COMARA Newsletter – August 2011

COMARA prepares and distributes about four newsletters each year to all members. Members with an email address receive copies through email. Copies are mailed to members without an email address in our records. If you receive this newsletter in the mail or didn’t receive one by email - it means that we don’t have an email address for you. Please take the time now to update your email address with us. You can do this yourself by signing in to the COMARA web site {http://comara.org/} and select the “Edit My Profile” link (on the left menu), or send an email to webmaster@comara.org containing your current email address. Contact the webmaster if you have problems updating your profile.

You can provide two email addresses. If you view your profile, there is a checkbox labeled “BE” on the same line with the email addresses. If this is checked, it indicates that email to both addresses bounces. Returned emails are checked after each emailing, and if email to only one of the emails bounces, we remove that one. We mark the “BE” record when two emails bounce.

In addition to the four major newsletters each year, we email news as it occurs to members with a working email address. So – if you have an email address, let us know so you will receive all the news.

Election

The recommended COMARA Board slate was, in effect, elected by acclamation since there were no additional candidates proposed by the membership. Thus Joseph N. Pelton, Robert W Kinzie and Denis Curtin have been re-elected to the Board for a 3 year term. Since the new Board and the past Board are one and the same we can also announce officers for the coming year: Joe Pelton will serve as President, Dan Swearingen will serve as Treasurer and Maury Mechanick will serve as both Vice President and Secretary.

Volunteers Needed: We need some additional people to help with the COMARA organization. Jack Hannon wants to turn the Strathmore concert arrangements to someone else. We also need someone who can help serve as the interface to Lockheed Martin for our benefits. We now have the responsibility to maintain the 78 boxes of materials collected by the COMSAT Legacy Project that were returned to our control this summer. We can also use help with social occasions.

Events

Social

Please join your COMSAT friends and colleagues for a social gathering on Sunday afternoon, September 18 at the Golden Bull Grand Cafe in Gaithersburg. This will be a chance to visit and catch up with friends and acquaintances from your COMSAT days. Spouses are welcome. Mail checks for $33 per person to cover the cost of a fabulous buffet dinner before September 10 if at all possible. Tickets at the door are $35. Response so far has been a bit slow so get your checks in as soon as possible to ensure we meet our minimum attendance before September 12. A copy of the announcement is included at the end of the newsletter. See http://comara.org/social/2011-Social.htm
First Wednesday in December 2011 - December 7, 2011

From Ron Johnson: Hi everyone! It's approaching that time of the year again: the Annual 1st Wednesday in December COMSAT Old Timers Get-to-gather at Roy's Place. It's a completely informal event starting around 6:30 pm. The 2011 First Wednesday in December will be held December 7 at Roys Place in Gaithersburg. This is an informal event organized by Ron Johnson and sponsored by COMARA. Full details can be found on the announcement page at http://comara.org/social/2011-firstwednesday.htm.

Strathmore Concert

Jack Hannon has evaluated the Strathmore events and reports: The two National Philharmonic Orchestra programs this coming year that look best are the all-Mozart concert on Saturday, March 24 and the "Sarah Chang Plays Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto" program on Saturday, April 28. You'll find the details on the full program here:


The prices for our combined group remain the same from this year: $48.80 for a Front Orchestra seat and $36 for the second balcony. This event is being coordinated with the Intelsat Retirees Association. More details including the selected performance will be provided soon.

Intelsat Retirees Association and COMARA Picnic

On Sunday afternoon June 26th the joint IRA and COMARA Picnic was held at the Lake Fairfax Park. The Red Hot and Blue caterers provided a great spread and a number of door prizes to a number of lucky attendees. Food, fun and some frolic was had by all at this event organized by the IRA Social Committee.

If you have suggestions for a picnic next year, we would like to hear your ideas.

Benefits

April 2011 Pension Benefits Letter

Jack Hannon Reviewed the April 2011 Pension Benefits Letter. Just the facts. Jack provides the result of his review and insight of the letter employees eligible for pension benefits received in April.

http://comara.org/members/Plan2011.htm

Jack considered the funding basis of the plan, and concluded that we don’t have much to worry about. There were two other interesting facts in the letter. I had always thought that when LM closed its Global Telecommunications unit, it swept all the COMSAT retirees into one of their large LM benefits and pension plans, some of which have 50,000 members enrolled. NOT SO! First, as above, we are in the "Global Telecommunications" pension plan, which relates solely to the now-defunct wholly-owned subsidiary that included COMSAT’s people and obligations and some other small companies ONLY. And if you go here to read the report of our plan Global-Telecommunications-Retirement-Plan-Form-5500-2009 [pdf]
you will find that there are only 1,016 persons currently drawing pension benefits under the plan, with another 1,373 entitled to benefits in the future (presumably when they reach age 62), for a grand total of only 2,573 in our little plan!!

