



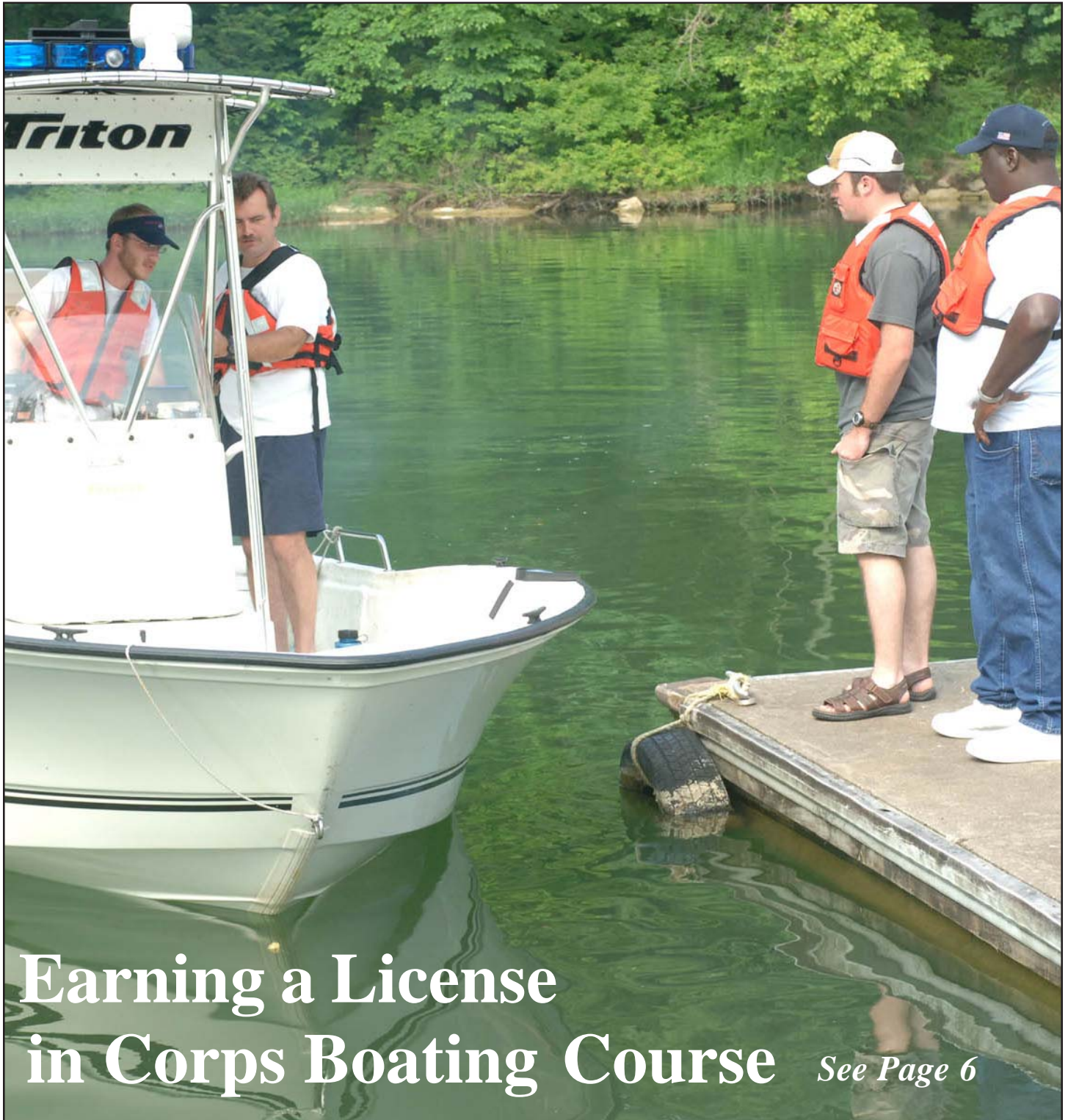
US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Nashville District

DistrictDigest

Volume 106, Number 7

Relevant-Ready-Responsive-Reliable

July 2006



**Earning a License
in Corps Boating Course** *See Page 6*

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SAME "Building for the Future"

SAME will host a Professional Development Workshop on August 16, from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Tennessee Engineering Center.


U.S. Representative Jim Cooper, Tennessee's 5th Congressional District, will be the special guest speaker during lunch.

Other speakers are commanders from neighboring districts and professionals from industry who will be speaking on new projects and re-building of the Gulf

Coast area devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Breakfast, lunch, break snacks and door prizes will be provided.

