



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Huntington District

Castle Comments

Vol. 48, No. 2

March 2003

Mining Corps Lands

District opposes mining East Lynn after lessons learned from Fishtrap Lake, but new legislation eliminates its authority

A boat drifts through a serene summer setting at East Lynn Lake. The Corps worries what mining will ultimately do to this project enjoyed by 300,000 visitors a year. (Photo by Jay Davis)



By **STEVE WRIGHT**
Public Affairs

Despite strong concern voiced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, exploratory core borings to search for coal reserves in Wayne County, W.Va.'s East Lynn Lake are expected to begin this spring.

The right to core bore on East Lynn project lands was granted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through a permit issued in October 2002 to Pen Coal Company.

After continued Huntington District opposition to requests to lease coal reserves at East Lynn Lake, exclusive authority for decision-making over government-owned mineral rights was given to the Bureau of Land Management through language added to the 1999 Water Resource and Development Act by Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.).

Corps opposition to leasing mineral rights was based on environmental concerns related

to potential damage to the lake and project lands. Opposition to Pen Coal's leasing request has been consistent by three district commanders, including Colonels Rich Jemiola, Dana Robertson and John Rivenburgh. The position was also supported in a March 1995 policy statement issued by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Paul W. Johnson that withdrew all civil works project lands from federal mineral leasing.

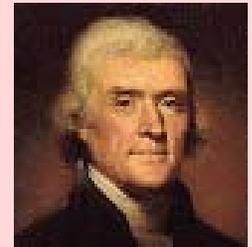
In a May 1999 strongly-worded letter, Jim Zoia of Rahall's staff, rejected the deputy assistant secretary's policy which removed Corps lands from mineral leasing.

"First, the March 1995 policy statement...withdrawing all civil works project lands from the operation of federal mineral leasing is without basis in law," Zoia wrote.

In the same letter Zoia continued that the

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Observing shuttle disaster



Photo by Frank Matthews

Logistics' Randy Blain lowers the Corps flag to half staff in observance of the space shuttle Columbia disaster.

Commander's Corner

February weather hits hard and war deployment felt strongly in district



By COL JOHN RIVENBURGH
District Engineer

This month and for the months in the foreseeable future our Nation, our Corps and our district are facing challenges at home and abroad. We will respond as we always have – with our full energy; throwing your technical expertise, work ethic and great patriotisms into the fight to ensure success.

We experienced significant weather events the last two weekends of February – snow, ice, winds, heavy rains and its associated high water. To many of us, it was business as usual, but to the rest of our district team; it was what I call high adventure every step of the way. The ice storm caused power outages at Grayson Lake and at Racine and R.C. Byrd Locks and Dam and the Point Pleasant floodwall pumps had no commercial power with the Ohio River rising fast. Many projects were without communications. Snow, cold and ice made work conditions for our field folks arduous at best.

Our lakes rose fast and stayed up – Paintsville achieved a pool of record. Yatesville, R.D. Bailey and Beech Fork were at alert pool two weeks in a row. Our resource managers working in concert with Water Control and Dam Safety made it work and we averted loss of life and property with the proper operation of all our projects. We're just getting ready to start the tough work, cleaning up and getting ready for the recreation season. Connie Conley (Contracting) and her family lost everything from their home in Salt Rock; so once again the reality of the disaster hits close to home.

The men and women of our Armed Forces are deploying in for potential operations against Iraq and in support of continued operations in Afghanistan. John Cidila (Customer Service), Joe Trimboli (Planning), Dan Bailey (Planning) and Norm Spero (OC) have left their families and are deployed. Spouses are also on their way to the front (Rick Mullins, Ginger Mullins' husband) and I expect there are moms and dads whose children are deployed. They are ready to execute their assigned missions – remember them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

All the deployed forces need and deserve the expertise and capability of our Corps of Engineers. Teams made up of our Corps' great employees are already deployed to provide engineering services, linked to home station with telecommunications suites that allow them to harness the expertise of all 35,000 members of our Corps. Volunteers like you and I make up these teams and the need will increase before it decreases. Steve Craig (Logistics) and Gerry Otwell (Program Management) are preparing to deploy to the Central Command Area of Operations. We will also be called upon to meet our housing team requirements in support of disaster relief missions (five folks are now home from supporting POD in relief from the super typhoon in Guam). Folks with all types of professional skills are needed and I ask you to take a look inside and volunteer if it is the right thing to do for you and your family. Our Regional Business Center will look across the Division to meet requirements caused by the deployment of team members.

I thank you all for all you do every day and for all you will do. May God bless every one of you and bless our United States of America.

Corps made provisions to protect future projects from mine degradation

By MIKE SMITH

Team Leader, Recreation and Resource Branch,
Operations and Readiness Division

The beautiful lands and waters that make up the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects are one of the Corps' greatest attributes. Much of the property in the Huntington District — close to 250,000 acres — is managed for recreational opportunities for the 30 million visitors which come to see our projects each year.

With the blessings of a diverse environment attracting millions of people, district employees are charged with an awesome responsibility. On a daily basis, we work to provide healthful, safe, family-oriented recreation opportunities for everyone. To complete this task, management of the many competing forces vying for the limited available resources at the project is of utmost importance.

A team effort by district and field employees screens every request to utilize these resources against mission requirements of the project. Our review tries to balance resource use versus sustainability of the lands and waters for future generations.

Since the district began buying land, there have always been those wishing to use public property for private gain. Sometimes the gain benefits many, including uses for things such as water supply, hydroelectric power or easements for roads or public utilities. Other times the benefit is smaller, like an easement only benefiting a single individual to be used for a garden or a driveway. However large or small, public or private gain of using government property is weighed with an overriding environmental stewardship concern for our mission to conserve the natural resources with which we are entrusted. This mission must be consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.

Many of the projects, particularly in the southern part of West Virginia, eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia, are located in an area abundant with mineral deposits. These are primarily coal, natural gas, and to a lesser extent oil. Development of and/or extraction of minerals is always environmentally disruptive. The challenge is to manage impacts or degradation of the ecosystem to ensure adverse impacts are minimized to the least extent possible. As part of the history in the Huntington District, a hard lesson has been learned.

