



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**®  
Rock Island District

# Tower Times

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# Spotlight on the District

Story by Mark Kane

**W**hen Jeffrey Blazekovich was a child, he watched big towboats push long strings of barges up and down the Illinois River and through a Corps' lock.

"I was born in Joliet, Ill., but I grew up in Lockport, Ill.," said Blazekovich. "I remember as a child riding my bicycle down to Lockport Lock and watching the towboats lock through, never realizing that one day I would work at a lock."

Now Blazekovich is a lockmaster on the Illinois River, and even though he's worked his way to that position, he says he still enjoys simple things.

"I love watching the towboats and pleasure boats lock through," said Blazekovich. "I enjoy talking to the deck crews and the pilots. I also like the interaction with the pleasure boaters, finding out where they've been and where they're going is extremely interesting to me."

Blazekovich says those pleasures are what he ranks as second to what he likes most about his job ... his first is a little more personal.

"The people that I work with," said Blazekovich.

"They are among the most motivated, driven and self-directed employees that I've ever been around. They make my job a pleasure."

Blazekovich's job entails a lot of duties, but he puts it in a nutshell.

"I schedule the day-to-day operations and maintenance of Dresden Island Lock and Dam on the Illinois Waterway in Morris, Ill.," said Blazekovich.

As for how Blazekovich chose the Corps as an agency to pursue a successful career ... his answer might surprise you.

"It's probably the other way around," said Blazekovich. "It's more like why did the Corps choose me. I used to work at the Texaco oil refinery in Lockport, Ill. In 1981, the plant closed and I was without a job. My wife was pregnant with our second child, and I was desperately looking for employment. A neighbor of mine, who was working at the Joliet Project Office at the time, asked me what I used to do at Texaco. I told him that I was a

## Jeffrey Blazekovich Lockmaster, Dresden Island Lock and Dam

maintenance machinist and then became a maintenance electrician. He told me the Corps of Engineers was looking for a lock and dam equipment mechanic at O'Brien Lock with those exact qualifications. I went down to the Joliet Project Office and applied, and the rest is history."

Blazekovich says he specifically likes working for the Corps because it's such a large and diverse organization known throughout the world.

"We have a reputation of being among the best that this country has to offer," said Blazekovich. "Several years ago I was

nominated by my boss to participate in the Emerging Leaders Program, and it has given me the opportunity to meet people from all over the world, who are very proud to be working for this great organization, and in turn, it has inspired me to push my limits beyond what I thought I was capable of."

Blazekovich has an associate's degree in architectural engineering and has been married 28 years. They have four children; three boys and a girl, as well as two grandchildren. His oldest son is an electrician; his second oldest son is a reservist in the Marine Corps, who recently returned from six months of overseas duty in Kuwait and Iraq; his third oldest son is

taking college classes; and his daughter is in high school and works part time at a movie theater.

When it comes to hobbies, his children seem to round out much of Blazekovich's interests.

"I've coached or managed all three of my sons' baseball teams," said Blazekovich. "I've been a supporter of all the sports activities that my children have participated in, including my daughter's pom-pom squad. I love to fish in the local rivers and streams. Then once a year, three of my closest friends and I go on a Canadian fishing trip for a week in June. My other hobby is home improvement and my wife and I hope to travel when we reach retirement age."

Blazekovich's advice to anyone reading this article is for everyone to know that, "Tomorrow is a mystery, yesterday is history, today is a gift ... live it to its fullest." 📧



**Jeffrey Blazekovich takes a phone call at the Dresden Island Lock and Dam during a hot August day on the Illinois River.**

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# Tower Times

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### On the Cover

Al Frohlich, Mississippi River Project Office, works to locate one of the Corps' concrete markers with brass caps to pinpoint the federal boundary in the Wapsi Bottoms area of Mississippi River Pool 14. See page 14 for more.

Photo by Joe Lundh, Mississippi River Project Office.

# Command of District Changes Hands



From top left to bottom right: Rock Island District park rangers present the colors leading into the change of command ceremony. Members of the 399th Army Band, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., provide patriotic background music during the event. Col. Stephen Heetland, Joint Munitions Command, delivers the invocation during the ceremony. Col. Duane Gapinski passes the Corps flag to Gary Loss, deputy for Programs and Project Management, having just accepted the flag and command of the Rock Island District from Brig. Gen. (P) Don T. Riley, commander, Mississippi Valley Division.

Story and photos by Mark Kane

Col. Duane Gapinski assumed command of the District from Col. William Bayles in a change of command ceremony, July 11, at the Davenport River Center concourse in Davenport, Iowa.