For more information, visit the SAME website www.SAMENashvillePost.org, or contact Carol Warren at 615-736-5601.

For a registration form, contact Lannae Long at Lannae.J.Long@usace.army.mil or 615-736-2049.

SAME officials believe this will be the best workshop yet! 

District Digest

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The District Digest is printed monthly and is a Command Information publication of the Nashville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles, photographs, and other contributions are welcomed and encouraged. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes to all material submitted for publication.

Story ideas and articles may be submitted to P.O. Box 1070, Nashville, TN 37202-1070. Details may be obtained from the editor at (615) 736-7163.

Written material may also be sent electronically to the editor at the following e-mail addresses: david.s.treadway@us.army.mil

Information about the Nashville District may also be found on the District's homepage at: <http://www.lrn.usace.army.mil>.



photo by Dave Treadway

On the Cover

Ranger Instructor Terry Martin (center) watches Corey Richardson practice docking the Corps' Triton boat June 21 at J. Percy Priest Lake, one qualifier for licensing in the District's annual Motor Boat Operators License and Testing Course. Josh Hindman and Arthur Wright wait on the dock for their turn at the wheel of the small craft. For complete story, and other photos, see pages 6 and 7.

Commander's Corner

May we live in interesting times...an old fabled curse; though tongue-in-cheek, seems to reflect our current state of affairs. We are in the midst of change; it is all around us. I sincerely believe the notion a myth that people/organizations are reluctant to change; people will readily change when they perceive results from that change to be positive. In addressing change, we need to focus on the results of that change.

Two areas of change that will affect nearly every employee in the District within the next six months are implementation of the new Most Effective Organization (MEO) within IMO as a result of the recent A-76 Study and the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). I would like to share recent developments in these two areas as well as my perceptions about the consequences of these changes.

Communication

As part of the ongoing IMO A-76 Study, HQUSACE recently announced the selection of the government bid through a competitive process and, consequently, our District will transition from our existing IMO structure to a new organizational structure defined by the MEO. We anticipate that this MEO will be significantly smaller than our existing structure, therefore we are working through a personnel transition plan for those IMO employees. Although the organization structure, and consequently the level of service provided by the MEO, is unknown at this time, my perception is that service to those facilities in the field will remain relatively similar to existing service. I believe the MEO structure will more significantly affect those offices within the Federal Building, as service to these offices will resemble the type of service currently being provided to the field; telephonic and remote systems support. The ultimate goal of the new organization is to reduce cost by aligning ourselves with other like organizations while using best business practices of industry. This reduction in costs makes us more competitive for and effective with our appropriated funding. This, in turn, provides us the ability to sustain our vitality, standardizing levels of

training, improving facilities, and sustaining expertise.

Another huge change is the future implementation of NSPS, which will significantly affect our personnel system. The Secretary of the Army recently directed all Army Commands to implement NSPS for specific numbers of employees during an early cycle or 'spiral'. All USACE supervisors, excluding wage-grade and maritime supervisors, will transition to NSPS on January 21, 2007. All other General Schedule (GS) employees will spiral into NSPS sometime later, followed by our Wage-Grade (WG) employees during an even later cycle. NSPS is designed to better reflect a pay for performance system where those high performing employees are compensated with higher pay. If you have not already done so, please look at the NSPS website at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps> for information. You are also welcome to contact our CPAC. When looking at results from various employee surveys and other venues of input, compensation for high performers is consistently one of the top items of interest and NSPS directly encompasses this philosophy of those best performers receiving more pay. Even though I do not yet have all the details I



desire on these two major upcoming changes, I am confident we will successfully implement both, and that will ultimately make the District more viable and poised to better address emerging requirements of the region.

I would like to end on a safety note. Summer is here and, historically, summer accidents that employees are likely to encounter the next three months include back strains, sprained knees, and contusions. When we focus on the next three months, consider how to prevent these types of occurrence as well as other injury types associated with outdoor activities and physical labor, like heat exhaustion and allergic reactions. Remember – Safety because you are important! 🏠

June Employee of the Month

Joseph Adawag, marine machinery mechanic, Navigation Branch, was named Employee of the Month for June. Adawag is recognized for his technical competence, esprit de corps, and consistently exceptional performance of duty.

He helps maintain the District navigation repair fleet equipment and keeps it in a constant state of emergency readiness. His unique ability to diagnose, troubleshoot and make emergency repairs have greatly increased the efficiency of the Fleet and the projects to which he is assigned. Because of his innovation, ingenuity and adaptability, he was also selected as a member of the RRV Team. In that capacity, he operates, maintains, calibrates and repairs a variety of

mechanical and electronic systems and components for, not only Nashville and other districts, but other government agencies as well.

