

# Yankee Engineer

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*Building Strong*



**Repairs complete at Bearskin Neck Jetty**

**Story on page 3**

# Yankee Voices

Jim Hachigian and Roger Eddy



## Information about the recent OPM Cybersecurity Incident

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently became aware of a cybersecurity incident affecting its systems and data that may have exposed the personal information of current and former federal employees.

Beginning June 8 and continuing through June 19, OPM will be sending email and U.S. mail notifications to current and former federal employees potentially impacted by the incident. Email notices will be sent from [opmcio@csid.com](mailto:opmcio@csid.com). Standard letters will be sent to individuals for whom OPM does not have an email address.

The communication will contain information regarding services being provided at no cost to individuals impacted by the incident, including credit report access, credit monitoring, identity theft insurance, and recovery services.

Additional information at [www.csid.com/opm](http://www.csid.com/opm).

## Employee Spotlight Thuyen Nguyen, Engineering/Planning



Thuyen Nguyen is a Senior Structural Engineer for the Structural Section of Design Branch, Engineering/Planning Division. He received his Bachelor's, Master's and all the courses for a PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of Connecticut. He also completed a special graduate study in Steel Bridge Engineering at

the State University of New York in Buffalo.

Nguyen's duties at the District include preparing structural design computations, contract drawings and technical specifications for projects that require any structures such as bridges, flood walls, pump stations, etc. He performs structural analysis and evaluation loading conditions of different types of structures. He also conducts routine inspection reports with repair recommendations for the structures.

Nguyen has worked for the New England District for the past two years. Prior to that, he worked at the Jacksonville, Afghanistan, and New Orleans Districts as well as private industry. He was selected as the Work Environment Association's Employee of the Month in March.

"Despite having a significant workload of his own, Thuyen has offered to lighten the workload burden on the Bridge Safety Program Manager by providing his assistance to perform six bridge load ratings in support of ongoing work for ERDC at Fort Drum," wrote Jason Paolino in his nomination for the award. "His spirit of team work and dedication to the mission is sincerely appreciated."

When asked what he enjoys most about being a part of the New England District team, Nguyen said, "I must say the work environment. It's a great place and the people are great to work with."

Nguyen and his wife spend all of their off work time with their two young sons and enjoy the variety of the four New England seasons.





Repairs to the Bearskin Neck Stone Jetty in Rockport, Massachusetts are complete.

Photo by Stephen Dunbar

## New England District, contractor complete work on Bearskin Neck Stone Jetty

Repair work to the Bearskin Neck Stone Jetty in Rockport, Massachusetts is complete.

“Despite being hit with a harsh winter that included Winter Storm Juno, field work was completed on the Bearskin Neck Jetty repairs, Rockport, Mass., two days before Memorial Day Weekend,” said Project Manager Stephen Dunbar.

The work on the \$3.3M project consisted of repairing the 540-foot-long jetty that was damaged during Hurricane Sandy. The Bearskin Neck Jetty is located at the northern end of Bearskin Neck in Rockport, approximately 35 miles north of Boston and 20 miles south of the New Hampshire-Massachusetts border. The jetty extends into the ocean from the end of Bearskin Neck to the east and provides protection to Rockport Harbor.

Prior to construction, the jetty consisted primarily of 3-5 ton armor stone. The ocean side of the jetty retained its shape and authorized dimension while 400 feet of the jetty contained voids 5-feet-deep along the crest profile and voids 5-10 feet deep along the harbor side slope. The head at the east end of the jetty was completely removed by wave action along with the U.S. Coast Guard Aid to Navigation

that was mounted there.

The work included delivery and installation of 8,900 tons of 14-19 ton armor stone and 3,800 tons of 4-8 ton armor stone to repair the jetty to authorized dimensions. Repairs provided a crest width of 18 feet for the first 400 feet, widening for the next 70 feet to a fixed width of 28 feet for the last 30 feet at the head of the jetty. Crest elevation was +18.8 feet mean lower low water (MLLW). A majority of the 18-19 ton stones were used to reconstruct the last 30 feet at the head of the jetty.

