COMARA Newsletter — April 2011

From the President: Dues Increase Needed for 2012

COMARA exists for a few important reasons. It ensures the integrity of Lockheed Martin retirement benefits to COMSAT employees. It is a way to stay connected with friends and colleagues and a way to see them at the annual meeting and social in September, the concert in March, and the picnic in June. COMARA also tries to keep alive the history of COMSAT, Intelsat, and satellite communications—via Wikipedia contributions, the Legacy Project, and museum exhibits. Many members have said that they especially value the COMARA interactive website, which offers a wide variety of features, especially for paid-up members, who have access to the member address book and updates regarding retirement benefit issues.

What most people don’t realize is that this website was created and has been maintained by the volunteer efforts of a single dedicated COMSAT alumnus who has donated over 200 hours per year to the organization. By relying upon such unpaid support, the COMARA Board was able to lower the annual dues, first from $25 to $18 in 2004 and then to $10 in 2005. Your Board of Directors recently discussed this situation and concluded that, going forward, a modest honorarium should be provided to our dedicated webmaster for his continued support of the website.

Your dues are used only for expenses essential to the objectives of our association and for communications with our members. Neither the directors nor the officers receive any compensation for the work they perform on behalf of the association. Despite our continued efforts to minimize expenses and annual dues, an increase in dues from $10 to $15 will be needed in 2012. If you’ve already sent in a check to cover your 2012 dues, you will be considered as paid up for 2012. However, if you have not yet paid your 2011 dues and want to include payment for 2012, please send a check for $25 to COMARA, PO Box 34594, Bethesda, MD 20827.

Events

2011 IRA/COMARA Picnic—June 26, 2011

Thanks to the IRA Social Committee, Alan Olson and Anita Saltos, a shelter at Lake Fairfax Park has been reserved on June 26 from 12–2:30 pm for the 2011 IRA/COMARA Family Picnic. This is just a short drive into Virginia across the American Legion Bridge on the Beltway if you are coming from Maryland—and then a 7 mile jaunt out Route 7. Make your reservation now! Send your check for $15/person to COMARA, PO Box 34594, Bethesda, MD 20827. Reservation deadline is June 20, 2011.

There is no rain date for this event. If the event is cancelled, we will post a notice on the web site and your check will be destroyed. If you include your e-mail address with your check, we’ll send you an e-mail. If you include your cell phone number and carrier, we’ll try to send you a text message.

Food will be provided by Red, Hot & Blue:

- 3 meats (pulled pork, pulled chicken, and brisket), BBQ sauce (mojo & hoochie coochie) and buns
- garden salad (balsamic and ranch dressing) and potato salad
• veggie wraps (limited amount for vegetarians)
• place settings (plastic utensils kit, paper plate, wet napkins, and mint)
• drinks (tea and lemonade)
• cookies/brownies platter

**COMARA Social—September 18, 2011**

The 2011 Social and Annual Meeting will be held at the Golden Bull Grand Café, 7 Dalamar Street, Gaithersburg, MD (301-948-3666) from 4−6:30 pm. From I-270 North, take exit 11, Montgomery Village Ave. (Rte 124). Turn right onto Rte 355 and go about 2 blocks. Then turn right on Dalamar St; the Golden Bull is on the left. bmember and guest. Checks must be mailed to COMARA, PO Box 34594, Bethesda, MD 20827 before September 12. Tickets may be purchased at the door for $41 each; the additional $10 may be applied to 2011 dues.

A brief Annual Meeting will be held at the start of the event. On the menu this year are carved round of beef, chicken supreme with white wine sauce, seafood newburg with rice, oven roasted red skin potatoes, green beans, vegetable and fruit salads, chocolate mousse, and coffee, tea, iced tea, or soft drink. A cash bar will be available.

**Concert by Jeff Binckes—May 9, 2011**

On Monday, May 9, at 1:30 pm, Jeff will present a concert entitled Variations on Variations at the Jewish Community Center in Rockville. This will be an very interesting performance that is a series of variations on well known piano concerto pieces including “Haydn's Variation on Haydn.” Just like us, he got better as he got older.

