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East Brimfield marks 50 years of service to the nation with ceremony, tours

The staff at the East Brimfield Dam recently celebrated a milestone in the project's history.

The team hosted a celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the project completion, Nov. 6. The event was attended by dozens of people. Col. Philip Feir, New England District Commander, represented the District and served as the keynote speaker at the event. "This is a significant and important milestone," he said. "This flood risk management project has

been protecting the citizens of this community, the region, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and downstream for 50 years. That's quite an accomplishment."

The Commander spoke briefly about the project's amazing damage preventing history. "Although it cost \$7.1 million to build, East Brimfield Dam has prevented more than \$109 million in flood damages since it was built," he said. "These are damages that would have occurred to people and property in the

region had the dam not been built."

Col. Feir noted that not only does East Brimfield provide flood protection, it offers recreational opportunities to the public to include swimming, picnicking, fishing, camping, hunting, canoeing, boating, cross-country skiing and nature study. "Additionally, the Corps of Engineers and the town of Brimfield have worked together to support the development of the Grand Trunk Trail for recreational use," he said. "The popular recreation area includes the Quinebaug River Canoe Trail from Lake Siog to East Brimfield Lake and is a five-mile flat water canoe route that is a designated part of the National Trails System by the National Park Service."

According to Col. Feir, East Brimfield is one of six flood risk management projects designed and built by the Corps of Engineers in the Thames River Basin. "This system is part of a much larger system of flood damage reduction system throughout all of New England," he said.

The result of these ongoing efforts is that this flood damage reduction network in New England, which cost \$538 million to build in the last 50 years has prevented flood damages of \$4.8 billion as of September 2009.

Col. Feir concluded his remarks by showing appreciation to those



East Brimfield Lake.

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Yankee Voices

Retiree Charlie Miller, Sue Loubier, Westover Resident Office, and retirees Jim Leonard and Charlie Marney during Miller's 70th birthday celebration.



Stay positive: Three powerful affirmations

Creative people are optimistic. They have to be, if they expect their ideas to succeed. But optimism isn't blind faith; it's a skill you can learn.

Author Martin E.P. Seligman explored how optimists explain negative events in their lives, and he found that they usually say these three statements to themselves:

1. This won't last forever.
2. This doesn't affect every part of my life.
3. I'm not necessarily to blame.

Adopt these statements to maintain a positive, creative frame of mind.

(First Draft Magazine)

Words worth repeating

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."

- Winston Churchill

Sympathy

...to the family of New England District retiree **Edward Hoell**, who passed away Oct. 1. Mr. Hoell was also a World War II Veteran, serving with the U.S. Navy.

...to **John Kennelly**, Engineering/Planning, on the passing of his mother-in-law, **Jean M. Sullivan**, Oct. 9.

... to **Kevin Burke**, Cape Cod Canal, on the passing of his wife, **Linda**, on Oct. 23.

...to Logistics retiree and Distinguished Civilian Gallery member **Ann Dogherty** on the passing of her husband, **Paul**, Nov. 13.

...to **Patricia Devine**, Westover Resident Office, on the passing of her mother, **Sally Venman**, Nov. 13.

...to the family of Contracting retiree **Ed Courtemanche** who passed away on Nov. 17. Mr. Courtemanche was the Chief of Procurement before his retirement. During that time he completed two overseas assignments in Okinawa and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Courtemanche served in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Congratulations

... to **Randy Sujat** and **Dan Richardson** of the Westover Resident Office for participating in the 17th annual Hartford ING Marathon on Oct. 9. The ING Hartford Marathon race event attracts participants from all over the world.

The race started at 8 a.m., in front of the Connecticut State Capitol in Hartford, Conn. Sujat completed the 26.2-mile full marathon in 4:36:50, placing 1,557 out of 2,265 runners. Richardson completed the 13.1-mile half-marathon in 2:05:47, placing 2,337 out of 4,623 runners.



Vegetation maintenance starts at Woonsocket Project

by **Tim Dugan**
Public Affairs Office

The New England District started vegetation maintenance on Nov. 10, at the federally-owned Woonsocket Flood Damage Reduction Project in Woonsocket, R.I. The work, to be completed by contractor Jennifer M. Cook, Inc., of Upton, Mass., will remove and dispose of heavy wooded vegetation along the side slopes and crests of earthen levees/dikes, along channel improvement slopes and adjacent to flood walls along the Blackstone, Mill and Peters Rivers.

All vegetation within 15 feet of the toe of the land and water sides of the levees/dikes, and the flood walls will be cut and removed.

