



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Huntington District

Castle Comments

Vol. 47, No. 10

November 2002

Students put local water to test



Photo by Chuck Minsker

Students gather around as they take notes during their field trip to Harris Riverfront.

Corps observes anniversary of Clean Water Act

By **CHUCK MINSKER**
Public Affairs

A large plastic cylinder dangles from a rope as a teenager slowly lowers it into the cold waters of the Ohio River.

She and 20 other eighth-grade students from Our Lady of Fatima were taking part in a special project. They were taking water samples from the river to be used in a nationwide project.

Thirty years ago the nation was facing a serious problem. Pollution was killing plants and animals in many waterways. The Kanawha River was virtually dead. Lake Erie could not support life. In Cleveland, the Cuyahoga River actually

caught fire in June of 1969.

That's why the National Clean Water Act was created – to help bring these waterways back to life, and to encourage everyone to do their part to protect the environment.

And on, Oct. 18, volunteers all over the country gave their local waterways a check-up. In the Huntington District, almost 50 sites took part.

At Grayson Lake in Kentucky, tests were performed at a variety of locations. Wayne Rigor, Corps Grayson Lake Manager said, "We have the cooperation of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's creel inspector, Elwood

See water sampling page 5

Inside This Issue

The average employee works 30 years before retiring. Read about a Corps contractor who worked twice that long in two different careers **page 3.**



They have what is said to be the most dangerous occupation in the Corps. Learn about some of the many risks involved with diving **page 6.**



Grayson Lake takes part in boosting local tourism as a scenic spot becomes an attraction **page 11.**



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Smiles out to:



• Ernie Romans, OR-TD; Matthew Gibson, EC-WH; John Rehme, PM-PD. Helma German, SO; and

James Vassar, EC-DA for letting Cabell County students shadow them Nov. 13 and 21.



• Those who participated in the Peyton Elementary Read-to-Me Day, Nov. 14.

They were: Kelley Campbell, PM-M; Janet Cote, EC-WQ; Helma German, SO; Betty Harmon, RE-PI;

Carolyn Jones, NC; Mark Kessinger, PM-P; Chuck Minsker, PA; Peggy Noel, PA; Kathy Persinger, OR-T; Kathy Rea, PA; Sharanna Romans, PM-P; Glenna Singleton, PM-PD; Martha Spurlock, PM-PD; Janet Wolfe, EC-CE and Steve Wright, PA

Commander's Corner



Corps will become a learning organization

By COL JOHN RIVENBURGH
District Engineer

Change and challenges - our Corps has faced both over the years and has always become better and stronger.

Our Corps is changing. We will become a Learning Organization. What do I mean by this? In our fast moving world, we have to learn from each other. Although our projects are all different, we have so many common functions and actions that we've got to learn from each other. This includes sharing mistakes. Remember — if it happened to “me”, it could happen to “you”. It could be as simple as a challenge with a hiring action in Operations to the complexities of large earthmoving projects for redevelopment sites. We can't ask our cost share partners to pay for the same oversight or error we made on an earlier project.

The good news about becoming a Learning Organization is it does not cost much. We already do some of the things a Learning Organization does. Our Bidability, Constructability, Operability and Environmental project reviews (BCOE) are learning opportunities — we just need to do a better job of sharing our results. We'll do After Action Reviews when we complete projects like Periodic Inspections and Regulatory Actions — not to produce paper, but to capture the good and “the what we can do better, right then”. We'll also use case studies to work through potential challenges before we attack the real world version. All good information to allow us to become better at what we do and to ensure we provide the best value to our Customers, our Stakeholders and the Citizens of our Great Nation.

The Administration and the Army have determined government is too big. The Army will analyze thousands of positions to see if they can most efficiently be performed by government employees or by contractor employees. Each position, section or organization will be studied individually to determine which is most cost effective. The process is called Competitive Sourcing. It appears many of our positions may be eligible for study. We just don't know how many or when, but I promise you that we will let you know as soon as we find out. All the actions will come from Department of the Army, through our Headquarters, through Cincinnati to Huntington. Stand by.

I only have one piece of guidance and advice. Keep doing your job to the best of your ability. We are the best in the Corps and the best organization in The Army. We already are efficient and there are no finer folks in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers than you and I continue to be honored to serve as your commander.

Contract employee worked for 60 years

By CHUCK MINSKER
Public Affairs

“Congratulations!”

“Come down and see us.”

“Come up and take me out to lunch sometime.”

“Have a good time, whatever you do.”

Those comments could have come from almost any retirement party – but they were heard Oct. 2, as a group of almost 50 Corps employees from the Muskingum Project gathered to say goodbye to a contractor who had worked with them – and the Corps – for 21 years.

