

# Yankee Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Volume 49, No. 10 July 2016

*Building Strong*

®



Celebrating 241 years of service to the nation during Founder's Day

See story on page 6

# Yankee Voices

Christine Johnson-Battista and James Morocco



## Federal employees eligible for tuition reduction through Penn State World Campus

Through a new agreement, 1.8 million federal government workers, their spouses and legal dependents can receive a 5 percent reduction of the competitive Penn State World Campus tuition rates, with no program exclusions or out-of-state rates.

Some 1.8 million federal government employees, their spouses and legal dependents are now eligible for a tuition reduction to attend Penn State World Campus, the online campus of Penn State, a premier public research university.

For more information, go to: <https://www.opm.gov/news/releases/2016/06/federal-employees-eligible-for-tuition-reduction-through-penn-state-world-campus/>



Tai Chi demonstration.



Dave Schafer gets his blood pressure checked.



Spine analysis information table.

## New England District hosts annual health fair

New England District's Safety Office and Federal Occupational Health Unit co-sponsored the annual health fair on June 15 in the Concord Park Cafeteria. The health fair is held annually to offer guides and screenings for better health.

Dozens of New England District team members attended this popular annual fair. This year, 14 vendors attended the event to include Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Federal Occupational Health, GEHA, the Employee Assistance Program and other local health care specialists and private companies.

Free offerings included facial analysis, scoliosis testing, biometric screening, blood pressure checks, eye and ear screening, spine analysis, tick kits and Tai Chi demonstrations. Vendors also provided brochures on topics from healthy eating to meditation webinars.

## Words worth repeating

"Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flow charts. It is about one life influencing another."

- John C. Maxwell





Paul L'Heureux arrives for his lunch in one of the golf outfits he's most famous for.



Paul L'Heureux receives his Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Lt. Col. Daniel Herlihy.

Photos by Brian Murphy



Elaine Stanley prepares to present Paul L'Heureux with a recognition certificate.



Paul L'Heureux opens up his new, colorful outfit from attendees.

## Paul L'Heureux retires from New England District

Paul L'Heureux, New Bedford Resident Office, has retired after 36 years of federal service. A lunch held in his honor took place at White's of Westport in Westport, Massachusetts, on June 17.

About 50 people attended the lunch. Christine Johnson, Deputy Chief, Construction Division, hosted the awards portion of the event. Other speakers included Anita Rigassio-Smith and Steve Fox of Jacobs Engineering, Elaine Stanley of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ellen Iorio, Gary Lacroix, Bonnie Ortiz, retiree Christopher Turek and Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Daniel Herlihy.

In addition to the various gifts he received during the presentations that included golf shorts, golf shirts, a minuteman statue and a recognition certificate from the EPA, L'Heureux received official citations such as the Commander's Award for Civilian Service, a commander's coin, and his retirement certificate and pin from Lt. Col. Herlihy.

L'Heureux began his 36 year journey with the Corps of Engineers in February 1980. Prior to that he spent summers as a youth working for White's of Westport, the venue where his retirement lunch was held. He retired as the Civil Engineer/Project Engineer for the New Bedford Harbor Superfund PCB Clean Up Project. It was the position that he held for the last 23 years. L'Heureux has accepted a part time position with the water district in Tiverton, Rhode Island. He will also be seen wearing wild and vibrant golf outfits at the local golf course during part of his retirement.

Family members that accompanied L'Heureux were his wife, Renee, son John, John's girlfriend Sandra Furtado and L'Heureux's parents Eleanor and Gilbert L'Heureux.

Distinguished Civilian Gallery member Maurice Beaudoin and his wife, Maureen, attended the event. Other retirees in attendance included Turek, Joe Bocchino, Jim Morocco, Jeff Perchak, Greg Buteau and Maureen Murray.

# A life gone too soon: Remembering Mike Keegan

In honor of his life and contributions to his nation, the New England District flew the Corps flag at half-mast in memory of Michael Keegan, Chief of the Civil/International-Interagency Support Project Management Branch, Programs/Project Management, who passed away suddenly, May 18.

Keegan was a consummate professional and was the project manager on high profile projects such as the Boston Harbor Navigation Maintenance and Improvement Project, the Muddy River Flood Risk Management and Environmental Restoration Project and the Long Island Sound Dredged Material Management Plan, to name just a few.