Root balls of trees greater than four inches in diameter

will be removed along the levees/dikes and the levees/dikes repaired accordingly. All vegetation along the channel improvement areas will be cut and removed to the top of the floodway. Herbicide spray will be used to control vegetation. The work will take about six or seven months to complete.

The devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita brought the issue of levee safety to the forefront of public debate in recent years. Findings of subsequent Corps investigations into the performance of the flood damage reduction systems pointed to a need for a periodic, comprehensive and risk-informed approach to levee safety. The Corps has been working together with the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) to provide them findings of Corps levee inspections and assessments for their use in making decisions in the National Flood Insurance Program.

The Corps and FEMA are working together to ensure that flood hazard maps clearly reflect the flood protection capabilities of the levees, and that the maps accurately represent the flood risks posed to those protected areas. The Woonsocket project was decertified under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) administered by FEMA in May 2007 because

the agency determined the project no longer provides protection from the base flood level. As a result, property owners behind the project are now paying flood insurance.

The Corps has begun the process of rehabilitating this project in the hope that it can once again comply with the requirements of the FEMA NFIP certification program so that

flood insurance would no longer be required. One step is to perform this one-time major vegetation maintenance followed up by an annual maintenance program to prevent the regrowth of vegetation. Another step is to perform repairs to the Woonsocket Falls Dam. Contract work has already begun to repair the dam.

The Woonsocket Flood Damage Reduction Project protects industrial and commercial establishments and densely populated residential areas from flood flows on the Blackstone, Peters and Mill Rivers. It was constructed in response to flood damage that occurred due to heavy rains in August 1955 that caused \$22 million in damage.



Heavy equipment operated by contractor J. Cook, Inc., of Upton, Mass., pulls a root ball from the "toe" of the Social District Levee. (Photo by Joe Zanca)



Rescue workers look for accident victims. (Photos by Kevin Woods)

Engineer tapped to observe NATO disaster training

Scott Acone, Project Management, traveled to the country of Armenia this fall to observe NATO's annual disaster response exercise.

The seven-day event, held Sept. 11-17, is held to test the coordinated response of member nations to a significant disaster event. "I was participating as an observer for NATO," said Acone. "Our purpose is to observe the response and provide feedback on what worked, what was good and what needed improvement."

The scenario event, which was called "Armenia 2010," took place in the city of Arzni in the Kotayk

region northeast of Yerevan. In the exercise, a severe earthquake caused high numbers of casualties

and widespread damage in the area, to include critical infrastructure.

"About 30 NATO and partner countries had teams respond, testing and challenging their ability to work together on issues such as controlling boarders and responding to chemical, biological or radiological incidents," said Acone.

Observers provided feedback daily by prepar-



Using a dummy, exercise participants practice rescuing an earthquake victim.

ing observation sheets and having daily after action report meetings. All of the data will be summarized into a final report.

Acone is a Senior Structures Specialist with the Corps of Engineers Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Cadre. Although the cadre – roughly 60 trained structures specialists – do not specifically belong to an US&R team, they are a USACE Headquarters asset that is available to augment the engineering capability of the US&R task forces. “We generally respond with the initial FEMA response of an incident support team,” said Acone. “Our response falls under Emergency Support Function 9 of the National Response framework.”

The Senior Structures Specialist has had some US&R experience. He deployed to Haiti immediately following the devastating earthquake that rocked the country. He and the other members of the US&R team worked with one of the FEMA liaisons to NATO while in Haiti, which made a connection that led to the invitation to observe the Armenian exercise. Acone had the credentials needed to be eligible to participate in the exercise. “Because I’m one of the program instructors and have been deployed, I met the requirements to be an observer for the Armenian event,” he said.

According to Acone, the training exercise for the NATO participants went well. “Communication plans were tested and response procedures were tested and improved on,” he said. “All the objectives of the exercise were met.”

NATO has already begun planning next year’s exercise, and USACE will participate. Next year’s exercise will be held in Moldova.



Rescue workers scale a fire truck ladder for a simulated rescue.



(from left) Kevin Woods and Scott Acone discuss the day's activities during an after action report meeting. (Photo by Siyoung Lee)



Park Ranger Tom Chamberland gathers ceremony participants for a tour of the dam. (Photos by Brian Murphy)

East Brimfield marks 50 years of service to the nation

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who participated in the day's event. "I want to thank the Corps team and the local supporters for helping to sponsor this special 50th anniversary event," he said.