Hershey Park Discount Tickets

COMARA is considering offering discount tickets to Hershey Park for the 2012 season as one benefit of COMARA membership. The purpose of this article is to collect a list of member’s that might be interested in purchasing discounted tickets next year. To give you an idea of the potential cost savings I have included the prices for the 2011 season as an example below.

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<td>Three Day Flex</td>
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Tickets will need to be pre-purchased by the first week of April 2012. The tickets can be used any day during the regular Hershey Park season from May 6, 2012 to Sept 25, 2012. Many families go to Hershey Park for two days by leaving early one morning and stay one night at a local hotel. It is possible to leave early one morning and return the same evening from the DC area. If you think you might be interested, send an email to hershey.tickets@comara.org and indicate the number you might purchase.

Legacy

Legacy Materials Return

Paul Schrantz has been working for several months to get materials from the CO MSAT Legacy Project (and the electronic versions of some of these documents) back in our control. Steve Struharik, Ron Johnson, and Steve Teller helped with the effort. A few weeks ago, David Lee provided a truck and helpers to move 78 boxes of materials from Williamsport to his company’s Gaithersburg facility. Summary of electronic documents:

- Bob Kroll Gallery: 20,600 files in 227 folders; People: 113 photos
- Comsat Oral histories: 47 files (approx)
- Comsat anniversary books: 10yrs, 15 yrs; Comsat Magazine: 17 files
- CTR Archives: 50 files; Labs Annual Reports: 11 files;
- Comsat News and Pathways: 27 files; Comsat news update: 22 files; Comsat Today: 57 files
- Comsat InfoGuide Booklet; Notes-Marisat,: 3 files; ViaSatellite: pdf of published book
The materials are now stored at David Lee’s company, Global Satcom Technologies Inc., in a room that has an outside entrance. Dave is a long time Comsat Alumni member and supporter. The electronic documents were created by Steve Teller and assistants Mike Hulley, Brian Teller, Heather Teller, Robert Kroll, Ron Johnson, and David Whalen. These materials will be added to the Legacy section of the COMARA website in the next few months.

Burt Edelson Honored at International Space University Memorial Lecture In DC On June 21st

On June 21st Dr. Burton I. Edelson, former Vice President and Director of Comsat Labs as well as Associate Administrator of NASA was honored on June 21st at the Westin Grand Hotel in Washington, D.C. This memorial lecture featured Jay Honeycutt who was the Director of the Kennedy Space Center for the Apollo Program, served as an official of Lockheed Martin, and is currently President of the Odyssey Moon Corporation. Honeycutt made the inaugural memorial speech that covered the challenges of the Apollo program and Space Shuttle operations. This event which included students of the ISU Executive MBA Program, many fans of Burt Edelson and a number of Comara members served to raise a nice amount for student fellowships.

National Electronics Museum

Comara continues to work with the Intelsat Retirees Association, the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation, and the Society of Satellite Professionals International (SSPI) to create a new and interesting exhibit on “Satellites Transforming Our Lives” at the National Electronics Museum. A committee is being formed to work with the satellite industry to secure artifacts for display and to arrange for the exhibit installation. If you would like to be involved and help in the development of the exhibit contact Joe Pelton at joepelton@verizon.net

Membership and Dues

We currently have about 740 members — although fewer than half pay the modest dues that allow us to put out newsletters, maintain the web site, plan social occasions and create a usable database for networking. Former employees (not just retirees) and surviving spouses are eligible for COMARA membership. When we receive notice of the death of a former employee, we normally transfer the record to the surviving spouse (if there is one). Newsletters are then sent to the surviving spouse. We make our member contact information available only to members. After you sign in – a menu selection, “View Members” appears on the left side menu. If the member checked the box giving permission, the phone numbers, address, and email address can be displayed. You do have to sign in before this information is available to keep your contact information hidden from non-members.

Dues for 2011 are still $10. Dues for 2012 are $15. You can check your dues status by simply signing in. The home page then displays your name and dues status near the top of the page (just below the picture bar). You can get additional information by selecting the “Edit My Profile” link that appears after you sign in. If you have any questions, send an email to treasurer@comara.org. If your dues are not current, please consider sending a check to the treasurer. A $10 check pays the 2011 dues. A $25 check pays for both 2011 and 2012. Send your check to
COMARA
PO Box 34594
Bethesda, MD 20827

This is a great deal at a very low cost. The dues pay for:

- Cost of mailing newsletters to those without an email address
- Cost of maintaining the website (domain registration, hosting company)
- Incidental expenses for checking, postage, liability insurance, etc.
- Arranging for Social Events
- Benefits defense fund.