There’s nothing unusual about that – but it’s the second time Glen Francis has retired from a career. The first time was almost 22 years ago – he had worked for the United States Geological Survey for 39 years, and when they offered him a retirement package at the age of 55, he decided to take it.

But not long after, the Corps of Engineers came calling. During the early 80s the Water Resources Engineering Branch was in the process of computerizing the process

used for forecasting streams conditions and operating district projects. State of the art equipment was being installed throughout the district to obtain real-time data for use in computer models.

The Corps decided to hire a contractor to help assist the Corps Technician in Ohio on a limited basis. They needed someone with experience in stream gauging and could maintain the equipment. Glen fit the description perfectly.

He remembers the first job he faced. “We started on the old telemarks – they’ve been gone for years now.” As to starting a “new” career, he said. “I thought, well, it’s something to do.”

For years, Glen (and his wife) answered phone calls at all hours of the day and night and went out to check on a broken gauge or install a new one.

To honor Glen for his many years of excellent, reliable service, which has saved the Corps thousands of dollars, he was presented the Commander’s Award for Public Service presented by Gary Mankin, the Chief of the Water Control Section.



Photo by Chuck Minsker

Water Control Chief Gary Mankin presents Glen Francis with an award at his second retirement reception. Francis went back to work for the Corps after 39 years with the Geological Survey. He worked an additional 21 years with the Corps.

Retiring from his second career leaves Glen more time to do the things he enjoys, like traveling and visiting his grandchildren. But don’t think he’s going to have nothing but free time – he still has one more job to handle. He has been a travel advisor for his local Convention and Visitors Bureau for 24 years, and he plans to hang on to that one for a while – at least until he feels ready to retire... one more time.

Awards

Gary Watson—deFlury
Medal

Don Thompson deFlury
Medal

Length of Service Awards:

25 Years

Joseph Williams

Pamela Edmonds

Thomas Gray

Terrance Smith

Thomas Bradley

Michael Lawrence

30 Years

Anthony Borda

Charles Lambert

Brenda Bias

James Noble

35 Years

Russell Craddock

Mary Hartz

Michael Porter

Thomas Gavorcik

40 Years

Richard McCoy Jr.

Roy Plummer

Engineering Excellence Award

Accepting Award—Tom
MacFarland

Engineer of the Year Award

Robert Reed

Commander's small business
team of excellence for 2001

Ronald Vest

CADD/GIS—Technology center

John Pittman

Certificate of appreciation—
West Virginia Flood May 2002

Joann Perkins

Wyatt Kmen

Thomas Floyd

Commander's award for
civilian service—West
Virginia Flood May 2002

James Rose

Steven Thompson

Theodore Hamb

Jean Read

Kevin Osborn

Maureen Paynter

Dennis Chabot

Doretta McComas

Dianne Wallace

Kathy Cline

Pamela Edmonds

Achievement medal for
civilian service—McDowell
Co., WV flood May 2, 2002

Steven Harris

Charles Lambert

Rick Mers

Joseph Trimboli

Gene Barr

Commander's award for
civilian service- As members
of the Construction team that
completed over 50 work orders
for approximately \$20 million
dollars of Construction
execution in FY 2002.

Jere West

William Cashion

Kevin Newman

Lisa Morgan

Christopher Mount

Sandy Nesmith

Mark Wheeler

Darin White

Achievement medal for
civilian service

David Wolfarth

Tracy Grimberg

Certificate of achievement

Wesley Walker

Mark Hammond

Lin Prescott

Achievement award for civil
service

Amy Frantz

Commander's award for
civilian service

Pamela Edmonds

Certificate of teamwork

Mark Keathley

John Pittman

Raymond Rogers

James Vassar

Heather Keeling

Nathan Myers

Certificate of Achievement

Carolyn Plants

District Briefs

The British publication "International Bulk Journal" recently published a list of leading dry bulk ports of the world. The Tri-State Port of Huntington was twelfth on the list.

According to Navigation Center's Wes Walker, a dry bulk is a port that ships dry commodities such as grain, coal or iron ore. Shipping containers and liquid fuels are not considered dry and would account for most ports' commodities.

However, Huntington makes the map with its large traffic of coal and is the only U.S. city cited as a global leader besides South Louisiana, which tops the list at number one.

The Tri-State Port of Huntington extends its boundaries to include all dry bulk shipping along the Kanawha River, Big Sandy River and from Byrd Locks and Dam to Portsmouth, Ohio along the Ohio River.

Aside from being the twelfth largest dry bulk port in the world, Huntington is the largest coal port in the U.S. according to Walker.

