

Rescue
Awards
Page 4



Frank Keefe
Retirement
Page 7



Commander's Corner.....	3
Town Meeting, Awards.....	5
Phil Durgin Retirement.....	6
Bass Harbor.....	8
Black History Month.....	9
Grace Higbee.....	9
Student Praises Internship.....	11
From the Field.....	12
Safety.....	14



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of Engineers
New England District

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New England District commander gives 'State of the District' address during town meeting

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, presented his "State of the District" address during a lunchtime meeting on March 17 in the Concord Park headquarters cafeteria. A video stream link of the meeting was made available to field personnel.

The commander started his presentation by reporting that financially the District is better than it's been in a number of years. Although employees who deployed over the past year have helped the District financially, other cost

cutting initiatives made this year had the real impact, including renting downstairs space to another agency.

The strategic planning group (SPG) has been meeting for the last few months, to try to develop a way to move the District forward, according to Col. Thalken. The SPG began by evaluating input from both inside and outside of the District. Information analyzed included the District's strengths and weaknesses; opportunities that outside stakeholders present.

The SPG used resources such as higher guidance from Corps Headquarters in the form of the Strategic Direction, the Chief of Engineers' Vision Statement, and guidance received from Brig. Gen. William Grisoli at North Atlantic Division to break into three teams to study three issues: structure, processes and cost effectiveness.

Col. Thalken then discussed project delivery teams and said that he has concluded that there has to be a maxi-

Continued on page 15



Photo by Kevin Burke

Welcome home, Cadets

The T.S. Enterprise, carrying Massachusetts Maritime Academy Cadets, passes under the Bourne Bridge and through the Cape Cod Canal as it returns home from its worldwide journey Feb. 26. Cadets who select majors in Marine Engineering and Marine Transportation embark on a 52-day training voyage that includes rotations through class and laboratory training at sea, ships operations including deck and engine watches, maintenance and emergency drills.

Yankee Voices



Dan Bradley
Survey

Sympathy

...to the family of New England District retiree **Irving Pickering**, who passed away, March 14. Mr. Pickering retired from the Corps in 1980 with over 20 years of federal service.

...to retiree **Martha Rotondi** on the passing of her husband, **Alfredo Rotondi**, March 18.

... to **Joe Redlinger**, Real Estate, on the passing of his father, **Jacob Francis Redlinger**, March 21.

...to **Paul Marinelli**, Engineering/Planning, on the passing of his mother, **Dorothy Marinelli**, March 22.

Words worth repeating

"It's not charisma, or barnstorming antics, or grand pronouncements that make a great leader; it's a very real concern and respect for people at every level of the organization—and the courage to act in their interest."

- Beverly Kaye
Career development consultant

Employee receives thanks for efforts during Katrina deployment

(Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Ruth Ladd, Regulatory. While working in Mississippi for the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Recovery mission, Ladd took some time, with permission, to visit the Clara Elementary School and speak with the 8th grade class.)

Ms. Ruth,

First of all, thank you for all that you did during your time here in South Mississippi. You were able to assist many people while always placing your job first. Your dedication to the Corps was most evident in all that you did.

Next, I will always treasure the time you spent with our students. Your inspiring enthusiasm and spirit allowed our students to get a feel of the subject matter.

Finally, may you continue to touch lives in the positive manner that you did for all of us here in South Mississippi.

Robert Dean
Principal, Clara Elementary

Congratulations

...to **Angie Vanaria**, Executive Office and her husband, **Dick**, on the birth of their grandson, **Joseph Angelo Vanaria**, March 8.

...to **Kathy Bucciarelli**, Engineering/Planning Division, for being named the WE Committee's Employee of the Month for March 2006. Bucciarelli received the award for her outstanding effort in assisting PPMD once she learned that administrative help would be needed.

...to the **Security Team** as the Team of the Month for March 2006. The employees are **Jerry Nunziato, Ron Hurley and Ray Gomes**. The team was chosen for its outstanding performance during three emergency situations that recently occurred at the District.

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Commander's Corner:

New England District emergency response and preparedness

by Col. Curtis L. Thalken
District Commander



The 2006 Hurricane Season will officially begin on June 1. This past week I was invited to attend a conference with USACE's Emergency Support Function #3 (ESF3) Team Leaders and while it is fresh in my mind, I'd like to pass on a few thoughts to everyone. For those unfamiliar with the federal government's National Response Plan (NRP), ESF#3 is the Public Works and Engineering Support Function, within the NRP. The NRP details what support and how that support will be provided, by the federal government, to assist local communities in the event of a disaster. USACE is designated as the lead federal agency for ESF#3 and this is the source for the taskers we receive to provide volunteers during the hurricane season. The upcoming hurricane season promises to be a busy one for several reasons:

- First, our regional water team has been redesignated as the national water team. This means for any disaster USACE is required to respond; our water team, operating from here in New England, will be activated to procure and distribute water

to the effected area. This will result in 24-hour operations for our Emergency Operations Center as well.

- Second, the National Weather Service is predicting another year of above normal activity. We still have volunteers deployed to support the Katrina and Rita recovery missions, but unless the weather predictions are wrong, volunteers will be in high demand again this summer and fall.

- Third, the Northeast has escaped the last few years without a devastating storm, but we must prepare for the inevitable—a hurricane landfall in New England. Now is the time for each division and separate office to dust off their internal support plans and external response plans. Let's not wait until the last minute. Also, take the time now to make sure your families are prepared and know what to do.

USACE is currently preparing an operation order for the upcoming season that will define its plan and describe the concept for supporting FEMA, with assets from around the Corps. Once the order has been finalized we will have a better understanding of our initial requirements, but for now I would like to say thank you in advance for the support we will soon be requesting. The unflinching support provided by our volunteers will again serve those in need from around our great nations.