Senior Leaders select the Nashville District employee of the Month from the many excellent employees identified by the District's

chain of command. Selected individuals personify the seven Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. 🏠



Joe Adawag

Summer Spilling to Improve Environment in Stones River

The Nashville District will manage the water level in J. Percy Priest Lake through the use of spillway gate releases to help improve the water quality in the lower Stones River this summer. The practice began the first week in June.

"We are committed to meeting established clean water goals for the lower Stones River and will do so in a manner consistent with a trial operation performed in 2005," said Bob Sneed, chief of the Nashville District Water Management Section.

This operation, according to Sneed, will allow the Corps to reduce iron and manganese concentrations, eliminate hydrogen sulfide odor, meet the Tennessee Water Quality Standard of 5 milligrams per liter (mg/l) for dissolved oxygen, and provide a continuous minimum flow.

Officials stress that the amount of water spilled will depend on the prevailing weather conditions. This procedure will remain in place until the fall drawdown begins in October, which prepares the lake

to store anticipated rainfall during the winter months. This also coincides with when the lake will have mixed to a sufficient depth for hydropower releases, which come from deep in the lake, to meet downstream water quality objectives.

Last year when the Corps conducted a similar operation in September, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency performed a biological survey in the Stones River and documented the effectiveness of this mode of operation.

These proposed water management modifications are also in close accord with the Chief of Engineers' recently adopted Environmental Operating Principles.



J. Percy Priest Dam spilling in 2005. The practice will add oxygen to the lower Stones River and improve the aquatic environment.

These Principles hold that an environment maintained in a healthy, diverse and sustainable condition is necessary to support life, the Corps should proactively consider environmental impacts of programs, accept responsibility for the consequences of Corps activities and work to mitigate such impacts. 🏗️

Cordell Hull Ranger a Winner in Water Safety Photo Contest

by Dave Treadway

Park Ranger John Derby, Cordell Hull Lake, captured second place in the Environmental Stewardship category of the National Water Safety photo contest with an image of a juvenile Bald Eagle being released by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency at Sullivans Bend March 10, 2005. Dale Hollow Ranger Sondra Carmen and Wolf Creek Electrician James O. Johnson are former winners.

The 2006 USACE Photo Contest, open to all Corps employees, is seeking entries in nine categories. Submissions should depict the promotion of water safety, demonstrate safe water practices, and/or showcase water-based recreation facilities. All uniformed employees shown in the photos should be wearing the appropriate uniform for the activity in which they are engaged. Photos will be judged for clarity, composition, originality, visual impact, and theme.

The categories include: Commercial Boating, Hunters and Anglers (in/on/near Water), Water Sports (swimming, boating, water play), USACE employees in action around water, Volunteer employees in action around water, Scenic Water Scenes (must feature a Corps project), Environmental Stewardship at Corps projects, Boat Accidents/Water-based Recreation Mishaps, and Flora/Fauna (does not require water safety connection, but should be related to Corps projects).

While all photos will be accepted, **only those with a water safety theme will be considered eligible for awards.** Awards will be a plaque or framed award that contains the winning entry.

Photos may be submitted as 35mm slides or Digital images in at least 300 dpi resolution at 6.5" by 10" on Compact Disc (CD). Images not in this format will not be judged.

Each photographer may submit up to three photos per category. All entries must be accompanied by a completed ENG Form

5067-R, Digital Library Image Information (Appendix B of ER 25-1-91). Indicate the category you are entering in the 'remarks' box. <http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/usace-docs/eng-regs/er25-1-91/a-b.pdf>

Close-up images of people should be accompanied by a signed DD Form 2830 (general talent release) <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/forms/DD2830.pdf> or district equivalent.

Submit contest entries to your Division Water Safety Committee Representative listed at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/contacts.htm>. Submission deadline is February 1, 2007.

Winners will be announced in March 2007 at the USACE session of the International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS) in San Antonio, Texas. Previous sweepstakes winners may enter. All photos become the property of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information, contact your division representative. 🏗️

Army Makes It Easy to Learn Another Language

by Dave Treadway

The Army recently entered into a contract to provide Rosetta Stone® foreign-language training, at no cost, to all active Army, National Guard, Reservists and Department of the Army civilians via the Army e-Learning portal on the Army Knowledge Online (AKO).

One Nashville District employee has already taken advantage of this opportunity and found it very beneficial. Melissa Cartwright, Information Management, first used it to prepare for a vacation trip to Mexico and found it easy to use.

