

# YELLOW



The quarterly newsletter of American Refining Group Inc.



Ray Saunders, former Kendall Refining Co. general manager, sat down recently with current ARG President and Chief Operating Officer Jon Giberson.

## The beat goes on

Though nearly 40 years have passed between Ray Saunders's time leading the Bradford refinery and Jon Giberson's tenure, much remains the same.

Mr. Saunders, now 93, was honored recently with the Penn Brad Oil Museum's Yellow Dog Award for his service to the local oil industry and the Bradford community.

Mr. Saunders was general manager of Kendall Refining Co.

from 1971 to 1981. So in 2019, when the opportunity arose for Jon to sit down and chat with Ray just before his much-deserved recognition from the museum, he jumped at the chance.

In recounting the path that brought him to Bradford and the refinery, Mr. Saunders went all the way back to the very beginning: Altus, Okla., 1947.

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## A lens of optimism

I view the future of ARG through a lens of optimism.

Our two great new leaders, Jon Giberson and John Malone, appreciate the strong base you have given them and will use that base to keep ARG moving forward. Your openness to change and different ideas has transformed ARG



**Jeannine Schoenecker**

into a company with strong roots in safety, quality and reliability.

We have also learned to "never accept the status quo." While change is difficult, we must always be raising the bar to maintain your safety and to keep ARG competitive in the marketplace. You have proven you have the strong foundational skills to keep ARG moving to the next level.

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*Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.*

*- Pauline R. Kezer*

**Beat,**

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Mr. Saunders was 21 years old, recently married and just back from World War II. He needed to work. At the U.S. Air Force base there, putting things back together just as the Cold War began heating up, one of the men he worked with seemed to disappear. Until, that is, Mr. Saunders bumped into him on the street one Saturday. In the course of their conversation, the man told him that there was an opening in a research department in Dumas, Texas, for which he would be a good fit.

After a week's discussion with his wife, Mr. Saunders drove to Dumas the following Saturday. At the third carbon plant he came to, the lone man working that morning finally informed him that he would need to speak to someone in Amarillo. One hundred twenty-five miles later, he found one man working who just happened to be the exact man Mr. Saunders wanted to see: the Continental Carbon personnel manager.

He submitted an application, figuring that would be it. Yet, he received a phone call just two days later asking him to come see the office manager. He arrived only to find that the officer manager was home sick. Ever persistent, Mr. Saunders simply drove to the man's house. He left only after he was hired as the company's Time Study Engineer.

The following years would take



**Jon, holding grandson Calvin, at the marriage of his youngest daughter June 28. From left are Kyle, oldest daughter Heidi, Jake, Laura and Jon's wife Amy.**



him, quite literally, all around the world. From Oklahoma to Texas, New Mexico, Rotterdam, Brussels, Argentina, India, Japan and, ultimately, to Bradford.

Bearing out that old saying, the more things change, the more they stay the same, Jon shared his own experiences from people he and Mr. Saunders both knew or to places they had been along their respective paths to this little refinery in Bradford, Pennsylvania. For both men, it was in the end a road-weariness that called them home.

Mr. Saunders said, "I would be overseas for two weeks without seeing my family. I'd get home just to turn around and leave again for another two weeks.

I went to my boss and just said 'I'm **tired!**'"

That statement set in motion the chain of events that would send him to Bradford to lead this refinery. While not the

Saunderses' home just yet, it would be and remains so today.

Jon related similar experiences. He and his wife Amy have two daughters, Heidi and Laura, who have both performed on Broadway and at one time were part of a national-award-winning a capella group. He missed the local reception recognizing their tremendous achievement because he was away at work.

Jon said, "I traveled so much that I started writing down where I was, on a piece of paper before bed, so that I would know when I woke up in the morning. When finally I woke up in my own bed, it would take me a moment to realize, I was home."

Still, both agreed there were some really good days and valued friendships made throughout those many years away. Jon had to admit, "There really were some fun days."

Mr. Saunders paused, before agreeing, "Maybe in retrospect ... you don't think about the bad days.

"I guess that's right."



**Ray and Mary Jo Saunders**