, I wanted to find out more.

*Deanne:* What kind of research did you do?

*Elisa:* When I started, it was almost overwhelming. There were some 51,000 Italian POWs held in the US from 1943-1945, 1,000 of whom were held at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward. Fortunately, I was able to work with the late, most wonderful Sal Serio, Curator of the American Italian Library, and Linda DiMarzio Massicot, the daughter of one of the Jackson Barracks POWs. They were amazing resources, helping me through what became a treasure hunt for information, artifacts, and people. Together, we were able to identify ten local families who had descended from the Jackson Barracks POWs and the local Sicilian-American women they met and married. I also did a lot of research into the Higgins Shipyard, which employed over 20,000 people in New Orleans during the war. My protagonist Rose works there with her friend Marie—so many women went to work outside the home during those year, and I wanted to capture that experience.

*Deanne:* What brought the prisoners to New Orleans?

*Elisa:* In 1942, the Allies launched "Operation Torch" in North Africa, a battle they won in May of 1943. They captured some 380,000 Germans and 51,000 Italian POWs who were brought to the US. When Italy surrendered and switched sides in September of 1943, the Italian POWs were no longer "enemy combatants," but couldn't be sent home either, according to the Geneva Convention. Given the severe shortage of workers, the US Army offered the Italian POWs a chance to serve in



“Italian Service Units” in March of 1944. Almost all of them signed up. About 1,000 Italians were housed at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans until they were sent home in December of 1945.

*Deanne:* And the connection to the New Orleans Sicilian community?

*Elisa:* Through the efforts of a few Catholic priests and local businessmen, the New Orleans’ Sicilian community adopted the Italian POWs – partly to help support the war effort and prove their patriotism, and partly out of compassion for their countrymen.

*Deanne:* So, is the rest, as they say, history? Seems like there is a good bit of imagination as well as local charm to the writing.

*Elisa:* I really had fun pulling pieces from all the stories to create the characters. As *The Italian Prisoner* reveals, the young women of “Little Palermo” found friends and dance partners, and many of them found husbands. So that part of the story was fun to write. Putting it all into the local New Orleans setting was a real pleasure—Jon and I live just a block outside the French Quarter, so that part of the physical research was pretty easy.

*Deanne:* I could really see the places and people you wrote about. I was born in New Orleans and grew up here in the ‘50s and ‘60s, so the descriptions were very vivid and close to what I remember.

*Elisa:* That’s just the effect I’d hoped for! I am really grateful for all the local enthusiasm for the book, particularly from the Italian American community. My father’s parents were Italian immigrants, and this is partly their story as well. So many locals had no idea that either the French Quarter at one time was the heart of the Sicilian community or that Italian prisoners had been housed nearby at Jackson Barracks. It has been fun to get the ‘aha’ reaction from readers.

*Deanne:* So, can we expect a sequel?

*Elisa:* I can give you an enthusiastic ‘yes’ to that question, though it’s more of a spin-off than a sequel. The main character in the second book is Rose’s sister, the Army nurse from the first book. I’m deep into nurses’ journals and letters home during the war.

*Deanne:* Can’t wait! As always, Elisa, wish you the best of luck in all you do. Stay in touch!

Elisa serves as Board Chair for the New Orleans Writers Workshop. A native Bostonian and die-hard member of Red Sox Nation, she is an alumna of Boston College and Harvard’s Kennedy School. She lives with Jon Kardon in New Orleans and Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. Check out her webpage to learn more about *The Italian Prisoner* Elisa M. Speranza ([elisamariesperanza.com](http://elisamariesperanza.com)) and about the historical inspiration for the book.

## Travelogues

We've heard from many folks about their travels in the past, and thought we'd add this section to make it easy for you to highlight your special trips and photos. Please keep this spot in mind and send your future highlights to [CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com](mailto:CH2MHILLaa@gmail.com) or Angie Kruse ([scarlet.study415@gmail.com](mailto:scarlet.study415@gmail.com)).

### EXPLORING THE TREASURES OF EGYPT

By Jerry and Mary Boyle ([maryboyle1224@icloud.com](mailto:maryboyle1224@icloud.com))



*Mary and Jerry on camels.*

In mid-November 2022, we set off to explore the treasures of Egypt on a Uniworld Nile River Cruise traveling with our travel agent, John, and fellow adventurers. This trip had been on our wish list for over a year and provided a unique opportunity to explore this part of world.