"I brushed up on my Spanish by taking three courses," revealed Cartwright. "I had three years of Spanish in high school, that's why I called it brushing up. The software was real user-friendly. Each course contained 15 lessons and I completed one or two a day for a week. I ran through the first course in five or six days."

Cartwright found that she was able to attend the course from both home and work locations, although future attendance from home may be impossible once login by CAC Card becomes mandatory Army wide. She then found a more practical use for the Language software when she applied for a job in Europe.

"I found studying German harder because the language was new. It does use voice recognition software so your voice is recorded and you get to try pronouncing words in the new language so you get practice as you memorize one word at a time. It doesn't make me proficient in German but serves as an introduction to the language and will make it easier for me as I take my new job in Germany. I sure would recommend it as a way to learn a language," concluded Cartwright.

IM's Vicki Isham said she also plans to take advantage of the software to learn Italian when her schedule will permit it.

The objective of this training tool, arranged via a contract with Fairfield


Language Technologies, is to develop a force capable of engaging in basic communications with the populace in the area deployed - and with coalition partners. Rosetta Stone® online training is an immediate, cost effective way to provide a training capability across the force, and is an excellent tool for units preparing to deploy and employees preparing to fill billets outside the United States.

The Army has had much success with Rosetta Stone® on Army e-Learning. More than 12,000 Soldiers and Army civilians have used the online training since it became available on November 7, 2005. The top five courses accessed are: Spanish (Lat Am); German; Arabic; French and Italian.

* Free state-of-the-art language courses through Army e-Learning,

include Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, English, French, Farsi (Persian), German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, Spanish (Latin America), Spanish (Spain), Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese and Welsh.

* Each user must have an AKO account to register for Army e-Learning.

* To access Army e-Learning, visit AKO <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/login/welcome.html> at www.us.army.mil and select "My Education" and click Rosetta Stone. If you are already registered for the Army e-Learning, logon and access the Rosetta Stone® courses or select Register to obtain your e.Learning password. All course completions are posted to individual ATRRS records. 



Melissa A. Cartwright, Information Management, is presented an Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service June 26 by District Engineer Lt.Col. Steven Roemhildt prior to her departure for Germany where she will work in the Civilian Personnel Operations Center there (CHRA-E). Cartwright prepared herself for the assignment by utilizing the online Rosetta Stone® foreign-language training. The award recognized Cartwright's contributions to the Nashville District emergency management efforts in support of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita along the Gulf Coast.

New Motor Vessel Operators Trained, Licensed

Story and photos by Dave Treadway

A number of District employees who work in Navigation Branch at one of the 14 locks or in the Maintenance and Repair Section, Hydropower Branch at one of the nine power plants, and Natural Resources at one of the 10 lake projects perform duties everyday on the nation's waterways. And in that capacity they sometimes must operate Corps vessels.

Now 14 more employees are qualified and licensed to better perform those duties after attending the Motor Boat Operators License and Testing Course taught by Corps

Instructors in June at J. Percy Priest Lake.

"This course is designed to test a student's skill level as a vessel operator," explained Freddie Bell, "all participants should arrive with some knowledge of how to operate a watercraft. We just teach them how to do it the Corps way which means 'safety first'."

Lead Instructor Bell was joined by Biologist Patty Coffey, Resource Manager Larry Nash, and Rangers Sondra Carmen, Terry Martin, and Brock Jones. Retiree Jim Dyer, a veteran instructor – one of the first in the District to be certified in the Nationally Sponsored Instructor Course – again joined the staff as a volunteer, as he put it, "to

make sure the youngsters can take advantage of my experience."

Over four days of classroom instruction and practical application, participants learned how to properly use fire suppression equipment, the proper procedures to use in different emergencies, how to rescue a passenger who had fallen overboard, how to operate a variety of Corps water craft in different situations, and a variety of other nautical details with which they must be acutely familiar.

Dyer and Carmen taught a variety of knot tying techniques, Jones discussed trailering and

trailer maintenance, while Bell and Carmen covered rules/regulations/laws, as well as ventilation and PFD requirements. Martin covered fire extinguisher requirements and proper towing techniques.

On Wednesday, each class member practiced backing a trailer down a launch ramp, maneuvering and towing a vessel, open water rescue, and properly docking different types of motor vessels.

Martin explained methods for towing a disabled vessel.