Leading Dry Bulk Ports

1. South Louisiana, US (129,814,948) -2001
(agribulk 120,858,136; ores 5,328,188; solid fuel 3,628,624)
2. Shanghai, China (117,133,000)
3. Qinhuangdao, China (105,500,000) -2001
(solid fuel 100,000,000; ores 2,710,000; agribulk 1,500,000)
4. Tuburão/Praia Mole, Brazil (85,940,000) -2001
(ores 69,049,000; solid fuel 9,266,000; agribulk 2,586,000)
5. Rotterdam, Netherlands (84,439,000) -2001
(ores 37,950,000; solid fuel 24,751,000; agribulk 11,256,000)
6. Dampier, Australia (78,407,342) -2001/2 (ores 68,559,170; salt 9,848,172)
7. Richards Bay, South Africa (76,448,000) -2001
(solid fuel 65,900,000)
8. Hedland, Australia (72,526,000) -2001
(ores 68,469,000)
9. Newcastle, Australia (71,800,000) -2001
(solid fuel 67,218,835; agribulk 1,610,452; ores 1,150,000)
10. Hay Point, Australia (69,324,356) -2001
(solid fuel 69,324,356)
11. Kwangyang, Korea (65,262,922) -2001RT
(ores 32,386,434; scrap 15,212,788; solid fuel 12,970,111)
12. Huntington, US (58,811,961) -2000
(solid fuel 53,684,467; aggregates 3,187,900; ores 1,020,600)

Student of the Month



*Name: Angie Ison Ratliff
School: Morehead State University*

Year: Senior

Field: Social Work

Hometown: Campton, Ky.

Started with Corps: May 2000

Project: Grayson Lake

Nomination: Angie is dedicated to the organization, project and her fellow team members. Her enthusiasm, eagerness to accept new challenges and her professional conduct with everyone and every situation is exemplary. She has been a quick learner and invaluable in administrative assistance during absence of key staff members. She is creative and her suggestions on improving the project work processes and facilities have been adopted. She recently played an important role in bringing a very dangerous situation involving an autistic child visiting the project to a successful resolution.--Wayne Rigor Resource Manager

Acting class can work on speaking skills

Acting is a skill that has benefits in the corporate world. That is why more and more theater schools across the country are filling their ranks with business people looking to improve their public speaking, presentation and seminar skills. Professional development aside, taking acting classes has the added benefit of being a creative outlet for

the overstressed professional. Plus, it's fun.

Some theater schools offer classes specifically for beginners interested in getting comfortable on stage in front of an audience. Either way, the experience of trying something new can boost confidence and help people feel more at ease giving presentations at work.

Water sampling

Continued from page 1

Frankel. In addition to his normal duties he will take samples at the headwaters of the lake on the Little Sandy, at smaller tributaries flowing directly into the lake and above and below the marina.”

In Ohio, students at Trimble High School near Hocking River examined the water in Sunday Creek, which runs behind the school. Other tests took place at the Tom Jenkins Dam and Alum Creek Lake.

In West Virginia, advanced biology students at Gilbert High School in Mingo County tested the quality of water at R.D. Bailey Lake. Corps employees also tested the water at each of the nine locks and dams and 35 flood control dams in the district.

The Ohio River was tested at a number of locations, including Huntington. About 20 students from Our Lady of Fatima School helped Col. John Rivenburgh, Ecologist Rich Meyer and Biologist Janet Cote run tests on the waters by Harris Riverfront Park. The water was tested for dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity/

clarity and temperature.

Their findings: the water temperature was 19 degrees Celsius, and it had about 8.0 milligrams of dissolved oxygen, which is considered normal or slightly alkaline. The turbidity level was 40.00 ntu, which means the water was cloudy. The pH was about 8.00, with 84 percent dissolved oxygen in the water, which gives it an “excellent” rating.

The project was designed to highlight the importance of grassroots participation in caring for our natural resources. What each person does on a daily basis affects water quality and can affect hundreds of people downstream.

The National Water Monitoring Day effort was coordinated by America’s Clean Water Foundation, in cooperation with other environmental groups and governmental agencies across the country.

You can check the results from all over the district along with the rest of the country at The Year of Clean Water website, www.yearofcleanwater.org.



Photo by Chuck Minsker

Col. John Rivenburgh tells 18 Our Lady of Fatima students the importance of the Clean Water Act and how the Corps adheres to this law.

Computers account for eye strain

If you spend most of your work day staring at a computer monitor, you may notice an abnormal number of red blood vessels in the whites of your eyes. Prolonged work at a computer is a strain on your eyes and can lead to engorged blood vessels, creating the illusion of new blood vessels. Dry, itchy eyes are another sign of this type of eye strain, referred to as computer-vision syndrome.