We flew from Los Angeles to Cairo via London Heathrow. The 25+ hour trip was a bit exhausting, but once we arrived in Cairo it was well worth it. While the city is bustling, just a short ride from the city we found ourselves in ruins dating back millennia. This trip by Uniworld Boutique River Cruises included 8 days cruising the Nile River on the Uniworld *S.S. Sphinx*. The *Sphinx* is the newest river ship in their collection. Once aboard we experienced a gracious welcoming staff, spacious accommodations, and delicious food ranging from familiar to exotic local delicacies.

The San Simeon Travel group of 60 were divided into 4 groups with a certified Egyptologist for each group. Our Egyptologist, Hamid, was with our group for the entire trip. Hamid was able to bring every ancient ruin, temple, statue, and exhibit alive for our understanding and enjoyment. While in Cairo, we visited the stunning Alabaster Mosque of Muhammad Ali atop the highest hill overlooking the city. The last stop on this very full day of touring was the historic Egyptian Museum. The artifacts were slowly being moved to the new Grand Egyptian Museum that was still in its final stages of construction. The Egyptian Museum still has many of Tut's treasures on display, including his solid gold mask.

We flew south to Luxor early the next morning. Hamid escorted our group of 17 on a tour of the magnificent Temple of Karnak, built by Ramses II, 3,400 years ago. When originally built, the temple was close beside the Nile, but now it is landlocked. Despite the passing of many centuries, the temple is still an awesome display of soaring colonnades of columns and passages. The columns still show many of their original colors; amazing considering the centuries of heat, wind, and sand bombarding them.

The next day we left the ship at 7 AM to tour the stunning Dendeara Temple built to worship the fertility goddess Hathor. It was a perfect 65-degree morning and no crowds. Dating back to 2400 BC, this temple is considered one of the prettiest and most complete. The rooms are decorated floor to ceiling with original colorful artwork. It still has its entire original roof where we were able to climb and enjoy views of the rugged countryside.

About a mile from the Karnak temple is the Temple of Luxor (circa 1400 BC). We were privileged to have a private after dark tour of the Temple exclusively for the Uniworld group. All the ruins were spotlighted which highlighted its immense scale. Today there is also an active Mosque in the large complex. Most unique to this Temple is the mile-long Avenue of the Sphinxes connecting it to the Temple of Karnak. This passage is lined with carved sphinxes the entire way. The sphinxes were buried under centuries of sand and just recently rediscovered and restored.



*Temple of Karnak.*



The Valley of the Kings is located across the river on the West Bank of the Nile; about a 45-minute drive from Luxor. Again, it was an early start for our group arriving at the Valley of the Kings just after sunrise. So far 63 tombs have been found, but they estimate over 100 are still buried under centuries of sand and rock.

The most recent find was King Tut's tomb discovered 100 years ago by Howard Carter, British archaeologist. Tutankhamen's was the only tomb discovered so far that was only partially looted in antiquity. It still held thousands of his treasures for the "after life", including his solid gold coffin and gold funeral mask (currently on display at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo). We walked down steep long tunnels to reach Tut's burial chamber where we saw his actual mummified body. The walls and ceilings of the tunnel were filled with colorful hieroglyphics and the tunnels are well lit with stairs and pathways. We explored 4 underground tombs, including Tut's, that day.



*Inside Tut's tomb.*

Each day of this trip was filled with new experiences including a lovely afternoon high tea in the gardens of the historic Old Cataract Hotel in Aswan overlooking the Nile. This 19th century pink palace has been a favorite of presidents and notables since it opened. Agatha Christie wrote her book *Death on the Nile* at this hotel.

The magnificent Abu Simbel Temples were a highlight of the trip. We took a 40-minute early morning flight from Aswan Airport, south to the temples located on the shore of Lake Nasser. Over the millennia the shifting sands almost completely buried the entire temple, leaving only the top of the heads visible.



*Abu Simbel Temple.*

The temple went undiscovered until 1813 when a Swiss orientalist found the top frieze of the main temple peeking above the dunes in the distance. It wasn't until 1817 when they were finally able to fully expose the temples and chambers inside.