“Repairs required a substantial rebuild of the neck of the jetty, reinforcement of the toe, and moving and re-handling of new and existing stones to obtain the required 3-point interlocking,” said Dunbar. The New England District also executed a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to install a new concrete base for Aid To Navigation (ATON) at the head of the jetty.

“The town of Rockport, residents and business owners are very happy with the finished product and that it was completed on schedule,” said Dunbar. “Thanks to the entire team-- from design through construction-- for a job well done.”



Photos by Brian Murphy

Friends and family members gather around Jim Lewis for a group photo at his retirement lunch.

## Jim Lewis retires with over 30 years of service

A celebration of distinguished service to the country and to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took place for Jim Lewis, Supervisory Park Ranger for Otter Brook Lake/Surry Mountain Lake, on April 24 at Papagallos Restaurant in Keene, New Hampshire.

Approximately 64 family, friends and co-workers attended. Christie Baker, Park Ranger at Otter Brook/Surry Mountain Lakes, hosted the event. Baker was the first in a long line of people who stood up to talk about their time, experiences and adventures with Lewis over his career. Speakers included John Asseng, Mark Wilmes, Ray Ballantine, Eric Chouinard, Jason Trembly, Randy Lecuyer, Ralph Gendron, Farrell McMillan, daughter Kiera Lewis and Barbara Ingalls. "Thank you for the laughs and for being such a good example of what it means to serve our country!" said Ingalls. "I wish you a very happy retirement."

Frank Fedele, Chief of Operations, presented Lewis with his retirement certificate. Mark Wilmes, Operations Manager for the Upper Connecticut River Basin, presented Lewis with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service for his exceptional work and dedication to service over his 33-year career.

Lewis began working for the Corps in New England on May 10, 1982, but his exposure to the Corps of Engineers went back to when he was 10 years old, sliding down the tunnels of North Springfield Dam in Vermont when it was under construction. He worked his first four summers at Townshend Lake and then in 1986 transferred to



Jim Lewis receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Mark Wilmes.



Frank Fedele presents Jim Lewis with his retirement certificate.



Christie Baker prepares to present Jim Lewis with a shirt.



John Asseng holds up a power tool before the presentation.



Veronica and Jim Lewis and daughter Kiera enjoy the presentations at his lunch.

Otter Brook and Surry Mountain Lakes where he stayed throughout his career.

The District's latest retiree has been serving and helping people throughout his entire life. Immediately after graduating high school, he served his country faithfully during the Vietnam War as a field medic, Medical Corpsman with the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division stationed in Mekong Delta, Vietnam. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device, the Army Commendation Medal and Combat Medical Badge.

After serving in Vietnam, Lewis worked for the Veterans Administration in White Water Junction, Vermont as a nursing assistant. He served in the Peace Corps, traveling to Tunisia, North Africa in 1975. He also volunteered with

the Chester, Vermont Rescue Squad.

When he worked for New England District and the call went out for help, Lewis answered. He deployed to help in the recovery efforts for Hurricane Fran in North Carolina and Super Typhoon Pongsana in Guam.

During his many years with the Corps, he mentored numerous young District team members and helped shape them into the professionals they are today. Alicia LaCrosse, Alex Cote, Eric Chouinard, Kane Turmelle, John Asseng, Heather Morse and Christie Baker are only some of the New England District team members that benefitted from the advice and training that Lewis happily provided.

During his career, Lewis has amassed various citations and awards that are too numerous to list in an article, a testament to his hard work and dedi-

cation to the District. "He has embodied the Army Values of Loyalty, Integrity, Honor, Selfless Service, Respect and Courage," said Ingalls.

Family members that accompanied Lewis to his lunch were his wife, Veronica; daughters Kiera, Jordan, Maya and Shanique; sister Joan; brother Dan and sister-in-law Kathy.

