



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®
Rock Island District

Tower Times

Volume 30

No. 5

April 2008

U S ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS





Spotlight on the District

Troy Larson Chief, Safety Office

Story and photo by Mark Kane

While many college graduates find work after they earn their degrees, some find it challenging to locate a job that is related to the field of their education.

Tony Larson, chief, Safety Office, graduated from the Blackhawk College - St. Ambrose physical therapy program in 1996. He earned his degree in physical therapy and occupational health and ergonomics.

Larson was able to directly apply it to workplace injuries, but he wanted to have a greater impact.

"After treating work related injuries for many years, I realized I could help more people by training safe work practices and making the workplace a safer environment," said Larson. "I continue to hold a physical therapy license in Illinois and have spent the last seven years as the risk manager -- safety manager for the City of Rock Island."

Prior to earning his degree, Larson gained valuable experience in the Air Force.

"I joined the Air Force just after high school and specialized as an equipment mechanic," said Larson. "My mechanical background has helped me relate to safety hazards in the workplace."

All of his combined experience has

and employees of the Corps."

Larson has been a District employee since mid-April and has barely had a chance to get his feet wet, but hasn't been shy about getting right into the mix.

"I enjoy interacting and helping people," said Larson. "I enjoy helping others with safety, health and wellness questions."

In regard to his job expectations, Larson knows he wants to have a positive impact.

"I am joining Beth Urmey and Jeff McCrery in the effort to ensure the occupational health and safety needs are met within our District," said Larson. "We are here to help keep our employees, contractors

and guests safe."

Larson is new to the District, but knows the area well. He was born in Rock Island, Ill., grew up and graduated from high school in Geneseo, Ill., and has lived in Moline, Ill. with his wife Stacey and their children, ages nine and seven, since 1990.

His hobbies include spending time with his family and on their boat.

"We spend a lot of time in the summer on the rivers and lakes fishing and camping," said Larson.

His advice to anyone reading this article is, "Do something healthy for yourself every day and keep an open mind; you never know what you may learn." 📷



worked well for Larson and served as the foundation in his efforts to find a challenging position with the Corps and greater prospects for development.

"The Corps offers amazing opportunity to grow," said Larson. "I have always been impressed with the efforts

"Spotlight Someone You Know"

The next District Spotlight employee could be working right beside you, and the only way you'll see that person here is if you let me know it.

If you know someone who you feel is doing a

good job, setting a good example, or is a pleasure to work around, maybe it's time the District knew it.

Ready to tell the rest of the District, then e-mail me at:

Mark.A.Kane@usace.army.mil



Tower Times
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Rock Island District
Vol. 30 No. 5
April 2008

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This newsletter is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the Tower Times are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or the Rock Island District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

It is published monthly using offset press by the Corporate Communications Office, Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clock Tower Building, Box 2004, Rock Island, IL 61204-2004. Phone (309) 794-5730. Circulation 1,500.

Send articles to Editor, Corporate Communications Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clock Tower Building, P.O. Box 2004, Rock Island, IL, 61204-2004.

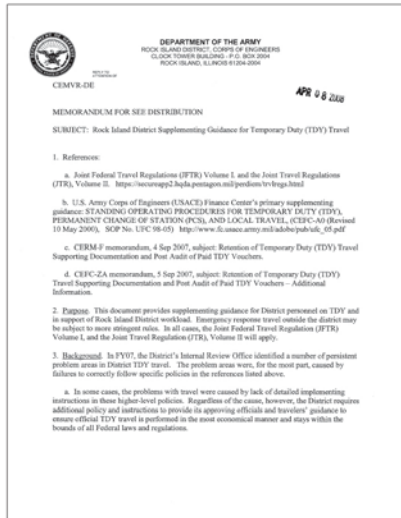
The Tower Times is printed on recycled paper.

On the web, in living color, at:
[www.mvr.usace.army.mil/
 PublicAffairsOffice/TowerTimes](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/TowerTimes)

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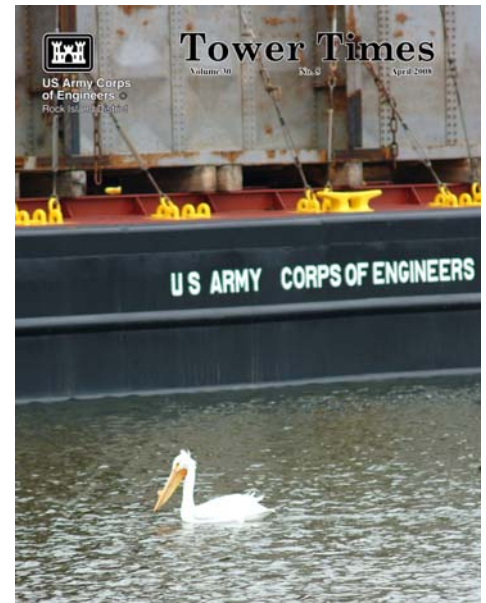
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On the Cover

An American white pelican swims in front of a Corps of Engineers barge at Locks and Dam 14 at Pleasant Valley, Iowa, during the District's third-annual Quad-Cities Pelican Watch. Photo by Mark Kane.