Essayons!

Leadership addresses issues and concerns identified in District Climate Survey

by Richard Carlson
Chief, Construction/Operations

Many of you know that a number of groups have been working with the results of last year's Climate Survey with the purpose of addressing issues raised in the survey. These groups have been divided into the following areas. Here's a summary from each team of what's been happening:

Consistency

The Consistency PDT Team has been reviewing the compilation, evaluation and consolidation of the many responses from the actual Climate Survey. The PDT has validated what turned out to be the compression of hundreds of individual comments into four recommendations for focused attention. If necessary, clarification and perhaps clear identification of overlap with the other focus areas will also be considered. The four "issues" are 1) time and attendance (T&A) should be recorded electronically across the District; 2) Rules for (T&A) should be enforced consistently between

offices; 3) Technology should be uniform between offices; and 4) a cross-District team be assembled to identify and address the major consistency issues in the District.

Awards/Recognition

The Awards/Recognitions focus group has reviewed the recommendations of the Work Climate Assessment and has summarized them into the following four categories: 1) Informal Recognitions (simple thank you's, attaboy/girl awards, etc.); 2) Existing District policies on awards/recognition; 3) Discipline Awards ("Planner of the Year," etc.) and; 4) WE Committee awards (employee and team of the month). We have assigned each of the categories above to different members of the focus group. The group members will examine their category in greater detail and determine how each issue can be improved upon.

Training & Development

The recommended NAE action in response to the Training and Development sections of the Climate Survey is the

Continued on page 10

Rescue at Birch Hill Dam

Bystanders, Ranger rush to free youth pinned under lawn mower

Caleb Comptois is a very lucky young man. His accident on Aug. 19, 2005 could have been a fatal one. While trying to mow a patch of grass on an angled piece of land at New England District's Birch Hill Dam, he and the mower he was riding fell 12 feet into a brook. The mower fell on some rocks, pinning the 17-year old in 18-inches of water. Thanks to some quick thinking bystanders and an incredible amount of luck, Comptois suffered only minor injuries.

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, and Jeffrey Phillips, Park Manager, Birch Hill Dam, honored those who saved Comptois during an awards ceremony, March 16 at the dam. It gave the participants the opportunity to recall their roles in the rescue and gave Comptois and his family an opportunity to thank his rescuers.

Comptois recalled that he was heading back to the main office of the dam when he saw the un-mown area behind some guardrail. The area, which is maintained by a hand mower, was pitched at an angle, and it wasn't long before Comptois lost his balance, causing him and the mower to fall into the culvert and into Beaver Brook.

Fortunately for Comptois, he escaped serious injury from the fall. However, the 1,200-pound mower landed on some rocks pinning him in the water,

which was much lower than the week before. "If he had landed in that brook just a week earlier, he would have drown," said Clifford Simula, one of Comptois' rescuers.

Simula lives only a few hundred yards away from the Corps property and was mowing his lawn when his mower ran out of gas. It was then that he heard the crash and soon after Comptois' cries for help. "I knew something happened," said Simula. "I went to see what happened and I saw Caleb's feet and head sticking out from under the mower."

Simula shouted for his wife to call 911 and then remembered seeing two railroad employees near the tracks not far from the accident site and rushed to enlist their aid. William Murphy and Shaun Keenan of Guilford Transportation agreed to help. The boom truck that

was on the scene had been broken the day before and was just repaired that morning. "The timing was perfect," said Murphy. "If the truck didn't break down, we wouldn't have been there."

As the boom truck lifted the mower off of Comptois, Jim Dixon of Grass Hopper Yard Grooming, the contractor hired to maintain Birch Hill Dam's grounds, got word of the accident through Simula and immediately headed to the site. "As soon as I heard, I knew who it was," he said.

By the time Dixon, also an EMT, arrived, Murphy and Keenan had pulled the mower off of Comptois with the boom truck. Dixon gave Comptois a thorough check and amazingly, the teenager seemed to only suffer some gasoline burns, bumps and bruises. Dixon feared that there could be internal injuries, so he stayed close to his employee until the ambulance came. State Trooper Robert Sundberg, III arrived as a result of Mrs. Simula's phone call and assisted on the scene. Park Ranger Zachery Koziol, the acting supervisor at Birch Hill in Phillips absence, was notified of the situation and assisted with the EMT coordination.

Wayne Newton, Chief of the Royalston Fire Department, and his brother Keith Newton, the Superintendent of the Royalston Highway Department responded with the ambulance and advanced care. Chief Newton, upon hearing of the accident, called for the assistance from the Life Flight helicopter out of UMASS Memorial Hospital in Worcester.

Although there was some question regarding a possible cracked vertebra, a



Photos by Brian Murphy

Above: Caleb Comptois (center) with his rescuers and Col. Curtis Thalken during the awards ceremony.

battery of tests confirmed that Comptois was fine.

At the awards ceremony, each rescuer received a New England District Bunker Hill plaque and the undying gratitude of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Comptois, who thanked the rescuers for saving their son. The rescuers were still stunned at the lack of injuries Comptois sustained. Chief Newton summed up the events of the day when he said, "God was watching each and every one of us that day."



Caleb Comptois (inset) stands above the brook that he fell in last August.

Employees recognized for service during Town Meeting

Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson, Deputy District Commander, presented awards and other recognitions to employees who have volunteered to assist in the Corps' missions to support the War on Terror and also to assist hurricane disaster relief efforts during the 2005 hurricane season.

The awards presentation took place during the March 17 town meeting held in the Concord Park Headquarters cafeteria prior to the "State of the District" address presented by Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander.