In addition to his every day work load, Keegan was the alternate Chief of Emergency Operations and was involved in overseeing the management of the District's response to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. He was also a member of the Corps of Engineers National Water Team that is responsible for procuring and providing potable water in response to natural disasters such as hurricanes. When disaster struck and the call for help went out, Keegan answered. He deployed in response to Hurricanes Ivan, Katrina, Ophelia, Rita, Ike and Gustav. He was also a national subject matter expert and advised the Federal Emergency Management Agency on water issues when he was needed.

As amazing as he was in his career, Keegan was so much more than that. He was a son, husband, father, grandfather, uncle, brother-in-law, friend and coworker. His sudden passing impacted more than his projects at the District; the hallways are quieter without the sounds of him saying hello to people and scheduling impromptu meetings. District social gatherings will be a little less cheerful without him seated at the table



Mike Keegan receives an award from Col. Philip Harris during the 1990 Founder's Day ceremony at the Waltham Federal Center.

telling stories. Everyone who knew Keegan had a story. Below are just a small sampling from the mountain of memories and stories that Keegan's coworkers shared for this article.

**Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander:** I have a lot of great memories of Mike, so it's difficult to pick out just one or two to share. Like everyone else, I was always impressed by his knowledge, dedication and passion for our work. His involvement in our Civil Works and Planning programs was legendary, and without doubt, he was one of the rocks that form the foundation of the Corps. Yet for all of that I have to come back to the fact that Mike was just a wonderful person and the kind of man that anyone would want as a friend - decent, considerate, loyal and humble.

**Bill Scully:** I have never worked with anyone here with more passion, dedication, loyalty, professionalism and caring than Mike. He earned the respect of all he worked with, to very importantly include our project partners and contractors. For his countless friends here, like me, he will be so sorely missed because put very simply: we loved him.

**Cathy LeBlanc:** I remember Mike

trying to turn most things into a teaching lesson. When I would ask Mike a question, I can still picture him coming into my office and saying something similar to, "Let me tell you how that works." Mike taught me a lot about a number of things.

**Scott Flanagan:** I'll remember Mike as someone who did not forget the little guy. I think Mike had a unique way of making you feel part of something big. I'll miss working on Mike Keegan projects.

**Judy Antonellis:** Ten years ago, I suffered a brain aneurism. It was a pretty scary and traumatic time to say the least. I was out of work for three months. In those three months I received many cards from my Corps family, but the one card that I hold dear is the one I received from Mike. The card itself was nice, but more importantly, Mike wrote from his heart such comforting words of faith, hope, encouragement, perseverance and strength. During that ordeal, I sat and read his card at least once a week, as it helped me get through a rough time.

**Evamarie D'Antuono:** Mike was a colleague and a friend. I always remember him asking me how my children were doing. I in turn would

ask him how Dylan, his grandson, was doing. He would tell me the most recent Dylan story. Anytime Mike talked about Dylan, his face would light up, he would beam and he would shake his head and marvel how Dylan always knew the right things to say to his Grandpa. He was so proud of Dylan and he loved being a grandfather. To me Mike's caring to ask about my family and the love that showed on his face when talking about his grandson speak volumes of his compassion and genuine caring of others. He took the time to check on the important things in people's lives.

**John Astley:** What I remember best is our conversations about our personal lives. We talked about family, golf, dealing with aging parents or in-laws and the importance of taking care of personal legal affairs sooner than later, such as powers of attorney, wills, trusts, medicare and assisted living arrangements. We also routinely talked about the joy of his life, Dylan. I can't recall the number of times Mike told me about his trip to Disney World with Dylan. I think it was one of the highlights of his life. What was clear to me is that Mike was a person who truly cared about others. He would do anything to lend a hand, to be a friend.

**Janet Harrington:** Mike loved to tell stories. One of my favorites that reflected many characteristics of Mike involved his early interaction with Col. Curtis Thalken. There was one occasion, early in Col. Thalken's assignment that the commander visited Mike in his cubicle and asked him questions about one of his projects. As Mike would do, Mike was honest and told the commander bluntly and directly his opinion of how things should be handled. The opinion and recommendation Mike gave was contrary to what the commander expected and possibly wanted to hear. The commander asked Mike if he knew who he was speaking to, being that he was new to his command. Mike, in his

unflappable way responded, "Yes I do, but if you do not want me to critically think and tell you my honest opinion on situations you ask me about, then you are paying me way too much money." The commander laughed and from then on had a very good relationship with Mike.

