

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto(at)yahoo.com).

Jerry Ososkie



Jerry and Ruth at Lahaina, Hawaii luau

Did you know that Jerry Ososkie was once a harem guard and a chimney sweep? Jerry was involved in San Jose Dance Theatre's production of the Nutcracker Ballet for several years in the 1970's & 80's. His daughter's love of dance and Jerry's love for his daughter moved him to volunteer to take on several roles with the dance company to include brief stage appearances. For two seasons after work, Jerry served as production manager for the dance company even though he had zero experience with

theatrical productions. Jerry relied upon his can-do attitude, intuition and organization skills to manage a team of a hundred volunteers to develop stage sets, procure costumes and most importantly promote the ballet. This was no easy task since the company was in financial debt from the previous season. Jerry met regularly with the dance theatre's board of directors to develop a strategy to promote the new season, generate early sales and manage operating costs within budgets. The intense promotional campaign involved contacting schools, businesses, dance studios, and local shopping centers. Opening night was sold out and the season finished as a financial success with receipts sufficient to pay for the current and previous year.

Jerry was born and raised in Wyandotte, Michigan, a city located about fifteen miles southwest of Detroit. He grew up in a close-knit family of seven children. He enjoyed a close relationship with his father and older brother Mike. In the summer they would often attend an early church service and then head out to Ernie's Boat Livery on the Detroit River and slowly motor out to their favorite fishing spot. They usually hooked walleyes, pike, smallmouth black bass and perch. As they sat, they would regularly view the large ore boats making their way from the Northern Great lakes to the steel plants in Michigan and Ohio. It was always fun to greet the men on the ships and see them wave back.

Jerry's father was a merchant and an exceptional salesman. He was the master of the soft sell approach, always listening to the customer and never trying to push a product that was not in their best interest. At 50 years old with only \$5,000, he started a successful family business. Jerry's dad was well respected in the community and he instilled in his children the values of honesty, determination and commitment. His advice to his kids was "remember your objectives".

Jerry enjoyed school especially the math and the sciences classes that laid the foundation for his future profession. He worked hard at his studies while attending Wyandotte Saint Patrick High school, achieving honors all four years and graduating academically among the top of his class. He was also a sports enthusiast at St. Pats, lettering in both football and baseball. Jerry played on the offensive line (he was a pulling guard at 150 pounds) for the football team. The team employed a single wing formation made famous by the University of Michigan during the 1950's. In his senior year, the school hired Jerry's oldest brother, Tom to be the head football coach. Under Tom's direction, the team switched over to a split- tee formation and Jerry switched from the guard to an end position. (Tom went on to coach at the University of Tulsa and became a scout for the New England Patriots). In Jerry's junior year his baseball team won the Detroit Metropolitan Catholic League Championship, Jerry played left and center field.

After high school, Jerry attended the University of Detroit and graduated with a BS in Physics and started his career as an optical engineer for Chrysler Defense Engineering in Centerline, MI. One of his unique experiences was testing an optical telescope called Visual Infra-red Articulated Telescope (VIRAT). The VIRAT successfully employed far-infrared, low-light-level technologies to aid in night vision. During the testing in an outback area of Michigan, Jerry encountered the Michigan State police who thought his mission was to look for UFOs. Many UFO sightings were in the news at that time. *(Editor's note: Go to <https://ufocasebook.com/michigan1966chase.html> to see the article "The Great Michigan UFO Chase of 1966").* Jerry did not spot a single flying saucer.

In the summer of 1966 Jerry took a vacation with his family to California and visited his brother-in-law. Paul took Jerry on a world wind tour of California starting at Hearst's castle in San Simeon ending several days later in Yosemite. With all that beauty, Jerry was hooked on moving to the Golden State. Fortunately a firm in Newport Beach CA, Aeronutronic Division of Philco Ford, was looking for optical engineers. Six weeks later Jerry moved with his young family to Costa Mesa CA.

