

## Lessons From Life #10 The Luck of Thea Lefki

We have a photo at home, taken about ( by the look of how old dad was ), around the middle of the 1930's. To my knowledge it is the only photo taken of the original Papamanuel clan. It shows my grandparents ( Pappou ) George and ( YiaYia )Maria Papamanuel and their offspring, Thea (auntie) Evangelitsa. Thea Eftihia. Theo (uncle) Mihali. Dad ( Alexander), and the baby of the family THEA LEFKI. "Lefki", by the way, in Greek means, "white". She was indeed that. Whiteness amongst women, of that Greek generation was prized. It showed that you, or your parents had enough money, not to put you out into the fields, to get a darkened, weather beaten face.

Thea Lefki, was born on, 18th January 1922, then again it could have been 1924.....she was always trying to keep us guessing, as to how old she was. Being the youngest, the "baby" of the family, she didn't get to do much back breaking work, planting, growing, and harvesting tobacco. She, more often than not, got to bond with YiaYia ( grandmother ). YiaYia, was the quintessential Greek hypochondriac. Whatever money, the family accumulated, in the '20's and '30's, YiaYia quickly spent it, on trying to fix every imaginary illness, that was bound to come her way... If there is a gene for hypochondria, then Thea Lefki and I, have / had, YiaYia's gene, in abundance.

Our hypochondria gene, manifested itself in different ways, between the two of us... I became a life long vitamin junky, to ward off, and imaginary illness that was sure to come my way.

AND, Thea developed, a life long aversion to germs and bacteria... more about that later, BUT, that gene kept us close, very close, during our time together!

Somewhere around the middle '50's, Thea hadn't as yet married. Most of the eligible young men, in the village, had gone overseas, after the war, so the pickings, in the village, were slim... so dad decided to bring her to Australia... maybe she would have better luck here. That might sound cruel... BUT remember, in my father's generation, ALL marriages, were arranged, even his and mums. So dad wrote to his sister and sent the money across for Thea to come to Sydney.

Back then, there was no email, no phones (and yes, grandchildren NO internet ! ). All the correspondence was done by "snail" mail.

So, somehow along the line, the snail mail, went wrong. Thea was "supposed" to arrive on Monday, at Sydney International Airport, but in actual fact, she arrived on Sunday, early 1957, that was a long time ago, right? Here is a young woman, who had never left the village of Mitilini.

Continued Page 2

## OUR 1<sup>st</sup> INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

May was a busy month for Era. Come to think of it , MOST months are busy. But that's the sort of company, that we are.

We had our first Asian, International Training Conference. Agents & Distributors, came from near and far. We even had some customers come along as well.

The session, took months to plan, & four days, to execute.

I should really thank a cast of thousands, BUT, I would like to single out TONY and DAVE, for their commitment, dedication, and their skills, in driving everybody around ,in the Taragos.

The attendees were;

**Quach Dung**, Behn Meyer (Vietnam); **Li Ming**, Shanghai AChemicals(China); **Juncheon Lee & Jinho Kim**, Il Shin Chemtech (Korea); **Sonny Emerson**, Transworld (Philippines); **Boonlert Wungchareon**, Somwung Chemicals (Thailand); **Tomsir Kusumo** Pt Elastomer Nusindo (Indonesia); **Ronald Ludong & Peter Budianta**, Pt Minindo Jaya (Indonesia)



Dear Mr. George and other Era staff,  
First of all, I really appreciate for Era staff's kind hospitality, training, food and everything last week.  
It was a valuable time to spend with Era people and Asian distributors.  
As we discussed, ILSHIN will make a better business with big customers in the region.  
And to have this training, I will continuously try to find potential customers in Korea with Era items.  
Always thank you for Era people's kind gesture and ILSHIN always try to return Era's favor.  
Thank you again and have a good day.  
Kind regards, **Jinho, Kim**  
**ILSHIN CHEMTECH CO., LTD.**

Conference  
Thank you's!

Tony,  
Thanks for the photos! And thank you very much for all the arrangements. The seminar was truly a great experience. It gave us the opportunity to become more technically equipped, to know more about Era and meet the people behind its success. And of course, we made new friends. We all had a good time with you guys.

Thanks again!

