



James D. Sawyer

## The Human Factor

Here's a point worth considering as we gather for the Annual Meeting: People really are the most important asset we've got.

I learned this in an unusual way. As my friends and I were beginning to establish ourselves in our careers, we eagerly looked to the day when we would be flush enough to enjoy life's better things.

Jay Kriss was the first of us to reach that point. Crazy about cars, his first goal was to own a brand new one. When he could afford it, he placed an order with the factory so he could get exactly what he wanted: the right model, the right engine, the right exterior and interior colors, the right options.

He waited weeks for the car to be delivered. When it arrived, Jay was as proud of that hardtop as he might have been of his first born. Within weeks, though, a drunk hit Jay's parked car, totaling it.

I felt bad for him. I called it a tragedy. His response surprised me.

"It's no big deal," Jay said. "No one was hurt. And they make cars every day. It takes a lot longer to make a good person."



Arun Varshneya (left) and Edgar Zanotto (right) join musicians in performing a line dance at the ICG banquet.

### Truly Notable People

This lesson comes to mind as I reflect on the many members I have met since coming to ACerS. Accomplished, brilliant, talented, ambitious. And good, warm, decent human beings. The conclusion is inescapable: The Society has a lot of good people who are as notable for their humanity as for their achievements.

George Beall comes to mind. The Stookey Lecturer at this year's GOMD meeting, he impressed me not just with the successes he recounted from his years at Corning, but also with his recognition of the people important to that success. And he was humble (and realistic) enough to mention the projects that *didn't* quite pan out.

You can tell good people even from a distance. I have only dealt with Victor Pandolfelli of Brazil and Aldo Boccaccini of the U.K. via E-mail. Yet they, too, fit the ACerS mold.

For further proof of just how wonderfully human the people of ACerS are, look to the accompanying picture from this summer's ICG meeting. Even though Arun Varshneya received the ICG President's Award recognizing his many achievements, he said, "The highlight of the meeting had to be the banquet night when I and Dr. Edgar Zanotto performed a line-dance on the

stage assisted by the French musicians while delegates from France, Germany, Poland, Turkey, the U.S., U.K., Russia, Brazil, China, Japan, Korea—all were dancing in each other's company on the floor."

### The Staff, Too

ACerS staffers are equally as remarkable. And one in particular needs to be singled out.

Jon Hines, senior editor of the *Bulletin*, marked his 40th anniversary with the Society August 23. He is the rare person with the loyalty, tenacity, patience and perseverance to spend an entire career with one organization.

This month Jon has decided to take a well-earned retirement. He deserves all our thanks for his long dedication to The American Ceramic Society. And I'd like to express my personal thanks to Jon for all he's done to help me get settled in to what to me was the totally new world of ceramics.

Good luck, Jon, and God bless. You'll be missed.

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