See page 4 for more information about the event.



Pelicans Draw Crowd at Locks and Dam 14

Story and photos by Mark Kane



(Above) An American white pelican comes in for a graceful landing. (Left) A local and avid wildlife photographer focuses in on the American white pelican with his telephoto lens.



Don Bardole, along with Amber Tilton, Mississippi River Visitor Center, assist a local youth with the use of a spotting scope during the Quad-Cities Pelican Watch held at Locks and Dam 14.

Spectators come from miles and miles to see bald eagles around the locks and dams on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers during some of the most brutally cold weather Old Man Winter dishes up each year, but there's a bird of a different feather that's drawing an audience and without the harsh low temperatures.

Until recently, the American white pelican had not been seen in these parts for at least a century. But this spring, the bird looks at home on the Mississippi River.

With a wing span of more than nine-foot-long and reaching better than four feet in height, the migratory giants could be seen floating on the waters like giant fishing bobbers at the Third-Annual Quad Cities Pelican Watch held at Locks and Dam 14 on March 29.

The Mississippi River Project with the Quad-Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau sponsored the annual watch.

Shortly after the turn of the century these birds began to be seen in numbers in the Quad-Cities area.

"We don't know why, but about 10 years ago, they started coming through the area," said Donald Bardole, park ranger, Mississippi River Visitor Center. "It's fascinating that their migration and nesting patterns are changing and no one seems to know why."

He said about 100 years ago, thousands upon thousands of the birds came through here to nest on the small lakes and wet areas left from the glaciers.

Today, the white pelicans migrate from Texas and Louisiana, going north into Minnesota and Canada, and west into the Dakotas and other western states.

"I think some of the habitat improvement by the Corps of Engineers has helped," said Bardole. "It's a sign the water is fairly clean. They're smarter than

we are about what's safe in the water."

That day, the large fish-eaters glided through heavy winds and settled on turbulent waters with ease. Visitors spoke with park rangers or looked through a spotting scope to watch the birds lift out of cold waters and catch the wind, gliding from one spot to another on the river.

The pelicans were out in force and gave those who came out to see them quite a show. The watch took place on both days of that weekend and drew a good crowd.

"We ended up with a total of 164 people," said Bardole.

Stephen Elliott, Rock Island Argus/Moline Dispatch, contributed to this article. ■

Law Day 2008

The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity

By Shannon McCurdy, Office of Counsel

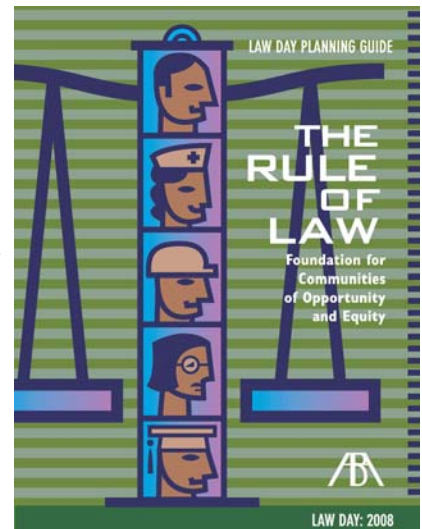
On May 1, the nation will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Law Day. Originally established by presidential proclamation in 1958 by President Eisenhower, the first of May was set aside by Joint Resolution of Congress in 1961 as a "special day of celebration by the American people in appreciation of their liberties and the reaffirmation of their loyalty to the United States of America," and as an occasion for "rededication to the ideals of equity and justice under laws."

This Law Day marks the 50th time many lawyers' groups, bar associations, corporate and governmental legal offices, and military staff judge advocates have sponsored Law Day activities. Law Day also serves as an occasion for communities, citizens' groups, and schools to further educate the public on the importance of the rule of law and the unique place of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights in history.