Best regards, **Sonny Emerson**  
**Transworld Trading Co**

Dear George,  
Thank you for inviting us to the seminar we really appreciate the great hospitality from all ERA management, it has been an enjoyable and informative visit for all of us.  
We have gained quite a lot of new product knowledge and knowing that ERA has such a tight quality control in the production gives us even greater confidence to gain more market share in Indonesia. Once again we express our most sincere gratitude to **ERA POLYMERS** and hope that our relationship will continue in the long future.  
Warm Regards, **Tomsir Kusumo**  
**PT ELASTOMER NUSINDO**



### Lessons from Life #10 Continued

She landed in a strange country, expecting to meet her brother.....and NO ONE is there to meet her. She can't call anyone. She doesn't speak a word of English. She doesn't understand anybody, and nobody understands her. She grabs her bag, goes outside onto the road way, sits down on the kerb and cries and cries..

A taxi driver sees her, pulls over, and starts to talk to her. As luck would have it, he speaks Greek. He's in actual fact Cyprian, but that's close enough to Greek, anyway!

All Thea knows is, that her brother lives in a suburb called Paddington, no street, no number, nothing.

She has no money.

The taxi driver says, to my thoroughly distraught ,aunty, " It doesn't matter about the money... I'll help you find your brother."

Back then Paddington, was full of Greeks, Italians ,Cypriots... it was a migrant suburb.. So the taxi driver figures somebody, must know Alexander Papamanuel.

So the poor man drives from house, to house, with a crying young lady in the back, asking if anybody knows Alex..... Nothing.

Dusk falls. My aunty's is ready to have a nervous break-down... she has nowhere to sleep... The taxi driver says he has some friends in Paddington, where she can sleep that night, and they will continue the search the next day.... That's a tough call in its own right, a young woman sheltered by her family all her life, sleeping in a strange house with strangers!

AND probably full of germs, and things that go bump in the Night.. Tough. BUT, the Papamanuel's, are tough people, right!

She meets a young man, at that house, (back then boarders were EVERYWHERE). Actually he's 14 years older than Thea. He's jumped off a ship, and he too, is trying to make his way, in the NEW Promised Land. His name was Chris COSTAKIS. He's also Cyprian.

Something must have clicked between them, that fateful day.

The next day, the taxi driver puts Thea in his taxi, they drive and drive... and EVENTUALLY, they bump into somebody who knows somebody, who knows my dad, and "Thank God" Thea finds, her long lost brother.

Then Mr. Costakis comes a calling ,for my aunty's hand in marriage. He's fallen in love with Thea.

BUT, there's problems... He's been married before. He's even had children from that marriage. That didn't sit well with dad. AND he's a lot older than Thea, In fact, he's older than dad!

### "Global Reach, Family Values"

#### Era's Distributors – Introducing Pharaonic Trading & IC Specialties



**Pharaonic Trading**  
[www.pharaonictrade.com](http://www.pharaonictrade.com)

Sometime in early 2008, Tony and I were in India, manning our stand, at the Utech Show. I had a gentleman come onto our stand Mr. Ashraf El Phraony from Egypt. You know that saying, that it takes 60 seconds to size people up, to know whether you are going to like them. Well 40 years on the road, has taught me ,that 15 seconds is enough. It took that long for me to like Ashraf. Four year later I like him more. I've been to Egypt 3 times. YES, the pyramids

were definitely a supreme highlight of my 62 years on this planet. And yes, walking around them as much as I have, and looking up at them in awe ,I'm convinced that human beings didn't build them without some off world help. And yes, Ashraf and I ,have started some pretty good PU shops. We've made some damn good friends, and the PU business continues to grow there. As does my friendship between myself, Ashraf, his wife Irini, and his staff.



**IC Specialties**  
[www.icspecialties.com](http://www.icspecialties.com)

In business, the old saying that you should never leave any stone / lead unturned, holds true in this case. Somebody in England, and a different person in Germany told me about the same time, in August / September 2011, that a company in Holland, was looking for some of the unique products that we had.. So I tracked down IC Specialties, and the rest is history. I get to see a lot of companies ( and even more people in my travels ) and you cannot imagine

a more professional company in the chemical distribution business. Hein Hoek, ably assisted by Remi Hennink, and the team, are professionals par excellence. The whole business reeks of class. The follow up is superb.. More so the attention to detail. It is a delight doing business with them ... professionals in motion.

### "Handski"

Amsterdam is not the first city people think of when talking about surfing, so it was a pleasant surprise to have an enquiry from there earlier this year from Hans, who was trying to find a company to make a "Handski" for him similar to one made in Australia over 30 years ago.

After meeting Hans at the Utech Show in Holland, we put him in touch with **Axiam Plastics in New Zealand** who made the tooling and produced the parts from high density foam.