Coal mining on environmentally sensitive lake projects can lead to near ecological disaster. In the 1960s, Fishtrap Lake was built in Pike County, Ky. During the land acquisition of the project, mineral ownership was retained by those who had title to the property, while the government purchased surface rights. This multipurpose flood control project soon was affected with rapid siltation, degraded water quality from severe land abuses rampant in the drainage basin. On the project itself, surface



A foul smoulder releases from this venting area from a mine fire on project grounds at Fishtrap. The mine fire been burning for more than 10 years. (Photo by Willie Whitaker)

subsidence, mine blowouts, and underground mine fires all contributed to a decision to acquire both surface and mineral rights at all projects in the future.

The lessons learned at Fishtrap Lake and other coalfield area lakes, reinforced the fact that development of federal minerals at East Lynn Lake is inconsistent with the purpose and missions of the project.

For this reason, 121 different property owners had their mineral rights condemned in 1977 to match surface acreage already acquired by the Corps. Many of the mineral rights were owned, not by big companies, but by those whose individual small family properties had already been taken by the Corps. The one big property holder was Columbia Gas, which held more than 16,000 acres.

At the time mineral rights were taken, there was concern voiced by reluctant "Mom and Pop" family-type holdings that the government would eventually become a land agent for big coal. Government representatives at the time promised their former land would not be stripped of its coal. Land agents for the Corps had good justification to think this was the case. The fact that the government eventually paid \$55 million for the severed mineral rights from Columbia Gas seemed to be a guarantee the land would be protected from future development.

Now, 25 years later, there is an emergency coal lease application being reviewed by the Bureau of Land

See coal rights page 7



*Photo by David Scragg
A monarch flutters on wild violet. This is just one of many thriving wildlife scenes at East Lynn Lake in contrast to the polluted scene above.*

Corps history shaped by Jefferson presidency

By STEVE WRIGHT
Public Affairs

This year, Americans celebrate the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the Lewis and Clark 1,000 days of exploration in “the interior of the continent of North America.” But the Lewis & Clark expedition was just one event during the Jefferson presidency that shaped what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has become today.

President Thomas Jefferson personally assigned the mission of exploring the Pacific Northwest to Army captain Meriwether Lewis, including the mission of “finding the most direct and practicable water communication (route) across the continent.”

In assigning that mission of finding a water route across the continent (often referred to in history as the “Northwest Passage”), Jefferson clearly focuses on the need to use American rivers for transportation. He also sets the precedent of looking to the military, specifically the Army, to expand knowledge of potential river travel and civil works involvement.

Besides the Lewis and Clark Expedition, three other events during the Jefferson presidency (1801-1809) profoundly affected the evolution of U.S. Army’s civil works responsibilities provided by the Corps.

After each war that America has fought, the Army had undergone a reduction in force, and the Revolutionary War was no exception. After the Revolutionary War, the Corps of Engineers was disbanded in 1783, as part of the reduction of the Army. In March 1802 Congress passed an act that again reduced the size of the Army, but Section 26 “authorized the President (Jefferson) to organize and establish a Corps of Engineers.”

In Section 28 of the same act, Congress added that the principal engineer of the Corps of Engineers would also be superintendent of the military academy. On the basis of this legislation, Jefferson reestablished the Corps of Engineers. Concurrently, he signed legislation establishing the U.S. Military Academy in 1802 under the oversight of the Corps.

As such, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point became the nation’s first engineering school, and served as the nation’s only engineering school until 1835. Trained by the academy’s civil engineering curriculum, West Point graduates were largely responsible for building the bulk of the nation’s initial railway lines, bridges, harbors, and roads for the first half of the 19th century.

In meeting these nation-building civil works missions, Army engineers became the nation’s engineers. This was the fruition of a concept of Secretary of War, James McHenry, who recommended establishing the military academy to produce engineers capable of serving the nation in military and civil works capacities.

“We must not conclude...that service of the engineer is limited to constructing, connecting, consolidating, and

keeping in repair fortifications,” said McHenry in 1800.

“This is but a single branch of their profession...Their utility extends to almost every department...besides embracing whatever respects public buildings, roads, bridges, canals, and all such works of a civil nature.”

Another key event of the Jefferson presidency was the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The U.S.

wanted to acquire the port of New Orleans, and Jefferson dispatched James Madison to assist Robert Livingston, ambassador to France, with authority to acquire New Orleans for \$2 million.

Controlling this key port was important to the new, expanding nation. Settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains into the Ohio Valley underscored the need for waterborne commercial transportation down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. New Orleans was the keystone of the inland navigation opportunity.

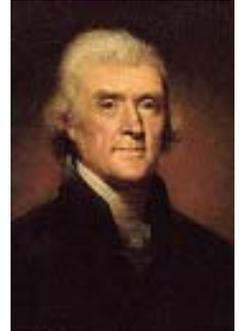
Due to a unique set of events, the French surprised the American negotiators with an offer to sell New Orleans plus the lands between the Mississippi River on the east, the Rocky Mountains on the west, the Gulf of Mexico on the south, and the Canadian Border on the north. All for the bargain price of \$15 million.

The Americans accepted this offer and, with the stroke of a pen, secured the port of New Orleans and doubled the size of the U.S.

Of course, such a huge tract of land needed to be explored. The Lewis and Clark expedition was a carefully planned high-tech military expedition, and its exploits are now the stuff of legend. For two-and-a-half years, Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery, soldiers and civilian team members, explored the Louisiana Purchase. They made detailed maps and scientific observations, interacted with the native tribes, and assessed the land’s economic potential. Beginning this year, the nation is commemorating the expedition’s 200th anniversary.

With these newly acquired lands, Army engineers were needed more than ever, and their work carved the Army’s civil works missions in stone. Army engineers explored and mapped land. They developed inland rivers and coastal harbors for navigation. They built roads, canals, locks, and dams.

