From the Editor..

Happy Spring! From what we have heard and seen that is pretty much the rallying cry after this past winter most of us have been through.

It’s time for dues again. Send your checks (or cash) to our treasurer, Jim Borden, at his address shown on the back page. Check your records as several folks either paid in advance or, in some instances, sent duplicate payments. If you have any questions regarding your status, contact: Jim Borden, (704) 365-1271 or jr4e951@aol.com

National Gypsum will be celebrating its 85th anniversary in 2010, and Nancy Spurlock is putting together a remembrance. We have a short paragraph, and her original email in the next column. Feel free to send her anything you may find.

The deadline for the Spring Fling has passed, and we hope to see you there. If your plans change, and you find that you can now join us, contact any of our committee members:
~ Elaine Beck (704) 588-1507 ebeck8839@aol.com
~ Gerrie Thomson (704) 238-1339 glthomson@carolina.rr.com
~ Jack Martin (704) 846-9310 jmartin44@carolina.rr.com

They can advise you on availability.

Sorry so short, we’ll try to do better in June. Keep those letters, notes, and emails coming.

Andy

National Gypsum’s 85th Anniversary

Nancy Spurlock, Director, Corporate Communications, sent an email (shown below) to those retirees who had email addresses. We are including the request in this newsletter for those of you who did not receive. Our staff went through what we had and it brought back many fond memories. Check out the cellar or attic for a dusty box of nostalgia from your years at National Gypsum and send (or email) what you have to Nancy. All materials sent will be returned to you.

National Gypsum is working on a history wiki. This would include a collection of pictures, newspaper items, etc., related to the company’s history. The website will also include personal recollections from retirees and employees. If you have pictures or articles that you would not mind sharing, please send them to me. I will scan them and return the items to you. Also, if anyone would like to contribute some of your recollections of events and work life when you were with National Gypsum, I would be interested in those, too. I could either call you and we can talk about your recollections or you could send them to me in an email.

We hope to have the history wiki started by August, the company’s 85th anniversary. Many thanks for your support in this project,

Nancy Spurlock
Director, Corporate Communications
National Gypsum Company
2001 Rexford Road
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-365-7556
NHSpurlock@nationalgypsum.com
Ann and I decided to go somewhere other than Europe last year, so we took an adventure tour to Costa Rica. Since we had such a good time with Snookie and Fred Macholz the previous year, we all agreed this would be the trip for us. Fred’s sister, Bonnie, also joined us.

Costa Rica is about the size of West Virginia. Four million people with 300,000 in its capital city, San Jose. It is in the heart of Central America bordered by Nicaragua, Panama, and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Spanish is the language and the colon is the currency.

Our flight was direct from Charlotte to San Jose and we arrived on September 3. We met our fellow travelers at an orientation that evening. There were 16 of us: 11 women and five guys. All of us were over 50, with the oldest being 76.

The first morning we boarded our 20-person bus and continued to our first stop, a 100-year-old coffee plantation that supplies Starbucks. Our destination that evening was La Fortuna, near a still-active volcano — Arenal. It was relatively clear, so we were able to get good photos of Arenal spewing smoke and lava. The Eco Lodge overlooking Lake Arenal was home for the next three nights.

During our stay in Fortuna we did nature walks, kayaked, visited a local school and spent several hours at Baldi Hot Springs Spa relaxing and enjoying the many pools.

Our way to Monteverde, our next stop, we went on a raft ride (only class 1 or 2 rapids). There were five or six of us to a raft along with a guide. For the next two nights, we stayed at the El Establo Mountain Hotel. Since Monteverde sits on a 4600’ high plateau, much of the trip was on unpaved roads — a tad bumpy. While there, we visited the cloud forest biological reserve, a 26,000-acre wildlife sanctuary that protects 100 species of mammals, 400 species of birds and more than 1,200 species of amphibians and reptiles. Another highlight was a hanging bridge tour over the rain forest. The next day we had an opportunity to take a canopy tour, otherwise known as the zip line. There were 21 of them starting at 30 yards long and growing to about a quarter mile long. It was an exciting couple of hours to say the least.

After that harrowing day, we were bound for Quepos on the Pacific Ocean. Our hotel was the Villa Lirio, which had a lovely setting. Here we did horseback riding and spent a day at the Manuel Antonio National Park that included free time to swim in the Pacific.