News From Colleagues – Keeping in Touch

Pier Bargellini: On August 4 my wife and I left Seattle, WA and moved to:
5855 Chabot Road
Oakland, CA 94618
in order to be with our son Leonard and family who had moved for personal reasons. We will continue to go to Mexico during the winter. Had I hoped to attend the Comara Social and Annual Meeting but will not be able to do it due to forthcoming minor surgery at the time of the event. I feel very good at age 97 1/2 but can’t run as fast as before! My preferred e-mail address is now pbargellini@gmail.com

Jim Silvius: We will be moving to the Masonic Retirement Village on Thurs. May 5th....into a retirement cottage! It will take a little while to get our computer etc. up and running but will be in touch as soon as we are good to go again. We are very excited about the move and our new digs are just about the same size as our present home minus the attic and cellar. Sending our new address, phone number and cell phone number in case anyone needs to reach us!

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Silvius
37 Franklin Drive
Elizabethtown, Penna.17022-3121
Tel: 717-361-5538
Jim’s Cell: 717-471-2982
Jean’s Cell: 717-945-4495

We will miss our present home, our family members, our neighbors and our little town, but all are close enough that our ties will not be broken. We won’t miss the leaf raking, the snow shoveling etc. Ha.

A follow up note after the move in May: We really love our new home. It has 2 bdrms, 2 baths, liv.rm, din. rm, kitchen, lg. foyer, sun porch, garage, a small, but nice yard and a small front porch. Jim's brother also lives here in an apartment.

We will welcome all visitors, but do call first as we are doing lots of running just now, getting ready for a yard sale at our old home and preparing it for sale......also getting supplies for our new digs and familiarizing ourselves with the area.......but as I said, all are welcome.

We are close to Hershey, Penna. and a casino, plus of course Lancaster area amenities. The nice thing is we do not have to do yard work, snow removal, house repairs etc. any longer.....leaving more time for things like golf, writing the great American novel, volunteer work, Jim's Ham Radio etc.

Our email is the same. Hope to stay in touch! Love, Jean and Jim
Dorothy Kirkendall is recovering from knee surgery after some complications.

Henry Schutzbier: We bought a nice 2 BR, 2 BATH 56 ft mobile home (w/o wheels) in Lakeland, FL 3 yrs ago but we still live in Japan too. Long story.

Note from Joe Bulko: It was Sunday, February 7, 2010 that a TV event was transmitted to a satellite, broadcast around the world and generated an average of 106.5 million viewers, scoring CBS the largest audience in TV history. It was the Super Bowl game.

It’s something to think about. Where any place in the world in the most humble of homes, with a small dish antenna on the roof, a person could turn on a TV and view this event. Surely a tribute to the communication satellite industry as a whole.

It wasn’t always like this though. There was a time when there were no communication satellites in existence and people lived simple and private lives. When “communication via satellite” became a reality and with the rapid advance of technology, lifestyles were forever changed. Step out of the house, walk down any street, into any shop, through any mall and for a first time observer it would appear that people were holding on to their ear and talking to themselves. But what people were really doing was communicating through their “cell phones” to any place in the world.

Travel around in foreign places by car is no longer a serious challenge when you have a satellite navigation system. Travel to any major city in the world and you can watch your favorite channel. It’s as though you have never left home and the lifestyle the world over was forever changed.

I have an interest in the “Comsat Legacy” only I call it the “Comsat Story” written by Comsat employees and I’ve done my part. I’ve written and published my 12 years with Comsat (ID 099), my 13 years with Intelsat and wonder how I could get the word out to see if anyone is interested in adding to this story.

Editor note: Joe has three books listed on the Amazon Website.

John Talcott: I took just a few minutes to look online for some of our missing Co-workers from Comsat and found some; maybe you’d care to do the same? I’m still living in Sierra Vista, AZ not far from Don Kutch. Lost Cathy 2 years ago and am lonely here.

Sajjad Durrani: I have just returned from Lima, Peru, where I was invited by the IEEE Section to speak on Satellite Communications during a Conference: Intercon 2011. The Conference was held from August 9 thru 11; it was organized by the National University of Engineering in Lima, and had speakers from several countries. My talk was partially sponsored by the IEEE-AESS Distinguished Lecturers Program. The University faculty and students have built a small satellite called Chasqui (which is an Inca word meaning messenger), and expect to launch it as part of a payload in collaboration with a Russian university. We had some interesting discussions about it.