Here are several tips to avoid the problem:

1. Rest your eyes regularly. Take breaks away from the computer.
2. Blink frequently to keep moisture moving to your corneas.
3. Reduce the glare from your monitor by adjusting the light around your desk, or use a screen filter.
4. Place your monitor at or just below eye level.
5. Keep the distance between your eyes and the monitor about the same distance as you would while reading a book.
6. Check the prescriptions of your eyeglasses or contacts regularly to be sure they are correct.
7. Upgrade to a liquid-crystal-display monitor or another model with a high refresh rate that flickers less.

—Adapted from Consumer Reports on Health

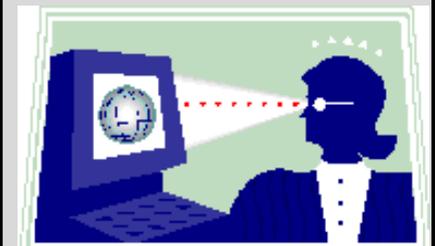




Photo by Steve Wright

Retired diver Ray Pittsonberger jumps through debris during a dewatering mission at Greenup in 1998.

By **ELIZABETH SLAGEL**
Public Affairs

You're in the dark, under water in freezing conditions with 80 to 100 pounds weighing you down. Life support is the only thing that keeps you breathing. You're entangled and you feel the force of water pulling you in an unknown direction.

Sounds like a bad dream, but this can be a real situation for the brave men and occasional women who take on the most dangerous occupation in the Corps of Engineers—that of a diver. All they have to get them safely out of the situation is their life support, their team, training and instincts.

Huntington District has 26 of the most experienced divers within the Corps, to include a former Navy diver, according to Diving Coordinator Chris Abshire. Most of the divers are lockmen from around the different projects and Huntington District's first female diver Pam Hall.

High Risk Job

In describing what makes this kind of diving so hazardous Abshire said, "In reality their bodies are subjected to larger stresses than astronauts relative to change in atmospheric pressure. When astronauts travel into space their bodies are exposed to an

Divers encounter all

environmental change of pressure from one atmosphere to zero atmospheres. When our divers leave the surface their bodies are subjected to environmental changes ranging from one atmosphere to as many as four atmospheres."

Environmental changes of temperature are also much more drastic for Corps divers than for astronauts mainly because NASA has developed better suits for their astronauts than those used by divers. Space is a single atmosphere whereas underwater has many different atmospheric variables to include temperature, air pressure, depth and water clarity. Water clarity intensifies these physical stresses psychologically by limiting visibility, often to the point that underwater lights cannot be seen at distances of one or two inches, Abshire added.

So many factors and conditions require divers and dive supervisors to have a broad knowledge of underwater effects on body physiology to perform many vital underwater jobs at Corps projects mainly the locks and dams.

Diving conditions

Abshire describes how a simple sinus cold can pose the danger of a diver's ear drum puncturing or an air embolism, where an air bubble is forced from the lung into the blood stream rupturing the aveoli then traveling to the brain or heart causing a stroke or heart attack.

It is not as simple as gearing up, jumping in and going to work either. Divers first of all must be in good physical shape, not just to withstand the weight of the equipment, but their body has to be basically medication free. Supervisors have to know everything about chemicals in a diver's body right down to cold medication before they go into the water.

Abshire says it is all about the atmospheric changes and how the body's physiology will react. Too much nitrogen in a diver's system can result in a painful diving condition known as the "bends" where the nitrogen bubbles affect the body's joints and rips body tissue. Oxygen toxicity is another where too much



Photo by Elizabeth Slagel

Chris Clinton and Water Quality's Bill Cremeans help Freddy Middleton gear up during some gauge work at Winfield this past summer. Although the air temperature was in the 90s, the water temps for this dive were in the 60s.

kinds of dangers underwater



Photo by Elizabeth Slagel

Chris Clinton peers up at the camera down inside of the Winfield Upper Gauge House. He described the water as being sewer like.

oxygen actually poisons the body causing convulsions. And of course, there is the common case of vertigo that can lead to total disorientation and intense nausea, which coupled with all the underwater dangers can be alarming.

Anything that can go wrong will

And it seems, Abshire says, that Murphy's law is always present. If there is something for a diver to get entangled in, it will usually happen.

Abshire, who dives himself, recalled a recent incident at Winfield Locks where his team was repairing a grease line on a culvert valve. He was in a tight area trying to reach a trunnion pin between a valve arm and indicator rod. "I had to reach between the valve arm and the indicator rod. My tank got caught between the valve and indicator rod. In trying to struggle, I banged my flashlight and it went out and couldn't see how much emergency air I had. My first thoughts were how long will it be until something happens to my surface air supply?"

He did get out without circumstance and Huntington District divers are in constant radio contact with the dive supervisor who can pull a diver out via the umbilical cord at anytime, unless the diver is stuck. The only way to solve this problem is to deploy the standby diver.

