

Quick fix of lock glitch

Maintenance workers at Lower Granite Dam remove equipment and cables from the navigation lock and prepare to test repairs made to the downstream miter gate seals. For story and photos, see pages 4 - 5. *Photo by Gina Schwetz*

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Taking it 'one day at a time'

by Ray Quinn, Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

I read an interesting advertisement in the newspaper last week; it said, "Stock up and save. Limit: one." Well, it sounds like it must be a pretty large size, or maybe you "stock up" every day.

And speaking of every day, let's focus on that for a bit.

Abraham Lincoln said: "The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time." That is a very important message these days. Just as Lincoln faced extraordinarily difficult times one day at a time, we also need to direct our attention to this day, each day, even in our own difficult times.

The temptation to worry about the past and be anxious about the future is strong. It can too easily be our focus with predictable and unfortunate results.

If our failures from yesterday weigh us down today, we will surely fail again. And if we worry excessively about our tomorrows, we will just as surely be unable to prepare for them. Today well lived, however, makes our yesterdays better memories and our tomorrows more welcome.

Sound simple? We all wish it was (with the possible exception of psychologists who would lose a lot of business).

Starting the Journey of Discovery



Jeanne Newton, a park ranger at Ice Harbor Dam, recently traveled to the Corps' Headquarters in Washington, D.C. for a presentation on the commemoration of the journey of Lewis and Clark. Preparation for the journey began in 1803 and took place 1804 - 1806. See the next INTERCOM for the story. *Photo by Heather Burke*

The Army trains leaders to "do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Sometimes there won't be enough money, as many people, or enough material to do our work as well as we would like. Sometimes we just won't apply them as well as we could and should have. We learn and we move on, one day at a time, because today is a new day with new opportunities. We need to see them and take advantage of them, learning from yesterday and planning for the future, but intent on this day.

No, it isn't always easy to keep ourselves focused on the task at hand and the things we need to do well today. We will always have some distraction, real or imagined, that scurries across our minds or becomes an unwelcome guest.

So what can we do? Here's a suggestion – keep your perspective and enjoy life. Yes, perspective and enjoyment. Remember that we are fallible, but we certainly aren't alone. We all have our foibles and eccentricities, and we all make mistakes. Laugh (if appropriate), learn and go on with life. Smile and laugh a lot at ourselves and with others (at others can be dangerous).

So how does that help us today? Well, don't be worried about yesterday – it either went well or we learned from our mistakes and are smarter now.

Tomorrows won't be bothersome because every tomorrow becomes a yesterday (many thanks to the time-space continuum), and we just saw that yesterdays are learning experiences. Yes, today is the past and the future, it's where we are and where we are going, and ultimately where we have been. We can make the most of it in our work and in our lives. It doesn't come again.

Did you know ...

The history of Walla Walla District is closely linked to the development of water resource projects on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Establishment of the District in 1948 coincided with the start of work on McNary Lock and Dam on the Columbia River near Umatilla, Oregon.

Collecting and transporting juvenile salmon and steelhead past dams started in 1968 by truck; 1980 by barge.

There are fish transport facilities at four dams: Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and McNary.

Hard hat safety

Chances are if you regularly wear a hard hat, you have your favorite one on the shelf, not too far away.

How long has it been since you replaced it?

Did you know that hard hats get old and lose their ability to protect?

Here are some tips:

- No modification to the shell or suspension is allowed unless approved by the manufacturer.

- Hard hats must be worn with the bill facing forward.

- Protective headgear worn near electric lines and equipment must be Class B.

- Protective headgear and components must be visually inspected on a daily basis for signs of damage (dents, cracks, etc.) that might reduce the degree of safety originally provided; headgear will periodically be inspected for ultraviolet degradation as evidenced by cracking or flaking of the helmet.

For more information, contact the Safety Office at (509) 527-7361.

Commentary: AKO keeps families in touch, securely

by Patrick Swan

Washington (Army News Service, Feb. 28, 2003) — Loose lips sink ships, but will errant e-mails strafe soldiers and their families?

It may all depend upon whom soldiers trust with information about themselves and their families when surfing the vast, anonymous, unsecure locale called the Internet.

We'd be rightly skeptical if we linked to a Web site offering support for U.S. military families with emergency notifications — but which was run by Osama bin Laden's operatives.

But what if the Web site with such a service seemed innocuous enough -- with good, red-blooded American names and addresses listed in its "Contact Us" button?

And what if the organization offering this service couched its request in noble-sounding, patriotic, rally-around-the-flag sentiments?

You know the kind: "We help our dedicated military people and their concerned loved ones stay in touch in uncertain times as these."

You just might be persuaded to submit your soldier's name, address, social security number — or your family member's names and addresses and other Privacy Act Information.

Such an Internet-based organization may or may not be legitimate. But to borrow a phrase from a typical site's pitch, in these "uncertain times," why take the chance?

