

Inventiveness Is His Genius

By Millie Wolff

PALM BEACH, Fla. — "Used atomic waste material is one of the most valuable assets we have," said Robert Sarbacher. "For various political reasons it's not being utilized."

How does he know? He worked it out scientifically for the Shah of Iran where water is almost as scarce as a rhinestone in the Peacock Throne.

"You take the material, convert it into ash for safe transportation, reconvert it into blazing hot rods and use the rods to boil sea water into superheated steam. This steam can also operate a generator to produce electricity as a by-product," he explained.

The same rods could be used to heat the thick oil flow in Salt Lake City's oil wells (we have as much oil there as they have in Arabia, but we can't get it out of the ground because it won't flow—too thick), and the Navy could use the rods to create water in Antarctica.

All this happened back in the early '60s, but the hand that rocked the atomic cradle also wiped the plan off the drawing board. Why? The powerful Atomic Energy Commission had other plans for the money it controlled.

He makes everything he does sound so simple that one is inclined to apply for a job as his shadow. What else has Sarbacher done? He invented the first machine for counting and sorting money. During World War II he was considered too valuable to be in uniform and was retained as a consultant to the United States Navy. And when a "Spot Jammer" was needed to erase the signals from high altitude German bombers endangering our bombers by sending flight information to the German anti-aircraft guns, Sarbacher invented one.

He also developed the Instrument Landing System enabling aircraft to land blind in bad weather.

What sort of a man is Sarbacher? He pops pills, but they're vitamin pills. He's a chain smoker, but he doesn't inhale. Although he's happily married, he has a fine eye for the turn of a slender ankle, and he's named his yacht, Desiree. She's every bit as much of his mistress as her namesake was to Napoleon, and it has taken him to the seven seas in search of pure microbioic enzymes.

He's a triple threat of a man. Baron Robert Sarbacher (the title goes back in the family to the twelfth century in Saxony); Dr. Robert Sarbacher; Mr. Robert Sarbacher. He prefers "Bob."

He's as much at home on the sea and on land as he is in his laboratory. And he's as comfortable in shorts and a T-shirt as in black tie. Most people refer to him as a genius.

Sarbacher is a gregarious man who will spend uninterrupted days and nights in his laboratory in search of a scientific solution. He is worth a fortune but puts much of his money back into his laboratory and admits to being somewhat reckless with the rest.

At 65 years old he has a son, 8, and a daughter, 21, Robin and Roberta. He says he doesn't dig the Palm Beach social scene but dances like a dream.

Sarbacher, a close friend and considerably younger colleague of Albert Einstein, was as much in tune with the late esteemed scientist as the atom splitter's legendary violin.

He recalls walking with Einstein who reached down and picked up some sandy soil, letting it filter through his hand with the comment, "My knowledge is like a grain of sand."

Sarbacher conveys the same degree of modesty whether speaking of his work or showing an interested visitor his original Utrillo and Toulouse-Lautrecs on the walls of his Palm Beach ocean-front mansion or sitting at his working desk on "Desiree."

On his desk are two of the books he has written. "Hyper and Ultra-High Frequency Engineering" is used as a textbook by graduate students in electrical engineering and physics. A 1417-page dictionary "Electronics and Nuclear Engineering" includes everything in the field from Ampere to Zed with Maxwell's quotations somewhere midway.

He holds degrees from nine universities and was dean of the graduate school at Georgia Tech at age 32. He has taught at Harvard, Radcliffe, and the Illinois Institute of Technology. To mention the various industrial, governmental, and scientific boards he has served on would seem like an overstatement.

What have you done lately is not an awkward question to ask a man who can't understand why someone else hasn't done it. He's into microbioic energy conversion and has patented a battery that can last 100 years and shouldn't cost more than one dollar.

He has four patents on his discovery. "Sarbacher shows a tiny four-inch square battery that can fit into the glove compartment of an automobile and that is capable of starting the car. "These batteries can be designed to last any number of years depending upon differences in equipment," he said.

"What kills a battery," he explains, "is the electrolyte eating up the plates. Instead of encapsulating a battery in a conventional way the electrolyte is sealed in little glass berries.

As long as a battery is kept dry it will last forever. Until that glass bottle is broken the battery is factory fresh. You get so much power for so many years. When one battery dies down, a little computer activates the next battery.

He explains that a sequential battery applies to any type of battery, but his enzyme battery (on which he's been working for seven years) has a higher degree of efficiency.

Sarbacher said that the Navy is very excited about this discovery. "The Navy has a transponder beacon that goes into a barrel and is dropped into two- to five-mile water depths so many miles apart. These barrels are direction finders. They



Robert Sarbacher enjoys his yacht for business and pleasure.

send off signals and can tell any ship where it is. But their barrels only last one year at a cost of \$10,000 each. Can you imagine the savings with a barrel holding a 100-year battery?"

Well, it's hard to imagine Sarbacher, but he's for real. And one day if you open a soft drink and a straw pops up — well, Sarbacher was at a party one night where an officer of a soft-drink corpora-

tion told him that they'd been struggling with the problem. No problem for Sarbacher. He told him how to do it. He makes it all sound so simple. Millie Wolff is a free-lance writer.

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Sir William Eden, father of the late Lord Avon, commissioned JAMES M. WHISTLER to paint a portrait of his wife. When the painting was completed and paid for, Whistler, for some unaccountable reason, refused to part with it.

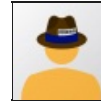
There were some angry scenes and then Eden brought suit. The court ordered the painter to return the money and pay costs and damages. He did. He also did something else, to make sure that Sir William did not get the painting he had wanted so much. He scraped out Lady Eden's face and substituted...

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