Albie Williams, 71, takes gold in World Masters running competition
http://tinyurl.com/williams-wins

With a time of 13.35 seconds, Williams, 71, of Bethesda took gold in the 100-meter men’s race in the 70- to 74-year-old age group in the World Masters Athletics Championships in Sacramento, beating his closest competition by about a second. Albie also won a second gold in the 400m relay, and a silver in the 200m. Williams works out five days a week at the gym and Walter Johnson High School. [Photo taken by Albie’s daughter]
In Memoriam

Henry E Carlson - Feb 20, 2010
Harold I Gerson - 07/ 16/ 1917 - 08/ 30/ 2009
Charles T Manatt - 6/ 9/ 1936 - 7/ 22/ 2011
Norman Paul Miller - 03/ 24/ 1932 - 07/ 18/ 2011
Marilyn Etta Murphy Owen - 1929-2007
Betty W. Poulson - 02/ 20/ 1930 - 03/ 03/ 2011
Bruce Sundlun - 1/ 19/ 1920 - 7/ 21/ 2011

We maintain a section of death notices. We often receive an email when a former colleague passes. At that point, we try to find the obituary and information about services. An email is then sent containing the information found. The information is then stored on the web site. The index to these files is a bit out of date, and doesn’t reflect all of the notices. That’s something the webmaster will correct. Feel free to send an email to webmaster@comara.org with news or questions.

If you know of someone who should have been included in the above list – please let the webmaster know.

Comments from Members

Comment From Ed Martin regarding the article about Tom Rogers in the April 2011 newsletter. "Just a small correction. Tom Rogers did not head Lincoln Labs. He and Jack Harrington organized the Satellite Communications Division there (Walt Morrow could give the exact name). Before Lincoln, Tom headed the Communications Laboratory at Air Force Cambridge where 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." in forming Lincoln’s satellite division.

Note from Bob Ames about Laurie Gray: Sad to see Laurie pass away as he literally wrote the book on HPA technology. I enjoyed working with him during our mutual time at COMSAT.

A note sent to the members email: I have been taking my dog up to the former Comsat facility in Germantown because of the open space provided for hiking and playing in the fields. I was rather intrigued by the history of the property and the role of Comsat in satellite communications. Although I never worked for Comsat, there is a certain feeling of nostalgia that has drawn me to the site and inspired me to learn more about the role of Comsat. I am just awe struck when I look at the remnants of a once robust facility and somewhat saddened by the passing of a fabulous company and era.
Please join your COMSAT friends and colleagues for a social gathering on **Sunday afternoon, September 18** at the **Golden Bull Grand Cafe in Gaithersburg**. This will be a chance to visit and catch up with friends and acquaintances from your COMSAT days. Spouses are welcome.

The 2011 COMARA Annual meeting will be held at the start of the reunion event. We promise it will be brief.

**DATE:** Sunday, September 18, 2011  
**TIME:** 4:30 to 7:30 pm [daylight savings time]  
**PLACE:** Golden Bull Grand Cafe  
7 Dalamar Street  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2501  
301-948-3666

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-270 North Take Exit 11 - Montgomery Village Ave. (Rt.124).  
Turn right onto Rt.355 and go about 2 blocks.  
Turn right on Dalamar St. The Golden Bull is on the left  
View Google map or Golden Bull Directions

**MENU:** Carved Round of Beef,  
Chicken Suprême with white wine sauce,  
Seafood Newburg with rice,  
oven roasted red skin potatoes, green beans,  
mixed salad, fruit salad, chocolate mousse

**ARRANGEMENTS:** Complimentary coffee, tea, iced tea, Soft drinks or lemonade.  
Cash Bar - Wine, Beer, Mixed Drinks

**DRESS:** Casual

**PARKING:** Complimentary

**RESERVATIONS:** Check payable to COMARA and mailed to:  
COMARA  
Attn: Social Reservations  
Post Office Box 34594  
Bethesda, MD 20827  
Checks must be received by September 12

**COST:** If you preregister by Sept. 12, the price is $33 per person for members whose dues are paid for 2011, and guest. $35 at the door..  
Members whose dues are not current are asked to pay an additional $10 that will be applied to 2011 dues.

**QUESTIONS?** Denis Curtin: (301 460 3659) or Joe Pelton; (703-536-6985)

Also, pass the word to others with COMSAT backgrounds. Note that although this social is being organized by the COMSAT Alumni & Retirees Association (COMARA), the event is open to all former COMSAT employees and spouses.