


Yankee Engineer

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Building Strong

®



Cape Cod Canal team hosts Bike Rodeo

Story on page 3



Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and Bob Casol

Choose the right food to combat stress

We all have our go-to foods when we're stressed out—chocolate cake or a bowl of ice cream. But certain foods can actually help you relax without blowing your diet. Consider these alternatives:

Leafy greens. Spinach, lettuce, and other leafy vegetables can help your brain produce dopamine, which can calm you down.

- Turkey. The tryptophan in turkey boosts serotonin levels, relieving depression.
- Salmon. Salmon is high in omega-3 fatty acids, which can inhibit hormones that cause stress.
- Cashews. The zinc in these nuts can reduce anxiety and depression.

(First Draft Magazine)

Words Worth Repeating

Get happiness out of your work, or you may never know what happiness is.

—Elbert Hubbard



Event participants stop by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers information booth.

Photos provided by the Cape Cod Canal



Bikers prepare to run through the bike course during the Bike Rodeo.

Canal Team, MassBike host Bike Rodeo

The Cape Cod Canal team partnered with [MassDOT](#) and the non-profit [MassBike](#) for a Bike Rodeo, Aug. 28, at the Buzzards Bay Recreation area in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.

The event promoted bike and service road safety. MassBike lead a bike safety review and guided participants through a special bike course.

The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cape Cod Canal](#) team engaged the public, handed out brochures and invited visitors to play their “Spin and Win” trivia game which focused on bike safety and service road trivia for prizes.

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Commander's Corner: Celebrating Women's Equality Day

by Col. John A. Atilano II
New England District Commander

I want to recognize an important day for women, an important day for us all, really: Women's Equality Day.

Women's Equality Day commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which grants women the right to vote. Although the amendment was first introduced in 1878, it was only passed by Congress in 1919, and ratified in 1920. In 1971, the U.S. Congress designated August 26 as Women's Equality Day.

Although women of all races joined the suffrage movement to fight for the 19th Amendment, not all women were able to vote when it was ratified in 1920 and inequality still existed. Native American women could not vote until 1924. Chinese women did not win the right to vote until 1943. Japanese and other Asian women could not cast a ballot until 1952. And Hawaiian women could not vote until Hawaii became a state in 1959. Black women were barred from voting until the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

Today, it's hard to believe that the right to vote was not given to everyone equally when our founding fathers created the Constitution. Even harder to believe is that African American women had to wait 45 more years before they could have their voices heard at the polls.

We've come a long way since women like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Ida B. Wells, and Mary E. Church Terrell had to march in the streets demanding



equal rights. Girls and young women play sports that had been "males only for decades" like football, baseball, basketball, wrestling, and hockey. Women can be found in occupations that were once exclusively filled by men, such as firefighters and police officers. Now, in 2021, 229,994 women are employed by the Department of Defense, and of those, 24.7 percent are Veterans. Here at New England District we have many women in STEM roles that stand beside their male counterparts as equals. I am proud of the amazing work they do.

Despite the great strides we have made in the 101 years since the Amendment has been in place, we still have a long way to go. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Women earn only 82 cents for every dollar a man earns. The pay gap is even wider for women of color. This discouraging fact is true for nearly all occupations. When the pandemic hit, the lack of childcare and the fact that school age children needed to learn remotely forced many women to leave their careers to take care of their children's needs. In February, only 55.8 percent of women were participating in the work force, which is the same participation rate as 1987.

Although we do not have pay gaps between men and women in the federal government, there is still gender bias and inequality. At New England District we recently held a Women in the Workplace panel as well as multiple Project Inclusion Listening sessions to discuss this hard topic with the hopes of getting comments and suggestions about how

to fix it. I will continue to listen and answer questions using my Commander's Mailbox and question and answer sessions during my Commander's Coffees.

It is important to me that all our team members feel they are treated equally and with respect. Every single one of you are vital to our mission execution and I value you all.



New England District commemorates Founder's Day with virtual ceremony

The New England District observed the 246th founding of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with a virtual Town Hall, Aug. 13. The original celebration, which included an in-person ceremony followed by a picnic and activities had to be canceled due to the Delta variant of COVID-19.

Beth Gosselin, Chief, Public Affairs, served as moderator for the event, which was live streamed for the audience.

“Officially, Founder’s Day commemorates a moment in time when we, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, celebrate our contributions to our nation,” she said. “Unofficially, it’s usually a time for us to get together in the nice weather and socialize. We wish we could all be together today, but hey... thanks Delta variant. Here’s to hoping we can meet in person for the holiday party!”

Col. John Atilano II, New England District Commander, followed Gosselin’s introduction. “This is definitely not how I thought this was going to go down nor how I was hoping we would be celebrating today,” he said. “COVID-19 is an insidious virus, and it needs to be



Photos by Brian Murphy

Col. John Atilano II addresses the New England District team virtually during the Founder's Day Town Hall ceremony.

taken seriously.”