"The quickest, simplest easiest tow is called a straight-line tow. That means one rope from the towing vessel to the

towed vessel. A couple other variations we can use are a Y-bridle and a V-bridle. The names are derived from the configuration of the ropes which form a Y or V. And the length of this Y or V needs to be about two or three times the width of the back of your boat." Martin then explained the advantages offered by either two-rope arrangement.

"As the towing boat turns, this Y-Bridle keeps constant tension on the towed vessel so there is not as much drift on the part of the vessel in tow. With a V-Bridle, you simply have two ropes coming from the towing vessel to a single attachment point on the towed vessel. Both of the two-rope arrangements give good stability to the vessel being towed. Another type of tow is called the alongside tow. This is just like it sounds, you have two vessels tied




Retiree Jim Dyer (above right) helped teach trailering, trailer maintenance and knot tying. Rangers Terry Martin (left) teaches a boat towing class and Sondra Carmen, (top left) gives instructions to Josh Hindman and Arthur Wright before they practice an open water rescue drill.

together, side-by-side. In this arrangement, that boat just becomes an extension of your boat. Whatever you do, that boat does. Steering and maneuvering is more cumbersome but in that arrangement, you can literally take the attached boat and set it alongside a courtesy float.” Students then practiced those techniques on the Lake.

During the first day of summer with the mercury hovering near 100 degrees, students maneuvered craft over a serpentine course, a transitional course, an evasive maneuvering course and practiced open-water docking.

“The USACE Certificate they earned,” said Bell, “authorizes operation of Corps vessels. Each year we offer one 24-hour course and up to four 8-hour refresher courses, which is required every five years for those holding a license.”

Newly certified operators include: Gary R. Fleeman - Ft. Loudoun Lock, Brandon Kennedy - Watts Bar Lock, Paul Weaver - Chickamauga Lock, Arthur Wright - Wilson Lock, Cory Richardson – Nickajack Lock, Josh Hindman – Barkley Resource, Larry Sutton - Center Hill Resource - Timothy Loftis, Cordell Hull Power - John Brewington, Cheatham Lock, Walker Woodruff – Old Hickory Resource, Ronnie Devlin – Cordell Hull Resource, Brent Thompson – Wolf Creek Power, along with William Peek and John Skinner from Kentucky Lock. 



Corey Richardson and Arthur Wright (above) prepare to retrieve a ‘man overboard’ under the watchful eye of Ranger Sondra Carmen during open water rescue training June 21 on J. Percy Priest Lake. Instructor Freddie Bell (below) demonstrates for three students the proper method of docking a small craft in a simulated dock. Each of the students then took the boat and practiced the procedure.



Fishing Rodeo a Success for Hermitage Kids

Story and photos by Steven Foshee

More than 65 children from the Hermitage, Tenn., Community Center enjoyed the third annual Kids Fishing Rodeo on J. Percy Priest Lake at the Cook Recreation Area June 7. Fishing success was enhanced by 350 pounds of stocked catfish, crappie, blue gill and bass in the Recreation Area pond.

“The event, sponsored by Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA), Bass Pro Shops and the Corps, offered two days of instruction on the techniques of fishing,” said Corps Park Ranger John Baird. “The first day was classroom instructions where park rangers taught fishing ethics and water safety and shared outdoor experiences. The second day was hands-on training with some of Davidson County’s littlest anglers.”

Baird said one of his highlights of the recreational season is coordinating this event with the local Bass Pro Shops and TWRA. He said Bass Pro Shops at Opry



J. Percy Priest Lake Park Ranger John Baird removes a catfish from the hook for a successful youngster from the Hermitage Community Center during the Lake’s 3rd Annual Kids Fishing Rodeo held June 7.



J. Percy Priest Park Ranger Robert Davis helps a happy angler with a nice catch June 7 during the Lake’s 3rd Annual Kids Fishing Rodeo.

Mills Mall plays an active role in this event by supplying equipment, expertise and prizes for young fishermen. Bass Pro also goes the extra mile and supports the Corps’ water safety program. The TWRA, through a partnership with the Corps, improved the fishing opportunities at the Cook Recreation Area by maintaining the fish attractors there and by constructing two stationary fishing platforms.

“All the planning and volunteer time is well worth the effort when you see the excitement as these kids spend a day fishing,” said Baird.


Derrick Larson struggled as his fishing rod bent toward the pond. Several park rangers quickly responded with encouragement for the young fisherman.

“Look at the size of this catfish!” smiled Larson. “This is my second fish I caught today.”

“The added fish attractors and the amount of catfish we stocked should increase the chances of a successful catch for most of these kids,” said Tennessee Wildlife Officer Todd Saint John. Ranger Justin Reed moved around the pond supplying bait and hooks to volunteers.