These lock maintenance type dives account for about 97 percent of all

dives, Abshire said. That is why most divers are lock operators or lock and dam maintenance mechanics who have a vast knowledge of the mechanics of locks and dams.

Pulling Force

Much care has to be taken when sending a diver down in what is called differential pressure where water pressure is unequal on either side of the structure. These situations include dewatering missions, installation of poire or emergency dams, roller gates and bulkheads. The divers are sent underwater to plug the voids in the closure and stop the flow of water.

The problem with differential pressure is when it is not controlled properly or can't be controlled at all and the current becomes too strong for a diver to withstand. If there is a leak in the gate, it forms a hole that can literally suck a diver through.

One such episode occurred this summer in the Louisville District where a diver lost his life in such a trap.

In Huntington however, Abshire said he devised a safety policy in differential pressure conditions to minimize the risk. The standard simply is to lower the water in small increments to minimize the differential pressure. "This is only possible because in most cases we can control the differential pressure. There are situations that could occur that would require special procedures to minimize this risk."

"I feel like we take steps to make it safe, but there are always opportunities for disaster."

Planning it safe

Corps divers do everything within their power to prevent these disasters with lots of preplanning. Dive

operations always begin with a dive plan, conducted by the dive supervisor who writes out the job description and makes assignments. He also analyzes the conditions, the water, the climate, the plan depth and an emergency evacuation plan complete with the nearest hypobaric chamber, numbers of the EMS, closest hospitals and even a landing for a Medic-vac.

With all the risk involved it is a wonder anyone would decide to do it. The fact is many who do it love it. David Powell, Corps diver for more than 30 years who was trained by Navy Seals, said being a diver adds variety to his job allowing him to do other tasks and travel to different projects. He said a lot of people simply fear the unknown and there are a lot



Photo by Elizabeth Slagel

Terry Whitley listens for Freddy Middleton underwater as he gives step by step accounts of what he entails while installing new technology for an outdated guage at Winfield.

of unknowns in diving dark water.

Why they dive

"People who go into it, do so for the adventure," Powell said. "I just feel comfortable in the water. When I go down 60 to 70 feet, it is total euphoria." Corps dives occur in water depths from four to 100 feet. Powell does a lot of outside diving as he has opened his own dive training business on the side.

Abshire added most divers do own
Continued on page 8

Diving

Continued from page 7

their own gear and do a lot of recreational diving.

It is easy to think divers take on the risky occupation for the extra pay or training in Key West, Fla., but it is something they just want to do, any diver will argue.

Once recommended for the program, the Corps sends prospective divers to four weeks of beginning training in Key West, Fla. followed by two weeks every four years to keep trained.

Shaken bravery

It's this dive training school in Florida that saved a veteran diver more than 20 years ago when the Corps first decided to formally train its underwater employees. Former Belleville Lockmaster George Connolly got spooked after a near-miss with being run down by a barge after he accidentally ended up inside of a lock chamber, he tells in the district history transcript.

He was one of the old-time-divers who got into the program because it looked challenging, and got his training from simply jumping in and going to work with a little coaching here and there from the experienced guys.

The formal training came just in

time for Connolly. He went on to Key West, and regained his confidence and continued his diving career.

Divers say fear is always in the back of their minds, but it is not possible to enter the water if you are frightened. Powell said, "You can't work if you're shaken. You know there are dangers down there. If it overwhelms you, you have to get out."

Corps' investment

Abshire said the district has \$10,000 worth of equipment invested for each diver to include suits for diving in freezing conditions and warm weather. Their equipment includes different diving masks for different diving operations along with fins, oxygen tanks and weight belts.

"Each diver has to be able to mobilize himself, but some equipment is shared like oxygen cylinders."

The initial investment of getting into the program is the diver's responsibility, Abshire said. An employee who shows interest in the program must get his or her open water certification, which costs \$300. And if they wish to purchase their own gear for recreational purposes, it costs another \$800.

If the employee has a good working knowledge of the locks and is in good



Photo by Steve Wright

Chris Abshire and Eric Dolly help Ray Pittsonberger suit up during a dewatering mission at Greenup.

physical shape, they are recommended by Abshire to attend diving school.

Divers needed

Abshire said there will likely never be technology to replace the need for divers.

So as long as there are brave men and women willing to literally break through ice and do the job, the Corps will always have Corps divers.