Lt. Col. Nelson started the awards presentation with the Combat Pins for Civilian Service. "The Combat Pin for Civilian Service was developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to honor civilians serving in Iraq for more than 60 days and has since been expanded to those also serving in Afghanistan," he said.

Those present to receive the awards were David Cole, Richalie Griffith, Dave Kratz, Christopher Lindsay, Farrell McMillan, John Murner, Ken Paton, Richard Riley and Don Wood.

Those employees who received the Combat Pin but were unable to attend the town meeting were Robert Govero, Robert Hanacek, Donald Hassett and Claudia Hixson.

Lt. Col. Nelson presented certificates of appreciation to volunteers who assisted in the disaster clean ups of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. "The 2005

Hurricane Season was the most active and the most destructive on record," he said. "Hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans were impacted by these storms and the New England District played a considerable role in bringing aid and comfort to all of the victims and was instrumental in helping them on the road to recovery."

According to Lt. Col. Nelson, District employees filled approximately 100 emergency tasking slots during this past season, which represents over 20 percent of the entire District work force. At the time of the town meeting, more than 10 employees were still deployed to the Gulf states. "Our response is something we can truly be proud of," said Lt. Col. Nelson.

Recipients of the certificates were Kevin Branch, Mark Habel, James Hachigan, John Haluchak, Gladys Leone, William Mullen, John Murner, Philip Nimeskern, Jeffrey Phillips, Richard Roach and Donna Vondle.

Those who were not present but will be receiving the certificate of appreciation are Scott Acone, Theron Chase, George Clafin, Robert Govero, Kenneth Hester, Paul Howard, Maryellen Iorio, Jack Karalius, Scott Leonard, Joseph Mazzola, Steven Patchkovsky and John Pribilla.

The Deputy District Commander then presented certificates of appreciation for Emergency Response and Recovery for the Hurricane Dennis Landfall. Awardees included Kevin Branch,

Dave Goodrich, Gladys Leone, Jeffrey Phillips and Richard Riley. Others who received the awards but could not attend the meeting were Robert Govero, David Kratz, Matthew McClintock and John Pribilla.

Certificates of appreciation were awarded to James Hachigan, Gladys Leone and Jeffrey Phillips. Other recipients were Paul Gaudreau and Lowell Whitehead.

Lt. Col. Nelson presented citations to Charles Farris and Joseph MacKay for their work during Task Force Hope - Mississippi; to Phillip Morrison for his efforts during the emergency response and recovery mission for Hurricane Ivan; and to Dale Berkness for his work during the emergency response and recovery efforts for Hurricane Frances.

Lt. Col. Nelson presented Achievement Medals for Civilian Service to the following employees:

Carol Charette, for her outstanding work as a quality assurance supervisor for the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in support of the response and recovery effort for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Bradley Clark, for distinguished service working on the temporary roofing missions after the landfall of Hurricanes Frances and Jean in Florida during the fall of 2004;

David Goodrich, for outstanding service as the water planning and response team action officer at FEMA's National response coordination center

Continued on page 10

Phil Durgin retires with 31 years of federal service

The New England District's leading hydrogeologist ended a distinguished 31 year federal career during a retirement party held March 3 at the Concord Park headquarters.

Approximately 55 friends and co-workers attended the event. Durgin's wife, Grace, was by his side during the retirement ceremony and luncheon.

Raimos Liias, Chief, Geotechnical Branch kicked off the celebration by welcoming the audience and summarized Durgin's long and varied government career.

Liias also commented on Durgin's madcap behavior that always made work interesting. "Phil has always been a humorous person," he said. "The things that he has done in the last 5-1/2 years that I've been here have been over the top. He always takes the time to give you a smile."

Rose Schmidt, a friend and co-worker of Durgin, presented Mrs. Durgin with a bouquet of flowers for her commitment and support to her husband. "The commitment and support on the homefront is a tremendous factor to our success," she said.

Following Schmidt's presentation, she joined Larry Cain and Mark Koenig, the "Geochemical Singers," in a song specially written for Durgin, entitled, "Looking for Water in All the Wrong Places." The song commemorated Durgin's career and his search for water.

Durgin's adventures in New England were many and his friends and co-workers were more than willing to share stories. Durgin's driving in particular brought forth many tales, some of which had to be acted out for attendees to believe. Schmidt and Greg Buteau got "behind the wheel" with Durgin to illustrate, much to the enjoyment and laughter of the appreciating audience.

Peter Hugh shared some amusing memories about Durgin's driving as well



Greg Buteau (left) can't contain his laughter as he and Phil Durgin "drive" in Boston on their way to a meeting. This was only one of several demonstrations of Durgin's expertise on the road performed during his retirement celebration.

as a story about Durgin's request to go to Kosovo.

Paul Young talked about his and Durgin's experiences in the field. After a story that involved a woman's raincoat and strange looks from a new District Commander on a site visit that had the audience roaring with laughter, Young presented Durgin with a Corps of Engineers rain jacket as a keepsake.

Durgin's abilities as a handyman were next on the list of "fond memories." Schmidt recalled his efforts at building a new roof on his home and how he needed to leave it unfinished and exposed to the elements to deploy to Hurricane Katrina. "Maybe you should have brought home one of the blue roofs," she quipped.

Terry Wong was next to speak and discussed a time when he tried to replace a gas tank on his car. He also talked about Durgin's investing adventures. As a joke gift, he presented him with a framed copy of Boston Edison stock.

As a parting gift, Schmidt presented Durgin with dousing rods and several instructional books. She also presented him with a 1963 edition of the Navajo Times, a framed flyer announcing his retirement party and a framed piece of play money.