**News of Colleagues—Keeping In Touch**

**Pier Bargellini** writes, I am still in Mexico and will return to the States in early June. As my son has left Seattle for work reasons and is now in Oakland Ca my wife and I will move there too. On February 7, I reached satisfactorily age 97; hope to keep on going…Greetings and salutations!

From **Bernadine Thomas**: My husband Richard and I are winding down our winter getaway in my home of Trinidad in the West Indies and are so grateful that we can get away from the cold to a place of 85 plus degrees daily during the winter months in the USA. We have been in Trinidad since January and will return to the US in mid April for the spring season.

**Ellen Hoff**, president of W. L. Pritchard & Co., L.C., was inducted into the Society of Satellite Professionals International Inc. Hall of Fame on March 15, 2011. Ellen had a 23-year career at COMSAT Headquarters before joining Pritchard & Co., where she later succeeded Dr. Pritchard as president when he passed away in 1999. The SSPI Hall of Fame recognizes the invaluable contributions of the visionaries who have transformed life on planet Earth for the better through satellite technology.

Ellen, a longtime member of Comara, and a past president, joins a number of other Comara members who have been elected to the SSPI Hall of Fame including our current president, Dr. Joseph Pelton; Dr. Dennis Curtin; Robert Briskman; Mary Ann Elliot; Dr. Burt Edelson; John Puente; Sydney Metzger; and Dr. Joseph Charyk.
Geza Serenyi writes, I have finally retired from Lockheed so I am eager to take participate more fully in COMARA. My wife and I now have the time to savor the cherry blossoms, work on our sailboat, our garden, and our hobbies. We are in great demand as babysitters for our 5 grandchildren, all of who live nearby.

From Jim Whitworth: After leaving COMSAT in 1984 I joined Federal Express Corp. in Memphis, TN, to work on their new satellite program called “Zap Mail”. I really enjoyed the work—it was a challenging project, but unfortunately the program was cancelled a few years later after the first shuttle disaster. I stayed on with FedEx as managing director of program management and later as managing director of international projects (stationed in High Wycombe, England).

In the early 90’s I returned to Memphis but quickly decided that my opportunities for further advancement were not looking very good at FedEx. Since I was in my mid 50’s, finding another industry position seemed difficult so I decided to prepare for a second career in academia. I started working on a PhD in business administration (major: information systems, minor: international business) and completed the degree in 1999. I then retired from FedEx. By that time I was 60 years old, and I joined the faculty at Georgia Southern University, in Statesboro GA, as assistant professor in the College of Business Administration. At Georgia Southern I have taught classes in systems analysis and design, data communications, global information resource management, IT management graduate classes, IS/IT project management, and computer concepts and applications.

I am still on the faculty at Georgia Southern, as a tenured associate professor, but now teach in the new College of Information Technology. This year I cut back to half time and all of my classes are taught online. My plan is to retire again in January 2012. One of the smartest decisions I ever made was to get the PhD and start teaching. It took about 7 years, was a lot of work, and I did question my sanity a few times before I was finished, but it was worth the effort. I have really, really enjoyed the academic life.

Betty and I have been married for 50 years, and have 3 children and 4 grandchildren. We live about 8 months out of the year here in Statesboro and 4 months in a cabin in Stuart, VA (near our 4 grandchildren) We plan on making that a 50-50 split after retiring again next year.

Mario Cardullo writes— Last June I was awarded the Outstanding Alumni of NYU-Poly at Radio City Music Hall at commencement for my invention of the RFID Tag in 1970. [Mario is chairman and CEO of Archimedes Lighting Systems Corp & Archimedes Tracking Corp, and managing director of The Belfield Group, Inc.]

