

Business as Usual – Friend or Foe?

Peter Triano had worked early on in many jobs, including one with Claude's uncle Anton. In 1960 he formed the Federal Plastics Corp. which started in Elizabeth, N.J. but moved to Cranford in 1978, where it added serious compounding capacity.

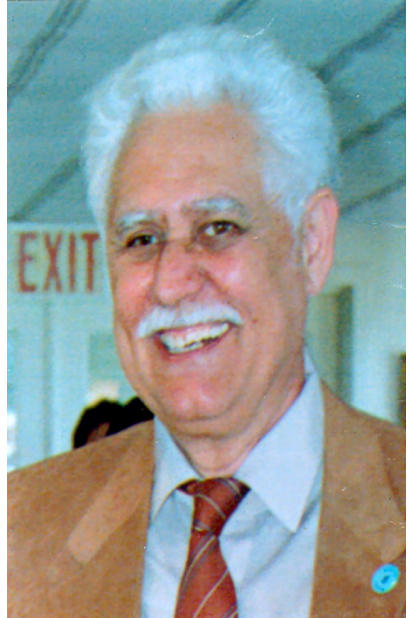
He likes working with management people from both customers and suppliers. And takes special pleasure in having helped a half dozen companies get under way. His business philosophy is simple: Integrity and fairness. Build a business for the long haul, both in satisfaction and success.

"It's been more years than I care to count," he tells us, "since I first met Claude Bamberger. Looking back over the years, I realize that Claude was a pioneer, perhaps the originator of the recycling industry.

Through the years Claude established the standard for ethical business in supplying plastic materials one could depend on. His introduction of acrylic purging compound is an example of his creativity.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Claude for being unofficial historian of our end of the plastic business. Without his books, our legacy would be lost.

Most of all I am glad to have known Claude for his witty philosophical friendships."



"I first met Dan Salopek and Jim Sattler" Claude tells us, "in April, 1982 at the Firestone office in Akron. I visited them to buy their offgrade Stereon 840 and Stereon 870. Later that year we had dinner with them in New York. From 1982 to 1996 we met with them several times a year. Jim (with his wife Mary and daughter Julie) came to Tenafly once for Thanksgiving. We

also met them in Scotland and attended Julie’s wedding at the Firestone Country Club.”



Jim goes deeper into the relationship: “Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, ‘Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.’ This certainly epitomizes the style by which you have lived your life and the way you have touched the lives of countless friends and associates in our case, your guidance, counsel and common sense advice was invaluable as we started our fledgling business, Momentum Technologies after years with Firestone.



But as you know our friendship with you and Mo-Li goes back more than twenty years through much of the Firestone years. During those years we developed both a close business and personal relationship. We cherish the good times we had together at the Stony Hill Inn and our wonderful mushroom dinner in Ballachulish Scotland. Of course, Julie still measures the success of Thanksgiving by your hospitality and the gathering of interesting people at your home.”



Dan Salopek wrote to Claude, “Since our first meeting in 1982, I have enjoyed the many dinners and the excellent, friendly hospitality with you and Mo-Li. The professional and personal support that you have given to me over the years will never be forgotten. I have always admired the integrity and honesty that you and Mo-Li bring to your business. Life would be so much easier if there were more people in the business world like the Bambrger’s. I sincerely thank you, for your friendship and allowing me to call you each a “friend.”

Maybe Dan was thinking of his own adventures in business. He started with Firestone T&R as a process engineer in the synthetic rubber plant, moved to sales in 1965, and retired from Bridgestone/Firestone in 1996.



He had held positions as Sales Rep, regional Sales manager and served as Manager of Marketing for 25 years. Upon retiring he started a new business call Momentum Technologies with two former associated from BFS (one of them Jim Sattler). But he's proudest of the sales and marketing he did at Firestone in the late 80's and early 90's, which were probably best in the synthetic rubber industry.

His philosophy was simple: manage people the way you'd want to be managed. He wanted people who were working with him to be smarter than he was — “which wasn't too hard to find,” he would modestly add. Integrity and honesty were very important to him. He was a true believer that ‘average people’ can achieve a great deal, and he couldn't stand pretentiousness. “Don't forget where you came from,” he'd tell you.