Todd Smola, Massachusetts State Representative, presented Keith Beecher, Project Manager, East Brimfield Lake, with a congratulatory proclamation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Other speakers included Mary Dowling, Selectman, town of

Sturbridge; Beecher, who welcomed the audience and served as Master of Ceremonies; Larry Lowenthal, local historian, who spoke about the history of East Brimfield Dam and the former East Brimfield Village; and Sumner Barr, resident of the former East Brimfield Village.

The official ceremony concluded with birthday cake and other refreshments. Dam tours followed the official ceremony. Historical displays showing the former East Brimfield Village and the construc-

tion photos of East Brimfield Dam were located inside the gate house for people to view. Construction on East Brimfield Dam began in 1958 and was placed into operation in 1960. The project was built in response to the devastation that occurred during the 1955 Flood and Hurricanes Connie and Diane. The earthen dam is capable of storing 9.4 billion gallons of water, and the area in and around the dam provides numerous recreational opportunities the public can enjoy year-round.



(above) Col. Philip Feir addresses the audience. (right) Park Ranger Glenna Vitello serves birthday cake.



Preventing turtle “road rash” at North Hartland Lake

**By Park Ranger Roxanne Barbeau
North Hartland Lake**

We still don’t know why the chicken crossed the road, but we know why turtles, at least female ones, do. Every year in New England, between the months of May-July, an ancient ritual repeats itself. Various species of aquatic turtles leave their watery homes and trudge onto dry land in search of loose soil in direct sunlight for a turtle, an ideal egg incubator. When the turtle finds her perfect patch, she digs a hole, lays her eggs, and covers them over with dirt -- her one parenting duty complete. Back to the pond! This method has worked well for millions of years. But today’s turtle mother faces an obstacle even more formidable than dinosaurs -- motor vehicles. Roadways of varying sizes all over the country create a serious problem for turtles of all ages and genders trying to get from Point A to B. Small and slow as they are, they are simply unseen by motorists hurtling by. The turtle’s built-in armor can be an effective deterrent against teeth and claws, but is no match for an automobile, even one traveling at a very low speed. Various studies done in

this country and Canada over the last decade show that turtle road mortality is beginning to have a real impact on populations of the slowly reproducing reptile.

While turtles might not be the most showy or charismatic of animals, they are important environmental players. Here at North Hartland Lake, visitors love seeing “our” turtles, and always make sure the lake’s staff is updated on the turtles’ movements, especially



Female common snapping turtle laying eggs. The soft shoulders of roads make good nesting areas for various species of aquatic turtles. Motorists driving on roads near water should be extra cautious in the late spring and early summer. (Photo by Mary-Lou Waugh)

during nesting season. Turtles here are very drawn to the easy to dig soil that supports the guard rails on North Hartland Lake’s main road, meaning that summer visitors in cars often find themselves playing “chicken” with them. But how to avoid human/turtle encounters of the vehicle kind?

One answer to this question has been to distribute brochures at the lake’s recreation areas explaining the turtle’s road crossing dilemma. But in order to reach an even larger audience, the staff decided to install “turtle crossing” signs in road areas approaching the turtles’ pathways, so that drivers would have time to react. North Hartland Lake worked with the District’s sign shop at Tully Lake, to find the appropriate sign template and fabricate it. The signs were installed late this summer, so while it may take several years to determine whether or not they help reduce turtle mortality, in the meantime they’ll remind drivers here to slow down to help safeguard all lake road users, regardless of size or species.



The template for this sign is now available through the District Sign Shop. (Photo by Samuel Potter)

Scouts clear invasive plants at Hop Brook Lake

**Story and photos by Steven Patchkofsky
Hop Brook Lake**

Naugatuck and Prospect scouts from Boy Scout Troop 102 recently teamed up with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to clear several varieties of invasive plant species from land around Hop Brook Lake, located in Middlebury, Conn. As part of this community service project, the scouts learned about the plants that are being controlled in the area and about the Global Positioning System (GPS) technology being used by the Corps. Naugatuck River Basin summer ranger Aaron Budris spent parts of his summer using GPS to mark invasive plants at projects in the Naugatuck River Basin such as Hop Brook Lake. With the extent of coverage determined, they were then able to start eradication of various invasive plants. Steve Patchkofsky, Environmental Compliance Coordinator for the Naugatuck River Basin, emailed out a request to various Boy Scout troops for volunteers to complete service projects in the park. Budgets are ever decreasing, and the use of volunteers has been a benefit to them as much as us. It was with this calling that Troop 102 stepped up to the challenge.

