

Class Notes – 1957

May-June 2009

Since the news coming over the wire is sometimes pretty skimpy I have taken to bugging classmates directly to get some news. So be forewarned. A call to **Martha Goodway** resulted in this fascinating story.

“After graduation I looked for a museum that would hire a metallurgist. It took ten years. In the meantime I worked on the Polaris program, developing materials for a better inertial guidance system, and atomic testing. At the time getting a woman engineer onto the Nevada Test Site required threat of non-performance of contract, but the best memory of this job was hearing a cry in the lab of “they’ve found x-rays!” This was in 1962 when rockets were first going high enough to detect them in space, and the discovery earned Riccardo Giacconi a Nobel Prize. Next I was off to Harvard to study Islamic history with Sir Hamilton Gibb, who patiently taught me how to do history professionally. Finally I became archaeometallurgist at the Smithsonian Institution, from which I retired only a couple of years ago.

“The Smithsonian is like no other place. You can have in hand George Washington’s pocket watch one day and the gold nugget from Sutter’s Mill or the crook from Tutankamen’s tomb the next. When the original crankcase from the Wright brothers’ plane came to Washington for authentication, it was in the trunk of my Plymouth Valiant. If you visit the National Park Service’s museum at Kitty Hawk take a look at the crankcase: you should be able to see the prints of the hammer used to break pieces off it. Apparently the Wright brothers were into recycling aluminum as well as into aviation. Excavations took me to Turkey, to study the Bronze Age mine that is the earliest known source of tin in the Middle East, and to Iraq only four months before Kuwait. You will be relieved to find out that not all this was funded by the American taxpayer. My way has been paid to much of the United States, to countries such as Japan and, to my continuing disbelief, the Florentines paid me to visit Florence.

“*Science* has published three of my papers. I edited a proceedings volume on “Corrosion and Metal Artifacts” that has stayed in print for decades, and wrote a book known only to harpsichord makers on “The Metallurgy of 17th and 18th Century Music Wire.” The Historical Metallurgy Society in Great Britain elected me their first woman president and I am still the only non-Brit to hold the office. The American Society for Metals elected me their second woman Fellow. I have two certificates to prove it, one that refers to ‘his contributions’ and the corrected one that refers to ‘hers.’ On the whole being a pioneer is not what it’s cracked up to be. It delights me to see how far things have improved.

“Friends from MIT days in many parts of the world have made me welcome. A visit to my roommate from Bombay, Almitra Sidwha ’58, resulted in a fascinating project on wootz, the traditional steel of India. Crewing on a 37’ sloop took me to Tortola and

showed me the extent we pollute the world. Even when out in the otherwise empty ocean its surface was endlessly littered with plastic.

“Living in Washington, DC, has its hazards. Years ago when I lived just three blocks from the Capitol building the house next door blew up and destroyed half my home as well, leaving me literally a homeless person. Now I would like very much to hear from my classmates.”

Lester Gimpelson reports that “about seven years ago, when our classmate **Marshall Schachtman** passed away, my notes about this extraordinary character (using these words in all their meanings) appeared in the class notes in TR. I concluded by offering Marshall's class ring to a '57er who might have lost his or hers, in return for a contribution to the MIT scholarship fund that Marshall's will set up. A few weeks ago I received a call from Leslie Rappaport-Atlas who has been searching for a '57 ring for her father, **Richard Rappaport** - no new one would do. She threw the words "MIT - class ring - 1957" into Google and it brought her to the class notes in TR. Leslie and her mother came to my home in Magnolia (on the coast north of Boston) and picked up the ring. Richard reported to me that he's very pleased, will never lose this one, and the ring fits exactly.”

Arnold Orange refuses to set aside the life of science and engineering, and has joined the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics marine EM group as a research associate for fun and games at sea.

Terry Straehley reports that “in retirement, I am enjoying life as a photographer and traveler. Pat and I celebrated our 50th anniversary on a safari to southern Africa and also visited Israel this fall before Gaza really heated up. Pictures for both of these trips can be seen at <http://photos.strassoc.com>. This week, I am living one of my early dreams, covering the Santa Barbara International Film Festival for Shutterstock (a stock agency). These photos are online at <http://www.shutterstock.com/gallery.mhtml?id=85557>.”

Frank Salz (BSME '57, MNE '58) has been practicing family law (divorce) in the Pasadena, CA, area for the last 35 years. He tried retirement for a few days about five years ago but it didn't work out. He is traveling a lot with his wife, Connie, who is also his law partner (Salz & Salz). Their last trip was a 61 day cruise from Los Angeles to Dubai on the new Queen Victoria. It was quite special. For the record, he says that the training that he received at MIT has helped immeasurably, even in the practice of divorce law in California.

Phil Cammack claims that there is not much news, but he is “still rejoicing in retirement in beautiful Sierra City, CA. About an hour and a half from Reno, Sierra County is the second smallest county in CA, with a population about 3,550. It was the site of a lot of excitement during the Gold Rush. We still have one active 'hard rock' gold mine. See: origsix.com.

“Sierra County is divided by the Sierra Nevada. On the west side the Yuba River has cut deep canyons. The hills are covered with pine trees. On the east side of the Yuba Pass (at 6,701 feet) is the Sierra Valley (at 5,000 feet) - the largest alpine valley in the US. It's agricultural, primarily in raising hay and feeding cows in the summer.

”I did weaken and was pressured into being on the County Planning Commission for another term. I think it is the fourth. We deal mostly with land use issues, and have fun when a developer wants to tear up all that agricultural land and plant houses - which people don't want. So, come west young man. Come by and I will take you thru a gold stamp mill, still in operating condition. Or if you want to go underground in a gold mine, I can arrange it.”

-**Don Roellke**, secretary, 4870 Carriagepark Road, Fairfax, VA 22032; tel: 703-978-7370; e-mail: daruellke@alum.mit.edu.