Frank Sawyer prefers to remember Claude as the lively, humorous friend of a long past. “We first met many years ago, how many I don't know. After a stint with the Army Air Force, I worked, from 1951 to 1987, for a long forgotten supplier in the industry (DuPont.)



I remember one occurrence relative to our professional relations. Our plant had a large number of bins filled with resin stored in an adjacent field. Along came a flood and the bins were immersed. On offering the product to Claude as is, I noted the resin could be contaminated by flood water leakage. Claude's immediate response was, 'Don't worry where this is going they can have people pick the contaminated specks out by hand.

I also squirreled away not only Claude's publications, but also his travelogue letters with their, to me, unbelievable tales of adventure. Dining with the natives and sharing some of their lives until India!



Frank's daughter, Daphne, would agree, too, but perhaps for different memories.



She wrote Claude, "When you first entered my life one Christmas, it was as a coveted — and hard-fought-over — box of divine Swiss chocolates.

You immediately assumed mythical qualities, much like a wizard's. Then, as a German Pen Pal in your book, wisdom was added to your mythical goodness. Though your writing we all enjoyed your humor and wit, which, over time, reduced your 'mythicalness' and increased your humanity.

When we met again years later, your perfection was completed with your gracious appreciation of my cranberry cordial.

I thank you for your friendship to our family and me."



Bill Walker also worked for DuPont — as plant manager for Du Pont Nemours, Luxemburg. Claude and Mo-li were seeing him for the first time along with Christophe Englebert (Operations Manager for off-spec Hytrel) and my old supplier Jean-Claude Pierrard whom Christophe had replaced.

Working with Jean-Claude, we purchased huge amounts of their off-spec Hytrel acrylic and shipped it to Taiwan to make rubber sun-glasses. We had also bought it from Dupont USA. Putting it all together, at one point we became Dupont's second largest customer in the world.



Bill enjoyed the meeting enormously. "As you can imagine, I meet many people in my job and it always seems I have a constant stream of visitors. But I would like for the both of you to know how truly special your visit was to me. I felt that we made an immediate connection at a deeper level, to the point that I could not wait to get home that evening and tell my lovely Persian wife, Mehrnaz, all about it."



Under Matt Taylor's direction, CYRO grew to become the largest North American producer of acrylic sheet, and a leader in the production



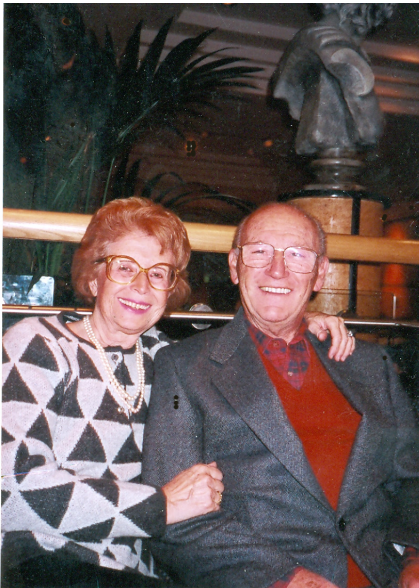
of acrylic molding and extrusion compounds. Following the completion of a \$35M expansion program, CYRO's Osceola, Arkansas, manufacturing facility yielded the largest continuously manufactured sheet capacity of any producer in the world.

Claude and Mo-li did a lot of business with him. Matt thought Claude's "was a life that speaks wonders. When I think of you — beyond the obvious firsts, namely, Mr. Plastics and true professional — other descriptors come to mind: patient and enthusiastic, gentle, resilient, tough-minded and energetic, thoughtful and fair minded, and a person with a true love of life."

Mo-li felt that the acrylic business could never be the same after Matt's retirement. "You represented," she said "a bastion of intelligence, integrity and a warm heart. It would be difficult for anyone at Cyro to match this." And she adds with some sniff, "In fact we have experienced the opposite."



Roberto Pietrocola tells the story: "My friendship with Claude dates back to the late 1940's. At that time, he was working for his uncle at A. Bamberger. Shortly after his uncle died, Claude left to form his own plastic company.



