Yankee Engineer

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Building Strong®

New Bedford Hurricane Barrier celebrates 50 years of Flood Risk Management

Story on page 4

Yankee Voices

Greg Penta and Bonnie Ortiz

Congratulations

… to Mark Godfrey, General Engineering Section of the Design Branch of the Engineering/Planning Division, on his selection as the Employee of the Month for September. Godfrey received this honor for his exemplary individual achievement, contribution and performance in conducting design reviews, responding to subsequent comments, and assembling specification sections for the projects.

… to Park Ranger Jason Farnsworth, North Springfield Lake, and his wife, Maria, on the birth of their first child, Tucker Leon, Nov. 21, 2012.

Words worth repeating

"You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club."

- Jack London

"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

District takes time to 'eat pie' at popular annual event

by Jess Levenson
Public Affairs Office

Many developments in New England trigger thoughts of the end of fall and the beginning of the winter/holiday season – falling leaves, colder temperatures, and, for New England District Team members, the annual Pie Fest sponsored by the Work Environment Association (WEA).

This year's event, held Nov. 1, 2012 in the Massachusetts and Connecticut Conference Rooms, boasted nearly 75 pies in every imaginable variety, crowding the decorative tables in anticipation of the hungry breaktime crowds. Candy corn and apples were also available. Spiced hot cider, coffee, and cranberry juice aided event participants in washing their food down.

The aroma of pie, cider, and coffee brought droves of New England District Team members and Community Based Health Care Organization members (located downstairs) to the Conference Rooms for a turn at the pies.

This wildly popular event is free to all employees. All food and beverages were donated by New England District team members who enjoy applying their incredible baking skills, as well as community members who support the Pie Fest celebration.

The Pie Fest was originally an October festivity signifying the end of another successful fiscal year. Today, it is an opportunity for team members to stir from their cubicles, grab a piece of pie and a drink, kick back and socialize.

The few surviving pies of the event met their fate the following morning at breaktime.

Bob Meader has been the long-time organizer of the event for WEA. This year he was assisted by Drew Cattano. Other WEA Committee members who helped with the set up, decorating and cleanup included: Bonnie Ortiz, Gladys Leone, Mary Daley, Sally Rigione, Donna Russell, Greg Penta and Tameka Chapman. Mary Christopher also helped out with the Pie Fest.

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Commander's Corner:

Selflessly serving the Nation, the Region, and the People!

by Col. Charles P. Samaris
District Commander

"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you…ask what you can do for your country. "

~ John F. Kennedy
Inaugural speech as 35th President of the United States (1961)

Team,

Happy New Year! During the holiday season we invest lots of time and energy in thinking about and doing things for others. We shop, wrap, cook, and some of us analog folks still get hand cramps writing cards. Bottom line: we serve others before self. So, I can think of no better time of the year to highlight the great service you render to the people of the Nation and New England.

Every day, members of the New England District team are out there on the front line of public service… SELFLESS SERVICE to the NATION, the REGION and the PEOPLE. So, let's delve into the concept of selfless service a bit. As always, it's all about the words and what they mean…clarity, specificity and understanding the true definition.

SELFLESS is an action word. Selfless is something we should be ourselves or see in others, rather than say we are or hear another's claim. Selfless is: 1) having little or no concern for oneself, especially with regard to fame, position, money, etc., unselfish; 2) devoted to others' welfare or interest and not one's own. Selfless is not easy. Why? First of all, it's not natural. Our instinct is self first, be it preservation, promotion, or pleasure. Sometimes it's tough to put others first when we have our own challenges at work or at home. No, selfless is not easy, because selfless requires…sacrifice.

SACRIFICE is a word you don't hear much these days, unless discussing the life of a Soldier or Civilian (or their Families) deployed to an overseas contingency operation (OCO). But sacrifice is not isolated to OCO. Simply defined, sacrifice is the surrender of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher claim [or calling]. For us, that higher calling is service to the Nation, the Region, and the people. Our sacrifice is placing the needs of the Nation, the Region, and the people before our own. The people of the United States deserve our very best effort. They are who we serve.