After five years in Southern California, Jerry transferred to Ford Aerospace in Palo Alto to support the integration and testing of a Visual Infrared Spin Scan Radiometer for the first GOES satellites developed by Ford Aerospace. *(Editor's note: The GOES satellites provided day and night observations of cloud, land and water temperatures. It gave forecasters their first near-real time look at atmospheric and environmental conditions - storms, fires, pollution and smog - from space).* To enhance his technical knowledge Jerry enrolled and received his MSEE degree from Santa Clara University. Jerry went on to work on a myriad of commercial and defense satellite programs to include INSAT,

NSTAR, SUPERBIRD and the Mabuhay program where he served as the chief architect for the Telemetry, Tracking and Command ground system. In the defense arena, Jerry was the chief engineer for the development and deployment of a satellite communications control system for the Army's DSCS satellite system.

The international commercial space satellite programs afforded Jerry an opportunity to travel abroad with trips to Japan, India and the Philippines. He will never forget how the road from Bangalore to Hassan was constructed. Men with pick axes would split granite rocks into smaller pieces while holding the rocks in place with their bare feet. Women and children would then follow with mallets and break those pieces into gravel for the road. The construction of the two-story hotel where Jerry stayed had similar stories. For details and other stories, you may ask him or other fellow SIR members Carl Plescia, John Brown, or Arnie Satterlee who were also present in India for the INSAT mission.

In the latter part of Jerry's career, he was promoted to Senior Systems Engineer and Department Manager for Lockheed Martin. Some of his memorable exploits included work on Astrolink. (*Editor's note: In 2001 Lockheed Martin, Liberty Media, TRW and Telespazio agreed to build, launch and operate a fleet of satellites providing worldwide internet access from space.*) He also worked on the Transformational Mission Operations System (Military Internet II satellite communications system). The TMOS program received the coveted Lockheed Martin Nova Team Award for Excellence. As a systems engineering manager, Jerry recruited and mentored many of the most talented young engineers for Lockheed Martin. He typically managed departments with 20-30 engineers assigned to various research and program projects.

On the personal side, Jerry met the love of his life, Ruth, in an elevator on the Lockheed Martin campus. She was very attractive and got Jerry's interest immediately. But Jerry was quite shy and it took about a year for him to ask her out for a date which happened the day after the Loma Prieta earth quake in 1989. You could say Jerry needed to be shaken up to make his move. Jerry was planning his first date but Ruth instead invited him to dinner with her family to vet him out. Jerry passed with flying colors. Jerry and Ruth married two years later and enjoy a blended family of five children and five grandchildren, all who reside in the Bay area.

Ruth has been very supportive of Jerry's involvement with SIR. She participates in the bowling league (has much better form than Jerry) and has been our registrar and data entry person for the tomato contest at the Branch 35 annual picnic.

Jerry retired in 2009 and was invited by Ken Jones to join SIR and one of the greatest golf programs for retired people in the bay area. Unfortunately, soon after joining Jerry was selected as a jurist for a rather lengthy jury trial involving four murders, and seven attempted murders. The trial was arduous but justice was proffered to the gang members and Jerry was able to transition back to his retired life pursuits. He has since volunteered as branch treasurer, started a bridge group and organized and run the annual tomato contest. He currently participates in the bowling league and prepares the tournament workbooks for the golf activity. Jerry is a gardener with a robust vegetable garden that produces a variety of vegetables, especially tomatoes and squash. Last



Baskets from Jerry's garden

year his garden produced over twenty varieties of tomatoes. He enjoys tinkering with new tomato varieties with each spring. Maybe you have sampled Jerry's prize-winning tomatoes, "Black from Tula", "Ken and Gracie's Kentucky Heirloom" or "Julia Child" to name a few.

Jerry encourages his fellow Sirs to take up gardening and take advantage of our extraordinary climate for growing vegetables. Gardening provides a great form of exercise and there's nothing better than enjoying a fresh, full flavored

tomato from your own home garden. Jerry is active with his church community of St Francis of Assisi in San Jose, where he serves as a worship coordinator and lector along with supporting his churches outreach programs. Each Tuesday, he supports the Family Shelter, East Side Senior Center and Sacred Heart Service

Center in San Jose through delivering donated bread and sandwiches. Jerry has been blessed his entire life with an exciting career, a beautiful and vivacious wife, many friends from SIR and his church community. His advice to his fellow Sirs is to enjoy what they do, get involved and share their abundant gifts... Life is too short not to.