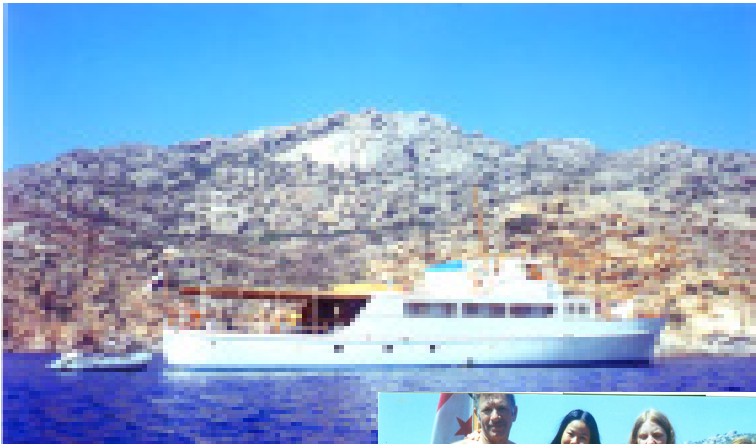
I was introduced to Claude by a mutual friend, Vasco. Vasco was also a good friend of my wife Piera. Claude was active in Italy selling various types of plastic materials. I bought acetate, vinyl and polystyrene scrap from him. Claude and I became good friends. We had many philosophical discussions and we often skied together. He was a champion skier. He was always ready to do anything which is "risky," like skiing on slopes which were dangerous. I was not as good a skier and I had trouble getting out of some of the pistes. Our friendship continued through the years.

One day Claude announced that he was coming to Milano with someone from the Orient and asked me to book a romantic room for them at the Hotel Manin where he always stayed. That was the first time Piera and I met Mo-Li. They came to our house for dinner and that the start of our long friendship with Mo-Li, too. Then we all drove to Cervinia to ski and I got them an apartment at the Geomein.

In 1975, Piera and I together with our sons, Flavio and Marcello visited them at their house in Nantucket. We had a marvelous time. It was the first time I saw a horse shoe crab.

After I sold my company Impi to LATI, I also started Caleppio in Milano which made house wares out of vinyl. I had over 400 employees. To be in business at that time was very difficult. Interest rate was over 17 percent. The unions were very strong and made many demands. Eventually after 20 years, I was forced to close Caleppio. In the late 1970's I started another company in Ireland manufacturing vinyl. Piera and I bought a beautiful mansion called the "Mentone House." Claude and Mo-Li also came to visit us.

In 1973, the Bambergers, including Claudette and Stephan, spent a week with us on our 120 ft. yacht the Bar Mingui (below) and we cruised in the Mediterranean stopping in places like Corsica, Sardinia. I think they enjoyed themselves very much.



(Who wouldn't enjoy themselves? A crew, a butler and a cook who favored six to ten course meals, a walk-in fridge with crates of fruit, scuba diving, swimming, sun and scenery. Only Stephan had to endure the compulsory chess matches with his father.)

In the late 1970's, Claude came alone to visit me in Dublin for a weekend. He had a serious business problem and needed my advice. He had discussed the problem with Mo-Li who told him to see me to get a second opinion. So he flew all the way to Dublin to see me just for that. After many hours of talking, the solution became quite clear and he went home to implement it. It was also what Mo-Li had advised him to do.

Other memorable trips included skiing in St. Moritz. Shortly before Claude's accident, we also met in Venice and stayed at a wonderful hotel, the Metropole. Piera was unable to come. We had a great time together. That was the last time I was with Claude and Mo-Li."



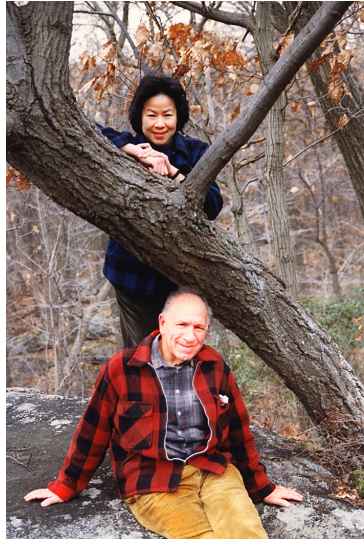
Ron Dugger knows a good story when he sees one " Having watched Claude continue to be as active as a 20-year-old man into his late seventies, there is nothing that would surprise me. Depending on the time of year, Claude would be found skiing and/or hiking in Switzerland, walking in the White Mountains, swimming the English Channel, or dropping out of airplanes, pinching nurses while recovering from a hip transplant — anything one can imagine, he's either been there or done that! And, he did everything with zest.