Built by Ramesses II in 1124 BC, each of the four statues on the façade is 60 feet high. When the Aswan High Dam was built in the 1960s, the entire temple complex had to be moved 650 feet horizontally and 211 feet vertically to avoid inundation when the lake was filled. It was a huge engineering feat. Adjacent to the large temple is smaller temple dedicated to Nefertari, wife of Ramesses. Her temple façade features six carved statues (four of Ramesses and two of Nefertari). We spent about two hours at Abu Simbel before flying back to Aswan, returning to our ship for lunch and a relaxing afternoon.

The next day we flew back to Cairo from Aswan. Our final day in Egypt featured another very early start from our Cairo hotel to the Giza Plateau to experience the Great Pyramids, built 5,000 years ago. Dawn was just streaking the sky when we arrived. The biggest and oldest pyramid was missing its original solid gold top, but that didn't take away from the awe-inspiring site. These blocks of stone were all hand-carved and manually put in place 5,000 years ago – an engineering marvel of immense proportion. Near the pyramids sits The Great Sphinx. It looks small compared to the pyramids, but it's over 70 feet high. It looks so serene gazing off into the desert.



*Great Pyramid and The Sphinx.*

Camel rides next to the pyramids... we couldn't resist. The camel driver literally lifted each one of us up on the saddle. Following a few screams and gasps, the beasts were standing upright with each of us clutching the horn on the saddles to keep from sliding off. It was a fun experience and a definite lifetime memory.

Our 2-week Egypt trip was amazing – this article only captures a few of our experiences in this ancient part of the world. The Egyptian people were so warm and welcoming everywhere we went, which made for wonderful memories to last many lifetimes.

## BUCKET LIST TRIP OF A LIFETIME

By Dan Wetstein ([dpwetstein@gmail.com](mailto:dpwetstein@gmail.com))

As a manager of large, complex programs, I had grown to expect to live the life of a sometimes nomad. True to expectations, in 1993 I moved our family from Australia, where I had worked on the Sydney Clean Waterways Program in New South Wales, to Buenos Aires, Argentina. When new political leadership was elected in the early 1990s, then President Carlos Menem pushed for the privatization of utilities to secure infrastructure improvements in water, wastewater, and transportation that would help Buenos Aires retain its position as a world class city. As wastewater lead, I led the urban planning strategies to implement broadscale improvements, like those CH2M delivered in Puerto Rico. I finished this work in 1994 and we then went on to the next assignment. As the fates would have it, however, the populist parties regained control of the Argentine government a few short years later and declared the efforts too costly to proceed, leaving much work yet to be done.



*Kathy and Dan.*

Flash forward almost 30 years to a call we received from a friend in Colorado who just happened to be a travel agent. Cruise lines, it seems, were rebuilding their business post-COVID and a deal could be had on revisiting Argentina and adventuring into the Antarctic peninsula. Antarctica was the only continent I had not worked or lived and was a bucket list destination for both me and my wife Kathy. We accepted the challenge and left the US on New Year's Eve 2022 for a 25-day trip of a lifetime.

Flying into Buenos Aires, we revisited many of the places we had enjoyed when we lived and worked there 1993-1994. I worked in the central part of the city and my family lived in a northern suburb, San Isidro. It was fun for Kathy especially to see the house that had been home so many years ago.

For me, seeing the finished construction of several transportation improvements my team had helped plan was satisfying, but I wished just as much progress had been made with water and wastewater infrastructure.

After 4 days in Buenos Aires, we boarded Princess Cruise Lines' *Sapphire Princess*, and began our cruise of the coasts of South America and points beyond. Highlights of the trip included stops in the Falkland Islands (I'll go back there anytime), the South Shetland Islands, Drake's Passage, southern Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego, Montevideo in Uruguay, the Strait of Magellan, the Beagle Channel of Charles Darwin fame, the Antarctic Peninsula, Elephant Island of the Shackelford expedition fame, and Santiago, Chile.

Several fun factoids: First, the captain of the ship had a running joke about being the largest pizza delivery vessel in the world with the southern-most deliveries, for he routinely delivers 5-6 pizzas to research facilities currently active on the Antarctic Peninsula. On the trip, the lucky research team was the Chileans. The captain again added considerable personality to the trip by advising all passengers as they left the Falkland Islands, "We are now ceasing to be a cruise and are becoming an expedition because below the 55th Parallel, one can never be sure if exactly what was planned will happen." This creative soul would push forward with the published itinerary until weather, floating ice, and winds prevented advancement; then he would find a way to accomplish the same mission but from a different angle.