Other speakers included Gary LaCroix, Carol Charette, and Erik Matthews. A PowerPoint presentation by Richalie Griffith about Durgin's time with the New England District and Afghanistan followed the speeches.

Tony Mackos presented Durgin with a Bunker Hill plaque for his 11 years of service with the New England District. Liias and Schmidt presented him with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service, for his honorable 31 years of federal service, that took him to different agencies in various parts of the nation.

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, officially ended the retirement celebration by presenting Durgin with his retirement certificate and certificate of appreciation.

When asked about his plans for the future, Durgin said that he wasn't sure at the moment. "I'm thinking about going to the Gulf for a month or two," he said.

Retirees who attended Durgin's retirement celebration were Yuri Yatsevitch and William Saner.

Following the retirement ceremony, attendees moved to the Concord Park Cafeteria to enjoy a lunch catered by Avellino's of Medford, Mass.

Seasoned Construction Representative retires with 38 years of federal service

For the past 38 years Frank Keefe, a Construction Representative for the New England District, has worked on a variety of high profile projects such as the Cape Cod Canal's Bourne and Sagamore Bridge painting, the Boston Navel Fuel Annex, and the Barnes Building in South Boston.

On March 3, Keefe handed in his hard hat and retired after a long and distinguished career. Several events were held for

Keefe to celebrate: a small, private gathering where some of his friends and co-workers presented him with gifts; an intimate luncheon at the Papparazzi Restaurant in Concord, Mass., with 25 attendees and; a public reception that welcomed the entire New England District team to wish him well. "I enjoyed working here

over the years and working with everyone here," said Keefe. "I think I've worked with 13 Division Engineers at various times since I've worked here. It's been fun, but now it's time to go out to pasture."

"We've worked together for a lot of years," said Dick Carlson, Chief, Construction/Operations. "Frank and I both came to Rivers and Harbors at a time when disposal inspectors wore suits to work."

During the private gathering, Keefe received a New England District Safety Coin, the first to be given out, for his long dedication to safety. He also received a framed photo of the Cape Cod Canal in appreciation of his many years of service working on the painting projects of the Canal's bridges.

At his retirement luncheon, no speeches were given, but attendees did present Keefe with a gift. Construction retiree Bill Haynes joined the group to welcome Keefe into the New England District's retirement community.

The public retirement reception was held at Concord Park and immediately followed the luncheon. Carlson said a few words and wished Keefe well. "It has been my pleasure to be able to work with you for a long time," he said. "You have been a loyal scout, you've been to jobs when you've oftentimes been holed up in hotel rooms by yourself away from your family. You made a lot of sacrifices and we really appreciate it."

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, presented Keefe with a Commander's Award for Civilian

Service, a New England District Bunker Hill plaque, and his retirement certificate/certificate of appreciation. Keefe received the Commander's Award for his outstanding service to the Corps in New England both as a Core Drill Operation and Construction Representative.

"Thirty-eight years of federal service is a long time to spend with the Corps," said Col. Thalken. "Construction Representatives are the people who get things done. Most of the money we get is appropriated to do a job. The guys who execute that job are the Construction Representatives working in the field. Thank you for all of the hard work that you've done out there."

Keefe began his career with the Corps in New England in 1973. Prior to joining the Corps, he worked as a ship fitter at the Boston Navy Yard from 1972 to 1973 and before that he began his federal career by serving four years in Vietnam with the United States Navy.

The variety of projects Keefe has worked on throughout his career include drilling, dredging, breakwater construction, dune reconstruction and beach nourishment, structural renovation, painting, and radiological cleanup.

After his nearly four-decade career, Keefe plans to take it easy and enjoy his retirement.



Frank Keefe (right) and Bob Casoli by one of the many projects Keefe worked on during his time with the Corps of Engineers.

Corps proposes navigation improvement, dredging of Bass Harbor in Tremont

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

At the request of the town of Tremont, Me., the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is proposing the improvement of navigation as well as maintenance dredging of the Federal Navigation Project in Bass Harbor in Tremont, Maine.

The purpose of the proposed navigation project is to improve the local commercial navigation. The existing Federal navigation project, constructed under Section 107 authority, was built in 1964 to provide a 10-foot by 8-acre combined entrance channel/anchorage area in the lower harbor, with two 6-foot anchorage areas, totaling about 16 acres, located west and north of the 10-foot area. The existing project has not required maintenance dredging since its construction in 1964 due to very low shoaling rates.

"Maintenance dredging is currently needed to restore the authorized dimensions of the Federal Navigation Project," said Study Manager Mike Tuttle, of the Corps' New England District Engineering/Planning Division. "Maintenance dredging would remove approximately 3,800 cubic yards of silty material from the northern 6-foot anchorage and approximately 800 cubic yards of silty material from the western 6-foot anchorage."

The recommended improvement plan would be carried out concurrently with the maintenance dredging and consist of: (1) redesignating an 80-foot wide portion of the existing 10-foot anchorage as channel to better access the town landing; (2) dredging a compensatory area of an 8-foot anchorage 80-foot wide east of the 10-foot anchorage to replace capacity lost to the channel; (3) providing a short channel 8-feet deep by 80 feet wide east of the central ledge connecting the upper and lower basins of the inner harbor; and (4) expanding the existing upper 6-foot anchorage by 5.8 acres.

"Approximately 53,400 cubic yards of silty material and 1,000 cubic yards of rock ledge will be removed for the improvement project," Tuttle said.

Disposal of all dredge material will be at a deep-water site located 4 miles northwest of Bass Harbor in the Eastern Passage west of Mount Desert Island, as recommended by local fishermen. The work will be performed during an approximate four-month period within an environmental win-

dow beginning Oct. 1 and ending April 15.