I have been extremely fortunate to hike with Claude (and Mo-Li) on numerous occasions both in New York State and in New Jersey. Mo-Li, always in contact with the Carlstadt office, would often be found sitting

upon a boulder conversing with staff via her cell phone. When someone invents a hand held fax, she will undoubtedly be monitoring that too!

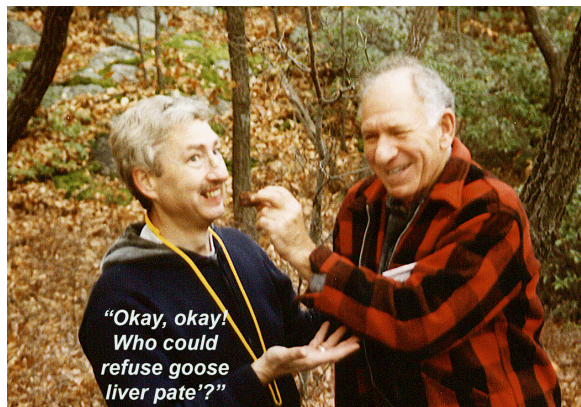
Claude is another story. I suppose, had he not been in semi-retirement by the time he and I hiked together (late 80s and 90s), he might have carried some of the same 20th century gadgetry, however, probably not. He consistently chided me about my compass, maps, and hand-held global positioning system, shaking his head in disbelief that I could not navigate simply by observance of surrounding natural phenomena. I quickly learned that he mostly depended on his keen sense of direction and past, lifelong, hiking experience to find his way. This worked well in Switzerland, where the paths in the mountains are so wide and worn, the way is almost too obvious. However, in New Jersey, he did admit once or twice that a map and compass could be helpful (but never compulsory). This is not to discredit his natural sixth sense about such things, at all however. More than once, the compass in Claude's head proved to be better than my Boy Scout-learned woodsman's skills, compass, map, GPS, intuition and all. Amazingly, he can be relied upon almost every time. But then, there was one time in Harriman State Park when he and I walked an unplanned mile along a busy highway. This hurt his pride a bit.



When I hiked and maintained New Jersey trails as a member of the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, besides my tools, my backpack contained plenty of water, a couple of Diet Cokes, some Oreo cookies, a peanut butter sandwich, an apple, a piece of cheese, and maybe some pretzels. Most of my trips were day hikes, usually 7-10 miles in length, following a careful plan. Using trail maps, I carefully plotted a circuitous route that returned me to the car in the late afternoon (Claude considers such senseless planning a bit trite). He did appreciate the beautiful scenery that he never dreamed existed in his own home state of NJ (like the Bearfort Trail overlooking Greenwood Lake), but always marveled at my preparations. This is nothing to compare with his preparation, however. Namely, lunch!

The first time I saw Claude lay out lunch in the woods was truly amazing. First out of his pack, he produces a bottle of aged French wine. No self-respecting man of Germanic origins would ever dream of taking nourishment without the proper elixir to wash down the cuisine, right?

Next he pulls out a small bag of processed meat the likes of which I have never seen before. Upon inquiry, I learn it is goose liver pate. I am becoming uncomfortable and hide my peanut butter sandwich under the rock I am sitting on. "Goose liver pate." I exclaim, "what in the world is that?" Then out comes the packet of fresh French bread, pre-cut in thick slices of course. He starts smearing the beige pate over its surface. Sure enough, he gives it to me and says, "Try it!" I get a huge surprise, the stuff is excellent. "I knew you would like it," he says, never blinking.