After all, any information provided to such sites could be used for identity theft, intelligence gathering by foreign nations or terrorists, or pose other threats to service members, their families and their privacy.

Indeed, why take any such chance when the Army is already offering a Web site to keep soldiers and families connected when separated by a deployment. That place is Army Knowledge Online, www.us.army.mil. AKO allows family members the ability to rapidly access general-level knowledge about the Army and their soldiers across a secure communications channel. Translation: It keeps the bad guys from getting your personal information while it helps you keep in touch with those you love in uniform.

AKO is a cyber-space example of its familiar credo: The Army takes care of its own. Hence, every family member of a soldier is eligible for an AKO account/e-mail address. All family members have to do to get one is sign in as a new user and request a guest account. Soldiers serve as the sponsors and once they approve the family member's request, they are re-connected in a trusted sector of cyber space. They can exchange e-mail, chat online, engage in instant messaging. They can even post photos or personal information in a secure individual knowledge center on AKO that only the soldier and family can access.

A soldier from the Oklahoma Army National Guard recently wrote that a friend at work has a son who just joined the Army.

"She didn't know how to contact him via e-mail," said 1st Lt. Benjamin J. Weiss. "I was able to go onto the white pages in AKO and find his e-mail address. He's at Fort Carson, Colo., getting ready to head overseas."

And because his mother only has to know one, lifetime e-mail address for her soldier-son, she can stay in touch, even when he is far away. That makes her very happy when she could be heart-sick and worried.

Clearly, not every Web site claiming to "support the troops" is a security risk for the soldier and family member. But thanks to AKO's ability to keep the Army family connected, we don't ever have to find out, either. That's worth a world of piece of mind.

Intercom



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District makes quick fix to navigation lock glitch

Story and photos by Gina Schwetz

It only took a little grease and a lot of teamwork to get the Lower Granite navigation lock back in operation after a 64-hour closure Feb. 12-15.

Operations officials at lock and dam near Pomeroy, Wash., took the navigation lock temporarily out of service at 6 p.m., Feb. 12, due to a suspected obstruction in the lock's downstream gate. Earlier that day, lock operators had noticed difficulty with the downstream gate closing completely and alerted maintenance staff to the problem.

"Safety is the Corps' first concern, so we closed the lock to river traffic until we could be sure the problem was not something serious," said Lower Granite Project Manager Marty Mendiola.

Quick coordination between

the District's construction, operations, engineering, finance and contracting divisions brought divers out the next day to inspect the gate for any obstructions that might be affecting the operation of the gate – none were found.

"The lock outage was an unanticipated emergency action that we all teamed up to fix. The headquarters offices and divisions worked closely with project officials to define work specifications, establish funds and award a diving service contract within two hours," said Scott Shelley, a contracting officer. "It's important to be able make things like this happen so quickly to help the team fix an emergency situation. This doesn't happen very often, and it's nice to know we can pull together and make something happen fast when it needs to."

Over Wednesday night, the

project dewatered the lock. A team of engineers inspected the gate on Friday to determine if there was a problem preventing gate closure that could be easily repaired.

A seal that had been replaced last year was determined to be the cause of the difficulties with closing the gate.

"We found a dry patch on the new gate seal we replaced last year," said Bob Hollenbeck, a structural engineer who inspected the gate. "New seals absorb a lot of lubricant until the waxy grease builds up on them. The gate was just sticking on that dry spot."

Lower Granite maintenance workers greased the seal, and the gate operated normally after a few openings and closings to spread the lubricant. The lock was re-watered Friday evening and opened to river traffic at approximately 10 a.m. on Feb. 15.



Bob Hollenbeck, the District's chief of structural design in Engineering Division, inspects the bottom of Lower Granite Lock's north gate door.



Gary Mellstrom and Bob Hollenbeck use a manbasket to inspect the 123-foot-high gate.



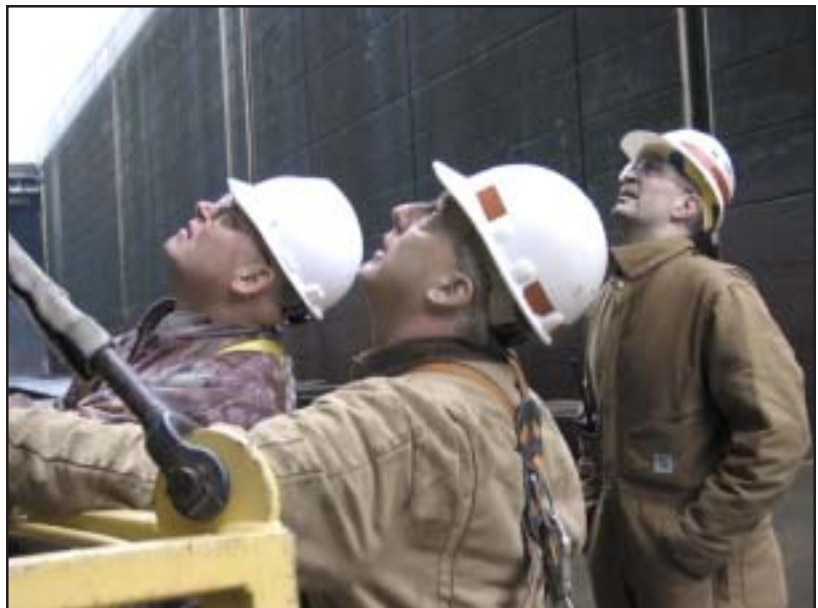
Gary Mellstrom, Lower Granite Dam's mechanical section foreman, climbs inside the manbasket and radios to crane operators on top of the navigation lock instructing them to hoist him up while he greases the gate seal.