Next was the Savegon Lodge in San Geraldo De Dota, at an elevation of 7,000 feet. During our two-day stay, we went to a dairy farm along with more nature walks and leisure time.

We continued back to San Jose, enjoying a tour of the National Theatre before we checked into our hotel. That particular evening was Costa Rica’s Independence Day. En route to our farewell dinner we saw parades and fireworks celebrating the holiday.

During our entire 13 days we were able to photograph the rain forest, howler monkeys, crocodiles, iguanas, white face capuchin monkeys, three-toed sloths, flowers and butterflies. In addition the many beautiful birds native to Central America: Toucans (think Fruit Loops), Quetzals, roseate spoonbills, white ibis, blue herons and the largest, most colorful, hummingbirds we have ever seen.

The food was very good to excellent, other than the beef. The fruit was the best we have eaten. Beans and rice are served with every meal, though, and that can wear one down.

Other than at the Baldi Hot Springs Spa, Fred was pretty well behaved.

With 12 different life zones housing more than 5% of the earth’s plant and animal species, Costa Rica is fully aware of its natural treasures, as almost a third of the country is protected land.

Andy Andrichuk
Sympathies

- Virginia Britt, wife of the late Robert Britt, passed away on December 19. She was 77 years old. She was an avid reader, raised horses, traveled the world & lectured on ancient religion. She is survived by 3 daughters, 1 son, 8 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren & one great-great grandchild.

Buffalo Alumni News

In our last issue we mentioned the retirement of the existing officers. At the December 5 luncheon, Don Vaccaro "volunteered" to take over as president of the 31-year retiree group. He will be assisted by two member volunteers. The twice-a-year luncheons will continue.

Don also sent us a note dated January 28 reminding us that is the 33rd anniversary of the Blizzard of '77. Some celebrations were scheduled.

Dick Neff sent us a copy of the December 14 issue of USA Today featuring an article of Buffalo’s fine old buildings. The article cited:
- The Darwin Martin House (1906), one of architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s master works
- The Central Railroad Terminal (1929)
- The Guaranty Building (1896), designed by Louis Sullivan, a father of the skyscraper
- The Buffalo State Asylum (designed in 1870 and build over the next 25 years and designed by H.H. Richardson
- The Martin House, also by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The art deco-style 32-story City Hall, the only surviving Tiffany theatre interior at Shea’s Performing Arts Center, St. Paul’s Church, which Richard Upjohn, architect of Trinity Church on Wall Street, once said was the best of his ecclesiastical designs.

Other cities have more than one building by Richardson or Sullivan or Wright but none has a major work by all three. Buffalo has an amazing collection of buildings. Buffalo was rich at just the right time, 1870 - 1914, when great architecture was still relatively inexpensive. Buffalo's buildings are important because this was the one place, more than a century ago, where designers and builders broke with European styles and developed a uniquely American architecture.

Miscellaneous

Useless Information

Many of you remember the M/V Melvin H. Baker, our first rock hauling vessel. Dick Mooshie sent us an email advising us that this proud vessel was sold to China for scrap. The Melvin H. Baker was built in 1956 & was in our exclusive service for 53 years.

Received a Christmas card that had the following wonderful sentiment by Mother Teresa:

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
Life is bliss, taste it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is wealth, keep it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.
Life is beauty, admire it.
Life is a dream, realize it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is costly, care for it.
Life is love, enjoy it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is tragedy, confront it.
Life is luck, make it.
Life is life, fight for it.
It’s Time For Dues Again!

Please mail in your check by April 1, 2010. Costs are the same as last year — $5 for members and $5 for spouses.

Please remember, if you do not pay for your spouse, he or she will not be listed in the directory.

Please complete the information sheet below and mail it in by April 1, 2010.

INFORMATION SHEET

Please print all information legibly.

Dues are $5.00 per person.

Make checks payable to: NGC Trailblazers

Mail with completed information to:

Jim Borden
5123 Havilon Court
Charlotte, NC 28211-4100

First Name ___________________________ Last Name ___________________________

Street Address or P.O. Box ______________________________________________________

City, State and Zip Code _______________________________________________________

Spouse ________________________________

Telephone ________ – ________ – ________

Email Address _______________________________________________________________

Secondary Address Information _________________________________________________

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Other: ______________________________________________________________________