From Dick McClure: I played the bassoon part in a March 26 performance of a work by Handel for chorus and orchestra before an audience of 300 or so. I'm looking forward to April 14 when the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra holds Rusty Musician's night—a public outreach event—where one amateur is paired with one pro for performances of two short works at Strathmore Hall in Rockville. This is strictly for fun—just an opportunity for amateurs to brush sleeves with the pros. I'm still working full time at APL and still threatening to retire, but haven't set a date yet.

Pat & Bill Baker are currently located in Leland, NC.

Robert Ames writes—Recently I retired again, this time from being the founding president and CEO of the Satellite Users Interference Reduction Group, Inc. (SUIRG) after 13 years association with the group. In 2002 we started the incorporation process and the group elected me to head the group. Previously I had retired from Intelsat as the sr. engineering manager of the Post Launch Test Systems Department. After leaving COMSAT twice, first in 1980 to work for the Northwest Alaskan Pipeline and then again in 1985.
to work for GTE Spacenet, I went to work with Intelsat in 1990. I thoroughly enjoyed my time within the communications satellite industry as it is a cottage industry and there are not that many people within it; therefore when you go to conferences such as Satellite 2011 it is like old home time. My wife Vickie and I are living in Punta Gorda, FL, and are having a wonderful time living in paradise. Best wishes to my friends in this wonderful business.

From Howard Briley: This year is a bit special: we have four dates we are unaccustomed to: 1/1/11, 1/11/11, 11/1/11, and 11/11/11. And that’s not all—take the last two numbers of the year of your birth, add your age this year, and the answer will be 111, the same for everyone. This year is also the silver year: October will have 5 Sundays, 5 Mondays, and 5 Saturdays. This happens only one time in 823 years. Try it!! For me, born in 1921, and turning 90 this year, this year means 111. Good luck!

Excerpts From A Trip to Egypt 2010—by Fred Kelly
(see the unabridged article at www.comara.org)

My wife Barbara and I were in Egypt for 3 weeks in the fall of 2010. When we landed in Cairo, the sweltering 95° heat enveloped us as we walked off the plane in long sleeves and winter pants. We learned early on that driving and crossing the street in Cairo are not for the faint of heart. Merging is a polite game of chicken that fortunately our driver won with increasing frequency. There are very few crosswalks or traffic lights. Brakes are used only to park the cars, and traffic lanes are just a suggestion.

Our hotel room had a great side view of the Nile and the traffic congestion on the July 26th Bridge. We spent the next five days touring Cairo with a side trip to Alexandria and Fayoum Oasis. The Egyptian Museum Pyramids and Temples were awe inspiring. However, the most startling realization for me was that my western classical education that had started in Greece should have started in Egypt. Many of the architectural structures like columns and basilicas found in Egypt predate the Greek civilization. The Egyptian museum, although not organized for self-touring, was worth the visit. The portion dedicated to King Tut was spectacular.

One interesting tidbit is that whenever we left Cairo on day trips, our tour guide checked in with the tourist police who monitored our movements throughout our stay. In Fayoum we were accompanied by an armed tourist police pickup truck with six soldiers inside. Apparently we were one of the few visitors to that area.

When visiting the Red Pyramid, I coincidentally perhaps, received the ancient “Curse of the Pharaohs” or “King Tut’s Trots” for climbing halfway up the Pyramid to the tomb’s entrance door. As for Barbara, she sat in the air conditioned van and waved to me as I climbed the pyramid’s steps. It was 104 degrees! I did not go down into the Red Pyramid’s tomb because our guide recommended visiting tombs in Luxor instead. Nevertheless, the Giza Pyramids are spectacular, as is the reconstructed sun boat.

From Cairo, we went onto Luxor to visit the various temples, Valley of the Kings, and Valley of the Queens plus lots of temples. Luxor is cleaner and the air is less polluted than Cairo, but the streets and sidewalks are in disrepair just as they are in Cairo. We stayed at the Winter Palace adjacent to the Nile, which is quite ornate and lavish. But the highlights of the Luxor were the visits to the various temples, especially the Karnak Temple aglow at night. True to our tour guide’s advice it was easy to visit the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, except for the throngs of people all entering at the same time. Here you can walk upright into the tombs instead of hunched over as is required in the tombs around Cairo. The Valley of the Kings tombs are better preserved, the walkways inside are wide, stairs and inclines have handrails and the drawings on the wall are easy to view because the tombs are well lit. The cruise up the Nile River was smooth and leisurely.