SERVICE, or to SERVE, are two very meaningful words. Service is pretty clear: 1) contribution to the welfare of others; 2) an act of helpful activity; 3) the supplying or supplier of commodities required or demanded by the public; 4) a department of public employment and its employees: CIVIL SERVICE. Serve is even more clear: 1) to be of use; 2) to be worthy of reliance or trust; 3) to discharge a duty or function; 4) to answer the needs of; 5) to contribute to. Service is about others, not self. We exist to serve – to meet the needs and insure the welfare of the Nation, Region and people – and be worthy of their trust. To serve successfully, we must do so selflessly, as stated in the Army Values:

'Selfless is something we should be ourselves or see in others, rather than say we are or hear another's claim.'

- Col. Charles Samaris
New England District Commander

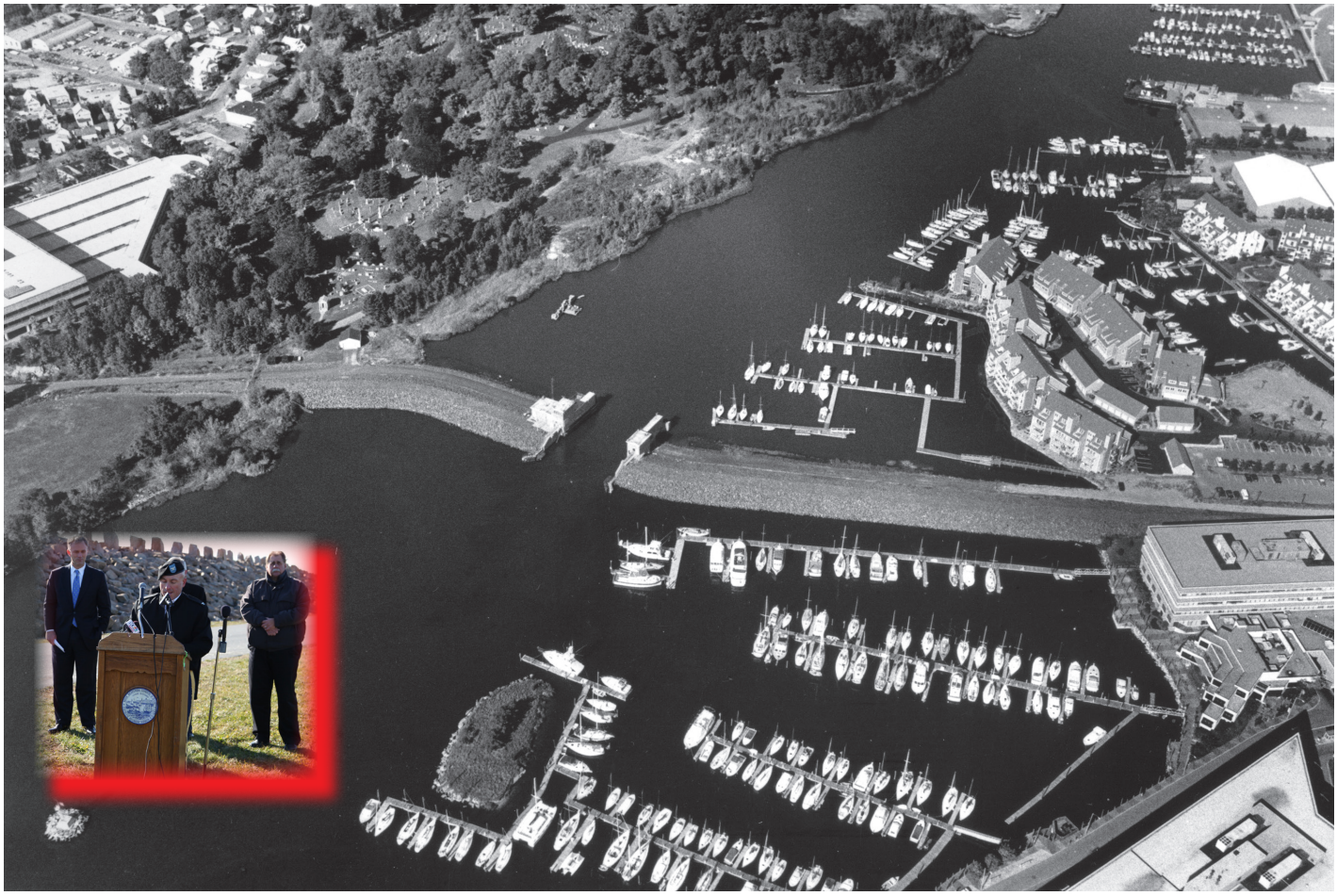
SELFLESS SERVICE - Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.