The Eastern Passage site was recommended as the disposal site due to its close proximity (6 miles) to Bass Harbor. Approximately 53,400 cubic yards of silty material and 1,000 cubic yards of ledge from the improvement project, as well as approximately 4,600 cubic yards from maintenance dredging, will be placed at the open-water site. Using the Eastern Passage site would enable the work to be completed within the allowable dredging and disposal window using only one scow.

The improvement study resulted after local officials and

harbor users expressed a concern for the lack of adequate public anchorage to efficiently accommodate a commercial fishing fleet that has grown significantly since the design of the existing project more than 40 years ago.

"The feasibility study objectives were to provide a clear designated channel to connect the town wharf with the harbor entrance, expand the available public anchorage area, and provide more direct channel connection between the harbor entrance and town wharf and between the upper and lower harbor areas," Tuttle said.

In addition, evaluations were made in the alternative process to eliminate harbor congestion, groundings in shallow harbor areas and other inefficiencies that constrain commercial operations.

"Portions of the existing Federal Navigation Project have shoaled to depths that inhibit safe passage for the Bass Harbor fleet at certain tides," Tuttle said. "Maintenance dredging of the existing Federal Navigation Project will restore the authorized dimensions to the project area and remove the hazardous shoal areas."

A number of navigation improvement alternatives were developed and analyzed during the early stages of the planning study. These alternatives included the possibility of transferring a portion of the existing fleet to other areas or harbors and various channel/anchorage improvements involving dredging and disposal options. An Environmental Assessment and Clean Water Act Section 404(b)1 analysis for this work has been prepared and is available for review upon request.

More information about this proposal, including the Environmental Assessment and Public Notice, is available on the Corps website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/bassharbor/bassharbor.htm>.



Bass Harbor

Black History Month

Program celebrates legendary Tuskegee Airmen

The Black Employment Program (BEP), sponsored by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office (EEO), held a presentation to celebrate Black History Month Feb. 23 in the Concord Park theater.

This year the District's BEP highlighted the accomplishments and history of the Tuskegee Airmen. The keynote speaker for the event was Capt. William Collins, Jr., President, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., Col. Charles E. McGee Chapter. The mission of the organization is to honor the accomplishments and perpetuate the history of African Americans who participated in air and ground crew as well as operations support training in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

According to the organization, the U.S. Air Force created the 99th Pursuit Squadron, which is the unit's official name, in 1941 to segregate African American pilots from the rest of the Air Force. Training for the pilots began at the airfield in Tuskegee, Ala., which is why the Squadron is often referred to as the "Tuskegee Airmen." Benjamin I. Davis, Jr., the first African American

West Point graduate, led the unit. Between 1941 and 1946, nearly 1,000 African American pilots earned their commissions and wings at the airfield in Tuskegee.

From the very beginning the Tuskegee Airmen showed their skill in the air. The unit achieved its first air victory in June 1943 when it shot down a German fighter plane. The flying abilities of the 99th Pursuit Squadron are well documented. According to Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., the Squadron flew over 15,000 combat aircraft missions, known as sorties, between May 1943 and June 1945. The Tuskegee Airmen destroyed 251 enemy aircraft and were awarded more than 850 various medals of Honor.

In addition to fighting a war, the Tuskegee Airmen had to fight discrimination as well. White American pilots were not allowed to fly more than 52 missions, but African American pilots often flew up to 100 missions because there were no replacements, according to Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Although they were highly trained military officers, the African American pilots were

not allowed access to U.S. Air Force Base's officers' clubs.

The Tuskegee Airmen's contributions to the U.S. Air Force was the deciding factor to eliminate racial discrimination in the military, and an Executive Order, signed by President Harry Truman in 1948, made it official. The 99th Pursuit Squadron was disbanded, with its pilots integrated into other units. Military officials estimate that about 200 original Tuskegee Airmen are still alive. The history and pride of the Tuskegee Airmen continues to be preserved by the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., the organization of which the guest speaker belongs.

After Collins concluded his presentation, Dick Carlson, Chief, Construction/Operations and Kevin McKelvey, BEP Manager, presented him with a Bunker Hill Plaque in appreciation for coming to the District as well as a Commander's coin.

In addition to the Feb. 23 event, EEO and the BEP also sponsored two brown bag lunch video presentations, "Rosa Parks – Path to Freedom" and "African Americans Marching to Freedom."

Grace Higbee, Executive Secretary, member of Distinguished Civilian Gallery, remembered

The New England District team was saddened to learn that Grace A. Higbee, retired Executive Secretary, Planning Division passed away Feb. 22.

Higbee was a member of the New England District's Distinguished Civilian Gallery.

Higbee's 38 years of federal service included a tour with the office of the Chief of Engineers and many



Grace Higbee

years with the Corps in New England. She retired in 1980.

Throughout her federal career, she was recognized for her dependability, loyalty, and exceptional cooperation.

According to her Gallery citation, "The guidance she gave to many junior secretaries prepared them to assume progressively responsible assignments. Miss Higbee is a true professional, respected by all in the Division."

Leadership addresses issues and concerns identified in District Climate Survey

Continued from page 3

issuance of a Commander's letter requiring: Adherence to TAPES submittal time frames be an element of a supervisor's performance plan; Individual Development Plans (IDP) to be accurate, current and signed at the initial and mid-year TAPES conference; all temporary assignments in the District to be posted in the Weekly Bulletin for two weeks prior to selection; and supporting a centralized training section of the District Intranet that identifies upcoming opportunities such as the Leadership Development Program and both potential and desired cross-training opportunities.