District Divers

Dave Powell, Willow Island Locks and Dam
Darrell Leeper, Willow Island Locks and Dam
Kenneth Clemons, Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam
Darren Maynard, Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam
Dan Hayes, Willow Island Locks and Dam
Chris Clinton, Winfield Locks and Dam
Scott Kinzel, OR-TM
Tim Fudge, OR-TD (Diver in training)
William McNabb, Marmet Locks and Dam
Pam Hall, Meldahl Locks and Dam
David Bennett, Marietta Repair Station (Diver in training)
Mark Russell, Marietta Repair Station (Diver in training)
Mark Gillum, Marietta Repair Station (Diver in training)
Tom Stan, Marietta Repair Station (Diver in training)
Steve Hann, OR-TM (Diver in training)

Chris Abshire, OR-TM
Cork McMannis, OR-TM (Diver in training)

Supervisors

Larry Circle, Racine Locks and Dam
Joe Hannah, Meldahl Locks and Dam
Terry Whitley, Greenup Locks and Dam
Wayne Clinton, Robert Byrd Locks and Dam
Danny Marcinko, Belleville Locks and Dam
Fred Middleton, Marmet Locks and Dam



Retirees Corner

The COEHDRA news corner

By JOHN TURNER
COEHDRA Publications
Coordinator

C O E H D R A Happenings: Well by the time you receive this issue, you will have polished off all the Thanksgiving leftovers and are deep into the "hustle and bustle" of the holiday season....Merry Christmas! It's hard to believe that it's been over a year since your new Corps of Engineers Huntington District Retiree Association (COEHDRA) was reborn. That's right, shortly after the annual Retiree Luncheon in the summer of 2001, Bevo's plea for help in continuing future retiree activities brought forth the "initial volunteers" who came together with him for their first meeting at Dwight's restaurant. There the basic framework for COEHDRA was established and now with the full support of our District Commander, Bevo and his legion of officers has it in full swing, meeting monthly to plan and develop interesting and exciting retiree activities for our future enjoyment. As we leave the "old year," Bevo wants to take this opportunity to pass on his

personal "thank you" to all those who have helped hold it together. Your dedication, commitment and loyalty to the cause has been greatly appreciated. His saying of "has" is because his long tenure as President comes to an end this next summer and he looks forward to handing the reigns over to his vice-president successor Willard Hunter. Hope you've been taking notes Willard!

COEHDRA Web Page: Since we now have our very own COEHDRA Web Page on the Internet, I hope many of you have taken the opportunity to share your interesting news articles with our Web Page Coordinator Randy Sortet. To find our page, sign on to www.lrh.usace.army.mil then click COEHDRA.

2003 Retiree Luncheon: It's not too early to be thinking about our always popular Annual Retiree Luncheon. I'm told that the actual date will be set at this year's Christmas Luncheon. In the meantime, remember to include this always popular event into your next year's plans. Specific details will be published as they are finalized.

Condolences: I've just learned that two of our former Corps Employees recently died. Robert G. Smith of the Engineering Division and Milton H. Christensen of the Construction Division. Our

condolences go out to Bob and Milt's families.

Tri-Care for Life: I'm quite happy to have learned that my article in the October issue on this subject reached the attention of some of our Medicare eligible Uniformed Services Retirees. Hopefully their conversations with me regarding this new "free" Health Insurance Program was enlightening and helpful in making their decisions to suspend from the FEHBP and pick up TriCare for Life as their second payer to Medicare. Others of you eligible retirees out there who want to hear of my experience and success with this great coverage, just give me a call at 304-453-1474

2002 Combined Federal Campaign: I hope "all" retirees took the opportunity to participate in this year's CFC Campaign. If you did not receive Bevo's October call for help letter but do desire to contribute, give him a call at 304-523-8234. I'm quite confident that gifts will continue to be received after established deadlines.

COEHDRA Meeting: The next COEHDRA Planning meeting is scheduled to be 10:30 a.m. on January 27, 2003 in the district office sixth floor conference room and all retirees are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Concept turns reality for Dillon bike trail

By **ROBERT CIFRANIC**
Ranger, Dillon Lake

The concept of having a mountain bike trail at Dillon Lake, Ohio, was pretty much of a dream until a year ago. Vicky Conder, Park Manager and Alan Ranck, Asst. Manager, with Dillon State Park, got together with the Appalachia Outdoor Adventures of Zanesville (AOA) and the Corps of Engineers and made a dream come true.

The AOA worked almost a year, designing, mapping out areas throughout the state park, and constructing new trails and improving on existing ones created by mountain bike enthusiasts. Dillon State Park, the Corps, and the AOA met with members of the Ohio Mountain Bikers Association this past winter to inspect the trails for compliance and suitability.

The site offers challenges to please the beginner, intermediate, and advanced riders; meandering through flat grassy areas, and rocky forested terrain for approximately 13 miles. Easy access is provided throughout the park for day-use visitors as well as campers.

The trail is an impressive project for a state park with a tight budget; state parks in Ohio have had their budgets cut to a minimum in the past several years. Volunteers and funds from members of the AOA helped create this awesome project. The AOA will also be responsible for the upkeep and sign posting throughout the trails.