You'll find some great stories of service on the pages of this month's edition of Yankee Engineer. These stories are shining examples of what you - the proud public servants of the New England District - do every single day! Thank you for your sacrifice and selfless service!

Essayons! Serving New England since 1775!

"The general [or any civil servant] who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom. "

- Sun Tzu



An aerial view of the Stamford Hurricane Barrier, Stamford, Conn.

Hurricane Barrier celebrates 50 years of service to the nation

Col. Charles Samaris, New England District Commander, joined New Bedford, Mass., Mayor Jonathan Mitchell, Fairhaven, Mass. Board of Selectmen Chair, Dr. Brian Bowcock and others in celebrating the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier's 50th anniversary during a ceremony at the project, Nov. 29, 2012.

Col. Samaris expressed his appreciation to the officials of days past to make the decision to build the project. "We stand on the shoulders of giants," he said. "More than 50 years ago our predecessors – many local, state and federal officials and local residents and communities – made some hard decisions and difficult sacrifices to bring this project to fruition. Today we can thank those who had the vision, integrity and fortitude to prepare for the future."

According to Col. Samaris, construction of the hurricane barrier took four years and cost over $18 million, using both federal and non-federal money. "To date, the hurricane barrier has prevented more than $28.2 million in flood damages, including about $3.6 million from Hurricane Sandy in late October," he said.

Other speakers at the event included Mayor Mitchell, Selectman Bowcock and Larry Worden, Commissioner of the New Bedford Department of Public Facilities. A tour of the facility followed the speeches.

The New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier lies across New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbor. It is approximately 50 miles south of Boston. The project protects about 1,400 acres in New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Acushnet from tidal flooding associated with hurricanes and coastal storms. This acreage is thickly settled with industrial and commercial properties, particularly along the waterfront and the shores of the Acushnet River. The area represents about 80 percent of land flooded in the September 1938 and August 1954 hurricanes, the latter storm causing $8.3 million in flood damages.

Construction of the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier began in October 1962 and was completed in January 1966, costing $18.6 million. The project required the relocation of power cables, modification of sewerage and drainage facilities, and acquisition of a small boat yard, several buildings, and about 36 acres of land. The city maintains the project, with the exception of the navigation gates and the barrier extending across New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbor which are oper-

ated and maintained by the Corps. The project is divided into three principle features: a barrier extending across New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbor with an extension dike on the mainland; Clarks Cove Dike in New Bedford; and Fairhaven Dike.

The barrier extending across the harbor consists of a 4,500-foot long earthfill dike with stone slope protection. The barrier has a maximum elevation of 20 feet and a 150-foot-wide gated opening to accommodate commercial and recreational navigation. It also has two gated conduits that are each nine feet high and six feet wide.

The extension dike starts at the western end of the main dike and stretches for 4,600 feet along Rodney French Boulevard East. It has a maximum elevation of 22 feet. The extension dike has three circular gated conduits with diameters of two, three, and four feet, and a street gate on Rodney French Boulevard East.

Clarks Cove Dike consists of earthfill with stone slope protection. It is 5,800 feet long and extends around the north and east sides of the cove, tying to high ground at both ends. On the north side the dike has a maximum elevation of 22 feet, and on the east side the maximum elevation is 23 feet. The dike also has street gates at Rodney French Boulevard West and Cove Road, and a pumping station. Fairhaven Dike consists of earthfill with stone slope protection. It starts at high ground near the foot of Lawton Street and runs easterly about 3,100 feet, with a maximum elevation of 20 feet. The dike also has a four-foot-diameter gated conduit.

Photos by Brian Murphy

John MacPherson, Frank Fedele and Col. Charles Samaris prior to the ceremony.

New Bedford Mayor Jonathan Mitchell and event attendees examine the barrier gates.

Gary Pelton receives an Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from Frank Fedele.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Joe Faloretti speaks at Gary Pelton's luncheon.

Mike Curran congratulates Gary Pelton on his retirement.

Gary Pelton retires with 38 years of service

After 38 years of federal service, Gary Pelton, Environmental Compliance Coordinator for the Upper Connecticut River Basin, has decided to retire.

A retirement luncheon celebrating his long and distinguished career was held Dec. 7, 2012 at Papagallos Restaurant in Keene, NH. Approximately 25 people attended the event.