Distinguished Civilian Gallery member Ron Tryba attended the event. Other retirees present were Ray Ballantine, Greg Buteau, Mike Curran, Joe Faloretti, Bob Hanacek, Ross Huntington, Farrell McMillan, Phil Morrison and Dave Shepardson.

Lewis is a world traveler, visiting places such as Thailand, Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand, Mexico, Columbia and many more. He plans to continue traveling, play music, hiking and motorcycle riding.



Merl and Marianne, Bassett stand by one of Bassett's vintage cars before entering the retirement lunch.

Photos by Brian Murphy

## Project Manager for West Hill Dam retires

A retirement lunch for Merl Bassett, Project Manager at West Hill Dam, was held May 1 at the Publick House in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Bassett retired with 25 years of federal service.

Sixty-five people attended the lunch. Jim Hachigian, who has worked with Bassett for the last 17 years, served as Master of Ceremonies for the official portion of the lunch. Hachigian introduced Bassett's family and the retirees who

were in attendance. He also talked about Bassett's military service, joining the U.S. Navy in 1970 and being stationed in the Bay of Naples, Italy aboard the USS LESTER. "In 1983, Bob Hanacek hired Merl as a seasonal survey technician for the summer," he said.

Bassett was hired full-time in 1996 and was first assigned to West Thompson Lake, according to Hachigian. From there he went to Buffumville, to East Brimfield and



Merl Bassett, Marianne Bassett and Jamie Kordack enjoy the buffet lunch and each other's company.



Adam Durando presents Merl Bassett with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service.

then finally settling at West Hill Dam until his retirement. Robert Hanacek, retired Thames River Basin Manager, got up to speak. He mentioned Bassett's moves over the years, but he also talked about his time as a member of the New England District Ranger Color Guard. "It was my honor to choose who would carry the American and Corps flags," said Hanacek, who often picked Bassett for one of those tasks.

Hanacek talked about the Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area and the Woonsocket Dam and what a great job Bassett did with the two projects. He concluded by welcoming Bassett into the New England District retirement community. "Welcome to the rank of retirees," he said.

Larry Lowenthal, a local historian and good friend of Bassett said he remembered him as a carefree ranger at East Brimfield Dam and that they shared an interest in history. "I cannot think anyone will be as active as Merl in retirement," he said. "Keep busy and do good things. I wish you a happy retirement."

Joe Zanca said he had worked closely with Bassett for the past five years on the Fox Point Hurricane Barrier, calling him the nicest guy you'll ever want to meet. "Merl can make you feel welcome wherever you are," he said.

Zanca presented Bassett with a suitcase full of things Bassett had left at the office when he left. "Thank you Merl for everything you did," he said.

Hachigian and Zanca presented Bassett with a Bunker Hill Plaque from the District.

Jason Robinson and Matt Coleman represented the New England District Ranger Color Guard. They presented Bassett with an American Flag in a flag case for his many years of faithful service to the Ranger Color Guard.

Mike Lechance, a former summer ranger who worked with Bassett at West Hill, remarked on Bassett's patience with all of the summer hires. He shared stories of some of his adventures with Bassett when he was employed at West Hill Dam. "He was a great role model who followed up on us after we left," he said. "Congratulations on your retirement!"

Keith Beecher talked about Bassett's love of history and a time when the two worked a National Public Lands Day event together at Hodges Village and wished Bassett and his family well. "I am going to miss the phone calls on how to figure out CEFMS," he said.

Son Chris Bassett talked about his father's passion for his work with the Corps. "He lent a big hand to what you all do now and for years to come," he said.

Adam Durando said it was a pleasure working with Bassett. "Merl thinks outside the box and gets things done with less money," he said. "Words like 'no' and 'can't' do not exist in his vocabulary."