At Edfu we boarded horse drawn carriages to travel to and from the temple of Horus. The horse drawn carriage was a great novelty, different and exciting. You never know what to expect in Egypt on a tour. In
Aswan, in addition to visiting the dam we rode a Felucca sailing vessel around Kitchener’s Island. The sailing was peaceful and smooth, but boarding required us to scurry from boat to boat until we found one that was uncommitted.

We had the same tour guide, Ahmed Bekheit, for our entire 14 day tour that included Cairo, Luxor, the Nile Cruise, Aswan and Abu Simbel so we got to know each other relatively well. Ahmed is married, his wife worked for Egypt Air and they have twins, a boy and a girl. He has a master’s degree in Egyptology from Cairo University and leads tours in English, Spanish, and Italian. He explained many of the Egyptians customs and through his eyes we gained a better appreciation of the Egyptian people. The picture Ahmed painted is that of a peaceful populace with an educated middle class yearning for jobs that are commensurate with their education and for real democracy. An Egyptian man typically gets married later in life because he is expected to have a house for his spouse. There are no 30 year mortgages—all houses have to be paid for in cash. The family adds rooms and floors as money becomes available. It is not uncommon to see apartment stairs going to nowhere and steel reinforcing rod sticking out of apartment buildings waiting for concrete pillars and a new floor to be added. Ahmed considers himself to be a moderate Egyptian trying to raise a family as best he can. As a tour guide he needs to make his annual salary from late September to early May. He earns very little during the hot summer months.

During the off months, Ahmed typically goes to school to learn another language or more Egyptology.

**In Memoriam**

Charles “Charlie” E. Johnson, 77, of Palm Coast FL, died January 23, 2011. Charlie's role as a space pioneer began in the early 1960s. He participated in developing NASA's Surveyor lunar lander, which achieved the first soft landing on the moon in 1966, transmitting photos that paved the way for Apollo astronaut lunar landings 3 years later. As Surveyor's test conductor for Hughes Aircraft, Charlie was responsible for system test in a simulated space environment, and for determining flight readiness of the radar system that controlled the soft landing.

Charlie later joined COMSAT and INTELSAT. He retired in 1996, having served as program manager for the INTELSAT VI Spacecraft Program & Flight 3 Reboost Mission. In 1990, when a $150M satellite was stranded in a useless low orbit by a rocket booster failure, he was named to manage a joint effort with NASA to conduct a daring satellite rescue launched during the maiden voyage of Shuttle Endeavour. The mission captured national news headlines in 1992, when three astronauts reached up to capture the 4600-pound satellite, attach it to the new booster, and launch it from the shuttle bay into its intended orbit, the first time a satellite was re-launched in space.

Charlie earned a BEE from Johns Hopkins University in 1955, and completed the Business Management Program at UCLA. He was a member of IEEE for many years. He was a 2nd Lt in the Army ROTC and served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. In the 1950's, he was a field services Technical Representative in Spain, Holland, and Florida and an instructor in the Hughes Factory Training School.

Survivors include his wife, Janet; his son, Charles Johnson Jr. of Los Angeles; and his grandson, Charles “CJ” Johnson of Anaheim, CA. He is also survived by his brother-in-law, Fred Hager of New Bern, NC, and sister-in-law, Barbi Carpenter of Yucaipa, CA. He previously resided in Reno NV, Los Altos Hills CA, and Palos Verdes Estates CA. Charlie was a member of Palm Coast United Methodist Church.

Donations in Charlie's name may be made to a charity of your choice.