As attendees munched on a pizza and ziti buffet, Mark Wilmes, Operations Manager at the Upper Connecticut River Basin, served as Master of Ceremonies, welcoming the audience and introducing the speakers. Ray Auger, Student Conservation Association (SCA), Marie Sheehan, Mike Curran, Joe Faloretti and Wilmes all made presentations during the luncheon. Auger presented Pelton with a helmet on behalf of the SCA. Pelton also received a gift certificate from luncheon attendees.

Frank Fedele, Chief of Operations, represented the Executive Office and presented Pelton with an Achievement Medal for Civilian Service as well as his retirement pin and certificate signed by Col. Charles Samaris, New England District Commander.

Jack Boyea, New England District Distinguished Civilian Gallery Member, attended the luncheon. Other retirees who attended were Bob Hanacek, Tim Flynn and Michael Curran.

Lt. Col. Steven Howell reads the award citation to Mary Christopher.

Col. Charles Samaris presents Mary Christopher with her retirement certificate.

Mary Christopher talks with Barbara Newman during Christopher's retirement breakfast.

Tim Winter says a few words to Mary Christopher during the breakfast.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Illustrious Graphic artist retires after more than three decades of service to the District

A retirement breakfast for New England District's Graphic Artist, Mary Christopher, was held Nov. 30, 2012 in the Maine/New Hampshire Conference Rooms. Christopher retired with 35 years of federal service.

Dozens of people came to say goodbye and celebrate her distinguished career while enjoying some bagels and coffee during the presentations. Speakers included Tim Winter, Chief of IT, and Christopher's co-worker Brian Murphy, who spoke extensively about her career. Col. Charles Samaris, New England District Commander and Lt. Col. Steven Howell, Deputy Commander, presented Christopher with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service and her retirement certificate.

"Mary started working for the Corps in New England in February 1975," said Murphy. "She was the first handicapped female hired as a drafter in the Graphic Arts Section."

According to Murphy, Christopher left the District for a while to take a teaching aid position to work with deaf high school students. Christopher, who is deaf herself, returned in February 1985 and has been working for the New England District ever since. "Mary has been a tremendous asset to the New England District, producing graphic designs, awards, brochures and project maps," said Murphy.

Christopher had designed the covers of the District's annual holiday card/safety message for many years, and is responsible for the hand-painted murals displayed at the District's holiday party. Christopher also painted mini masterpieces on the faces of thousands of children over the years during the District's annual Founder's Day picnic.

During her career, Christopher has received many outstanding performance and team awards for her work at the District. But her impact on her community and the invaluable services she has provided to children is just as outstanding. In her spare time, Christopher advocated for the deaf, traveling to the country of Moldova to work in an orphanage for the deaf, teaching the children sign language. Here at home, she worked tirelessly at the Grace Chapel in Lexington, Mass., in their Deaf Ministries Program teaching American Sign Language. She was also an activist for Women's Rights early in her career and was a part of the Federal Women's Program when it originated at the Corps' Waltham, Mass., office in the 1980's.

Christopher's husband Bob and daughter Mia attended the breakfast. She also has a son, Andrew, who was unable to attend. Christopher and her husband are planning a Florida retirement.

Kim Russell and Greg Penta give away trivia prizes during the District's Holiday celebration.

New England District celebrates holiday season with merry making, festivities and friendship

New England District employees gathered in Concord Park's cafeteria to celebrate the holidays with a lunch time party on Dec. 14, 2012. Approximately 240 current team members, family and retirees attended. This year's party was hosted by Contracting, Human Resources, Construction, Operations and the Work Environment Association (WEA) and was one of several observances that took place over the holidays.

As the doors swung open for the noon hour, attendees walked into a winter wonderland expertly decorated by the host offices, complete with snowflakes and winter murals painted by newly retired Mary Christopher.

For a small cost, the New England District team was treated to an Italian-themed catered meal that included salad, eggplant parmesan, lasagna, ziti and sauce, chicken broccoli and ziti, broccoli and ziti (vegetarian option), meatballs and rolls. WEA subsidized most of the cost of the party with popular and frequent fundraisers to include the morning coffee and bagel breakfast.

WEA and its partners also conducted several fundraisers during the event. The association held its annual Holiday Party Commemorative Labeled Bottle fundraiser during the District's Holiday Party. This year the fundraiser is dedicated to benefitting the victims of Hurricane Sandy. A total of $180 will be donated by the WE Committee to the Red Cross Relief Fund. WEA also held its successful Toys for Tots toy drive in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps, collecting 380 new and unwrapped toys for children in need. Jerry Nunziato and Janet Brayden organized the event for WEA. Both the Red Cross and the Toys for Tots toy drive fall under the Combined Federal Campaign initiative.