Durando presented Bassett with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service, his retirement certificate and pin. Hachi-



Merl Bassett proudly displays his retirement certificate.

gian presented Mrs. Marianne Bassett with a bouquet of flowers for supporting her husband's career over the years.

Bassett's talk was one laced with important dates, people and events that not only shaped his career, but also the New England District. He took out a lunch box filled with trinkets and told the stories of the people connected with them. He also displayed the many coins he received over the years. "Thank you," he said. "I am already blessed, have lived a good life and a good part of it was with the Corps."

Bassett plans to keep busy in his retirement, spending more time with family and friends, traveling to Italy and focusing on his many hobbies such as vintage cars, hiking and genealogy.



Merl Bassett receives an American Flag from Jason Robinson and Matt Coleman.



The orange team prepares to leave their fort and head into battle.

Photos provided by Peter Hugh

## District team participates in 4th annual paintball games

by Peter Hugh

### Project Management

After the white stuff from Boston's record breaking snowfall winter melted away, some New England District employees (Army Interns, Office Automation Specialists, Survey Technicians, Contract Specialists, Engineers, Scientists, Project Managers and the District Deputy Commander) and some family members decided to embrace the spring weather by having a team building outing in a forest. Oh yeah, while they were out there they also decided to shoot each other with spherically-shaped pellets containing viscous fluorescently color acrylic gel (aka paintballs).

Peter Hugh, event coordinator, came up with a personal "bucket list" of experiences about four years ago and decided to start working on it. Paintball was on that list. He had so much fun, he decided to share the activity with friends and co-workers and make it an annual event.

Twenty New England District team members attended the fourth annual New England District Paintball Games on May 1 at Action Games in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. Most people in attendance were first-timer paintball warriors. The participants divided into the orange and green teams (armbands were used to identify each other). The rules of engagement were simple: if a paintball round hit

someone or their paintball gun and it exploded, that person was eliminated. After elimination, players raised their gun and walked off the field. If someone was hit and the paintball did not explode, they were still in the game.

The event lasted about four hours including lunch. There were several different paintball scenarios that the participants took part in to include Capture the Flag, Attack/Defend, Fort Courage, Road Kill, Mission Recon, and Speedball Elimination to name a few. Most sessions lasted up to 20 minutes. Everyone had so much fun, no one kept track of who won.



Members of the New England District team take cover during one of the matches.



According to Hugh, team building happens when people are given a common goal.

“You get great team building results when the activities are fun -- like going outdoors and hunting down your co-workers with paintballs, especially after a long winter, and then having some hot food. BBQ burgers taste great after being shot in the chest by a Contract Specialist or a Project Delivery Team Cost Estimator,” he said. “The post-game get-together over appetizers and beverages to brag about our respective battlefield exploits also contributed to the camaraderie.”

According to Hugh, it was fun and exciting to see after the initial games (after the baptism of fire) how the two groups started to develop both offensive and defensive tactics. “The individuals started to work in teams to flank the opponents and understood the concept of using suppressing fire (everyone shooting to keep the enemy’s head down) while a team member charges,”



Peter Hugh, Jessica Loc and William Walker get ready to get a little dirty in the paintball match.

he said.

Hugh said that judging by the enthusiasm the group had, the event was a success.

“I believe it is a great team-building

experience and was delighted that everyone had a fantastic time,” he said. “I will be looking forward to orchestrating the 5th Annual Games next spring. Hope to see you next year!”