Last we heard they were being tested somewhere in Hawaii, and were creating a lot of interest from anyone who saw them.

A new set of Handski's might be on a few peoples Christmas list perhaps?



Continued Page 3

## Lessons from Life #10 Continued

Somehow he talks dad around... AND, if you have ever had the pleasure of meeting Uncle Chris, you'd know why.

He was suave. He was sophisticated. He was a man of the world. He'd been around the world a few times and learnt a darn lot in his travels. (And throughout all his life, I too, was in awe, of Uncle Chris. He knew stuff about stuff, that made a young boy's head turn).

He also helped me through those difficult, awkward teenage years. He never lectured, he only guided. And I was blessed to have known him. And hey, he even taught me how to drive!

So Thea got VERY lucky, because she arrived, in Australia, on the wrong day.

She and Uncle lived happily together for 44 years. They had two girls MARIA and EPHY.

As the years wore on, Thea's hypochondria got worse.. She got into the habit, of washing the fruit and vegetables from the greengrocer in detergent. The cans and packets from the supermarket got the same treatment! Worse still, she would go around the house, detoxifying it, with Methylated Spirits.... Thank you, YiaYia Maria!

The later years, were not kind to Thea. She was wracked with Parkinson's and Osteoporosis. Her shrivelled body, ended up in a wheelchair. Her body ached, and ached. BUT, despite all that pain, and agony, she NEVER lost her intelligence, her sarcasm, her wit, her sense of the ridiculous... and believe it or not, YiaYia's gene followed her, to the end!

In the end, by the way, she couldn't even throw her voice, it came across as a very, soft whisper. You had to put your face onto hers, to hear what she was saying. I would get close, when we met, and I would smother her with kisses, all over her face. She was the last one alive in that photo. She was the last link to my father, and his family. So, I would kiss her, and kiss her, and even Maria, her daughter was in awe..."

"George, you're the only one that she allows to do that to her, because of her fear of GERMS.. WE, her daughters can't even do that!"

And I would reply, "It's OK Maria, we have the same DNA, and, GERMS". And when I would kiss her, she would whisper to me;

"You're the son, that I never had."

Indeed I was Thea, indeed I was.

Thea Lefki passed away on 28th October 2010.

And I still miss her.

## THE COATINGS CORNER

### *Polyaspartic Coatings - The New Coating for Concrete*

You may not know it but **Era Polymers** is a "Total Polyurethane Systems House", supplying all your polyurethane needs, Elastomers, Membranes, Foams and Coatings.

**Era** is very proud to announce the birth of a new technology for concrete coatings.

Its name is *Polyaspartic*. What is behind such a strange name? Quite a beautiful product actually!

*Polyaspartic* is the new generation of polyurethanes for coatings. Because it is aliphatic, the UV resistance is outstanding. Being VOC-free, you get what you apply and without smell. And the good thing is its curing time: just a matter of 1 to 2 hours to be able to walk on it.

It is perfect for indoor or outdoor projects.

But *Polyaspartic* is not only a product, it is a full coating system: flake flooring, granite-like effect, solid colour, gloss or matt, anti slippery finish... the only limitation is your imagination.

Epoxies, Acrylics, Methacrylates, ... shiver!

**Era Polymers Polyaspartic** is on it's way in Australia.

For more information about *Polyaspartic*, contact your local **Era Polymers** Representative.



## LABORATORY NEWS

### New Abrasion Test Method:

Have you ever wondered why some data sheets show fantastic abrasion and others (usually ours!) Show ordinary levels? The answer is how much weight you put onto the sample you are abrading. We have always added 10 Newtons weight whilst others may use lighter weights.

So what have we done....

A new abrasion test method (ISO 4649) has been introduced to replace the old DIN 53512. Both test methods are very similar except the new test method 'ISO 4649' has allowed the introduction of a lighter weight (5 Newton force) to be applied on the sample during the abrasive test. This of course, will result in a more favourable number being obtained showing a 30 to 50% improvement (lower) in the final abrasion result when compared to the old test method using 10 Newton force.

The old standard weight of 10 Newtons will still be used in our datasheets to minimise confusion, however, from now on you may see two weights listed on our datasheets against abrasion resistance. One with 10 Newton force applied (old standard) and another with 5 Newton force applied (new standard).

### Era Polymers launches a New Line of Low Free Monomer TDI Prepolymers

In addition to our conventional range of TDI based prepolymers, Era Polymers is now happy to announce a number of lower free TDI versions for many of our prepolymer grades. Alongside our commitment to produce high quality polyurethane prepolymers it is our responsibility to produce materials that are safer for our customers and for the environment.