**Meghan Quinn:** As the PM of Boston Harbor projects for nearly 15 years, Mike grew attached to the project partners and developed long-lasting friendships. One particular attachment Mike had to Boston Harbor was the monthly Port Operator's Group meeting, known as the POG. Mike loved interacting with folks in the group and answering questions. The POG meetings always ended with lunch. Mike figured out the lunches were on a two to three month rotation. This was important because he loved a particular sandwich: breaded chicken with mozzarella, prosciutto, and peppers. He even knew that sometimes they were tricky and changed the bread that the sandwich was made with.

**Sally Rigione:** Mike liked to eat, I think he enjoyed watching the Food Network channel. He always made sure we planned time before a public meeting to go someplace new to eat. A few days before a public meeting, he would e-mail me a list of restaurants to choose from that he had researched that were close to our meeting

location(s). Sometimes Mike had tried the restaurants, sometime he had not. One memorable location that Mike introduced me to was Frank Pepe's Pizza in New Haven, Connecticut. As we drove off the highway he regaled us with the history behind the pizza shop and the rivalry they had with the shop down the street. I will think of Mike fondly whenever I think of that restaurant as it wasn't just the food that made the meal, it was definitely the camaraderie of the group.

**Jeanine Cline:** I received an e-mail from Mike when he heard that I had a Developmental Assignment as Acting Chief of General Engineering Section: "We haven't had a lot of experience working together other than Muddy River. My impression is that you are one sharp lady. Anything I can do to help you please talk to me. I'm willing to help you anyway I can. – Mike." His message went straight to my heart. He was a good man and ready to be a good mentor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Keegan is survived by his mother Barbara, wife, Donna, son Christopher, daughter Briana, grandson Dylan Zelonis; sisters and brothers-in-law, Jacqueline and James McColgan, Kathleen and David Goodrich, Barbara and Brian Graham; mother-in-law Edna Van Buskirk and many nieces and nephews.



Mike Keegan describes the Muddy River Restoration Project to Assistant Secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy during one of her visits to New England.



Photos by Brian Murphy

Col. Christopher Barron presents New England District's current Vietnam Veterans tokens of thanks for their service. Veterans are Tim Hays, Brian Valiton, Bill Scully and Andrew McAvoy.

## New England District celebrates 241 years of service to the nation

The New England District celebrated the founding of the Corps of Engineers 241 years ago with an awards ceremony and picnic at the Concord Park Headquarters, June 24. Over 200 employees, retirees and family members attended this year's event.

Larry Rosenberg, Chief, Public Affairs, welcomed the audience to the awards ceremony. As has become tradition, Rosenberg gave a slightly different, but very entertaining version of the founding of the Corps of Engineers.

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, thanked the Work Environment Committee for their hard work putting together the picnic portion of the day that would follow the awards ceremony. He discussed the new Chief of Engineers and said that he will be visiting all around the Corps and that he likes to take two minute videos of the places he visits.

Col. Barron said that the District still has one person overseas assisting with the Overseas Contingency Operations and could not join in on the day's festivities. He asked that everyone keep the team member and his family in their thoughts as they celebrate. He also acknowledged those who have stayed behind and have been covering the team member's workload while he is away.

The District Commander took the opportunity to give updates on several projects that are currently ongoing in the District: Muddy River, Hanscom Middle School, Westover Fuel Hydrant, Bridgeport Army Reserve Center, Cape Cod Beach Nourishment, Operations and Field projects, New Bedford Superfund, Block Island Wind Farm, and the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Warwick, Rhode Island. He said that although there is always room for growth, everyone

should be proud of their accomplishments.

According to the Colonel, there were many retirements and many new employees that have come to the District. He also mentioned the passing of Mike Keegan and that Brig. Gen. William Graham, North Atlantic Division Commander, has approved a request to name a survey boat after him. More details will follow.

Rosenberg returned to the microphone to talk about the Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration that has been going on for the past year and a half. He told the audience that New England District is a commemorative partner and that he wanted to recognize the current veterans that work at the District. Those Veterans are Tim Hays, Brian Valiton, Bill Scully and Andrew McAvoy. Each Veteran received a commemorative lapel pin and a folder full of commemorative items to celebrate their service to the nation.

Bill Scully, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, inducted David Descoteaux and William Hubbard into the Distinguished Civilian Gallery. See story on the pages following this article.

Denise Kammerer-Cody, Federal Women's Program Manager, named Matt Tessier as the 2016 New England District Supervisor of the Year.