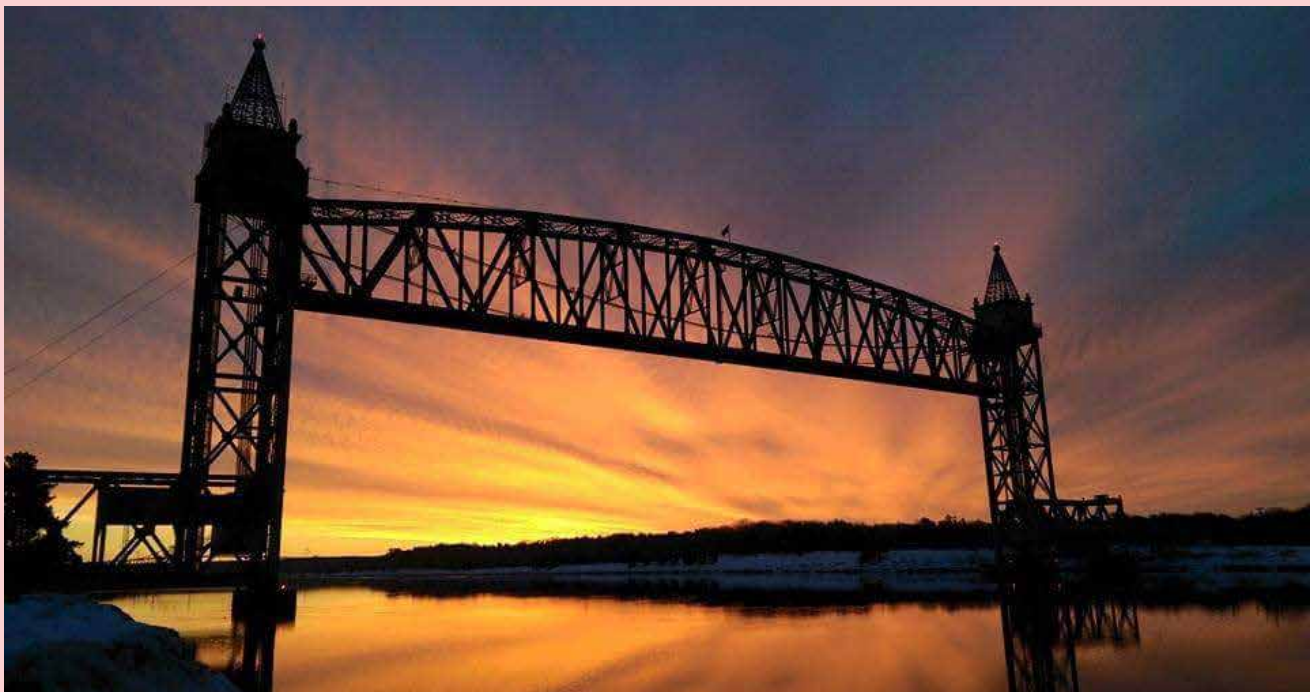


Photo provided by the Cape Cod Canal Project Office

## Canal Railroad Bridge wins photographic award

A photograph of the New England District’s Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge has taken first place in the International Bridge Conference Photo Competition. The competition is sponsored by the Engineers’ Society of Western Pennsylvania, International Bridge Conference. This year’s competition was themed, “Railroad Bridges of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.” The Cape Cod Canal Project Office submitted the photo, which will be featured in P.E. Magazine, Special IBC Conference edition.

## District holds Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage celebration

The New England District's Equal Employment Opportunity Office hosted its annual Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month event, May 28 in the Concord Park Theater. The Army theme for the 2015 observance was, "Many Cultures, One Voice: Promote Equality and Inclusion."

This year's keynote speaker was Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, Massachusetts. She was first elected in November 2007 and is currently serving her fourth term. Lt. Col. Charles Gray, Deputy Commander of the New England District, welcomed Mayor Wong and thanked her for taking time out of her schedule to speak.

"Mayor Wong has become known throughout the state as one of the most effective leaders in economic restructuring, environmental affairs and redevelopment projects," he said. "She was recently asked to head the Gateway Cities Initiative statewide."

Kate Atwood, Asian American/Pacific Islander Program Manager, introduced Mayor Wong to the audience. "By managing more effectively in lean times, Mayor Wong has been able to lower crime, make significant capital improvements and attract private investments," she said. "She is also a leader in conservation efforts, setting aside over 1,700 acres



for permanent conservation and building parks and trails along the Nashua River, allowing for more tourism as well as enjoyment by the citizens of Massachusetts."