Management Project Delivery Team

The work force contends that management is out of touch with the work force and is not held accountable for performance. As a remedy, the PDT developed six recommendations, which are paraphrased from the final report as follows:

- Senior management should have regular contact with customers and agency counterparts;
- Management needs to engage in strategic planning;
- Everyone in the District, including Management, must be more accountable;
- Supervisors/managers should continually strive to improve and sharpen their management and leadership skills,
- Managers should manage by "presence," and;
- Supervisors should develop regular staff meeting schedules.

The team plans to evaluate methods including, but not limited to, structuring a Senior Management Board for corporate decision making and revising performance evaluation methods and/or metrics.

Promotions

The Promotion Group has met four times to discuss how to implement the recommendations of the Workplace Climate Survey regarding promotions. Recommendations that we

seek to implement are: 1) Ensure that management debriefs job candidates in a timely manner; 2) Develop more technical GS-13 positions in order to maintain technical expertise; 3) Develop a process to ensure that all vacancies are advertised locally and in a timely manner. Addressing opportunities for hiring from within is being investigated, and; 4) Develop a Grade 12 Park Ranger position.

Communications

This team seeks to evaluate current District wide Communication practices from their perspective and to identify best practices that would ensure employees can access, understand, and are informed on issues affecting themselves, the District, the Corps of Engineers, and the Department of the Army. Their goals include: Improve employee communications, horizontally and vertically, and to facilitate the mission of the District and the Corps, and; To establish education subcommittee to increase knowledge and understanding of Corps programs and training.

Other Concerns & Issues

The 'Other' PDT is dealing with issues that were not identified with the other major areas of the climate survey. Here's a quick summary of the 'other' issues identified to date: 1) Working to raise IMPAC credit card limit to \$5,000; 2) GSA vehicles for field offices is being evaluated; 3) Review hours of work requirements; 4) Rethink Founders Day, and; 5) Improve PMBP Implementation.

Please feel free to contact any team leader or team member if you'd like to provide additional input into the process: Consistency, Raimo Liias; Awards/Recognition, Christine Godfrey; Training & Development, Bill Hubbard; Management, Dave Margolis; Promotions, Barbara Newman, and; Communication, Farrell McMillan.

As team leader for other issues feel free to contact me directly. The entire District Climate Survey report can be found on the District intranet.

Employees recognized for service during Town Meeting

Continued from page 5

during the Corps' first national water mission;

Richalie Griffith, for exceptionally outstanding service as a construction representative in the Anaconda Area Office in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Jeffrey Mangum, for superior service and dedication during the Hurricane Ivan, Alabama response and recovery operations. (Mangum served as the housing, planning and response team's quality assurance inspector);

Joe Redlinger, for serving as a reality specialist for the

Louisiana Recovery Field Office in support of the response and recovery efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita;

Randy Sujat, for outstanding service during the Hurricane Ivan, Alabama response and recovery operation. (Sujat served as a debris quality assurance inspector.)

Concluding the awards portion of the town meeting, Lt. Col. Nelson presented a Commander's Award for Civilian Service to Richard Riley for meritorious service as the Construction Representative for the Tallil Area Office in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Former student praises internship at Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area

By Rick Murphy
Former SCA Intern, West Hill Dam



When I was at West Hill Dam I had a Bachelor's of Science in GIS from Penn State but no real world experience. Make no bones about it; even though it says this is an internship, this is a consultant job. You will gain a ton of experience.

The work completed by the Student Conservations Association (SCA) interns is to protect the storage area in case floods happen. I had the liberty to experience a flood right before my tour of duty ended. As the site coordinator and I were patrolling the Charles and witnessing everywhere that was marked under water, I knew that what I was doing was important because it saved lives and money.

This is a description of a typical day. The main duties of the SCA interns are to maintain the GIS for the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area (CRNVSA) and to locate its boundaries. There are 31 segments in the CRNVSA. It takes roughly two months or so to fully complete a segment. So as you can imagine it is an on-going project.

You would be using a GPS unit to go out and find the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) fee and easement markers for the CRNVSA. But before you go out into the field you must check that the GIS match the hanging paper

maps that are stamped by a surveyor. More often then not you will have to fix the polygons (boundary areas) and the point (USACE monuments) shape files.

I won't lie, it can be tedious, and most of it takes about a week or so to have the entire segment fixed in the GIS. Once all that is finished you would go out into the field, with a co-worker, and locate the monuments, mark them and take notes. Then you come back to the office and input the notes into the attribute tables. You also report to the site coordinators about any encroachments on the land and they will take the appropriate steps to handle that matter.

You are also given a pair of boots and brush pants for work. Once you are there for a while and have gotten acquainted with the people at headquarters, you would then be asking them questions and taking on more responsibility about information on the segments you will be working on.

I would also like to say that this opportunity is a great chance to bolster your resume. Because of this experience I have been able to secure a full time position with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in Philadelphia as a GIS Analyst.



Photo by Brad Walley

Top: Rick Murphy by the project sign. Above: Murphy with co-worker and fellow SCA Intern Alana Winder.

New England District Park Ranger honors Stoughton family history at North Springfield Lake

**Michael D. Currie, Park Ranger
North Springfield Lake**

On Sept. 12, 2005 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took a journey back in time, a time before our presence in the Black River Valley had ever been considered and a time before the recreation areas and dams had been built. I had an opportunity to share a piece of common ground, a meal and an afternoon with a family whose name will forever be connected to the North Springfield Lake Project.