“For the past hour the fish have been really tearing up the bait,” said Reed as he pointed out more than 20 kids catching fish along the banks at the same time. Reed was pleased to see children using the fishing ethics and safety suggestions provided by Rangers and sponsors on the previous day.

Participant Tatianna Blanton enjoyed more than just fishing, “I enjoyed the fishing but my favorite part was watching the duck family move across the water as I waited for the bobber to move.”

Volunteers from Bass Pro Shops awarded prizes of tackle boxes, fishing gear and numerous rods and reels at the conclusion of the Rodeo. As the young fishermen packed up their gear, TWRA representatives and Corps park rangers recapped the day’s activities and stressed the importance of being safe around the water while fishing, boating or swimming. 

240 Young Anglers Turn Out for Cheatham Rodeo

Story by Environmental Protection Specialist Mark Klimaszewski

Summer heat couldn't stop 240 young anglers, ages 15 and under, from turning out for the 15th Annual Cheatham Lake Fish Bustin' Rodeo on Saturday, June 10.

Excited participants began arriving as early as 6:30 a.m. to sign up to try their luck and win a trophy. The little inlet located in Cheatham Dam Right Bank Recreation Area where the event was held was stocked with more than 1,000 pounds of catfish. Many kids left at the end of the day with an impressive stringer of fish.

Approximately 200 door prizes valued at more than \$2,000 were given away during the event, and more than 600 hot dogs disappeared during lunch. American Bass Anglers, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct the free youth fishing event every year at the Right Bank Recreation Area on the date set aside statewide as free fishing day.

The 2006 Rodeo would not have been a success without the help of many dedicated volunteers and sponsors. Steve Cochran, Gracie Parker of American Bass Anglers, Madison Trophy Shop, Purity Dairies, Tommy Pardue, Wayne Reeves Septic Tank Service, Gander Mountain, Bass Pro Shops, and many local businesses pitched in to provide door prizes, tackle, trophies for winning anglers, and all the food items served at lunchtime.

Each sponsor deserves a special 'Thank You!' 🏠



Smiles abounded on young anglers of all ages at the Cheatham Lake 2006 Fish-Bustin' Rodeo June 10.



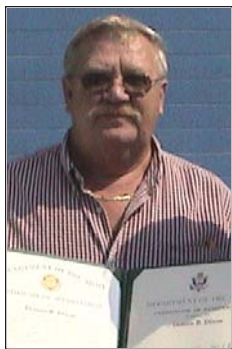
The Corps Crowd

Welcome to ...

...Park Ranger Lindsey Houchens, who just graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a BS in Forestry, Wildland Recreation. Lindsey will be working full-time at Old Hickory after spending the previous two summers at the Lake as a co-op student.

Farewell to ...

...Fay Johnson, Contracting Office, who retired on May 31.
...Park Ranger Steven Gregory, who leaves Old Hickory Lake for his next assignment at Lake Barkley.



Dixon

...Donnie Dixon, lock and dam operator, Wilson Lock, who retired June 30.

Congratulations to ...

...Becky Jolly, park ranger at Cheatham Lake, and Greg Smith, a former park ranger at Lake

Barkley who is now with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They were married July 5.

...Katherine Lane and Roger Devereux, Old Hickory Hydro Power Plant, who were married July 2. He works in the Maintenance Office and she is assistant to the Executive Vice President of the Ingram Corp.

...Lari Allman and Lindsey Murray, secretary at Chickamauga Lock, who were



The Devereuxs



The Allmans married June 25.
...Brad Long of the Soils and Dam Safety Section; and Kyle Hayworth and Ben Rohrbach of the Hydrology & Hydraulics Branch for earning their Professional Engineer licenses from the State of Tennessee.

...Deborah Furkins, an employee at Wolf Creek Power Plant, on her recent promotion to mechanic (A).
...Spencer Huddleston, son of Wava and Wayne Huddleston, PPPMD, who graduated from Maryville College on the Dean's list as one of five students named an Outstanding Senior for his work with international students. Spencer will be moving to Nagashima, Japan, next month to teach English. He spent his junior year as an exchange student at Kansai Guidai University near Osaka, and plans to travel in Asia before returning to pursue an MBA.



Lynn Bowden meets Actor Robert Prosky June 20 in Smyrna, as a member of a team working on a future video production for the Hollywood star. Prosky's face has been a prominent part of HILL STREET BLUES and 38 other movies and TV productions. The retired AV specialist will be involved with a promotional video for Prosky's future lecture series. "He was a super nice fellow," said Bowden, "and I was really thrilled to meet him." Not one to sit still long, Bowden is staying as busy as he wants to be and will also soon be working on a small production with country music singer Trace Adkins.