Thus the Corps of Engineers established its nation-building capabilities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The Corps’ civil works legacy is rooted in four key events of the Jefferson Presidency — reestablishment of the Corps in 1802, establishment of the U.S. Military Academy under the Corps supervision in 1802, the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and the Lewis and Clark expedition from 1803 to 1805.



Thomas Jefferson

Student of the month

Rick Brown

**Student Ranger, Yatesville Lake
Nominated by John Uppole
Ranger, Yatesville Lake**

Quality of Work

Rick Brown has worked at Yatesville Lake for two years as a Student Aid. During this time Rick has demonstrated outstanding initiative and work ethic. He consistently exceeds the expectations of my supervisor and me in regard to his assignments and his willingness to take on new projects. Due to his abilities and understanding of the complexities of tasks assigned, he requires minimal supervision. Rick conducts himself as a professional and provides input and ideas that make the workplace and the project a safer and more productive place to work. In addition to his work as a Student Aid, Rick maintains high scholastic standards by maintaining a 3.9 Grade Point Average (GPA).

Dependability

Rick takes pride in his work and in achieving the objectives of the task assigned. I know if I ask him to perform a task it will be accomplished in a timely manner and completed with the highest quality and care. When given several tasks to perform Rick's abilities and knowledge of the job provides him with a means to prioritize tasks effectively. He is punctual when he is suppose to be



Rick Brown, Yatesville Lake

somewhere at a prescribed time and usually arrives to work 15 to 20 minutes prior to his duty hours

Attitude

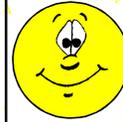
Rick demonstrates an optimistic attitude and is able to find the best in the worst situations. In dealing with the public, he exhibits a professional, courteous and friendly attitude. When overloaded with assignments to be completed in a limited time frame Rick doesn't waste his time debating his work load instead, he pursues each appointment to its completion. Because of his helpful attitude Rick is well liked and respected by the visiting public especially sportsmen, who he shares outdoor interests with.

Die hard fisherman

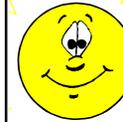


Two fisherman break their way through ice in a small John boat at Fishtrap Lake Feb 3. The lake surface is 80 percent frozen.

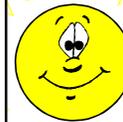
Smiles out to:



Kent Browning for participating in shadowing by a Madison Elementary School 4th grade student Feb. 10.



Terry Noble for participating in shadowing by a Cabell-Midland High School student Feb. 13.



Dave Meadows and the team from EC-CE for sponsoring an intern student from South Point High School.



Jay Aya-ay, John Clarkson, Kim Davidson, Matthew Gibson, Brenden McKinley, Vince Marchese, Jeff Maynard, Raynell Napier, Terry Noble and Barry Passmore for participating as judges for the Fairland West Middle School Science Fair Feb. 13.



Peggy Noel and Chuck Minsker for participating as judges for the Village of Barboursville Elementary School Social Studies Fair Feb. 24.



Peggy Noel for participating as a judge for the Martha Elementary Social Studies Fair Feb. 14.

East Lynn

Continued from page 1

refusal to consent to the proposed lease was done in an “arbitrary and capricious manner,” without consideration of the fact that underground mining was being proposed. Zoia also said several hundred jobs were at stake in an economically depressed area dependent on mining at East Lynn.

The mineral rights for coal at East Lynn Lake were acquired by 121 separate tracts on a total of 24,000 acres. Columbia Gas Company was the largest holder of mineral rights with 16,000 acres. Since Columbia Gas and the Corps had a differed in opinion of the value of the mineral rights, their interest was acquired by eminent domain, in the U.S. District Court. In 1991, the court decision resulted in a payment of \$55 million including interest to Columbia Gas for their East Lynn mineral rights. The remaining 8,000 acres was split among 120 mineral rights holders, who were paid a combined total of \$500,000 for their mineral interests.

Twenty-five thousand acres of land, excluding mineral rights, were acquired in the 1960s. In 1977, six years after the lake was completed, the mineral rights for coal reserves on East Lynn Lake lands were acquired to assure the integrity of the project, according to the Corps Real Estate Division’s Ken Bumgardner.

“Based on experiences at our Kentucky Lake projects, particularly at Fishtrap Lake, we wanted to protect the project from mining,” Bumgardner said. “Problems there were so severe, that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) investigated the project. Following this investigation, Congress directed the Corps to acquire rights that would eliminate problems such as those that occurred at Fishtrap Lake and appropriated money to accomplish this task.”

Fishtrap Lake, located near the Virginia border in Kentucky just outside Pikeville, Ky., was completed in 1969. By this time, adverse conditions related to coal mining had severely degraded the lake and project lands. Given these conditions, the

Commonwealth of Kentucky withdrew from its recreation development cost-share agreement with the Corps of Engineers, according to Arlie Bishop, Operation Division’s Chief of the Technical Support Branch.

Bishop said the lake’s project purposes authorized by Congress were at risk due to surface and deep mining activities on project lands and in the watershed. These purposes included flood reduction, recreation, fish and wildlife conservation and water quality improvement on the Levisa Fork during low-flow and drought conditions.

The most dramatic mining-related problem at Fishtrap Lake continues to be a mine fire – a 11-year-old mine fire. It initially started when an exposed coal seam caught fire during a forest fire in 1992. The ongoing fire has been impossible to extinguish and continues to burn within abandoned tunnels and mine works, according to Bishop. This mine fire ignites overlying coal seams and accumulated organic material, within subsidence areas, creating new forest fires in an unending cycle. This condition makes large portions of the project lands unavailable to the public for use and enjoyment due to safety concerns.

“We can’t fight forest fires at Fishtrap at night in this previously mined area, because there is a chance someone might fall into subsidence holes,” Bishop said. “Air quality and the smell of sulfur from the coal fire is terrible, especially in the winter.”

In addition to continuing fires, heavy sediment loads or suspended solids from mining have entered the lake, deposited themselves on the bottom, and have reduced Fishtrap’s

Present



Photo by David Scragg

The East Lynn campground resembles a golf course in this photo.

flood storage capacity, according to Bishop.