In fact this day was a day the North Springfield Lake project and the Stoughton family set aside as a “family day” to tell stories and dedicate a small piece of ground using a stone marker with a bronze plaque telling the story of the Stoughton family legacy in the Branch Brook Valley. The public will see the finished historical project for the first time and get to enjoy the site this spring, as the 2006 recreation season begins and our parks and boat ramp open. The new site has a nice grassed picnic area, with

picnic tables, adjacent to the pond and boat ramp overlooking the Stoughton home site.

It was a wonderfully colorful and historic story that began in Weathersfield over two centuries ago when the family patriarch Nathaniel Stoughton came to Vermont and built the ancestral homestead in the fields and woodlands beneath what is today Stoughton Pond. Weathersfield land records show that Nathaniel Stoughton owned lands in the town by February 1781. But, family stories tell of historical incidents that happened while Stoughton was clearing these lands as early as January 1776. According to the family, while Nathaniel Stoughton worked at clearing the land, cold and hungry soldiers came dragging cannon from Fort Ticonderoga down the old Crown Point military road which passed through the Stoughton land near the home site. The cannon were headed south for the defense of Boston. Nathaniel Stoughton was said to have aided many traveling soldiers traveling along the military road during this period with food and sometimes shelter.

In recognition of the historic role played by the Stoughton family in Weathersfield, the recreation pond built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nearly five decades ago on the site of the family homestead was named “Stoughton Pond.”

Much water has passed through this valley and through our dams since the construction period, and many of the original families have moved on or are just unaware of the history and significance of this particular piece of ground. The Stoughton family agreed with my ideas and over the last three summers a lot has happened on North Springfield Lake Project lands to recognize valley history and dedicate a few sites, roads and connections to the past, for future generations. You can take the cultural history tour of the North Springfield Lake Project by going to our website and then travel the project with the click of a finger on our live project map.

The Stoughton family sites was one of our most significant sites to recognize on the project, but, at the same time our most delicate, mainly because of the family connections with history and this particular piece of ground. Family roots ran no deeper anywhere on North Springfield Lake Project lands during the construction period than it did on the Stoughton homestead. We wanted very much to give recognition to the family for its sacrifices and at the same time protect, collect and preserve family history and integrity to share with family members and the public.

It's public knowledge that North Springfield Lake was not surrounded by willing participants when residents had to sell their lands during the “taking and construction period” which began in the mid-1950s. Weathersfield actually came aboard the flood control project “kicking and screaming” all the way, with the Stoughton family patriarch Joseph Potwine Stoughton being the last hold out, even naming the recreational pond



Photo by Mike Currie

Joe Stoughton's children at the Sept. 12 plaque dedication. Seated from left to right: Robert Stoughton, James Stoughton, Ruth Stoughton (Knutting), Joyce Stoughton (Lundgren) and William Stoughton.



The old Stoughton family home circa 1880 provided courtesy of the Weathersfield Historical Society.

that bares his name “Controversy Pond.”

It wasn’t until after the deadline of Sept. 14, 1959, when construction workers were to start collecting water from the Branch Brook behind the newly constructed dam structure that “old Joe” started to move his house. Family stories tell of Joe telling Corps and Vermont officials of buried septic systems never mapped or located, to stop the flooding of the homestead area, to buy him more time to move his house to higher ground.

There was much Yankee ingenuity involved in the actual moving process. “Joe” Stoughton assisted by his boys, friends and neighbors bulldozed and cut a roadway through the woods for the house, since only a narrow country road existed and only a narrow covered bridge existed to cross the Branch Brook. Many of his neighbors contributed usage of their lands for this road to move the historical home. It moved near the original location of the “Ten Mile Encampment” along the Crown Point Road during the second day of the move. The

“Ten Mile Encampment” was a site 10 miles from the Fort at #4 along the Connecticut River; the original stone marker still exists today. As history will tell it, “Joe” with his family and friends moved the house 1.6 miles in two days, a feat of tenacity and determination, and one of love of his family and heritage that they all shared in this valley.

It was with all this history and heritage in mind that “Joe’s” marker and the dedication should rightfully be the last one placed in our cultural heritage tour of the project, and one the family thoroughly loved.

We picnicked all day on that early fall Sunday, “Joe’s” three sons and two daughters with their families shared many stories with me and I was made to feel very welcome amongst them. The family was very sincere in their desire to keep the family legacy alive in Weathersfield, even though the house got moved.

The valley healed very well over the last forty odd years, and so too did the feelings that were hurt during the con-

struction period. What is left is some of the most loving and humorous family stories of the grit and tenacity it took to settle this land, all the children of the Stoughton family, a beautiful lake and a special place for families to enjoy, and a permanent marker for all to see, telling how Stoughton Pond got its name.

The picnic site with its stone wall, grassed scenic overlook of the homestead and the bronze marker are now a permanent part of our project. They are attached to our public boat ramp at the north end of the pond, for the public and family to enjoy.

This now public site was constructed by project staff. The plaque was purchased by the North Springfield Lake Project, and with the help and support of the Weathersfield Historical Society was dedicated to the Stoughton family, and most notably Kathy Blum of Weathersfield, Vermont, a granddaughter of “Joe” Stoughton who helped organize the family for this very special and warm event.

Staying safe

New England District Safety Office looks at old ways/new ways to prevent accidents

Last year was a safe year for the New England District and its contractors. The Safety Office is working to keep that record up by reviewing old initiatives and creating new ones. New England District employees and contractors kept themselves safer in 2005 than they have in past years.

According to the Safety Office, contractor accidents were down to eight from 11 in 2004. Out of the eight contractor accidents, only two resulted in lost time. New England District employees also had safety on their minds last year, having only 27 accidents down from 38 in 2004. Of those accidents, only six resulted in lost time. Department of Labor, Workman's Compensation statistics indicate that District employees are back to work quicker than other federal agencies after an accident.