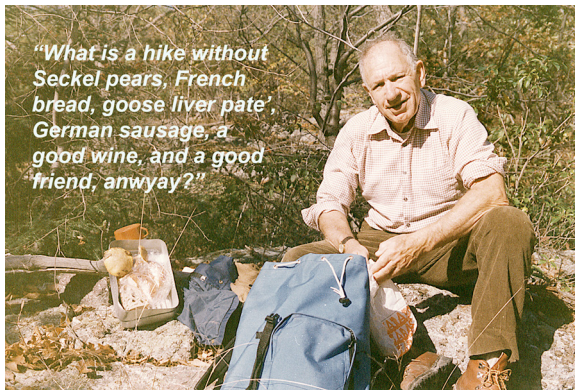


He again reaches into his pack and extracts a small package of German sausage (the high fat and cholesterol stuff); makes perfect sense, I tell myself. I also learn that this is not just German sausage, it is a connoisseur brand, which probably costs \$7 a gram. It too proves to be delicious. Sin is scrumptious. The palate tingles with excitement as the body writhes from the abuse. Next he produces some special ham, pischutto? This also goes on the French bread, after finishing the pate, the proclaimed second course. In between, he is washing down everything with splashes of wine. I am concerned because someone has to drive. I say, "I better lay low on the wine and stick to my Diet Coke." He laughs and says, "Don't worry, with your compass there could not possibly be a problem."

Time for dessert. Claude again reaches into that small but bottomless pack and displays yet another bag, containing some exotic pastry the name of which I cannot remember, but it must have been 3000 calories per bite, boy it was rich. All thoughts of anything which came out of Claude's bag not tasting good are now permanently dismissed. I want to offer something back to him for all the goodies he is giving me, but all I have are Oreos. Quite ashamedly, I give him one and he politely accepts it. The true response is written all over his face as he slowly chews it, then politely says, Interesting.

He professes to like my Colby cheese too, but his cheese, ooh-la-la! It is of Swiss origin and made out of goat's milk. It is very rich indeed. Fruit next, but of course, it is no ordinary apple or peach. It is a small pear called a seckel pear. It is about the size of a golf ball but soft and so sweet your eyeballs fill with tears. This guy really knows what's good. The pears turn out not to be from some exotic part of another continent but purchased at a local farm market. which he takes me to on the way home. While there, I must also purchase some Seckel pears to take home to my wife. How does he know these things? I've been around for almost sixty years myself, I never heard of Seckel pears.

If you have read his two books, *Breaking the Mold* and *Pen Pal*, as I have, you realize that this is no ordinary man. Having personally had the privilege of dealing with Claude Bamberger for many years in the plastics business, I can honestly say that those experiences were among the most pleasant in my career. He operates with high integrity, fair-mindedness, a good sense of humor and sound horse sense, always. He really knows the business, but he will not take advantage of anyone who could fall easy prey to his vast experience (unlike most others in the recycled plastics business). Claude is easily one of the finest and kindest men I've ever known. I was enriched during our time together. I gained a few pounds too."



Claude replied to Ron's story. "We met Ron about a decade ago while doing business with his employer the BASF Company. Actually our first meeting wasn't the greatest. Working for a powerful company as BASF he had a bit of a chip on his shoulder. The product we were buying was a relatively new plastic compound and the manager of the company insisted to sell us this off-grade material on the condition that the material had to be exported. Ron Dugger, his subordinate, scoffed at Mo-Li's quotation of a lower price prevailing on the export market. He said he could get a much

better price. “We know the export market” Mo-Li replied, “There is no way anyone can pay that much.”

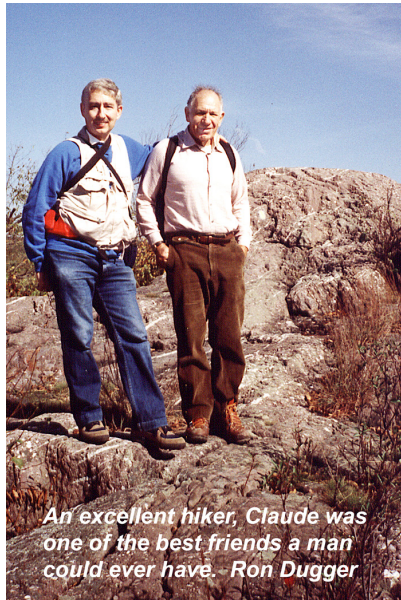
So Mo-Li lost the deal to our competitor, who paid more than we had offered. However contrary to his promises he sold the material to a domestic customer of BASF who used, up to that point, the much higher priced first quality plastic. The transaction backfired when the customer called BASF and complained about the poor quality. After that incident, Ron became a good friend, a good supplier, and was never tempted again to listen to promises of others offering substantially higher prices.