“Sediment loads are reducing the life expectancy of the Fishtrap Lake project,” said Bishop. “Because of this, we no longer drop the lake 30-feet from summer to winter pool. If we did that we wouldn’t have a lake, just an expanse of sediment.”

Sediment is a problem for all lakes according to Danny Boster, chief of the Huntington district’s soil section.

“The end state of lakes is to fill with sedimentation, however, mining greatly accelerates that process, Boster said.”

Depending on the circumstances both acid and non-acid mine drainage also enters the lake. Water filling the old mine shafts and building pressure causes blowouts where water erupts from hillsides causing landslides, flooding and further degrading water quality in the lake, according to Dr. George Kincaid, head of the district’s water quality section.

“Waters influenced by mining activities are degraded. They can be acidic, contain high mineral content, and metals such as iron, manganese and selenium. This then affects the water quality in our streams and lakes,” said Kincaid.

The Fishtrap Lake experience led District Commander Col. Scott Smith (Lt.Gen., ret.), in 1977 to push to

Mining near East Lynn



Photo by David Scragg
The Pen Coal mine opening is close to East Lynn Lake project lands.

Fishtrap post mining



Photo by Willie Whitaker
Smoke issues from one of Fishtrap's subsidence cracks. Corps experts fear such disturbances are in East Lynn's future.

acquire coal mineral rights to the 24,000 acres at East Lynn Lake. As a result, mineral rights were acquired through eminent domain and U.S. Marshals were dispatched in September 1977 to stop all mining activities on federal lands at East Lynn Lake.

Lessons learned at Fishtrap Lake and in other coalfield area lakes have served to reinforce that development of coal mining at East Lynn Lake remain incompatible with the original purpose and mission of the project, according to

Mike Smith, former East Lynn Lake Manager and now Operations Division's Recreation and Resource Branch Team Leader.

In spite of these lessons, East Lynn Lake is now suffering some of the same problems that Fishtrap did. Since the initiation of mining in the watershed above the lake, sedimentation has increased with increased mineral content in the water and water quality is being degraded. Lower water quality has resulted in increased cost to operate the East Lynn's water-treatment

plant by \$100,000 annually said Smith

Now, years after both land and minerals were acquired to protect the integrity of the East Lynn Lake, mining activities in the drainage basin and proposed mining activities on project lands are threatening to destroy a source of enjoyment for the 300,000 visitors annually who make their way to East Lynn shores and surrounding lands every year.

"The lake is a beautiful jewel in West Virginia," said Smith. "I hope it remains that way."

Coal rights

Continued from page 3

Management (BLM) at East Lynn Lake. They have approved a drilling plan and permit to access coal reserves. The Corps has been removed from management oversight of minerals at East Lynn Lake by legislation. While the Corps continues to have grave concerns about developing minerals at East Lynn, the decision to do so is now managed by another agency.

Undoubtedly, there will be short-term economic gains with the proposed coal mining; however, long-term consequences of extracting coal jeopardize the economic viability of the area by lessening the flood damage reduction potential of the project. In addition, possible

degradation of the overall environmental quality of the lake not only impacts the recreational opportunities for the public, but habitat losses in the fish and wildlife program resulting from mining activity are probable.

In 1999, the economic impact of the recreation program at East Lynn Lake stood at more than \$2.5 million in income from gross sales of \$5 million within 30 miles of the project. Further economic benefits of the project include flood damage reduction in excess of \$64 million for those living downstream in the Twelvepole Valley and along the Ohio River since the dam was finished in the early 70s. To endanger the primary economic contributions of the recreation program and possibly the flood

damage reduction program for short-term mineral extraction gains should be undertaken only after serious study.

As environmental stewards of lands and waters owned by the U.S. Government, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers takes seriously the responsibility to ensure the lands, waters, and facilities of East Lynn Lake are capable of sustaining project missions not only now but for generations to come. It is for these reasons, the Huntington District, with approval by Congress, purchased the property, including minerals, with the intent of protecting an important but fragile environmental resource enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

Clowning around

Project manager says it is all about bringing a smile to someone

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

Project Managers don't have much time for clowning around, but away from work that's just what Dwight Smith lives to do.

On weekends it's not unusual for him to replace his sensible tie with a green sequin bow tie, paint his face, wear a wig, put on an outrageously colorful getup and change his name to Peppy the Clown.

"People ask me all the time why I clown. It's the kids—bringing a smile to a face whether they are 1 or 101. I know it sounds corny, but that's what I do it for."

Smith fell into clowning when he joined the El Hasa Shrine Temple 16 years ago after transferring to Huntington District from Vicksburg, Miss. He chose the Shriner's clown unit after observing it could use some new members. "Two of the older clowns took me under their wing and showed me how to put on makeup and helped me get started."



Photo by Camelot Studios
Locally Peppy the Clown is as familiar to the public as the woman in the photo, without her costume that is. WSAZ newsanchor Susan Nicholas is the clown seen with Peppy at a ice skating show with the Huntington Figure Skating Club.

With a few balloon and magic tricks and some costuming help from his wife Rita Smith, of Human Resources, Peppy the Clown was born.

"One time back when I first started clowning and didn't know much about what to do, I went to St. Mary's hospital to visit a Huntington District employee who was shot in a turkey hunting accident. The nurses asked me if I would go to the children's ward but warned there was a room I may not want to go in."

"I visited all the kids and agreed to go visit this particular room. It was a 15-year-old girl with a brain tumor and not much time to live. When I walked in, she got this big smile on her face. I joked with her for a while, but normally when I leave, I say, 'When you get well, look me up and I'll come see you.'"

Knowing he couldn't say this to her, he said his good-bye and walked out of her room and cried.

This isn't the only time either. There are countless stories Smith can tell of cheering up children in all types of hopeless situations from the Shrine hospitals to special Olympic events to the Make-A-Wish program.

In fact, one third of all Smith's clowning goes toward these and other worthwhile causes. Last year he did 20 birthday parties and 11 volunteer activities. On average, he comes out partially in the green, but mostly tries to break even with his expenses. This doesn't include his time which ends up taking a half hour for his face, 20 minutes full costume, travel time and his hour or more length of show time.