According to her biography, she is the first minority mayor in Fitchburg and the first female Asian American mayor in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Wong's presentation centered on growing up and community involvement. At the end of her presentation, Lt. Col. Gray awarded her a Bunker Hill plaque in appreciation for her coming to speak.

The United States has recognized the month of May as the time to acknowledge the achievements and contributions to the American Story by Asian Americans,

Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians.

According to the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, the month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States (May 7, 1843) and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad (May 10, 1869). The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.



Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong makes a presentation about becoming an adult and community involvement during New England District's Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage observance.

## Engineer inspires, coaches all-girl elementary robotics team

A New England District engineer coached and inspired a team of seven little girls to build an impressive structure during a new robotics program at their school.

Matt Tessier, Engineering/Planning, participated in advising a team of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to include his own daughter, Morgan, at the Eliot Elementary School's Robotics Program in Eliot, Maine. "A total of four teams of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders participated," said Tessier. "The Engineering and Robotics Program's goal was to introduce students to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) concepts and provide opportunities for collaborative problem solving."

Tessier, a Civil Engineer for the District for the last six years, received an e-mail from school officials who were looking for coaches. Tessier was happy to help.

The challenge for this year's elementary school students was to pick a place to learn about and then identify tools to learn in that environment. Tessier participated in several sessions with his all-girl team. At the first session, Tessier discussed what STEM was and its importance to engineers and the New England District. "We talked about NAE's projects in Maine," he said. "Eliot is right on the coast, so we discussed all of the Hurricane Sandy recovery projects



Photo by Matt Tessier

Matt Tessier's all-girl robotics team show their girl power poses during one of the sessions.

USACE has been doing."

According to Tessier, his talk about the work the Corps is doing with the Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts inspired the team to choose the ocean as their place to learn. They focused on building a remotely operated vehicle in the form of a small, unmanned submarine used for researching the ocean. "They did all their own research and built a Lego model with operating propellers and a robotic arm," he said. "They even used supplied software to program the model to move objects."

The girls used the Lego WeDo

Construction sets that enabled the students to build and program simple Lego models that are plugged into a computer. The program went on for several weeks. At the end, all of the teams presented their robots at a school-wide presentation. "My team was the only all-girl team and while I admit my bias, I think we had the best Lego model of all the teams," said Tessier. "It was a wonderful experience."

Participation in the Eliot Elementary School Robotics Program supports the Corps of Engineers Campaign Goal to "Prepare for Tomorrow."

## New England District, MassBay sign educational agreement

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, entered into an education partnership agreement with MassBay Community College, May 26. Col. Barron and John O'Donnell, President of MassBay Community College signed the agreement at the Wellesley, Massachusetts Campus. "This agreement established the basis for mutual understanding and cooperation between the Corps and MassBay Community College in the implementation of a

'Partnership in Education' program," said Mark Anderson, District STEM coordinator.

According to Anderson, the supportive relationship is established in recognition of the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to the future political and economic well-being of the nation, the importance of MassBay to the business, industrial and governmental institutions in this region as well as the overall USACE objective to attract a

highly competent and diverse STEM workforce through the use of formal partnerships with engineering colleges and universities.

MassBay Community College is a two-year college that offers Associate Degrees and certificate programs. Some of the many degree programs the institute offers include engineering, engineering design and mechanical engineering. This agreement is in support of the Corps of Engineers' "Prepare for Tomorrow" Goal.

# Dredging up the past



Photo by Mark McHemey

Robert Hanacek, Tom Chamberland, Keith Beecher and Merlon Bassett hold up a new sign and designation for Westville Lake in this June 6, 2001 picture. The Department of the Interior designated the Grand Trunk Trail, that runs through the District's Westville Lake, as a National Recreation Trail. The honor includes the Grand Trunk Trail as part of the National Trails System and recognizes its value in conservation.

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