Sympathy to ...

...Valerie Carlton, Contracting, whose husband Ray passed away July 6 following a long illness.

Upcoming events ...

...Program dates have been established for Special Emphasis Programs Committee events for 2006. Look for an updated list in subsequent issues.

August 22 – Women's Equality Day program 🏠

Carrier

(Continued from page 11)
started out in 1986 with 25 years worth of fuel; that, from keel to mast, the ship is as tall as a 24-story building.

What will I always remember about the visit?

The size of the carrier, which, in fact, is a floating city and airport; that the Navy was able to squeeze a crew of 5,500, whose average age is 19 years, into those 4.5 acres of mobile sovereign U.S. territory. I will also remember the tremendous technology and power of the

machines and equipment onboard; the efficiency and awesome sight of the cats and traps (they can launch jets in 26-second intervals); the great size and relative openness (compared to other areas below deck) of the hanger bay; the incessant drills and training (hence the popular saying on the carrier that every day is Monday); the courtesy of the sailors who were happy to engage in conversation to answer questions; the lack of privacy; the gracious hospitality we were shown; . . . and thinking I'm glad the TR and it's crew are on our side! 🏠

Once-in-a-Lifetime Visit to a U.S. Navy Aircraft Carrier

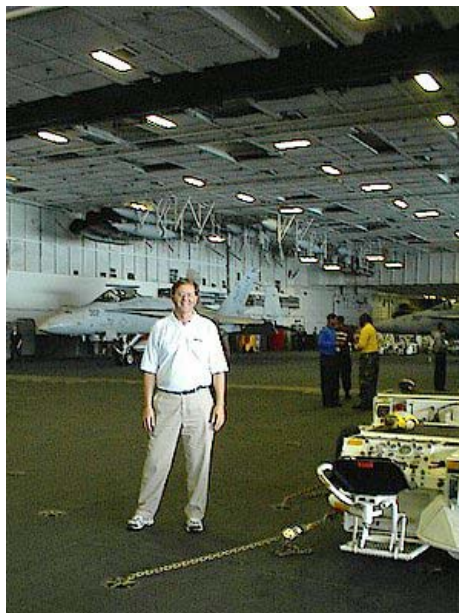
by Walt Green, Project Management Div.

Sometimes, like in *The Godfather*, someone makes you an offer you can't refuse. While attending a nephew's wedding in Norfolk, Va., last September, I received such an offer. A Navy retiree who knew I was enamored with Naval ships and the military asked if I would like to visit an aircraft carrier, which would include a cable-assisted landing (or trap), a night onboard and catapult off (or cat) the next day. This Navy program is designed to increase public awareness and appreciation for Naval operations.

I had to accept. I submitted my resume, medical and personal information, and an all-important release of liability. If I cleared the background check, the wait could be two or three years before I was notified of my visit dates. If I couldn't make those dates, the wait would be repeated.

In mid-May I was informed that my dates were Thursday and Friday, June 8-9 and that my destination would be the Nimitz-class nuclear aircraft carrier USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN71), nicknamed America's "Big Stick", in its home port of Norfolk after a mission to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Although my wedding anniversary was the 8th, I was able to survive that schedule conflict. I packed as instructed by the Navy - one carry-on size bag of clothes and other necessities, shades, comfortable shoes, a camera and \$40 for meals and incidentals. It was suggested that I try to be in decent shape and get plenty of sleep the night before, because the visit would be physically taxing, with lots of walking and climbing of ladders.

I flew to Norfolk on Wednesday and spent the night with family. I was joined by 10 others Thursday morning at the Norfolk Naval Station. After required briefings, we donned our PFD, goggles and cranium/hearing protection and boarded a 28-passenger, twin-prop Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) designed to deliver supplies and personnel to carriers. We flew in aft-facing seats about 70 miles out into the Atlantic. Since there were only two small windows in the cramped



Walt Green in the enormous hangar bay of the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

cabin, most of us never saw the carrier until we landed. It took us 30 minutes to get into a landing pattern, then another 30-minute wait for clearance to land. We made a typically hard and abrupt landing on the 1,092-foot long deck, "trapped" by the number 3 cable at 1345 hours. It was quite a sensation, being pressed backwards into our seats while decelerating from 150 mph to zero in about 2 seconds. The first big thrill, however, came as the cargo ramp at the rear of the plane opened and I could see, after nine months anticipation, the flight deck teeming with activity.