Whether it's a volunteer event or a child's memorable birthday party, every show is different, Smith says.

His shows include lots of jokes with sheer nonsense, puppets, magic tricks and end with balloon animals. Any age can appreciate his skill. Peppy's known to throw a few jokes across the room to adults and his magic tricks aren't exactly elementary.

Structural Engineer John Clarkson says Peppy is definitely a hit at his house.



Peppy the Clown (AKA Dwight Smith) before his performance at the Huntington District Circus in Huntington. Smith began clowning in 1994 and also clowns as Sparkles and Hobo the Happy Clown.

He's performed three times and been requested four, but had to decline for a volunteer event. "We had him at our house three times and the kids thoroughly enjoyed him. Even the adults stayed and enjoyed the show instead of just dropping their kids off and saying good-bye."

Clarkson says Smith brings a lot more to the whole clown act than just the costume and makeup. "You can tell he knows what he is doing."

Although noticeably skilled, Smith found treating clowning as a serious art form wasn't for him. "Once I entered a clown competition and got wrote up pretty badly. I said to myself, 'That's tough. It's just me.'"

Instead Smith says he finds priceless value in the difference he is able to make. He recalled several episodes where he visited a discouraged sick child not knowing what to expect, or exactly what to do or say, but somehow made all the difference. "There was this 14-year-old girl in full body cast

one's face



Photographer unknown

friends a girl in a wheelchair at a Shrine's event as Peppy 16 years ago with the Shriners. He says,

who I visited. She had gone through a terrible operation and had to repeat it again on Thursday."

With her spirits obviously broken, the child shut down. Her family spotted Peppy visiting other children and talked him into seeing her. "I'll give it a try," he said

To her family's amazement Peppy broke through her unresponsiveness.

The same thing happened with another girl, only 4, in shock after a devastating surgery. As the girl laughed and became interested in Peppy's puppet, her mother sobbed.



Photo by Pat Keeling

Dwight Smith talks to Pat Keeling's second grade class this year about the history of Groundhog Day.

"I told her 'I'm sorry ma'am.' She said, 'You don't understand. That's the first she's been responsive to anyone or anything.'"

His wife Rita sees the obvious value in what he does. "He enjoys doing it and the kids enjoy seeing him."

When asked if her husband was a kid himself, just plain big-hearted or someone who lives to make people laugh, she said a little of all three.

Of course, not everyone is a fan of clowns. "I usually know the minute I look in their face," Smith said. In these cases he simply backs off or finds a way to befriend them.

Experience and a desire to make people laugh seem to get him through every challenge. He says his biggest challenge was the time he clowned for a special education class that had a mix of students that were deaf, in wheel chairs and autistic.

One such occasion that didn't exactly have the elements for success, but ended up being one of his biggest was the time he clowned for a nursing home in Huntington. He came up with the idea

of the patients inviting their grandchildren along for the event. As the youngsters laughed at Peppy, the older folks basked in their delight. "One elderly lady told me that it was like being a kid again."

Smith admits the some of the benefits of clowning are reciprocated to him. To be on the receiving end of a smile is all the therapy Smith needs, especially after a bad week.

And he will be the first to profess, laughter really is the best medicine.

Volunteer work of Peppy the clown



- Make-A-Wish Program in West Virginia and Pennsylvania
- Muscular Dystrophy Bass Tournament, Huntington
- Cancer Day, Huntington and Chesapeake, Ohio
- American Red Cross, Huntington
- Starting Point Family Resource Center, Crum, W.Va.
- Special Olympics, Huntington and Chesapeake, Ohio
- Elementary School Carnivals, Meadows Elementary and Chesapeake Elementary
- Public Libraries, Ceredo/Kenova, Gallagher Village and Guyandotte
- Assisted Living and Nursing Homes in West Virginia and Pennsylvania
- Octoberfest in Chesapeake, Ohio
- Various Christmas parties for underprivileged children
- Musical Arts Guild, the play "Mame"
- Local hospital visits
- Shrine hospitals in Lexington, Ky. and Erie, Penn.
- Shrine Circus in all three tri-states
- Clown ministry program in three churches (teaches youth the basics of clowning to visit nursing homes and perform skits in front of church)

Planning for future goes beyond retirement

Majority of Americans do not have a will

By **CHUCK MINSKER**
Public Affairs

It may be the most important legal document needed by the average citizen, yet over 70 percent of American adults do not have a will.

There are lots of excuses for not having one: you may think you're too young to need one; or that you can't afford an attorney; or perhaps you just don't have time to think about it. Perhaps you just don't want to think about it.

But there are important reasons why every adult should think about getting a will. It gives you a measure of control over the care of your family and the disposition of your property in the event of your death - otherwise state law will make those decisions.

A will can be used to set up a trust fund to provide for a minor,

and a trustee to oversee it. You can also name a guardian if your children are left without a parent.

Many members of the Corps are active in the military, and they may get called up at any time. Supervisory General Attorney Norman Spero serves with a unit of lawyers and paralegals covering a four-state area. He said, "My reserve unit writes wills for reservists. I stress the importance of advanced planning. When a soldier is standing in line to mobilize with hundreds of other deploying soldiers, ready to leave the country, they may not have previously given a great deal of thought to estate planning."

It's something you should discuss with your family. Spero said you should give Power of Attorney to someone you trust, so they can conduct your business while you're gone. That would allow someone to cash checks, sell real estate, manage your taxes and title your car - in other words, manage your estate.

There are several ways to set up a will. The easiest is to contact a lawyer, although there are on-line sites you can visit and other help kits that are available. "You can have a will drawn up in five minutes," Spero added. "But does that get the job done?"

A good will plans for almost every eventuality. Future questions about incompetence, the value of your life insurance, health care and even organ donations can be covered.

If you already have a will, you may think you have nothing to worry about - but is your will current? If your life has changed significantly since your original will was drawn up, you may want to bring the document up to date.

With a will prepared (or up to date), you'll have one less thing to worry about. It will look after your family and your possessions when you can't, and (perhaps best of all) it's a smart thing to do.