The American Bar Association, as the national professional association of American lawyers, selects a theme for Law Day activities. This year's theme is "The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity." The rule of law refers to a system in which the government is accountable under the law. This system is based on fair, clear, publicized, and stable laws that protect fundamental rights. These laws are enacted,

administered, and enforced by a process that is accessible, fair, and efficient. The laws are upheld by diverse, competent, independent, and ethical law-enforcement officials, advocates, and judges. This foundation is essential to foster sustainable communities of opportunity and equity. As stated by Lyndon Johnson, "All who cherish freedom should also cherish law. Liberty and law abide together. In that bond is the foundation of our liberties."

In recognition of Law Day, Office of Counsel will host an open house from nine through 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 1. The District's legal staff will be present to discuss the District's legal services program and answer any questions you may have. There will be plenty of refreshments available. We hope to see you all there. ■



Supplemental Travel Guidance Released to Employees

By Mark Kane

The District has released new supplemental guidance for employees who perform official duty travel and their travel approving officials.

The guidance provides augmented instructions to the Joint Travel Regulations Volume II for areas where material travel weaknesses were identified within the District, potentially putting the traveler, the approving official, or both, in conflict with prescribed regulations.

Emergency response travel outside the District could be subject to more stringent rules. In all cases, the Joint Federal Travel Regulation Volume I and the Joint Travel Regulation Volume II will apply.

The reason for the supplemental guidance came about in 2007.

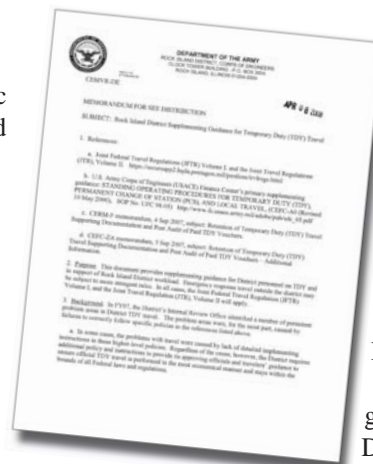
"In Fiscal Year 2007, we (Internal Review) identified a number of persistent problem areas in District TDY travel," said Mike Roarty, chief, Internal Review. "The problem areas were, for the most part,

caused by failures to correctly follow specific policies in the JFTR and JTR."

In some cases, the problems with travel were caused by lack of detailed implementing instructions in these higher-level policies.

"The District requires additional policy and instructions to provide its approving officials and travelers' guidance to ensure official TDY travel is performed in the most economical manner and stays within the bounds of all federal laws and regulations," said Roarty.

Approving officials should be aware that signing a traveler's voucher constitutes a financial certification action that is covered by fiscal laws of the U.S. government.



"Those officials approving travel orders, as well as travelers, can be held financially liable for these actions and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for willful violations," said Roarty.

The supplemental travel guidance was sent out to all District employees via e-mail on April 9. The guidance

included a helpful checklist to aid travelers and approving officials as they prepare and process travel requests and reimbursement vouchers.

The guidance can be accessed on the District's Intranet site. The JFTR and the JTR are available at: <http://perdiem.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/trvlregs.html>. ■



Investing In Our People

Around the District

District Commander's Award

Kirk Sunderman, civil engineer, Engineering and Construction, received the January Commander's Award.

Sunderman earned the award for his work during the months of October through December, while performing the duties of the Lead Flood Area Engineer for the Waterloo Flood Area.

Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Troy and Denise Hythecker**, Engineering and Construction, on the birth of a baby boy, Caleb Mark, March 8. He was 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and 19½ inches long.

Retirements ...

Lawrence Parker, lock and dam operator, Lock and Dam 13, Operations Division, retired March 1, after dedicating 39 years and five months to the federal government.

Dennis Mann, lock and dam operator, Starved Rock Lock and Dam, Operations Division, will retire April 30, after dedicating 11 years and 27 days to the federal government.

Frank Mussatto, lock and dam operator, Marseilles Lock and Dam, Operations Division, will retire April 30, after dedicating 18 years and eight months to the federal government.

Jeanne Elliott, chief, Information Management, will retire April 26, after dedicating 30 years and 21 days to the federal government.

William Hallam, lock and dam equipment mechanic, Lock and Dam 17, Operations Division, retired April 17, after dedicating 20 years, two months, and 25 days to the federal government.

Charles Clatt, lock and dam operator, Lock and Dam 19, Operations Division, retired April 3, after dedicating 37 years, one month, and 22 days to the federal government.

Ronald Allison, maintenance worker, Lake Red Rock, Operations Division, retired April 1, after dedicating 42 years to the federal government.