One day Mo-Li came home from a meeting with Ron and said that she had made a date with him to go on a hike. I had met Ron before. He did not strike me as a regular hiker. Anyway, I, heralding originally from Switzerland, took a dim view of New Jerseyites claiming to be hikers. In fact this was my turn to have a chip on my shoulder.

When we met, Ron had a compass and all kinds of fancy gear; ‘*ridiculous*,’ I was thinking to myself. Despite maps and compass we got hopelessly lost on that day and instead of the planned four hours, it turned into an eight-hour hike. I was utterly exhausted, while Ron acted as if eight hours of ups and downs on rocky terrain was the norm.

Many hikes followed and I *always* had a bit of trouble keeping up with Ron. In fact, despite coming from New Jersey, he was a far better hiker than I had ever been.”

But Ron gets the last word:



An excellent hiker, Claude was one of the best friends a man could ever have. - Ron Dugger



Norman Plotkin, as he reflects on his action-packed life, is sensitive to its highs and lows and, surprises, but especially to its opportunities to show others respect.

“I am in the eighth grade,” he tells us, “and take the test for admission to Stuyvesant High School. I am the only student in my class to be accepted. Commuting every day from Brighton Beach in Brooklyn to mid-Manhattan, I am elected to Arista and The National Honor Society. I serve on the school newspaper, The Spectator, and am on the swimming squad. I graduate in the top 10% of my class and declare my major to be chemical engineering. A defining moment!



Next, I am a senior in chemical engineering at the University of Illinois in 1953. All the major chemical and petroleum companies are interviewing on campus. Chemical engineers are in high demand and short supply. I’ve been on several interviews and have scheduled one with Shell Oil Company. I’m deeply involved in a senior research project and forget the interview.

Suddenly 15 minutes into what should have been the interview I realize that I’m missing it and run down the corridors in my rubberized laboratory apron, filthy, grimy and perspiring. I see two immaculately dressed young men peering out from an office. I identify myself, apologizing profusely for my tardiness. They took one look at me, dirty, sweaty, and two of the most beatific grins faced me. What should have been a half-hour interview

ended up taking close to two hours. I had a job offer when I left the office. A defining moment!

I have been awarded a teaching assistantship in chemical engineering at Columbia University in 1955 having been drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953. I complete all my course credits and am working on my Master's thesis when my advisor receives an appointment to another university. I am now married and a father living with my wife's parents while attending university. Two years in the army, two years at Columbia, no significant income and a family to support.

The chemical engineering department wants me to start my research all over because no one wants to advise me on completing my current research. I contact Shell; they immediately offer me a position and I leave graduate school with no degree but I have a job and I'm now supporting my family.

It's now the 1970's and I'm director of Marketing and Sales for Novamont Corporation, a subsidiary of Montedison S.P.A. manufacturing polypropylene. E.I. duPont is one of the largest consumers of polypropylene, a highly desirable customer by any standards and one which Novamont has been unsuccessful in selling. The problem is that although much of what Novamont manufactures is high quality, it is inconsistent and this customer demands the highest quality from their vendors on an every-day basis. I initiate with the cooperation of manufacturing and research a zero tolerance product manufactured to duPont's exacting standards. Any materials not meeting these standards are rejected and reserved for other non-critical applications. Hundreds of rail cars are shipped to duPont with not one rejection. I am elected by the Montedison of Director to be Novamont's Vice-President of Marketing, Sales and Research and Development. A defining moment!

Novamont's sales are significantly exceeding capacity and Montedison's laboratories have developed a high efficiency catalyst. I push for additional capacity and Montedison approves a giant new facility, which is built. This makes Novamont ripe for acquisition and U.S. Steel's chemical subsidiary purchases Novamont and I have a severance package. I am now 52, too young to retire. I do not have a job. Another defining moment!

The petrochemical industry has for all intensive purposes relocated to the Southwest. Within the New York City area there are minimal employment opportunities in the chemical industry. I join Bamberger Polymers owned by Claude's cousin Gerald, and while there, I meet a representative of McGraw-Hill who alerts me to opportunities that are in the chemical and plastic trade publications and I become sales manager for Modern Plastics magazine, then the president and publisher of XIP Target



Marketing magazine, a direct marketing publication. I retire in 1994. By this time my family consists of my lovely wife, Eve (above), Harvard law graduate and former head of the Family Law Unit of the NY Legal Aid Society, three married daughters, all university grads, and six grandchildren.”