Patchkofsky and Budris were invited to their Thursday night meeting where they explained some of the invasive plants in Hop Brook Lake that they would be attempting to eradicate. Along with this, Budris gave a brief demonstration of Geographic Information System (GIS) and how it is used to map the facilities. That was all that was needed to get the scouts involved. From that point on, they learned the five plants we would be picking, how to use the GPS to locate them, and the ways we would be harvesting them.

The troop showed up on time and ready for a day's activity. They were eager and well prepared. After a brief safety meeting and passing out tools and gloves, their senior patrol leader took charge and they went to work. The scouts used pruners and saws to cut Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive and Barberry down flush with the ground. The total area cleared of these invasives was approximately 1.5 acres.

The troop also tackled a .25 acre plot of Japanese Knotweed. Because of the hardness of this plant and its ability to rejuvenate after being cut, the Knotweed was placed in garbage bags and will be incinerated at a local facility.



Scouts from Troop 102 clear invasive plants at Hop Brook Lake.

The 1.75 acres of invasives that were cut helped tremendously, and that alone was a great help to this park. They finished the day by filling multiple trash bags of litter. The scouts plan to return in the spring to use the hand-held GPS devices to record the type, size and location of invasive plants as part of the Corps' ground control project at the lake.

Troop 102 showed up to work at Hop Brook with 14 scouts and 4 adult leaders. The scouts picked up and bagged eight 55-gallon bags of trash and 11, 55-gallon bags of the invasive Japanese Knotweed. Using the Corps of Engineers value for volunteer services, the scouts of Troop 102 completed \$1,125.90 of benefits to the federal park system.



Scouts use a Trimble GeoXM GPS unit to find the next patch of Honeysuckle.

Corps of Engineers completes Bourne Bridge repairs

Repairs on the Bourne Bridge spanning the Cape Cod Canal in Bourne, Mass., were completed Nov. 17 at 11 a.m. and the bridge has now been fully re-opened to its normal four lanes of traffic, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District officials.

Due to the diligence and hard work of the Corps of Engineers construction contractor, R. Zoppo Corporation, of Stoughton, Mass., the project was completed earlier than planned.

Although there were some weather delays during the project they did not prove to be significant.

Work consisted of removal of the old waterproofing and pavement to the bridge deck, and the reinstallation of pavement/waterproofing. These pavement/waterproofing repairs are essential to protecting the underlying steel/concrete grid deck in order to



R. Zoppo Corporation, the District's contractor, paves the Bourne Bridge in October 2010. (Photo by Scott Barr)

maintain the structural integrity and safety of the bridge. The entire project for deck repairs and paving

of the Bourne and Sagamore bridges is now complete. (*New England District news release*)

WE Committee holds largest Pie Fest event to date

Nothing says comfort after a stressful year end like a delicious piece of pie. To celebrate yet another successful closing of another fiscal year and to begin the new fiscal year on a good note, the Work Environment (WE) Committee held its largest "Pie Fest" to date.

The event, which over the years has become synonymous with the beginning of the new fiscal year, was held Oct. 6 in the Massachusetts/Connecticut Conference Rooms.

"This is by far the largest Pie Fest we've held," said Bob Meader, Pie Fest coordinator of the WE Committee. "We really appreciate everyone's participation. It was a very successful event."

About 74 pies were registered to appear (and then disappear) at the event. The hundreds of New England District employees and members of the Community Health Based Health Care Organization chose from nearly two dozen varieties of pie that ranged from the traditional apple and pumpkin to the more exotic chocolate banana cream and raspberry swirl pies.

Other delightfully delicious desserts included cheesecake, Ontario butter tarts, Hungarian nut cake, apples, candy, ice cream and cheese.

And what's pie without something to wash it down with? Meader and his Pie Fest helpers thought of that, too. They served up coffee, juice and cider to pair with the pies.

After everyone had their fill (and then some), there was still more pie to go around. "For the first time ever, there was a significant amount of food left over," said Meader. "The WE Committee sold coffee the following morning as a fund-raiser to buy new microwaves in the cafeteria. You got a free piece of pie with every coffee purchase."

Many people participated in the Pie Fest by donating pies, paper goods and other materials, but Meader received a great deal of assistance from Pie Fest volunteers Mary Christopher, Bonnie Ortiz, Gladys Leone, Zina Cassulo-Henderson, Phill Nimeskern and Sarita Martinez.



Bob Meader writes a description of one of the goodies on display at the Pie Fest. (Photos by Brian Murphy)



The crowd at the New England District Pie Fest line up to get a piece of pie and other desserts.