Finally, the most anticipated annual fundraiser for WEA was the gift basket auction held during the holiday party. Eighteen gift baskets were donated by District offices of various sizes and themes that New England District Team members could take home if they were the highest bidders. The fundraiser took in over $800 with the proceeds going to offset the costs of the numerous WEA events held throughout the year to include the holiday party and Founder's Day.

In addition to the meal and the fundraising activities, party-goers also had the option of participating in a trivia

Mike Bioardi, Drew Cattano and Jesse Morrill-Winter enjoy the festivities.

Elaine Law looks over the holiday baskets before bidding on one.

contest for prizes or singing karaoke.

Distinguished Civilian Gallery Member Earle "Buz" McDonald attended the daytime holiday party. Other retirees seen spreading holiday cheer were Joe Bocchino, Richard Santini, Tony Riccio, Eileen Hughes, Alexine Raineri, Greg Buteau, Bobby Byrne, Susan Rodkey, Bill and Sue Holtham, Bob Batt and Paul Battista.

The 2012 Holiday Party Committee members who organized and ran the day time party included: Sheila Winston-Vincuilla, Tina Krawczyk, Mary Daley, Sarah Rudner, Frank Fedele, Helen Newcomb, Joan Gardner, Kim Russell, Christine Johnson-Battista, Fay Kent, Gladys Leone, Sean Dolan, Greg Penta and Leanna Martin. Santos Lara and Silas Sanderson also helped out during the Holiday Party.

The Westover Resident Office held its annual holiday luncheon on Dec. 12, 2012 at Zoe's Fish House in Hadley, Mass. Over a dozen Westover Resident Office Team members, families and retirees attended. Retirees were Champak Shah, Andrew Janet, Pat Allen, Charlie Miller and Al Laraway.

The New England District Team also held a night-time party at The Tavern, Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Mass., on Dec. 6, 2012. Attendees of the after work Holiday Party enjoyed dancing, an appetizer and dinner buffet and the company of their coworkers from 4 p.m. until midnight.

About 100 people attended the night event, to include retirees Greg Buteau, Bobby Byrne and Joe Bocchino. Organizers this year included Judy Antonellis, Grace Bowles, Sue MacDonald, Kathy Bucciarelli and Greg Penta.

District celebrates Year End with BBQ

The Work Environment Association (WEA) hosted its End of Year Barbecue on Oct. 15, 2012 in the Concord Park courtyard immediately following the awards ceremony.

The annual event celebrates the successful fiscal year end and kicks off the new Fiscal Year in a positive way. About 200 employees signed up for the barbecue.

This year was a catered event with a menu of pulled chicken, Georgia pulled pork, macaroni and cheese, candied yams, grilled veggies, baked beans and collard greens. WEA supplied cakes for dessert. WEA also provided background music to accentuate the festive mood.

The ticket price would have been $12 per person, but strategic breakfast and clothing fundraising by WEA, who subsidized a large portion of the event, brought the cost down to $5 per person.

The WEA team that sponsored this year's event were: Greg Penta (Chair), Paige Kimbrough-Rowan, Susan MacDonald, Judy Antonellis, Grace Bowles, Drew Cattano, Tameka Chapman, Mary Daley, Santos Lara, Gladys Leone, Leanna Martin, Bob Meader, Bonnie Ortiz, Sally Rigione, Donna Russell, Robbie Russo, Kane Turmelle and Angie Vanaria.

In addition, many New England District team members pitched in to set up/take down the tables and chairs and assisted in the clean up.

The Year End Barbecue is only one of many popular WEA initiatives to help make the New England District a great place to work.

The lower east end of Stewart's Creek that is scheduled to be restored.

Photo provided by Larry Oliver

Corps of Engineers awards contract for Stewart's Creek Estuary Habitat Salt Pond and Restoration

The Stewart's Creek Estuary Habitat Restoration Project in Barnstable, Mass., will be completed under the terms of a $470,720.00 contract issued recently by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District.

Work will be accomplished by Sumco Eco-Contracting, LLC, of Salem, Mass. The project is scheduled to start on or about Dec. 1, 2012 and take about four months to complete. The contract was awarded on Sept. 27, 2012.

"The project involves increasing tidal exchange to the Stewart's Creek salt pond and wetlands," said Project Manager Larry Oliver, of the Corps' New England District, Engineering and Planning Division. "Inadequate flushing is contributing to eutrophication and sediment accumulation in the salt pond."