Repair fleet leaves Marietta Station



Photo by Rick Buckley

The traveling Repair Fleet moves on to the next job, leaving behind the Marietta Repair Station, Feb. 23.

Tactful ways to divide estate

Estate attorneys have probably seen it all when it comes to heirs battling over the possessions of a family member. The argument over Ted Williams' DNA had to be one of the more quirky ones in recent memory. But the fights aren't always over millions of dollars; often, family members can lose their cool over little things.

While most people are mindful of listing beneficiaries on their insurance policies, stock portfolios and valuable antiques, they forget about the more sentimental items. Discussing who gets what upon one's death isn't the most enjoyable activity at a family gathering. So what to do with the white elephant in the living room, like the one

sitting in the curio cabinet?

Experts advise overcoming the awkwardness and calling the family together for a who-gets-what meeting. Find out which items mean the most to whom, and label things accordingly. For highly coveted items, hold a family auction. The highest bidder wins the loot, with the value deducted from their share of the inheritance. It's wise to have all property appraised beforehand to ensure one child's bounty is not worth more than another's. Once the recipients are determined, highly valued items should be given out before death to decrease the estate value for tax purposes.

—adapted from the Chicago Tribune

Free training available through FWP seminar

By **CHUCK MINSKER**
Public Affairs

Building a Team. Personal Motivation. Conflict Resolution.

Those are just a few of the skills you can learn more about when you attend the 24th Annual Federal Women's Program Training Seminar on April 2 and 3.

The seminar, which is offered free of charge to the public, will take place at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Huntington and will offer 20 workshops. The classes offered include: Interview Skills; Resume Writing; Time Management; Pre-Retirement Training; Effective Communication; Balancing Work/Life and more than a dozen other workshops.

The seminar is being organized by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

The keynote speaker for the

seminar will be Dr. Susan Duncan, the Director of Human Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In this capacity she is responsible for all policies related to civilian and military personnel. Dr. Duncan received her bachelors and masters degrees at Marshall University, and her Doctorate of Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. Dr. Duncan is a recipient of the Meritorious Civilian Service Award and The Presidential Meritorious Rank Award.

Those wanting to attend the seminar will have an opportunity to register online at a later date.

Awards will be presented at the event to honor the District Office Woman of the Year, the Field Office Woman of the Year, the District Office Supervisor of the Year and the Field Office Supervisor of the Year.

For more information, contact Tracy Baker at (304) 529-5214.

SESSION I

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

2:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

- So You're the New Team Leader?
by Skip Gebhart
- How Golden are the Golden Years?
by Charlene Farrell & Andrew Miller
- Winning Conflict
by Sharon Thomas
- Motivation
by Dr. Susan Duncan
- Humor at Work
by Dr. Lorraine Anderson

SESSION II

Thursday, April 3, 2003

8:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

- *Let's Talk!*
by Skip Gebhart
- The Well
by Aila Accad
- Managing Difficult People
by Sharon Thomas
- EEO Tips and Pitfalls for Managers and Supervisors
by Geneva A. Lares
- What You Should Know BEFORE You Retire
by David Darkow

SESSION III

Thursday, April 3, 2003

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- Meetings that Work
by Skip Gebhart
- The Perfection Myth
by Aila Accad
- Balancing the Work/Life Scale: An Approach to Wellness
by Sharon Thomas
- UHHHH?
by Charles P. Stump
- What You Should Know BEFORE You Retire (continued)
David Darkow

SESSION IV

Thursday, April 3, 2003

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

- Build a Great Resume
by Skip Gebhart
- Team Building
by Aila Accad
- *What's Your Emotional IQ?*
by Sharon Thomas
- *Attitudes for Life! How to Develop and Maintain a Winning Attitude*
by Charles P. Stump
- *What You Should Know BEFORE You Retire (continued)*
by David Darkow



Photo by Johnson's Photo

Senior Co-Chair Jan Mayes and Junior Co-Chair Tammy Fudge head up this year's Federal Women's Program Training Seminar.

Mascot fun for kids, but not always for person inside costume

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

Not many employees would consider it within their job description to dress up like a squirrel and entertain children, but there are some devoted field employees who do it without complaint.

Safety Squirrel became the Huntington District mascot to promote water safety to children during the 80s after a series of drownings at Corps projects, according to Ranger Paige Cruz.

The campaign was a joint effort between Safety Office, Operations and Public Affairs. "We had lots of characters to choose from. One was Freddie the Fish, which went along great with the idea of water safety, but we were concerned about the tubelike costuming and the safety of the person wearing it," she said.

Since a lot of the events would be near water, the concern was that the person inside might not be able to get out if he or she fell in. So the group ended up choosing the squirrel for its mobility and familiarity to children.

Today the character continues to be a bright spot at many project activities that include children and serves as a Corps representative at many community events.

Safety Squirrel wears a hard hat to depict the engineer persona and a red shirt with the Corps castle on it. Projects like Dewey and Beech Fork Lake use him extensively with their Junior Ranger Programs.

Dewey Ranger Shirla Wells said the kids in her Junior Ranger Program really identify with him. "The kindergarten kids just love it while the fourth graders get a little mean." But by the end of the program, the children associate the squirrel with the Corps and all that the Corps of Engineers does.

While the costume may be fun for the kids, it's not necessarily fun for the person wearing it. At Dewey, rangers Jessica Evans and Stonney Burke usually do the honors as the



Photo by

Dewey ranger Jessica Evans takes a break during a parade aboard the back of a Corps truck. She has played Safety Squirrel four times since she started last June.

project brings him safety squirrel out about 10 times a year.

Evans describes what it's like getting into the costume which is not as heavy as it looks. "When it's hot you put on a special shirt that has pockets for ice packs. That, along with the rest of the costume, is probably 20 pounds."

The head and two-foot long tail can be a little tricky. The head, which is five times human size, wears much the way a hard hat would with the plastic adjustable straps inside. "You have to be careful with the head. If you don't get it on just right it tilts."

The tail goes on first with a velcro belt and the fur coat goes on over top.