The official “chain-cutting” ceremony was performed during Dillon State Park’s yearly Labor Day Fair. The trail is not 100 percent complete, but that has not stopped many riders in the local area from using it each day since it opened.

Although a “Rails-To-Trails” pathway for road bikes already exists; the Dillon State Park Mountain Bike Trail will add even more diversity for bikers, especially if the two trails connected sometime in the near future. The “Rails-To-Trails” pathway already links Newark, Zanesville, and the Dresden areas.

This major achievement was accomplished by the teamwork of several organizations. Everyone involved is proud of the accomplishment and what it will mean to Dillon Lake and mountain bikers from Ohio and neighboring states.



Photo by Robert Cifranic

The white outlines show parts of the trail that remain to be constructed.

Also at Dillon...

We are proud to announce that Dillon Lake has two new employees. Brian Swope, Electrician, lives in Zanesville, but has worked maintenance at Dover and then Mohawk, commuting close to 100 miles each day for the past 11 years.

Sally Sipperley, Lake Project Assistant (LPA), has come all the way from Alaska to be Dillon’s first LPA. Sally enjoyed her administrative work with the Army since 1994, but felt that it was time to be closer to home.

To coin a phrase, their loss is our gain. We feel very fortunate to have two new employees with such a wealth of expertise, here at Dillon Lake!!

Project figures volunteers offered seven years of man hours

By **ROBBY YOUNG**
Ranger, Burnsville Lake

This Sept. 2, the staff at Burnsville Lake provided a picnic for all the volunteers who gave so much of their time this past recreation season. Everyone who came brought a covered dish. Hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and drinks were supplied and a great feast was undertaken.

The dedication of these groups and individuals serving as campground hosts, Civil War re-enactors, living history activities, musicians and students is greatly appreciated. These folks have supplied Burnsville Lake with 14,600 man hours with a value of \$ 201,487. This figure is equal to over seven years of labor. They accomplished various jobs and assistance that the staff could not

have done without their help.

Although a light rain shortened the festivities somewhat, everyone was well fed and had a great time.

Once again we would like to thank these folks for their greatly appreciated help ensuring that Burnsville Lake will always be a great place to experience along with the history of the area.



Photo by Robby Young

Volunteers get treated to a picnic by the Burnsville Lake project office at the project grounds.. In all, they dedicated over \$201,000 worth of man hours performing their tasks.

Corps promotes Elliot County tourism

By **KEVIN WRIGHT**
Ranger, Grayson Lake

An official groundbreaking ceremony was conducted for the Welcome Center at Laurel Gorge. The project resulting from a grass roots movement that started in the early 1990's to promote tourism and boost the local economy.

Guest speakers included: Flora Whitley, Chairman of Elliott County Tourism and Heritage Council, Charles Pennington, Elliott County Judge-Executive, Huntington District Commander Col. John Rivenburgh, Corps District Engineer, James Codell, III, Kentucky Secretary of Transportation, Rocky Adkins, State Representative, and Walter Blevins, Jr., State Senator.

The project was made possible through funding from the Kentucky Department of Transportation for \$300,000. Additional funding includes the following: \$48,249.00 RTP funds for trail development, \$75,000.00 from the Steele Reese Foundation, \$10,000.00 from the National Endowment for the Arts, \$10,000.00 gift from Larry Addington, \$10,000.00 ARC Flex-e grant, \$3,000.00 gift from the Kentucky Arts Council, along with a variety of administrative contributions from the Corps of Engineers.

The 3400 square foot center which is enthusiastically endorsed by the Corps is currently under review and construction is expected to be completed by next spring. Upon entering the center a visitor will be taken on a trip back in time. Different time periods will be showcased, such as prehistoric, settlement age and modern. It will advertise area attractions and become a home for local folk art and exhibits.

The center will serve as a trail head for the new six mile Laurel Gorge Trail. The first proposed section of the trail already under construction is one mile long and follows the creek that created the beautiful cliff lines of Laurel Gorge. The first one quarter mile will be handicap accessible and is currently about 75 percent complete.

Between December 10, 2001 and January 11, 2002 a Phase I archaeological survey was completed

of the Laurel Gorge Trail area by the Corps. The survey was conducted as required by law by Dr. Robert Maslowski. Two previously recorded sites and seven previously unrecorded sites were investigated. It was concluded that none of the sites were potentially eligible for the National Register nor would they be directly impacted by trail construction.

Evidence is consistent with the use of rock shelters as temporary camps ranging from brief occupation by an individual to relatively long term occupations such as seasonal hunting or base camps. An environmental impact assessment was also conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District.