The project is located on Cape Cod in the town of Barnstable. The system is connected to Hyannis Harbor (Nantucket Sound) through a 50-foot-long, 3-foot-diamater concrete culvert that passes under Ocean Avenue. The project involves restoring tidal flushing to the salt pond/marsh system by replacing the existing culvert under Ocean Avenue.

The Corps developed a plan to restore tidal flows, salt marsh, and benthic habitat to the salt pond/marsh system. The existing culvert will be replaced with a 4-foot by 6-foot concrete culvert with headwalls and wingwalls. The downstream side of the culvert will be equipped with a combination sluice gate, which has a flap valve to allow water to leave the upstream area as the tide recedes. A sedimentation basin (a small depression) will be constructed at the upstream side of the culvert to capture sand transported into the marsh from the beach and an access ramp will be constructed to allow maintenance equipment to access the sedimentation basin.

The project will be managed by the Corps and all work will be accomplished under the supervision of a Corps' Quality Assurance Representative to assure compliance with contract requirements. For more information about the Corps' New England District projects and activities visit the website at: http://www.nae.usace.army.mil.

(New England District Press Release)

Frida Kahlo's life and works explained during New England District's Hispanic Heritage celebration

The New England District's Hispanic Heritage Program Manager, assisted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, hosted a program that highlighted the works of Mexican artists and political activist Frida Kahlo in the New England District Theatre on Oct. 17, 2012.

Col. Charles Samaris, New England District commander, told event attendees that one of the priorities of Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Commanding General, is to increase diversity in the Corps. Sixteen percent of the U.S. population is Hispanic. "One of the beauties of being in New England is its rich diversity," said Col. Samaris.

The colonel said that although the country as a whole has gotten open minded, discrimination is still out there. "It's getting better because of programs like this," he said. "Discrimination is NOT tolerated at the New England District."

Hispanic Employment Program Manager Ruth Ann Brien introduced the event's keynote speaker, Professor Esteban Loustaunau, Associate Professor of Spanish and the Director of Latin American Studies at Assumption College in Worcester, Mass.

Loustaunau said in honor of Hispanic Heritage month he would discuss the life and paintings of Frida Kahlo. The professor said that Kahlo is a source of pride and inspiration to the people of Mexico, and was the first Hispanic woman featured on a U.S. Stamp.

Kahlo is famous for her provocative self portraits and favored a style of painting on small canvases when the popular method of painting was murals. According to Loustaunau, her life was just as interesting as her art.

The artist suffered great physical pain throughout her life, contracting polio at the age of six and then being involved in a serious bus accident at age 18 that permanently damaged her body and necessitated approximately 35 surgeries over the course of her lifetime. It was during her recovery from the bus accident that she finished her first self portrait.

Kahlo found solace and self-expression in her paintings, of which she was often the subject. Many of her works are surrealistic but surprisingly honest, representing intensely personal emotions and relationships.

It was also during this time when Kahlo became more politically involved and joined the Young Communist League and the Mexican Communist Party. She met and married fellow artist Diego Rivera in 1929. Their stormy marriage was reflected in many of Kahlo's self portraits. Kahlo and Rivera briefly lived in the U.S. and Paris before returning to Mexico.

Loustaunau encouraged the audience to view the autobiographical film, "Frida" which documents the artist's life and artwork, and then he showed examples of her work during the PowerPoint presentation.

Though her work was not as widely known during her lifetime, her 1938 painting entitled "Self-Portrait-the Frame" was the first work by a 20th century Mexican artist to be purchased by the Louvre. In 2001 the U.S. Postal Service put her image on a stamp, making her the first Hispanic woman to receive this honor. In 2006, her 1943 painting "Roots" sold for $5.6 million at an auction, setting a U.S. record for a Latin American work. Kahlo died in 1954.

At the conclusion of Loustaunau's presentation, Col. Samaris and Brien presented him with a Bunker Hill plaque in appreciation for coming to speak with the New England District team.

Photo by Brian Murphy

Professor Esteban Loustaunau interprets the creative works of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo during the Hispanic Heritage celebration.

Dredging up the past

Joanne Barry examines her Yankee Swap gift and decides whether or not to keep it during the New England District Holiday Party held Dec. 15, 2000. Lt. Col. John Rovero (in the Santa Hat) ran the Swap.

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