Gary Lacroix, Engineering/Planning, presented Vincent Pecchia and Marcus Madison with Achievement Awards for Civilian Service. Both men are leaving the District and Lacroix recognized them with the award for their outstanding work while at the District. Pecchia also received a name plate that he affixed to the deployment board that hangs in the Building 2 hallway after the awards ceremony.

Lt. Col. Daniel Herlihy, Deputy District Commander,



New England District Team Members enjoy the nice weather during lunch.



Julie Mackley paints faces during the afternoon.



Matt Tessier (center) is the 2016 Supervisor of the Year.



Vincent Pecchia receives an Achievement Award for Civilian Service.



Col. Barron presents Marcus Madison with an Achievement Award for Civilian Service. presented certificates of achievement to the 2015 Impact Area Ground Water Study Program Team. Team members are Dean Brammer, Drew Clemens, Cynthia Colquitt, Scott Greene, Daniel Groher, Donald Hassett, Kenneth Heim, Lauren Jacobs, Michael Kaminsky, Michael Kulbresh, Christopher Kilbridge, Mark Koenig, Patrick Mion, Paul Morelli, Christopher Veinotte, Matthew Walsh and Marie Wojtas.

Paul Chansky and Sarah Rudner, Human Resources, presented length of service awards to team members with 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service.

Festivities with a carnival theme followed the awards ceremony. For a small fee, participants enjoyed a catered lunch featuring North Carolina pulled pork and pulled chicken sandwiches, dirty rice, collard greens, black-eyed corn, baked beans, corn bread and homemade pickles from Blue Ribbon



2015 Impact Area Ground Water Study Program team.

BBQ, drinks and desserts.

The kids' activities included a bouncy house, bubbles, coloring books and crayons, face paint, a visit from the fire truck, a kiddie pool with toys and sponges as well as movies in the theatre. Adult activities included badminton, beat the bucket, basketball toss arcade game, cornhole, kan jam, frisbeener, golf/ladder toss, horseshoe tournament and spin art. Everyone enjoyed popcorn and snow cones throughout the event.

Retirees that attended this year's Founder's Day event were Distinguished Civilian Gallery members Charlie Coe, Hubbard, and Descoteaux. Other retirees were Ann Descoteaux, Annie Chin, Jenny Tam, Bob Meader, Chiway Hsiung and Greg Buteau. Members of this year's Founder's Day Committee were: Steve Andon, Leanna Martin, Grace Moses and Greg Penta.



Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, with David Descoteaux, William Hubbard and Bill Scully at the Distinguished Civilian Gallery display.

## Distinguished Civilian Gallery inducts two new members

Two more of New England District's finest were inducted into the Distinguished Civilian Gallery during the Founder's Day Ceremony, June 24.

Bill Scully, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, inducted David Descoteaux and William Hubbard into the gallery. This was Scully's 25<sup>th</sup> and final year inducting members into the gallery.

Scully talked about the history of the Distinguished Civilian Gallery that was established many years ago. The Gallery has 105 members, counting Descoteaux and Hubbard, and is located in the hallway of Building 2 leading up to the Executive Office. Scully went through the stringent criteria that a nominee needed to pass before receiving an induction.

He welcomed the two inductees and mentioned that Descoteaux was accompanied by his wife, Ann, who is an Information Management retiree. The couple have three sons, who were

unable to attend. Hubbard's wife, Diane, and their five children were also unable to attend.

Scully summarized Descoteaux's nomination and then the two unveiled Descoteaux's temporary Gallery photo.

Descoteaux thanked Gary Lacroix and his team for nominating him. He credited his team with his success. "I got to work on many great projects

with many great people. Our strong suit was team work," he said.

"Throughout his 40-year tenure with New England District, Mr. Descoteaux has been a faithful and loyal public servant, doing whatever was needed to support the mission and his fellow employees," wrote Gary Lacroix in his nomination justification. "He personified the Army value of selfless



David Descoteaux unveils his photo that will hang in the Distinguished Civilian Gallery Display.



Photos by Brian Murphy

David Descoteaux and Bill Hubbard affix their pictures to the Distinguished Civilian Gallery display.

Branch in 2004. Mr. Hubbard led the Environmental Resources Section and the Evaluation Branch in stewarding our environmental, cultural, and economic resources and established the New England District as a leader in the field. Throughout his career, he demonstrated leadership, hard work, loyalty, dedication and commitment to the Corps of Engineers.”