Bob Hollenbeck, chief of structural design for the District, and Gary Mellstrom examine the dry spots on the quoin seal.



Lower Granite Lock and Dam maintenance and operations workers watch over the guardrail as lock operators test the gate to see if the waxy grease applied to the seals will fix the problem.



On the floor of the navigation lock at Lower Granite Dam (from left) Gary Mellstrom, Bob Hollenbeck and Marty Mendiola, Lower Granite operations manager, analyze the best approach to lubricating the navigation lock's gate.

Bridge builders test their strength

Story and photos by Gina Schwetz

District engineers invited students from three local-area schools to celebrate National Engineers Week, Feb. 16-22. Students explored their potential structural design skills with a bridge-building contest.

Design and construction specifications were sent to the schools a couple of weeks before the scheduled testing dates to allow students time to plan and build bridges. To fit inside the testing apparatus bridge dimensions could not exceed 30-34 centimeters long, 10 centimeters wide, and 8 centimeters tall. The bridge had to be designed to bear weight by compression only. The bridge deck could be no more than one layer of

cardboard. The only materials students were allowed to use in construction were standard corrugated cardboard, standard paper (up to 20-pound weight) and standard white glue.

Students from Garrison Middle School and DeSales Catholic School in Walla Walla, and Walla Walla Valley Academy in College Place stepped up to the challenge of building the strongest, yet lightest-weighting arc bridges they could design. Once built, Engineering Division staff and other District volunteers brought weight-compression testing devices to perform load-bearing tests on the bridges – ultimately breaking the bridges to discover their weight-bearing limits.

To determine a winner, the bridges were



From left, Jon Lomeland, structural engineer, Margie McGill, engineer-in-training, and Garrison students Karianne Koski, Holly Erwin and Jeff Ladderud monitor the pressure gauge as a bridge is tested.



Simeon Francis, civil engineer, talks to Steve Irwin, a Garrison Middle School student, about his bridge design.

weighed prior to testing, then loaded into the testing apparatus and weight applied until the bridge failed, or until the maximum weight was applied through the device. Scoring was based on the resulting “strength coefficient” — a number calculated by dividing the maximum weight the bridge supported by the weight of the bridge. The bridge with the highest “strength coefficient” won.

“We participate in Engineer Week activities almost every year,” said Greg Reid, a science teacher at Garrison Middle School. “I incorporate this event into our classroom instruction and make the bridge-building project a homework item. It really makes the kids think about their designs, and they have a lot of fun competing against each other.”

Garrison students submitted about 150 bridges for testing on Feb. 20. Some entries were layered and glued together to form solid blocks of cardboard with an arc carved beneath the testing devices’ pressure meters, but also weighed a lot. The winning design, built by Karianne Koski, weighed only 0.08776 lbs. (39.8 grams) but held up to 148 lbs. of force applied yielding a strength coefficient of 1,686.4. It used only two pieces of cardboard, folded and glued to increase its strength.

The next day, DeSales students ran nearly 200 bridges through the testing devices. Hannah Wentz built the winning bridge, which weighed 0.1788 lbs. (81.1 grams) and supported 148 lbs. with a strength coefficient of 827.7.

To accommodate a school schedule change, the District will hold WWVA’s bridge testing event on a day in March yet to be determined.

“Throughout America, we’re not seeing a high



Garrison Middle School students (from left) Ethan Johnson, Olivia Newhouse, Taylor Simon and Greg Prins gather around the testing device as Jon Lomeland, a Walla Walla District structural engineer, prepares to measure the load capacity of Johnson’s bridge.

representation in numbers of people in the fields of engineering and science. This is a way we, as professional engineers, can hopefully spark some interest in students in these fields and show them that it can be fun,” said Simeon Francis, National Engineers’ Week coordinator for the District.

“I hope this contest encouraged the students to be creative while thinking analytically. Today’s students are the Corps’ future engineers and scientists – I hope this event gets some of them excited about engineering as a potential career,” Francis said.