Claude’s response to a letter Norm wrote Claude revived their earlier alliance. “Mo-Li and I have a warm feeling in our hearts for Eve and Norman, though we more or less lost touch with them after Norman retired and seemingly devoted all of his time to his grandchildren, whom he adores.

What was unusual about Norman was that despite his high position as a vice president of Novamont Chemical, he “stooped” so low as to actually talk to a scrap dealer. Most people in Norman’s position could not be

bothered to talk to the likes of me and, unlike most corporate bigwigs, he was incorruptible. Most people working for global corporations in some way manage to look out for themselves, using their position to further their own goals, whether they be political or financial. As for Norman, I always had the impression that, rather than lining his own pockets, he looked out for the company that employed him.

One of my best memories is the day I asked him to have lunch with me because I needed the advice of a big corporate wheel. I was having a lot of personnel problems at the time and sought his input on how to go about solving them. In the course of the conversation I also mentioned that Mo-Li had just graduated from a pilot program sponsored by New York University and some global corporations, aiming to persuade recent Ph.D. graduates to pursue a career in big business rather than academia. I said she was looking for a position with a multinational corporation like Novamont, hoping he might offer her a job.

Norman either misunderstood or thought he could solve two problems for me at the same time when he said: "I really don't think you have a problem at all. Mo-Li would be the ideal person to manage your business and solve all these personnel problems. Offer her a job!"

"I was crazy not to have seen this myself. Ultimately, Mo-Li did join our business, and it was the best decision I have ever made in my life. She turned out to be a hundred times more efficient and successful than I had ever been. All this thanks to lunch with Norman."

The embrace of respect and friendship was reciprocated. "I've known Claude Bamberger for more than 25 years," Norman says. "We were part of the Golden Age of Plastics. I met Claude and subsequently, Mo-li, when I was Vice-President of Sales & Marketing of Novamont Corporation, a manufacturer of polypropylene resins and acrylic sheet.

Claude and Mo-li were re-sellers of plastic materials worldwide. Many re-sellers vied for my company's materials. Their livelihood depended on a consistent source of saleable product. I came to know Claude in the '70s when I was marketing director and technical director of a petrochemical company. Claude was in the business of selling off grade material and scrap when available. The off grade was perfectly suitable for many applications but was sufficiently off-spec so that we could not put our label on it. As such, these materials were in great demand by re-sellers and we were contacted by many. We soon came to know whom we could trust. I put Claude Bamberger on the top of the list. He always called for an appointment and kept it once made.

Claude never lost his temper, never raised his voice; he would smile and say, maybe next time. I would smile back and say, 'the sooner the better.'

Most times we came to an agreement and I have to admit to being prejudiced in his favor on a number of transactions. In every business there are companies with questionable business practices. I knew who they were. Claude knew who they were; in many cases they were his competitors. Never did Claude say a negative word about them. Claude positioned his company as how he could help me, not how much better he was than anyone else. He would make his case, they could make theirs.

When Claude introduced me to delightful Mo-Li, I was very impressed with her charm and business knowledge. Claude had many interests outside buying and selling plastics and I think left to his own devices, he might have let the business side slip. But he had Mo-Li and therefore the best of two worlds. He could indulge his other passions knowing that Mo-Li could run the business if he were absent.

If Claude left a legacy, for me personally it might be the way he fostered mutual respect in his dealings with others. One could not help being charmed by his gentleness, warmth and honesty. I learned from Claude that one can be resolute in business and still be civil, that honesty and forthrightness is still the best policy. As for his professional legacy: Claude Bamberger was a giant in the plastics industry and if there was a Hall of Fame, he surely would be one of the earliest inductees.

We didn't socialize much and it wasn't until many years after I was involved plastic industry that my wife Eve finally met Claude and Mo-li when Claude was writing his magnum opus to the plastics industry, with his family as the central theme. I remember how Eve and I were so impressed with his biographical study. It was a pleasure and an honor to have known him and worked with him."