The District’s Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees recognizes retired employees who rendered distinguished and exceptional service. Candidates must have achieved 30 or more years of federal service, at least 20 of which were served as a civilian employee of the Corps of Engineers.

Individuals are recognized for performance that was exceptional and preeminent among all who have performed like or similar duties, improvement of methods and procedures which produced extraordinary benefits to the Corps of Engineers, and substantial contribution to the reputation and honor of the Corps of Engineers. A senior ad hoc committee reviews nominations and makes recommendations to the District Engineer, who has final approval. Induction into the Gallery is a part of the annual Founder’s Day activities.

service such as when he would respond to emergencies at any of our facilities or construction projects within a moment’s notice. As with many great leaders, Mr. Descoteaux was humble and kind, putting the needs of his peers and employees ahead of his own. Mr. Descoteaux was a consummate professional, a friend to all who worked with him, and respected by all of those lucky enough to know him.”

Hubbard was next to be inducted by Scully and the two revealed his temporary photo after Scully read his citation. Hubbard said that he missed everyone, but he was really enjoying retirement and that he highly recommended it. He urged new employees to both plan their career and their retirement. Hubbard thanked his nominators and said he was honored to be inducted with Descoteaux. He said jokingly, “It’s such a great honor that Dave and I will be glued up against the wall together for eternity.”

Hubbard concluded by saying that the reason why he is “distinguished” is because of his team. He asked that the audience give a round of applause to the Evaluation Branch and for all that they do.

“Mr. William A. Hubbard demonstrated excellence and

leadership throughout his 30 years of service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He began his career with the Corps in 1985 as a Marine Ecologist in the Environmental Resources Branch after receiving a Master of Science degree in Marine Ecology from Southern Connecticut State University,” wrote Larry Oliver as part of his nomination package. “Mr. Hubbard quickly rose to the position of Chief of the Environmental Resources Branch in November 1989 and earned a promotion to the position of Chief of the Evaluation



Bill Scully inducts the two newest members of the Distinguished Civilian Gallery.



The CURRITUCK fills with water and material during the dredging process.

## Watching the CURRITUCK work up close

**Commentary and photos by Olivia Stenger  
Navigation Division**

Block Island is a quaint mass of land located 13 miles off the coast of Rhode Island populated by a relatively small community and arrayed with a sense of welcoming familiarity, felt by even those who are visiting for the first time. Only an hour ferry ride from Point Judith Harbor, Block Island emerges from the horizon as a modest and nostalgically beautiful reminder of classic summers.

Admittedly, I had never heard of Block Island before I was invited to go on a trip there to learn more about the Army Corps' dredging project, but I am so happy I had the chance to discover this ideal place.

The island opened up to me and immediately I felt like I had been there before. Outlined by a seashore scattered with several locally-owned restaurants, a few hotels, a library, and a couple of other small businesses, the island refrains from busy, chain companies disrupting the long-established traditional atmosphere of the island. Though a little chilly as it was not quite yet the peak of summer, it was a perfect, sunny June day to board the CURRITUCK and learn more about how it functions.

While aboard the dredge, I had the chance to speak with Town Manager Nancy Dodge and Assistant Moderator for the Town Council Martha Ball, two women who live on

the island year-round. They informed me that an unofficial census calculated the population to be about one-thousand people. In actuality, the community consists of around seven or eight-hundred residents who live there all year, maybe even less; it expands to over fifteen-thousand visitors during the summer peak tourist period. This number has definitely risen since its earlier years, but the island remains non-commercialized and adheres to its time-honored values. Emanating in the late 1600's, the island has held its ground for many years and withstood countless obstacles of history.

In order to care for the harbor and beach after slight wear-and-tear from years of endurance, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been dredging here since the late 1800's and continues to do so today as a way to improve accessibility to the Old Harbor.

The CURRITUCK is a government-operated dredge used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the federal channel on Block Island. Operated by a crew from North Carolina, the ship runs every other week while the men switch between working one week on and having one week off.

The large vessel floats on the water while two massive vacuums on each side excavate sand from the sea and carry it in the center of the craft to be moved from the channel to a near shore site where it is available to nourish the beach. The vacuums, reaching all the way down to the ocean floor, fill up

the center of the CURRITUCK through several tubes lining the sides of the vessel. At the beginning of the process, white, foaming sea water pours from the pipes, along with the occasional small fish. As the middle of the dredge fills, the contents flooding in slowly turn dark grey and light brown, a result of the sand making its way up into the vacuums. The surplus water is drained out, and the procedure repeats until the middle of the dredge is completely full of sand. Currently, the CURRITUCK dredges sand from the Old Harbor and transfers it to a placement site off the Crescent Beach to the north of the harbor. The dredge is crucial in maintaining accessibility of the ferries from the mainland into the Old Harbor. Because Block Island thrives during the summer months due to the inflow of tourists, ensuring that the ferries can come and go smoothly is essential for the stability of the island.

