

Saluting John Busada, the 99-Year-Old Entrepreneur Who Built a Plastics Legacy

An SPE member for nearly 7 decades, this Navy veteran & son of immigrants created a tubing extrusion company that thrives to this day

By Robert Grace

John K. Busada – a 69-year member of SPE who will turn 100 years old on Sept. 11 – was a classic entrepreneur of the World War II era. Born in Worcester, Mass., as the oldest of seven children, this smart, determined and self-driven son of Lebanese immigrants, earned a chemistry degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1939.

Today, the company that he literally founded in his garage in 1951 – specialist tubing extruder Busada Manufacturing Corp. of Louisa, Va. – continues to thrive under the guidance of his daughter, Jean Busada Jones, and son, Charles.

While still mentally sharp, with an excellent long-term memory, John is hard of hearing now, so Jean and Charles in recent interviews shared some insights about their father and helped to recount his impressive career.

Fresh out of college, young John Boosahda (as his parents originally spelled their name) went to work as a chemist for the Plastics Division of the General Electric Co., where he gained extensive experience in the chemistry and manufacturing of synthetic resins and resin solutions. GE then assigned him to its Laminating Division as treating engineer. During this time, he became familiar with all sorts of manu-



John K. Busada

facturing equipment, such as pumps, heater, driers, conveyors, hydraulic presses, molds and various control equipment.

In 1942, due to his training and experience in the processing of plastics materials, he was assigned to help develop the materials required by the war effort by the U.S. Navy. Through the scope of this work, his knowledge broadened to include phenolics, ureas, melamines, celulosics, acrylics, vinyls and elastomers.

In 1943, Boosahda officially joined the Navy and was assigned to the Research & Development Division of the Bureau of Ordnance, where he focused mainly on resolving manufacturing and production problems. This required him to travel from molding plant to molding plant, with the aim of engineering and setting up efficient thermoplastic and thermosetting molding practices to obtain maximum production with no sacrifice in quality.

In 1945, he began working in the Materials Division of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy's office as plastics material engineer, and as coordinator of

plastics specifications for the Joint Army and Navy Munitions Board. It was then, Charles recounted, that his father met George E. Pickering, who much later (in 1976) would serve as SPE president. In December 1945, while still in the Navy, John married Violet Abraham.

The following year, upon return to inactive duty, he started working for the Boston-based Northern Industrial Chemical Co. as a sales engineer for eastern New England. One day George Pickering came there to chat and was looking for a job. Northern Industrial ended up hiring Pickering. "It was sometime later, according to Dad," recalled Charles recently, "that George ended up eyeing Doris, who was Dad's secretary," and Pickering later married her.

By 1947, Boosahda was a member of both the American Chemical Society and the Society of Plastics Engineers.

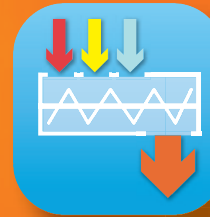
In 1948, he started working for Omni Products Corp. and went abroad to places such as India to offer his expertise in machinery and operations.

In 1951, with a loan from his uncle, he put a down payment on an extruder and rented a garage in Maspeth, N.Y. He



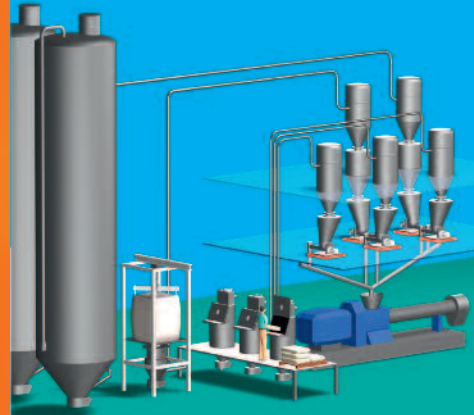
Busada Manufacturing extruded Eastman's cellulose acetate butyrate resin to make clear plastic tubing, such as that shown here (above), which is transporting Dixie Cups made by the firm's first customer, Sweetheart Cups. John Busada launched his company, now 66 years old, in his garage (below) in Maspeth, N.Y.

Photos courtesy of the Busada family



**Automatic
raw material
handling in
continuous
processes**

Automatically Continuous



AZO® Solutions for Continuous Processing:

- Consistent
- Accurate
- Reliable

**AZO®. The No. 1
in mixer feeding**

Right
to the Point

AZO®

www.azo.com

formed a company to make specialized plastic tubing, decided to simplify the spelling of his name, and called his new business Busada Manufacturing Corp.

His first client was Sweetheart Cups, and (though now part of Dart Corp.) they remain a Busada customer to this day. Eastman Chemical Co. supplied the Tenite-brand cellulose acetate butyrate (CAB) that Busada used to extrude its first run of transparent butyrate tubing and pipe. Eastman, still a loyal supplier to the tubing maker, used the end products in its factory as part of the pneumatic systems to move their products.