The Safety Office cites several reasons for the downward accident trend. For contractors, it is because of the types of contractors that now work for the New England District.

A majority of contracts are Best Value Procurement where contractors are selected on expertise and experience as well as price and not just price alone, which has been attracting a high quality contractor.

Sean Dolan, New England District's Safety Officer, said that contractors are providing better safety training to their employees. "We are getting contractors with outstanding safety programs that offer employees awareness and safety training," he said.

According to Dolan, New England District employees are also staying safe because of training and awareness programs. The District offers first aid training twice a year and annual HTRW and Defensive Driving training. The Safety Office also has an ergonomic assessment program for work spaces and inspects work areas to assess potential slips, trips and fall hazards.

This year, the New England District will continue to try to keep its employees and contractors safe. The Corps of Engineers already has one of the most stringent safety guidelines in the federal government. "Our contractors are 10 times safer than general industry," said Dolan.

The Safety Office cites several initiatives that it hopes will

help the District continue to stay safe. "This year, we're going to evaluate and revise some of the programs that are currently in place and determine who really needs to take the training," said Dolan. "We are also going to be offering confined space training to Park Rangers."

As of Jan. 1, the Corps of Engineers moved to a new accident reporting system. When an accident occurs the person reporting the accident will go through ENGLINK and create a Preliminary Accident Notification (PAN).

The PAN will automatically report to the appropriate chain of command. If the accident is serious (permanent or partial disability, dismemberment, death, three or more persons hospitalized or property damage in excess of \$200,000) the PAN will automatically turn into a Report of Serious Accident (ROSA) which will be reported to higher authorities.

The new system will create a Corps-wide database that will give Safety Officers a good source of historical information and a better way to perform trend analysis on accidents.

"This will change the way we report accidents and will automatically generate the necessary OSHA reporting forms to keep the District in compliance with the OSHA reporting requirements" said Dolan.

In addition to the PAN, an ENG Form 3394 needs to be filled out for all reportable accidents as defined by OSHA. Contact the Safety Office if

you have an accident and need assistance with the reporting requirements.

The New England District Safety Office is also trying to build an alliance with OSHA so that the two federal agencies would work together to promote safety. "Ideally, we would like to have joint training programs with OSHA," said Dolan. "We're looking at new ways to leverage our resources and promote safety."

One of those ways is the new District Safety Coin. The coin is given out to people who have done acts that promote safety or commit acts that promote safety. The District Commander, the Safety Office and supervisors can all present safety coins. Employees can nominate a co-worker for the coin by contacting Sean Dolan with a brief justification.

By revamping old initiatives and creating new ones, the Safety Office hopes that 2006 and future years will bring a better sense of safety to all.



New England District commander gives 'State of the District' address during town meeting

Continued from page 1

mum size for each team. The size of the PDT is factored by the duration, cost and type of project. "If we place ourselves in a situation where we have too many people working on a project, we can't even break even," he said. "The PDT is the cornerstone of most of what we do because that is how our funds come to us in most cases."

Col. Thalken said that with the exception of some money given for Regulatory and Real Estate, the Corps is funded based on the projects that are constructed. "How we manage that is very important," he said.

The colonel then unveiled the New England District vision statement and spoke about USACE 2012, Regionalization and how work is distributed around the Corps. "We need to be prepared to move to where that work is, whether it is temporary duty for a month or six months," he said. "We need to be prepared to address this. In some cases, it might be virtually, but not in all cases."

According to Col. Thalken, the New England District has a great reputation in the Corps for the environmental restoration and remediation work that it performs, including dam removal. He said that the current proposed Water Resources Development Act has another CAP program included in it that focuses on dam removal. "We need to leverage that," he said. "This is an area of strength and reputation for the District that we need to take advantage of that."

The colonel stressed that everything New England District does must be on time and on budget. "Whether it is internal processes or external relationships and commitments that we

make to our stakeholders, we need to stay the line," he said. "We need to deliver when we say we're going to for the amount that we say we're going to. In the end, that's really what brings people back."

As the District moves from the three over-arching processes it wants to examine, it has to come up with a way to implement them. "Vision statements and discussions don't put food on the table," said Col. Thalken.

Col. Thalken gave the SPG guidance to keep in mind as it looks for solutions. Some of those guidelines include doing work better, faster, cheaper, safer, and greener; no reductions in force if possible; rewarding "on time and on budget;" determine how much contingency capability the District can afford; and using the USACE Project Management Business Plan. "The PMBP process has a lot of good stuff in there," said Col. Thalken.

The next step for the SPG is to develop a strategy to change. Col. Thalken has given the team a deadline of May 15. The first strategy will focus on shaping the work force to include O&M Navigation and Flood Control; Regulatory; Emergency/Contingency Operations; Separate Offices; Civil Works/Military Construction and Planning.

The second strategy will focus on enhancing the District's environmental restoration and remediation capabilities to include Planning, Design, and Construction. The third strategy will tailor the District's PDT's in Military Construction, Civil Works, and Interagency/International Support.

After a brief question and answer period, Col. Thalken dismissed the audience.



Sweet Valentines

The New England District's Work Environment (WE) Committee sells chocolates and flowers during its Valentine's Day Chocolate Feast and Carnation Sale. The popular event, held Feb. 14, sold out of everything in less than an hour. Photo by Brian Murphy.

Dredging up the past . . .



Col. William Hodgson, Jr., New England Division Engineer (left) stands on the ceremonial platform with Jan Szwed during the Claude M. Hill horse trail dedication at Knightville Dam in this Nov. 1, 1980 photo. Claude M. Hill attended the ceremony and is seen in the photo on horseback.

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