Col. Atilano said that despite the virus, the New England District has proven that in any situation, whether it be a deadly pandemic or a natural disaster, the team can still deliver the program. “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers truly is the greatest engineering organization in the world, and I am proud to be a part of it.”

The New England District commander talked about the founding of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

and how it started in Concord, Massachusetts, seven days after the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. “The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts appointed Col. Richard Gridley as the ‘chief engineer’ of the forces now raising in this colony, for the defense of the rights and liberties of the American continent,” he said. “So here we are, continuing to provide exemplary engineering services to our nation as we did over 200 years ago, and continue to do so to this day.”

Even though the New England District team couldn’t meet in person, a lot of work went into the planning of the in-person event. Col. Atilano thanked the Resource Management, Real Estate, Internal Review, Equal Employment Office and Work Environment Association teams for their willingness to host this year’s activities.

Col. Atilano introduced Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, who inducted this year’s Distinguished Civilian Gallery member Catherine LeBlanc. See story on page 4.



Tim Maynard received two enterprise-level awards during the awards portion of the ceremony.

Following the induction, Maj. Michael Carvelli, Deputy District Engineer, introduced himself and announced the 2021 Length of Service awards. "I arrived last month and look forward to meeting you, hopefully soon," she said. "It's my honor to recognize our District employees who have achieved some major milestones in terms of the years of selfless public service they have dedicated to the federal government."

Maj. Carvelli announced the names of those who have served five, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service. Many of the recipients did not attend the event in person due to safety concerns, but everyone received a length of service certificate and pin.

Jon Belmont, New England District's Chief of Staff announced this year's honorary awards. "I want to make it clear – by no means is this an exhaustive list of noteworthy employees who have achieved milestones or received recognition over the past year and a half," he said. "We've presented several honorary awards to departing employees and approved nearly two dozen team awards in this FY alone."

Carl Niemitz, Construction Division, received the Civilian Service Commendation Medal for his support of the district's vaccination efforts in early 2021.

Julie Carignan, Operations Division, was commended for her exceptional service as the Administrative Officer for the Thames and Lower Connecticut River Basins from Nov. 26, 2018 to Nov. 18, 2019, which was critical to the success of the Thames River Basin during a period of transition.

Eric Pedersen, Chief, Operations Division, received a Bunker Hill award in recognition of his efforts in the field during the COVID-19 pandemic and for facilitating an Operations Manager check-in on a weekly basis contributing to the overall success.

Tim Maynard, Security Office,



Alex Gameau picks up his 15-year length of service award.

received two enterprise-level awards. First, he received Army-wide recognition when he was placed on the 2020 Army Antiterrorism Honor Roll. Maynard also was recognized at the USACE level as the Security Program Manager of the Year, beating out more than 40 districts and field operating activities for the honor.

Capt. Lisa Belisle was recognized by the Army Engineer Association by being inducted into the Steel Order of the de Fleury Medal for 10 years of distinguished service to the Engineer Regiment and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. She also received the Meritorious Service Medal for superior performance and leadership



Michael Kulbersh picks up his 15 year certificate.

as project engineer and contracting officer representative for the Westover Resident Office.

Members of the 2020 graduates of the Leadership Development Program received Commander's Challenge Coins. The graduates are Stephen Potts, Jeremiah Chicca, Crystal Daley, Stephen Elgart, Brianna Green, Lauren Jacobs, and Leanna Martin.

Stepping in for EEO Officer Jackie Papini, Belmont presented this year's Federal Woman's Program Supervisor of the Year Award to Wendy Gendron. See story on page 7.

Col. Atilano returned to the podium and said that although he wanted everyone to enjoy their vacations and time in the water, he also wanted them to be careful. "I know we talk a lot about COVID safety measures but please don't forget the importance of water safety during these excursions. Wear a life jacket! We want everyone to have a safe, enjoyable summer."

The colonel concluded his remarks by thanking the New England District team for their dedication and hard work, especially during the ongoing pandemic. "I am so proud to be part of this team and continue the work that Colonel Gridley started so long ago," he said. "Thank you and enjoy the day!"

Catherine LeBlanc inducted into New England District's Distinguished Civilian Gallery

Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, named Catherine LeBlanc, Programs Retiree, as this year's Distinguished Civilian Gallery inductee. LeBlanc was honored during the virtual Founder's Day ceremony, Aug. 13. LeBlanc received her award at the District's Concord Park headquarters.

"Each year the New England District recognizes a retired employee who made a lasting impact on our District," he said. "It is my pleasure to announce this year's inductee into the New England District's Distinguished Civilian Employee Gallery, Cathy LeBlanc."

Due to COVID-19 concerns, LeBlanc stepped up to the awards table and picked up her own award and stood next to the official display, six feet away from Col. John Atilano II, New England District Commander, who verbally congratulated her. As Acone read her citation, LeBlanc and Col. Atilano unveiled her picture and a write up that will be displayed in the hallway of Building One in a temporary



Cathy LeBlanc and Col. John Atilano II unveil the Distinguished Civilian Gallery display.