Long Island Lighting Co. became a client shortly thereafter and used Busada's tubing for underground conduit. One problem, Jean recalled, was that John manufactured 20-foot tubing, and his garage was neither 20 feet wide nor 20 feet deep, so in order to cut the material, John had to open the door, take it outside and turn it around.

In 1958, Busada Manufacturing Corp. finally moved to a real factory building in Flushing N.Y., and 14 years later relocated



Today, Busada's daughter, Jean (left), and son, Charles (right), run the tubing and pipe extrusion company in Louisa, Va.

Photo courtesy of the Busada family

to Hicksville, N.Y., on Long Island. That same year – 1972 – the company built a 20,000-square-foot factory in Louisa Industrial Airpark, in its current location in Virginia and eventually moved the entire business there in 1987.

John “completely” retired about 10 years ago, while in his late 80s. Charles, now 63, left the business to pursue a Ph.D. in theology and was away for some 20 years before returning to the business a few years ago to rejoin his sister in managing the business. Jean, the company's president, will turn 65 this month.

Today, Busada Manufacturing Corp. (www.busada.com) is a growing business that occupies a special niche with a worldwide client base. “We have also expanded our product lines to include tubing and pipe from 0.5” to 10” in diameter,” Jean said. “Most importantly, we can offer many custom configurations – and especially bends in many sizes, degrees, and radii that, when coupled with our tubing, can provide almost any configuration. We have also expanded our materials to include many other different plastics, as well as FDA-approved formulas for food transport.”

“SPE was a resource for him for the entirety of his career,” Charles said. “Dad was into networking. I'm sure that his cohorts in the Navy ... and especially his associates at Omni suggested to him that he join SPE. Dad had a degree in chemistry, but he was seeking guidance from older men with more experience. He was also dealing with many questions from his Indian customers, and I'm sure that he needed the help of a network to learn and answer those questions.

“I recall that Dad was often at meetings and expositions. He networked there and met (and made friends with) people such as Charlie Gatto, Dewey Rainville, Ernie Carmagnola, and others.” A number of these men were just beginning their businesses in the New York area then, so John would have been developing a local network where they would visit each other and innovate together.

“He always had SPE publications on his desk, and they were always open,” noted Charles, adding, “I was young; I thought that he was into James Bond type of stuff.”

Charles said that his father often quipped that he did not know what he was doing half the time, but the key to success was to find someone who he could pay to do it for him.

“Dad believed in doing what he does and doing it well. By meeting other people at [industry] meetings and the like, he would talk over his problems and make business associates. Dad held a tight rein on his business.” This allowed him to develop a niche in the industry and helped him to remain in business through recessions and hard times. “He put his kids and his grandkids through college and kept a bunch of



John Busada married Violet Abraham (left) in 1945, while still active in the U.S. Navy (below).

Photos courtesy of the Busada family



local [Virginia] families in work for 30 years, and still counting."

In 1969 John Busada was inducted into the Plastics Pioneers Association, which describes itself as "an organization of individuals who are persons of accomplishment in the plastics industry, and who wish to foster the bonds of friendship and fraternalism among themselves." Busada also served as a former governor of the PPA.

Charles recounts that his dad "encouraged me to join SPE when I was young in the business. I did, and we went to several expos together."

Having joined SPE in November 1947, Busada holds the honor of being one of the longest-tenured living members of the society. Only Fort Worth, Texas-based Louis H. Barnett – who joined SPE in May 1946 and who will turn 99 years old in November – appears to have been a member longer. (Neither Barnett nor his family could be reached for comment.)

In July Charles said, "My Dad will be 100 years old in two months and the other day he went fishing for the first time in his life. Here he is at 99, going fishing. A companion loaded the fishing rod with the worm and Dad caught two fish. I said, "Boy, I wish I had a picture of that." He said, "I do!" "Where is it?" I asked. He answered, "In my mind."

That sums up my dad for me – the entrepreneur, the generosity of spirit and sense of humor, the optimist." And a professionally successful, highly respected, long-time SPE member.



ALL THE RIGHT RESINS.

FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.

**A capacity for leadership.
In what matters most to you.**

When it comes to PET Resin, DAK Americas® has just what you are looking for...Innovative PET Resins from pioneering research and development, state-of-the-art technologies and market know-how. All from one of the largest producers of PET Resins world-wide. DAK Americas' broad line of Laser+® PET Resins give you exceptional flexibility in meeting your design and production goals. From trade leading products and technical service to recycling, to sustainable raw materials, we continue to demonstrate not just our record of innovation, but our steadfast commitment to you and to the industry. Today, tomorrow, and well into the future... DAK Americas.

dakamericas.com | 1.888.738.2002

Laser+
PET RESIN