Bela Andrew Banyasz died on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011. Beloved husband of Pauline Wright Banyasz; father of Andrea Banyasz of Washington, D.C. and Gabriella Banyasz; father-in-law of Jonathan Deitch; grandfather of Alex Deitch, all of Levallois-Perret, France. Bela worked for General Electric,
Communication Products Department, in Lynchburg from 1960 to 1968, before going on to a career at COMSAT in Washington, D.C. A memorial service was held at Collins Funeral Home, 500 University Boulevard West, Silver Spring, Md., on Monday, Jan. 31. Memorial contributions may be made to National Kidney Foundation, 6110 Executive Boulevard, #1010, Rockville, MD 20852; St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 10401 Armory Place, Kensington, MD 20895; or Hungarian Amateur Radio Club (NMARK) c/o Paul Lukas, 4828 Garnet Street, Torrance, CA 90503.

**Pamela Emmett Dahlgren**, born June 24, 1950, in Pretoria, South Africa, died January 5, 2011, from complications of cancer. Daughter of Wilma Emmett (deceased, 2006) and adopted father, Wilfred Emmett (deceased, 1987), she is succeeded by husband Robert (Acworth, GA), daughter Christine O'Donnell (Boston, MA), son Michael (Acworth, GA), and sisters Lee Stern and (Acworth, GA), Adrienne Frazier (Acworth, GA), Lee Ric-Hansen (England), and Debra Cinnamond (South Africa). Pam lived a global life and as a child resided in South Africa, New Zealand, Uruguay, and Hong Kong before settling in Alexandria, VA, as a teenager. As an adult, she worked at the Communications Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) in Washington, DC for a total 9 years. She met her husband Robert at the company in 1971 and the couple was married August 19, 1972, in Washington, DC. In 1981 she and her family moved to Surrey, England, Pam was extremely active in local and international expat women's organizations. She was a member of the American Women of Surrey (AWS) and served as president from 1989-1990. She was a member of the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), of which AWS is a member, and served as president from 2001-2003 of. After Pam's children went to college, she and Bob continued to live in England until his retirement, and in 2004 moved to Acworth, GA. To make contributions in Pamela Dahlgren's honor please visit www.fawcofoundation.org. Click on the "Donate" button and then click the NEEED scholarship button. Contributions will provide education to young women in Burkina Faso, Africa, to become teachers, nurses, and midwives.

**Margaret L. "Peggy" Frank** passed away Thursday, Dec. 9, 2010. She was a resident of Homewood at Crumland Farms in Frederick, MD. She was born in Altoona, Pa., in 1926. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ira and Luretta Karns, and her husband, John H. Frank. Surviving are her five children, Mary Margaret Smith of Winston-Salem, NC; J. Michael Frank of DeBary, FL; Phillip Frank of Salisbury, MD; Sheila Frank of Olney, MD; and Jennifer Clevenger of Richmond, VA; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. She graduated from Hollidaysburg Pennsylvania High School, attended the University of Richmond, Maryland University, and Montgomery College. She retired from COMSAT Laboratories in 1988, and enjoyed volunteering in churches, schools, and the community.

**Estelle Elizabeth Rogers** , beloved wife of the late Tom Rogers, passed away on February 9, 2011. She was an elementary school teacher at Taylor and Tuckahoe schools in Arlington, Virginia, until her retirement in 1990. She was the loving mother of Clare Rogers and husband Tom Hibschman, Judith Reynolds and husband Stephen, Hope Grove and husband Robert. She is also survived by her beloved grandchildren, Hope, Dan, Alexis, Kate, Judy, Bee Jay, and three great-grandchildren. Contributions may be made in her memory to The Alzheimer's Association, 1850 York Road, Suite D, Timonium, Maryland 21093.

Tom Rogers played a key role in space and satellite communications for many years. He organized the Lincoln Labs Satellite Communications Division at MIT and was a force in the field for some 40 years. Siegfried Reiger was his deputy. After Lincoln, Tom went to DDR&E at the Pentagon, then HUD, and finally, the Mitre Corporation, after which he only did things that he enjoyed.