A wide variety of pies were made available to Pie Fest participants.

Equal Opportunity Office hosts Hispanic Heritage celebration

“Heritage, Diversity, Integrity and Honor: The Renewed Hope in America,” was the 2010 Theme of Hispanic Heritage Month. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage and culture, Ruth Ann Brien, Hispanic Heritage Program Manager in conjunction with Jackie DiDomenico, EEO Officer, sponsored a celebration, Oct. 5, in the Concord Park Cafeteria.

Lt. Col. Steven Howell, Deputy District Commander, welcomed the audience and talked about the rich history and influence Hispanics have in American culture. “Collectively, Hispanics represent the history, culture and traditions of 20 nations and form a vital part of the Army’s rich and diverse social fabric,” he said. “Hispanic Soldiers are prevalent throughout our Army, making up nearly six percent of our commissioned officers, eight percent of our warrant officers, 12 percent of our enlisted personnel and six percent of the Army Civilian workforce.”

After Lt. Col. Howell’s remarks, Brien then introduced the keynote

speaker for the event, Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, the first Latin American woman to be elected to the Massachusetts State Senate. “Senator Chang-Diaz is serving her first term on behalf of the Second Suffolk District,” said Brien. “She is a strong advocate for public education, Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) reform and other social issues. She serves as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development; as the Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Business, and as a member of the Education, Elder Affairs, Nursing and the Municipalities and Regional Government Committees.”

Senator Chang-Diaz spoke about the influence that her father had on her, especially when it came to determination in adversity. “I would talk about how hard it was being the only female Latino in the Massachusetts State Senate and he would remind me of all he went

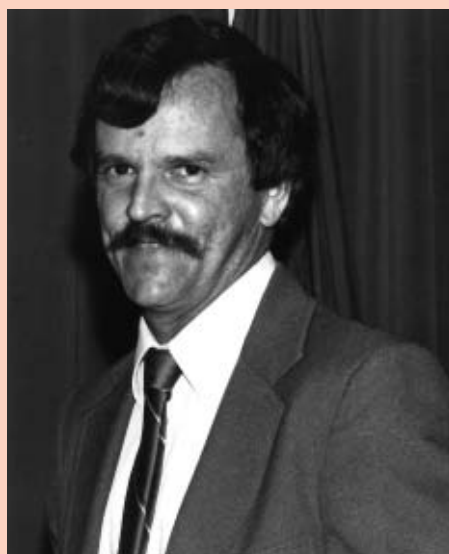
through to succeed,” she said. She went on to talk about how her father emigrated to the U.S. from Costa Rica and went on to become the owner of a company that studies advances in jet rocket propulsion.

Senator Chang-Diaz concluded her presentation by talking about discrimination against Latinos, especially in a downturned economy. She invited members of the audience to share their own stories, especially children of immigrants. Lt. Col. Howell and Brien presented Senator Chang-Diaz with a Bunker Hill plaque to demonstrate the District’s appreciation for her participation in the event. The Hispanic Heritage celebration concluded with a Fiesta featuring home-made Hispanic dishes made by New England District employees. In addition to Brien and DiDomenico, other District employees who contributed to the event included Bob Leitch, Heather Sullivan, Kim Kaminski-Donaher, Norm Farris, Sheila Harvey, and Ruth Ladd.

Richard Drew, long time, valued employee passes away

The New England District lost a valuable employee and good friend when Richard Drew, Resource Management Officer, passed away after a long illness, Sept. 27.

Richard received his BSBA in Accounting from Northeastern University. He began his federal career in the District as a temporary accounting technician on Jan. 4, 1982. Through the years, Richard earned a series of promotions, until he became the District’s Budget and Manpower Officer.



Richard Drew in a circa late 1980's photo.

During his 28 and a half years, Richard received numerous performance and special act awards, which prove to be a small testament to his dedication and quality of work he performed for the District.

Richard was laid to rest on Oct. 1, the beginning of the New Fiscal Year, at the Calvary Cemetery in Woburn, Mass. He is survived by two brothers, their wives, and a niece.

The Corps of Engineers flag flew at half mast on Oct. 1, to honor his memory and dedicated service to the District and the to nation.

Dredging up the past . . .



This photo was taken at the Hartford, Conn., Area Office in 1979. In the photo are Charlie Miller, Office Engineer, Sue Loubier, secretary and Jim Leonard, Area Engineer. The office was established to oversee the \$24 million Hartford Underground Tunnel Project started in 1976. The project was completed in 1981.

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