So, we saw everything we hoped to see but from a different vantage point from time to time. This was quite an accomplishment, given one night at sea when the ship encountered 115 mph winds and 35-foot seas!

Finally, an unexpected gift was the ability of the ship to enter and cruise through previously inaccessible fiords. Climate change, causing a reduction in the ice mass, enabled the ship to enter areas where in the past, only smaller vessels could visit. True to my water resources sensibilities, I both enjoyed those excursions and lamented the root cause.

For Kathy, packing was the greatest challenge. We had to plan for 90-degree weather in Buenos Aires and a bone-chilling 25 degrees with a 40-knot breeze in the southernmost points. Needless to say, checked bags were the order of the day.

Being able to circle back to bask in the fruits of long-ago labors, reinvigorate our Spanish language skills, and complete a bucket list adventure combined to make this trip one we could not resist taking. Incidentally, my interest in traveling this itinerary was confirmed when I first saw a similar trip posted in none other than the CHAA newsletter by Don Marske. Imagine that?!



## MISSING IN ACTION

We are again seeking your help in connecting with some folks without current email addresses or contact information. Many times, it just may be a change in their email address. We've been successful with our last few MIA searches and found several folks each time who are now reconnected with us again. Thank you to the folks who helped us find them!!

For this issue, they are:

Luis Aragon	Patti Hanseder	Gary Liu	Doris Powers	Michael Stansbury
Steve Armbrust	Gretchen Honan	Tom Mclean	Ed Prestemon	John Stubban
Patricia Bourdage	Ned Johnson	Rick Miller	Kathleen Reyes	Jack Suddath
Mark Bowen	Katherine Jory	Rob Miller	Vin Rubino	Robert Waller
Ana Coady	Linda Lack	Bill Missilin	Robert Schmidt	Daria Wightman
Charley Ephieum	Lyn Larson	Marvin Murray	Mary Shoenberger	
Brian Gackstatter	Jong Wook Lee	Ellen Paterson	Tricia Shular	
Jean Gibbs	Carol Littge	Betty Peterson	John Spitzley	
Michael Guthrie	Rudd Little	Hank Postrozny	Maxine Stangler	

An added thought: If you have a LinkedIn account, perhaps you could help us find some of our missing colleagues you know of by reaching out via LinkedIn and obtain their email address so we can follow-up. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated! Please respond to [donmarske@gmail.com](mailto:donmarske@gmail.com) if you have any information. Thank you!!



## Tidbits

**Bob Chapman writes** that he received the attached Sid Lasswell note from Bob Pailthorp. [Click here](#) to read.

### **Ray Yep writes:**

On a trip to Oregon and Washington last fall I had a chance to meet up with Sally Ruggles and Diane Angelo for breakfast in Portland. I was then in Corvallis and had dinner with John and Genny Filbert.



*Ray and wife Nancy, with Diane and Sally.*



*Ray, Genny, and John.*

### **Don Marske writes:**

The Southern California alumni group held their winter quarter gathering at the Stonefire Grill in Fountain Valley. Susie Gaare reports that it was great to have several new attendees. Seems that the invited alums shared their invite with fellow alums resulting in the nice turnout. If this keeps up, Susie may have to rent a hotel banquet hall. 😊 Kudos to Susie for organizing the gathering. Looking forward to the holiday event.



**Southern Cal Geezers March 6, 2021 Luncheon**  
l. to r. Karen Meade, Dave Mark, Nancy Keating Mau, Andy Vollmar, Bryant Wong, Linda Wright, Susie Gaare, Tom Bissonnette, Lee Ann Webster, Karen McClellan, Randy Denton, Denise Wike-Lewis, Lee Vanderlinden, John Dolegowski, Mike Grigorieff, and Bob Willey

## Jacobs Pension Service Center News

Jacobs' Consolidated Pension Plan Service Center number (by Willis Towers Watson) is 888-482-6632 or [www.eepoint.com/jacobs](http://www.eepoint.com/jacobs) for assistance.

For any other inquiries, please contact Jacobs HR and Global People services at the following e-mail: [JACOBSHRUS.CAN@jacobs.com](mailto:JACOBSHRUS.CAN@jacobs.com).

## Jacobs News

We encourage our readers to check the Jacobs company website for the latest project wins and related news and stock news:

<https://www.jacobs.com> for general information.