Karolyn Bebensee, information technology specialist, Customer Assistant Branch, Information Management, retired March 31, after dedicating 21 years and 16 days to the federal government.

Michael O'Keefe, management and program analyst, Management Support Branch, Operations Division, retired March 30, after dedicating 30 years and 11 months to the federal government.

Sympathy ...



Robert Kenney, 77, of Aledo, Ill., died March 25, at Blessing Hospital, Quincy, Ill.

Kenney worked for the District as a lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 17, retiring in July 1988.

He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean Conflict and was awarded the Purple Heart.

NOTE

Please send achievements, births, and obituaries for this page to the editor at: mark.a.kane@usace.army.mil.

Without your input, we may not receive the information that enables us to inform the District.



AN ADVENTURE IN NEWSPAPERS -- Several well-meaning Operations Division employees honored their supervisor, Steve Russell, by covering nearing every inch of his office in newspapers in observance of his birthday in early March. Photo by Mark Kane.

SUPPORT, SACRIFICE FOR CORPS

Thanks to our employees who are deployed, or have completed duty, in support of the Global War on Terrorism, as well as those who are deployed or have completed duty, in support of natural disaster relief operations

Thank You For Serving!



A listing of all the current District employees who are, or have been, involved in supporting the Global War on Terrorism and natural disaster relief operations can be seen on the District's Internet at:



www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/TowerTimes/support-for-corps/support-for-corps.htm



CORPS DAY 2008

Thursday, June 12, at Memorial Field, Rock Island Arsenal

- The event will be from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.
- Events will include awards, a picnic, drinks, and games.
- Additional information will be made available on the District Intranet under sub-category "Corps Day" located at the bottom of the main page.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

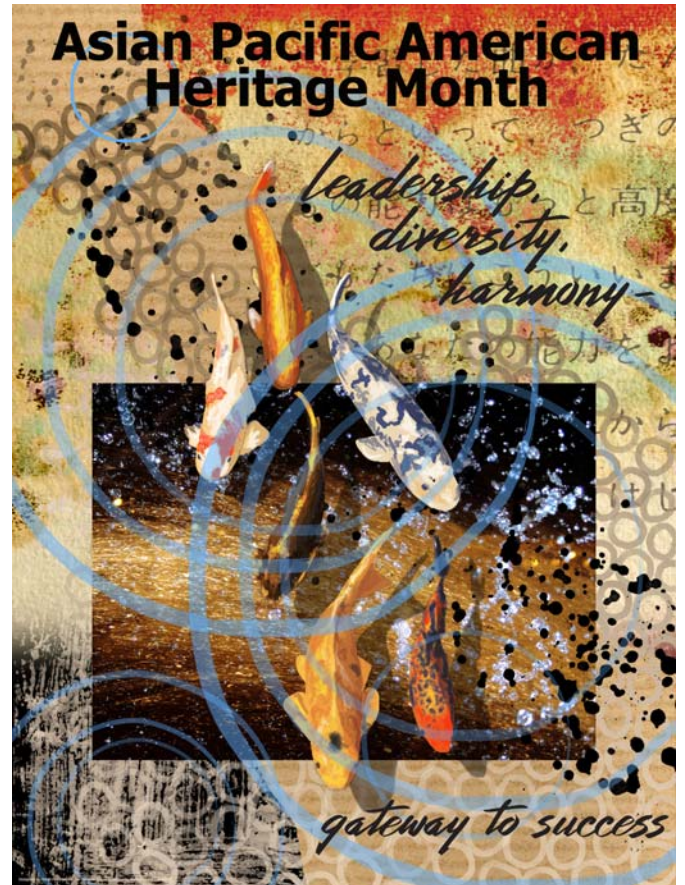


Equal Employment Opportunity Underscores Events

May is ...

The District Equal Employment Opportunity office and the Special Emphasis Program Committee are collecting information about events within the District that reflect and endorse diversity. These events are listed here.

- **April 26:** Black Hawk College multicultural celebration. The event will include displays, music, dancing and food. Cost is \$2 at the door or \$1 in advance. The celebration is from 2 p.m. through 7 p.m.
- **May 3:** Samputu and Ingelis Rwandan musicians and dancers. This program will be presented at Augustana College Centennial Hall. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for students. For additional information call 309-794-7306.
- **May 3:** A program on India will feature cultural activities, as well as food samples. The program will be presented at the Bettendorf Family Museum. It will run from 1 p.m. through 3 p.m. The cost is free with normal museum admission.



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