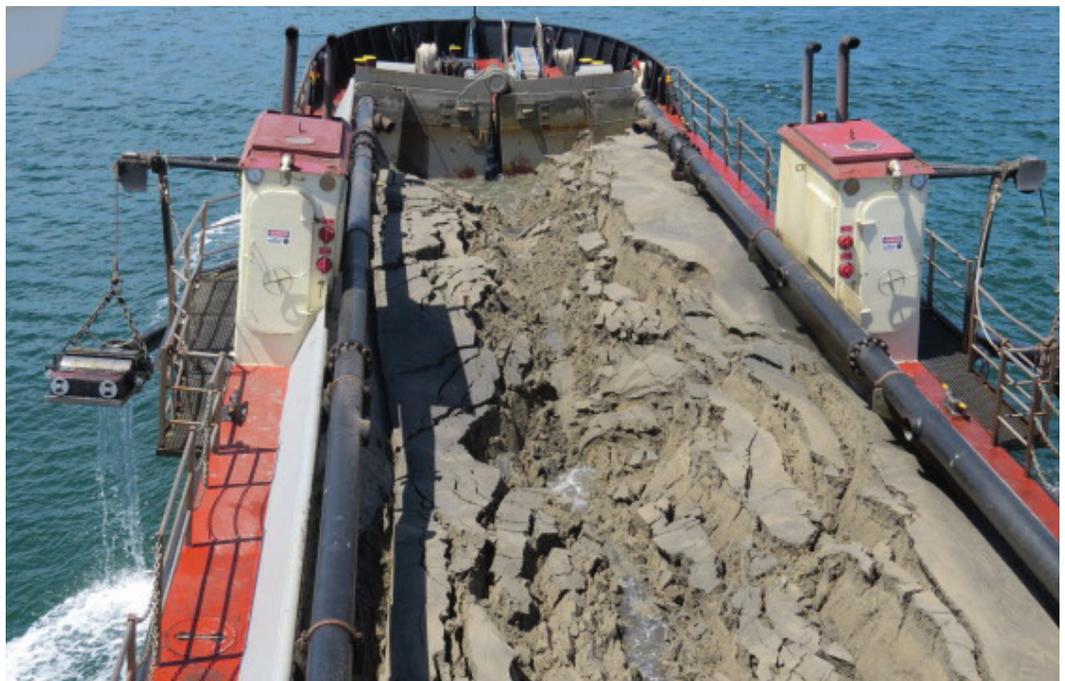
As I discussed tourism with the Town Manager, she informed me that most of Block Island's tourists hail from New York. Following close behind are Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Though the island remains detached from commercialization, many families come to spend their summer days on the beaches and enjoy many of the services and activities offered, such as bike-riding, fishing, boating, kayaking, and surfing, among others.

Because Block Island enjoys its peak tourist season during the hottest months, those who live there year-round embrace the summer days with an appreciation for the arrival of excited visitors on the island as a much-anticipated transition away from the long, quiet winter season. The dredging project facilitates this pleasant influx of guests and plays a significant role in keeping the rush of tourists constant.

As a testament to the budding growth of activity on the



The CURRITUCK drains the water, leaving only material behind.



Once the CURRITUCK has arrived at the disposal site, it dumps the material.

island in the summer, a large white tent appears on the upper part of the beach. As we admire the view from the top of the CURRITUCK, we gaze at the scenic shore that promises a flourishing summer, and Martha Ball explains to me that the tent is for weddings and other such social events. She points out that some people complain that it seems out-of-place and disturbs the naturalistic scenery of the beach. However, as a year-long-islander, she sees the tent on the beach as the arrival of the busy, prosperous summer season after a lengthy, cold winter. "It's a happy tent," she says, smiling at the picturesque shoreline. "It means that there's life back on the island."

# Dredging up the past



Photo by Brian Murphy

Mike Keegan mugging with Maureen Murray and Bill Walker during Murray's retirement lunch at the Chateau Restaurant on June 18, 2015.

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