We stepped out into this new world, onto this floating airport, and were taken to the Captain's Room and welcomed by the Commanding Officer. After freshening up in our staterooms - I shared one with two bankruptcy lawyers - we were fed a light lunch and turned over to Chief Petty Officer Bourgeois who watched over us during our stay. He took us to a number of support centers - the bridge, weather station, combat direction center, flight deck control room, and air traffic control center. We experienced another safety briefing, then again donned our safety gear and stepped onto the flight deck - one of the most dangerous places on earth - to observe 'cats' and 'traps'. We were lucky to have great weather and to

be onboard when several pilots in training were performing their numerous carrier qualification landings, touch-and-goes and take-offs to advance toward combat status; because of this, there was a lot of deck activity well into the night. There were about 50 aircraft onboard, including F/A18 Super Hornets, EA/6B Prowlers, F/14 Tomcats and MH-60S Seahawk helicopters. All the pilots were flying Hornets.

After a filling dinner, we went to Buzzard's Row to observe night take-offs and landings, a lot more dangerous than daylight maneuvers. After this full day, we were returned to our rooms at 2230 hours and told we might not get to sleep until after 0130 hours because of the noisy nocturnal flight activity. They were right - the catapults and jet blast deflectors were immediately above us. Not a good night's sleep, but that was part of the experience.

On Friday, we enjoyed a Waffle House-style breakfast in the mess hall, then visited the turbine maintenance and electronics shops, radar repair shop, a ready room, the medical and dental offices, the fantail and the engine testing area. We had lunch with the chief engineer, and then watched our COD (carrying the next group of visitors) land. After a farewell by the Commanding Officer, we put on our safety gear, boarded the COD and were catapulted (from zero to 160 mph in 2 seconds) off CVN71 at 1330 hours towards Norfolk and reality. The cat was more exciting than our trap had been, partly because we had seen too many take-offs and could visualize how fast we were accelerating. At the Naval Station, the PAO gave us personalized 'TR' caps, a photo album and a certificate proclaiming us honorary "tailhookers" and sent us back into civilian life with an enhanced appreciation for the military.

What did I find most interesting?

There are four arresting cables and the pilots are graded on how often they hit number 3; that the pilots go full throttle upon touchdown in case they miss the cables and have to take off again; that each link of the 1,200-foot-long anchor chains weighs 360 pounds; that the carrier

(See Carrier, page 10)

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Just To Be On The Safe Side . . . Kite Tubes

by John Tibbels, Safety Office

Kite tubing is a new recreational sport which comes with many dangers. In kite tubing, a speedboat tows a rider on an inflatable tube 10 feet in diameter, and the rider pulls back on a rope to cause the tube to rise into the air to a height that depends on the speed of the boat. Manufacturers claim riders can rise from 10 to 60 feet.

Kevin Schneider, a National Park Service management assistant at Glen Canyon Lake, said controlling a kite tube is extremely challenging, and the slightest upset can cause the rider to fall violently into the water, resulting in severe injuries.

Last week, the Salt Lake City, Utah, Desert Morning News reported two people were seriously hurt in separate kite-tubing accidents on Lake Powell. In the first and most severe, a 29-year-old man, fell about 40 feet to the water's surface on June 2, while being towed at approximately 40 mph, and suffered a broken neck. The next day, a 14-year-old girl lost consciousness when she fell about 15 feet and struck the water. Park administrators evaluated the injuries and determined the only way to prevent future injuries is to ban the Wego Kite Tube, manufactured by SportsStuff Inc., from use in the Park. The restriction also


applies to any device towed by a boat which allows the rider to take flight, including the Manta, manufactured by Sevylor, parasailing and kite boarding.

Industry representatives insisted that watching the instructional DVD included with the purchase can prevent serious injury. However, park officials reasoned that in light of all that has taken place, the prohibitions are needed for guests' safety.

All victims were using the kite tube as directed when they suddenly lifted to dangerous heights, became unstable and plunged down to the water's surface. This information was sent to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and nearly 400 other parks across the nation.

If you are planning to purchase a kite tube, you may want to research it more before doing so and check to see if it has

been banned on area lakes where you plan to use it.

District Engineers in Sacramento, Little Rock, Tulsa and Vicksburg have banned the devices on all area lakes. The National Park Service has also banned them at one of their major lakes. The Consumer Product Safety Commission is now looking into the product and recently had unusually strong words about its hazards. 



A SportsStuff promotional photo of the device called a Kite Tube.