Most people who have played Safety Squirrel say it is no fun to do so when the temperature is hot. It can be heat exhausting if you don't take several breaks and drink plenty of fluids.

"Sometimes when I take that costume off, my face is so red," Evans said.

Not everyone is as willing as Evans to play Safety Squirrel. Resource Manager for Beech Fork Lake Ron Hooper said his project mostly takes turns among students and rangers with no one exactly jumping at the chance.

"I've even played him a couple of

times when no one else was available. One time I nearly hyperventilated inside the costume."

His daughter Kimberly Adkins and student for Operations Division, volunteered for the project a couple of times as credit toward her schooling. She said the biggest challenge of playing Safety Squirrel is being theatrical inside the costume. "You sort of have to put a bounce in your step and act in the uniform in order to make the younger kids believe you are really a squirrel."

She said it can be a fun experience, especially with the younger kids who are thrilled to get their picture taken with the character or just to sit on its lap. "It's great the way the younger kids respond to these types of mascots. It is something that will stick in their head a while, and you hope that when they recall it, they also recall the safety aspect of it."

There are four known Safety Squirrel costumes in the district that rotate to different projects as the need arises. Dewey has two costumes, one that belongs to the district and one is paid for with its project funds. Beech Fork and Bluestone house the other two costumes.

Retirees Corner

COEHDRRA News update

By **JOHN TURNER**
COEHDRRA Publications
Coordinator

COEHDRRA Happenings: Hopefully all of you survived the "deep freeze" and are anxiously looking forward to an "early spring"...I know I am! I'm sure you'll agree that as cold as it has been, we're quite blessed in not having the large snow falls that we use to experience.

Remember when it would set in snowing early in the wintertime and stay on the ground until spring. Then the rains would come, rivers would rise and flooding occur throughout our area.

Yep, the weather pattern seems to be changing so drastically that before you know it, we may be scheduling our summer beach get-a-ways to the Minnesota shore line and our winter retreats to the marsh lands of the deep south. Oh well enough of this "dreaming" and on with the business at hand.

Members of your Corps of Engineers Huntington District Retiree Association (COEHDRRA) have now put away their "sleds" and are back at the meeting table planning and developing retiree activities for this new year. Bevo keeps reminding that all retirees are welcome and encouraged to attend these planning meetings which by the way have been changed to the last Monday of each month.

CONDOLENCES: Ray Knight recently called and informed me that retiree Frank Weider passed away Jan. 30 of this year. Our condolences go out to Frank's family.

STAYING IN TOUCH: Speaking of Ray Knight, I need to reiterate that since he is developing and maintaining a master listing

of all "active and inactive" Corps retirees, he needs for each of us to provide him timely Change of Addresses and names of all known "nonparticipants" as they occur and/or become known. Ray's home phone number is: 525-7313. Also to those of you current Corps employees who are planning retirement in the immediate future Ray also needs your contact address in order for COEHDRRA to "Stay in Touch." :

COEHDRRA Web Page: I recently went out on-line and viewed our COEHDRRA Web Page and must say I'm most impressed with the layout and detailed information that our "Webmaster" Randy Sortet has developed and maintains. By the way, he also has posted photo pictures of COEHDRRA's President, Officers and Members and I'm quite sure we'll be seeing many more such pictures in the future. Who knows, it may even be your face on the...World-Wide-Web! Again you can get to

COEHDRRA'S Web Page by signing on to www.lrh.usace.army.mil and then click onto "retirees."

SENIOR BASKETBALL: For all you basketball lovers "55 and over" who enjoy shooting "hoops," you can now do so at the old C-K gymnasium at 1 p.m. every Thursday. There is no cost for using the gym and/or playing. Larry Hatfield, Willard Hunter and John Lusher welcomes and encourages other retirees to come out and join in the fun. Those interested are requested to advise Larry at: 453-4960.

ANNUAL RETIREE LUNCHEON: Can you believe that our always popular Annual Retiree Luncheon will be taking place in two months? To be more specific, the actual date has been established as May 23 at a location yet to be identified. Detailed information and reservation form will be published in next month's issue of Castle Comments. Plan now to attend!!

Retirees on the web: www.lrh.usace.army.mil

Click here

Click on map for a larger, more detailed map

Look for [missing Army personnel](#)

Marshall summer event builds student interest in engineering

By **CHUCK MINSKER**
Public Affairs

The future of the Corps rests on today's engineering students. So the question is, what can we do to spark that interest in engineering?

The answer can be found in the annual summer event at Marshall University called "Exploring Engineering: Academy of Excellence," which will take place starting June 22.

The six-day event is a group effort, sponsored by Marshall University, the Huntington Post of the Society of American Military Engineers Huntington Post (SAME), the Nick Joe Rahall Appalachian Transportation Institute and the Learning for Life program.

"We want to entice students to become engineers by giving them an introduction to the fun side of engineering," said Dave Meadows, Supervisory Civil Engineer.

The event will play host to approximately 30 students entering their junior year from more than 20 high schools in Kentucky, Ohio

and West Virginia.

The participants will take part in hands-on engineering activities, focusing on the skills important for success in the study and practice of engineering. Activities will include projects like building a catapult and robotics; and field trips to engineering projects; and discussions with young engineers facilities.

In previous years, the academy was held in July, but this year it will take place in June. During the week, the students will experience a little bit of college life as they stay on the campus of Marshall University. The student's expenses are It's entirely funded through corporate sponsors.

It is an event that is almost as much fun for the engineers as it is for the students. Meadows said, "It's a real pleasure to do it, and it is an opportunity to give something back to the profession. If we can entice one kid, then it's worthwhile – we want our brightest students involved."

He smiled and added, "I wish I'd had the opportunity when I was their age."

EC Co-op student receives award and scholarship



Photo by Brittany Merritt

Marshall University professor Dr. Bill Pierson stands with Corps student Edward Stowasser at the National Engineering Week in Charleston. Stowasser won a \$500 scholarship as well as the Engineering Student of the Year award for Marshall.