"Stripping" as it is known, is the physical process of reducing free TDI. It involves heating prepolymers up to temperatures well above 130°C. We have used, instead of stripping technology, our own expertise, in chemically modifying the prepolymer's design, to lower the Free TDI level in these new grades.

By chemically reducing the level of unreacted TDI, we were able to achieve the following benefits:

- Reducing TDI exposure to the processors
- Increasing material pot-life allowing for easier processing
- Improved physical properties

The following grades are now available:

L-E95A, L-E93, L-E90, L-E83A, L-ETX76D, L-E60D, L-ETL94A, L-ETL91A and L-ETL85A.

If you are interested in trialling any of these please contact your local sales representative.

### Meet the Era Team



**Keith Town**

Away from Era Polymers, Keith is an avid collector of books, with a home library exceeding 4,000 books. Regardless, Keith still looks for more military and naval history tomes as well as crime novels to add to his ever growing book collection. One day we may even see Keith's own writing published combining military, naval, crime and polyurethane history?



**Charine Halim**

I've said it before ,our company is blessed with a plethora of "stars". A lot of them are hidden from view.Charine is half hidden because occasionally she gets to answer the phone. She's a petite girl, but what she lacks in height she MORE than makes up for, in ability. She's a "worldwind" of a girl... She can juggle multiple tasks, all at once,multiple times. She does it with fantastic aplomb. When the front office is short staffed, she rises to the occasion,never complains. Never has a bad day. She just gets on with it.Charine is married to Erik Halim She originally hails from Indonesia. Thank you Charine for being Charine.

**Era Polymers Literature Downloads**  
 Don't forget to visit <http://www.era.pol.com.au/english/Downloads.html> to view or download our latest Brochures, Flyers and Bulletins.

Era Polymers' acquisition of the Pacific Urethanes New Zealand business last year brought with it the acquisition of an enthusiastic and capable team of people. From within this team, Era Polymers also acquired Dr Keith Town, a technical manager who had accumulated close to 20 years' experience working with polyurethane chemistry. Having completed his doctorate in organometallic chemistry, Keith commenced work in the oil industry at BP Oil, then moved into chemical contract manufacturing before seeing the light and joining the polyurethane industry.

From Dunlop Foams to Pacific Urethanes NZ and recently to Era Polymers, Keith has accumulated a wealth of polyurethanes knowledge – including flexible foams, ISF, sprayable and rigid foam systems. Now with a fully equipped laboratory, (Grumpy) Keith is able to offer technical service and product development capabilities to Era Polymers' customers in New Zealand. His experience is also valued by the technical staff in Sydney, which Keith is always willing to share.

### Era Wedding Of The Year

It's nice when people get married ,true? For me, it's especially nice ,when Era people marry Era people. It means that there's love in the air! So, here we have **Irena Handoko** marrying **Eric Yogisaputra** on 24th June.

Irena, spent 4 years in the Elastomer Lab, as a Senior Chemist, and Eric 18 months , in the foam lab.

Now the happy couple live in Jakarta, and look after our business in Indonesia... extra, extra nice. And who's the guy in the left... That's Jimmy Kostouros... Jimmy also works in the Foam Lab. If you want to meet a NICE, gentle , downright great guy, that's Jimmy!

Jimmy traveled all the way to Indonesia to attend the wedding... It was his first time overseas... Nice one, Jimmy.



### BABY NEWS

Wendy & Daniel Handriyanto

Had a Baby Girl !

Name: **Zoe Handriyanto**

Born: 6 Jun 2012

Time: 8.49am

Weight: & Height 3.5kg and 50cm long.



### Tongue Twister

Do you ever wake up some mornings and find that you can't seem to connect your brain to your tongue? Well try what that famous English Actor, Sir Laurence Olivier use to do, say repeatedly:

**"Red Leather, Yellow Leather"** Say it as fast as you can and watch those soliloquies fly!

### Who's new to the Era Team?

Accounts:	Terrence Costa
Receptionist:	Manisha Sharma
Chemist - Elastomers:	Jessica Baker

For more information on any of the products featured in this Newsletter please contact Era Polymers on +61 (0) 2 9666 3788 where one of our representatives will be able to assist you. Alternatively email [era.pol@era.pol.com.au](mailto:era.pol@era.pol.com.au)

#### Strategic Alliances