Laurel Gorge has been designated as a cold water habitat and further plans are to have it designated as a wildlife preserve. As stated by Kentucky Wildlife Biologist Allan Worms and University of Kentucky professors in 1996, "That gorge has not been disturbed for 100 years. We don't have very many places like that left in Eastern Kentucky, or in the eastern United States, period." The gorge is sheltered by sandstone cliffs rising 200 feet above the stream and is a good example of what scientists call "mixed mesophytic forest" the forest with the highest diversity in North America above the tropics. Rhododendron and mountain laurel, which gave the gorge its name, are

common here along with paratley spotted ferns and wildflowers ranging from Solomon's seal to Sweet Cicely and Jack-in-the-pulpit. A hike through the gorge is indeed a trip back in time.

A cooperative working agreement between the Corps of Engineers and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Officers has severely curtailed the use of ATVs in the gorge which was seriously endangering the fragile and unique gorge environment.

The groundbreaking for the new welcome center and construction of a hiking trail is the culmination of many years of hard work and combined efforts by both the Elliott County Tourism Council and the Corps to preserve this pristine area for further generations.

Leading by example Col. Rivenburgh along with Resource Manager Wayne Rigor took this opportunity to conduct a water sample at the confluence of Laurel Creek and the Little Sandy River in recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the enactment of the Clean Water Act. **(See page 1)** October 18th was designated as National Water Monitoring Day and the Huntington District was an active participant in events such as this with the purpose of promoting public involvement, providing education and to document water quality. This is yet another example of how the Corps in partnership with local and state agencies can make a difference in our world.



WSAZ Channel 3's Randy Yohe interviews Col. John Rivenburgh who explains the Corps' water sampling procedure for the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Clean Water Act. (Photo by Kevin Wright)

Huntington District People

Congratulations

•To submariner in the U.S. Navy Brent Evans, son of Kathy Patrick, for being promoted to Petty Officer

(First Class). He is currently stationed at Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia. He and his wife Tiffany live in Woodbine, Ga.

Correction

• In the last edition of Castle Comments, Ginny Lares' granddaughter was incorrectly referred to as Caroline Hatfield. Howard is her correct last name.

Touchdown touches more hearts than the score

Note: The following article appeared in Huntington's Herald-Dispatch and is reprinted with their permission. The story is about an inspirational act of kindness. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have. Steve Wright

By JAMES WALKER
Herald Dispatch reporter

In an age when arrogance and "Sharpie" pens steal the national spotlight, it is often the smallest, most unnoticed acts of kindness that remind us that football is merely a game.

The story, which is destined to become legendary in Southern Ohio circles, starts in Waverly.

Northwest football coach Dave Frantz and Tiger's coach Derek DeWitt shared a conversation the week leading up to the game. But the two coaches weren't discussing strategy instead they were talking about a mentally-handicapped Northwest player by the name of Jake Porter.

Porter, a senior, has a disorder called "Chromosomal Fragile-X," which is the most common cause of inherited mental retardation.

Porter still shows up on time for practice every day and dresses in

full gear during games, but he has yet to take an official snap in a football game.

Frantz wanted that streak to end last Friday. "I told them (Waverly) ahead of time that he can't take a hit or anything," Frantz said. "If the games not at stake on the last play, I wanted him to come in and take a knee."

Yet a week after their conversation, with Waverly leading 42-0 with five seconds remaining, coach Dewitt offered Frantz one better.

"During the timeout, he met me in the middle of the field and said, 'We'll let him score,' " Frantz explained. "(Initially) I said 'Nah.' Then we talked about it with the referees, and they said 'Hey coach, we understand.'"

What soon followed will forever go down in Southern Ohio football lore.

At Waverly's 49-yard line, Porter entered the game at tailback, had his play, "84-iso," called in the huddle, and when the ball was snapped all 21 players parted ways.

Porter was somewhat surprised when he slowly walked through the huge hole. He initially turned back around to the original line of scrimmage, but everyone on the field—including defensive players from Waverly—pointed and guided Porter toward the Tigers' end zone.

"When we practiced it, he was

supposed to down it, so I think he was a little confused at first," Northwest tailback Zack Smith said. "But once he figured it out, he took off."

The 49-yard trek to glory took about 10-12 seconds in all, and was culminated by players from both sidelines cheering and running step-for-step with Porter to the end zone.

Tears flowed from the bleachers well into the night, and the life of one young man was changed forever.

"At Waverly, we didn't do anything special. We were just happy to be part of that," a humbled DeWitt said. "That young man was just excited to get the ball. Our guys didn't care about the shutout, those stats went out the window."

When you're involved in a moment like that, you want to make sure you end the game with class, decency and respect."

Those who play football on the highest levels should take notice.

No pen that Terrell Owens ever pulls out of his sock could write a scene more touching than this.

James Walker covers high school football for The Herald-Dispatch. His e-mail address is jwalker@herald-dispatch.com.

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