Keep desk clean, keep self healthy

There could be a bigger benefit to keeping your desk clean other than being organized and impressing the boss. It could prevent you from getting sick. A new study shows some desks are dirtier than toilet seats and contain more bacteria. Why? Generally, the evening cleaning crews steer away from them for the sake of an employee's privacy. As a result, coffee spilled here and there is never cleaned up, not to mention those cinnamon-coffee-cake crumbs.

Those who keep a dirty desk, in fact, are more susceptible to catching a cold and other ailments spread by unchecked germs, according to the study. Consider this: 80 percent of colds and flu come from touching surfaces, the study said. The solution is simple. Buy a disinfecting product such as Clorox wipes and clean your desk daily. This will reduce germs and bacteria by as much as 99.9 percent.

Now that will impress the boss —adapted from Freedom News Service



Photo courtesy of Marshall University

A group of students study a problem at last year's SAME sponsored event. In the background Huntington District's Dave Meadows helps oversee the event.

Never mind the groundhog

Redbud is announcer of spring's arrival

By KEVIN WRIGHT
Ranger, Grayson Lake

There are few plants that can match the beauty and grace of a redbud tree in early spring. Redbuds have been a welcome site to outdoor enthusiasts for many generations. Some refer to it as the lover's tree because of its unique heart shaped leaves, which are bronzy, as they unfurl but soon become bright green and turn yellow in the fall. Clusters of small purplish-pink flowers appear on old stems and branches long before the leaves form.

Found mostly in open woods and glades, redbuds are a popular tree for landscaping. The redbud is a small tree but can reach a trunk diameter of one foot. Branches are wild spread and brittle. The flowers range in color from light pink to deep purple and are roughly pea shaped. Seedpods are numerous, up to three inches in length, and are an important source of nutrients for squirrels in early spring.

A first cousin to our Appalachian redbud the Mediterranean variety is often called Judas tree, for the betrayer of Christ. It is told that Judas hung himself from such a tree after which the white flowers turned red with blood or shame. A white variety was found only once in the wild and is now cultivated for ornamental gardening uses.

The flowers of the redbud as well as the seedpods are edible. Early settlers learned this from the Native Americans of this region. Below you will find a few simple recipes for the redbud. Give one of them a try, but hurry, redbud blooms are only here for a short time.

One last note of interest concerning the redbud, it is the state tree of Oklahoma. And it is against Oklahoma State law to harm in any way any redbud growing along the state highways. At Grayson Lake we are privileged to have an abundance of redbud trees. I invite you to come out and enjoy one of Mother Nature's earliest signs of spring.

Redbud-Sage Muffins

- 2 cups redbuds
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh sage leaves
- 1/2 cup sugar
- minced zest of 1 lemon (2 or 3 teaspoons)
- 1 1/2 cups unbleached or all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup egg substitute
- 1/2 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Topping

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a large bowl, combine the redbuds, sage, sugar, and lemon zest. Let sit for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375F. Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, & salt into a large bowl. To the redbud mixture add the egg, yogurt, milk, oil, & lemon juice. Pour the redbud mixture into the flour mixture, stirring just until the dry ingredients are moistened. Do not over mix.

Fill your muffin tin and combine sugar and cinnamon for the topping and sprinkle some on each muffin. Bake for 25 minutes or until muffin tops spring back when lightly touched. Remove from muffin pan and cool on a wire rack.



Redbud Broccoli Stir-Fry

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cups blanched or steamed broccoli
- 1 tablespoon plus
- 1/2 teaspoon white wine
- 1 cup blanched diagonally sliced carrots
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 cup onion slices
- 1/2 teaspoon cornstarch
- 2 cups rebud pods
- 1/4 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

In a 10-inch skillet or wok, heat oil; add broccoli, rebud pods, carrots & onion and cook, stirring quickly and frequently, until vegetables are tender-crisp and onions are browned. In a small bowl combine remaining ingredients, stirring to dissolve cornstarch; add to beef mixture and cook, stirring constantly until sauce is thickened, 2 or 3 minutes. Meat can be added to this recipe if desired or substitute your favorite veggies or spring wild edible.

Redbud Relish

- 1 Garlic Clove
- 1 stalk celery
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 1 hot pepper
- 1 dill head or 1tblsp dill seed
- 1 pint of water
- 1/4 cup salt
- redbud blooms

For each quart jar of relish add one clove of garlic, 1 stalk of celery chopped, 1 hot pepper and 1 dill head or 1 tablespoon dill seed. In sauce pan combine 1 pint water, 1 cup cider vinegar, 1/4 cup salt and simmer for 5 minutes. Pack washed redbuds into quart jars to 1/2 inch from the top. Pour hot liquid over redbuds and seal. Can be added to salads and slaws.

Huntington District People

Congratulations

• Timothy Paynter, son of Maureen Paynter, was promoted to JOC (SW) (Chief, USN) in a ceremony aboard the USS Missouri at Pearl



Harbor, Hawaii last Sept. He is currently assigned to the Public Affairs Office at Pearl Harbor where he resides with his wife Heather and daughter Morgan. He attended DINFOS, Fort Meade, Md. and served in Sasebo, Japan aboard the USS Frank Cable in Guam. Tim is one of the youngest to make chief in Naval history.

• Castle Comments placed second best newsletter overall in the Corps-wide Herbert Kassner Journalism Award Competition. Peggy Noel won first place in the commentary category for her editorial on Breast Cancer Awareness. Elizabeth Slagel won first place in the newswriting category for an article on EC preparing for gradual loss of baby boomers. First place winners will go on to compete in the Army-wide Keith Ware journalism competition.

New Arrival

• Congratulations to Rick and Rebecca Rutherford on the birth of their daughter Sylvia Alaine Feb. 11.



Condolences

- To the family of retiree Frank Weider who passed away Jan. 29.
- To the family of retiree George Hartman who passed away March 2.
- To Doug Mills and his family on the loss of his brother Feb. 6.

Celebrity Meeting



Retiree Betty Secoy poses with well-known Hollywood star George Clooney at a benefit in honor of Clooney's aunt Rosemary Clooney. The benefit was a fund raiser for renovating the old Russell Theatre in Maysville, Ky. Secoy is a family friend of the Clooneys and attended the event.

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