Photos by Brian Murphy

display for one year before going into the permanent gallery.

LeBlanc began her career with the New England Division in 1978 in the Planning Division as an engineer. Over the years, she earned a succession of promotions from Staff Engineer to Planning Manager and eventually New England District Operation and Maintenance Appropriation Manager, the position from which she retired. During her career, Cathy saw USACE

adopt and change our systems for scheduling, funding, and budgeting.

"Cathy's first commitment was always to the taxpayer, then the District. She instilled a sense of accountability and responsibility in all - ensuring that as good stewards of tax dollars, we practiced ethical spending," said Acone. "That sense of responsibility earned New England District the trust of HQ - when we said we needed money, we really needed it."



Cathy LeBlanc is the latest New England District Distinguished Gallery inductee.

LeBlanc was one of the few District representatives who were members of the National P2 team and the National O&M 20/20 team, both significant initiatives to modernize and improve District systems and processes for funding Districts' needs. Her hard work, expertise, and integrity earned her the national reputation of subject matter expert and her input was often sought by Headquarters in Washington, DC.

"She was always the go to District representative to test new systems while working to improve how we develop our Civil Works budgets and manage our projects and commitments," said Acone. "That reputation resulted

in a personal request from the Jacksonville District Commander to help his District with Programs, P2 and CEFMS. They're still using many of Cathy's recommendations today as they execute billions of dollars in supplemental disaster relief funding."

According to the citation, LeBlanc has embodied leadership throughout her life. She was one of the first female engineers to lead studies in the District and is a graduate of the New England District's Leadership Development Program. In addition, she is very active in the Girl Scouts of America. She's held the role of Gold Star Committee Co-Chair, Gold Award Advisor, First Aid Instructor and Girl Scout Regional Delegate. She has

selflessly and happily spent countless hours assisting Girl Scouts, many of them our daughters, as they develop into future female leaders and in many cases coaching them to achieve the highest honor given by the organization – the Gold Award.

"Cathy has always been the benchmark for outstanding performance, being recognized with many commendations and awards," said Acone. "I hope today's recognition is as meaningful to her as being presented a Ranger hat for support to Operations."

LeBlanc retired on January 3, 2019 with 40 years of service. After Acone finished reading the citation, she moved to the podium to say a few words. "I am

humbled to be selected for this honor," she said. "Walking by the display over the years I never imagined my photo would be there."

LeBlanc thanked those who supported her through her journey – her family and co-workers. She said she really enjoyed doing her work because she enjoyed doing puzzles. "Programs and Project Management offered me puzzles to solve on a regular basis."

She said that she didn't like to call attention to herself and was not a very social person, so attending this year's ceremony with hardly anyone in the room was a good fit for her. She concluded the Distinguished Civilian Gallery portion of the ceremony by thanking everyone who nominated her.

Wendy Gendron chosen for FWP Supervisor of the Year

Jon Belmont, New England District Chief of Staff, presented Wendy Gendron, Chief of the Civil Works / IIS Project Management Branch in PPMD with the Federal Woman's Program (FWP) Supervisor of the Year Award during the New England District's virtual Founder's Day celebration, Aug. 13. Gendron accepted the award in person at the Concord Park headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts.

The FWP Supervisor of the Year Award recognizes a supervisor who has significantly promoted the employment and advancement of women, minorities, and/or individuals with disabilities and supported the principals of EEO during the period June 2020 to present.

"Wendy Gendron encourages women in our workplace in so many ways, most importantly as she leads by example," said Belmont. "She is a strong, smart, confident, relatable, and compassionate supervisor who is an active contributor to improving the work environment for all members of her Branch, and others, regardless of their background."



Wendy Gendron receives the FWP Supervisor of the Year from Col. John Atilano II during the Founder's Day ceremony.

Photo by Brian Murphy

Gendron's nomination indicated that she is not just a supervisor but a proactive and caring leader. She takes the time to know each individual, listen, and offers solutions. Her nominators cited her willingness to assign projects based on strengths or desires for growth and truly creates an environment that is fun, positive, and collaborative. She teaches, she strengthens, and she cares for the people in her Branch.

According to the citation, "Her strength to lead and provide support has been especially invaluable during the last 14 months of working remotely. We are fortunate to have her as our Chief."

"Wendy, the words of our own employees often carry the most weight for the leaders," said Belmont. "Your team members' words ring true, and the accolades are well-deserved. Congratulations!"

Dredging up the past



Photo by Brian Murphy

At the request of the Quincy, Massachusetts Park and Recreation Department, Larry Oliver, Chief, Evaluation Branch, Engineering/Planning, hosted a site tour and presentation about the Broad Meadows Salt Marsh Restoration Project and Salt Marsh Restoration, Aug. 24, 2015. The presentation was part of the city's monthly Environmental Treasures Program. Over 60 people attended the hour and a half presentation, held at the project site in Quincy.

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