Bayles completed his three-year term as district engineer from July 11, 2000, through July 10, 2003. He is now serving at the U.S. North Command at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo. U.S. North Command is a new joint command dedicated to homeland defense.

Gapinski has been in the Army for 21 years. He was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy in 1982. In

addition to a bachelor's degree from West Point, he holds master's degrees in chemical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and national resource strategy from the National Defense University. He is also registered as a professional engineer in Virginia.

During his time in military service, Gapinski has served with engineer units in the 9th Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division, and the 1st Infantry Division. He commanded the 82nd Engineer Battalion from 1998 to 2000 and was the Task Force Falcon Engineer in Kosovo for seven months during that time. It was during his time in Kosovo that Gapinski said he had the opportunity to

work with many "outstanding" Corps employees.

Additionally, Gapinski has served on the staff at Headquarters, Department of the Army; on the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C.; and on the staff and faculty of the U.S. Military Academy, where he was an assistant professor of chemistry.

At the time of the ceremony, Gapinski had not been here long, but already had positive things to say about the District.

"Terri and I, and our family, are delighted to be in the Quad Cities," said Gapinski. "We appreciate the very warm welcome and intend to be active members of this community." ■

# Let Me Introduce Myself

By Col. Duane Gapinski, District Engineer

In case you didn't know yet, the Rock Island District has a new district engineer, and I'm proud to say that I am the man now filling those shoes.

It is a great professional honor to serve as the Rock Island District commander and district engineer, and I look forward to being part of the District's outstanding team, serving our great nation and overcoming the challenges that lie ahead.

What I'd like to do is tell you about myself and my family and how I view my job. Before I do though, I'd like to thank everyone who assisted with the Change of Command for a job well done. The ceremony was a professionally executed event, an appropriate farewell for my longtime friend Col. William Bayles, and an impressive introduction to the District for me. I have also had the opportunity to meet many of you since arriving here. I appreciate the warm welcome and am impressed by the pride and professionalism you demonstrate.

I think it is important for me to tell you how I view my job, and in doing so, give you a feel for what I expect of you and what you can expect from me. I view my job as having two main components:

1. To maintain a positive work environment, and
2. To prepare the organization for the future.

My first goal is to maintain a positive work environment. People should be proud to be a part of this organization and should look forward to coming to work everyday.

Negativism wastes energy. You must have a positive attitude -- having a sense of humor also helps. Think of a positive attitude as resolve or determination, and not as an excuse to squash dissent. We need open, frank communication and discussion. It is the employee's job to make sure that decision makers know all the options and hear different perspectives and differing analyses. It is also important for employees to bring problems to the attention of their supervisors. While trite, it is still true that bad news doesn't get better with age. We need to solve problems as soon as possible.

When problem solving, don't fall into the blame game. It is a byproduct of negativism. Don't look to blame others -- do what you can to solve a problem -- worry about what you can control and what you can do.

My second goal is to prepare the organization for the future. Leader development is important. I am heartened to see that the District has a leader development program. I encourage you to join that program and to look for opportunities to be coached, counseled, and mentored by your managers, leaders and supervisors.

We must continue to be a learning organization and assess the

need for refinements to our strategic plans and business processes. I am not changing anything right away. I need some time to learn the lay of the land, if you will, and then together, we will do what is necessary to continue to work for the public good.

And on that note, I want to remind you of the public good. The last few words of the Corps' mission statement say, "We must be good stewards ... of our earth, our natural environment, of the nation's tax dollars, and of the public trust and faith in our Army Corps of Engineers." Keep in mind, that it is our job to do work for the public good and the nation's taxpayers have put that trust in our hands. We must do our best to live up to that expectation.

On a lighter note, I want to tell you about the type of person I am. I value common sense and simplicity. If something doesn't make sense, ask for clarification. Simplicity -- including being plainspoken and solving problems without overly complex solutions -- reduces confusion and makes success more likely.

On the personal side, I come here with my family from the Washington, D.C. area where we lived for the past three years, while I went to the War College and worked in the Pentagon. My wife, Terri, and I have been married for 20 years and we have three children.

I grew up in New York on Long Island. I was one of five kids. I have a younger brother who is an environmental engineer in the Jacksonville District. He is also an Army Reservist and has been deployed to Iraq for the past four months as part of a civil affairs facilities team.

My hobbies are running and weight lifting, and I keep my chemical engineering skills sharp by brewing my own beer.

I am really glad to be here. I view working for the Rock Island District as a great professional honor for me, both as an engineer and as a soldier.

I look forward to meeting you and working with you on the important duties the Rock Island District undertakes for the nation. Essayons. ■



Nearly 44 percent of District employees participated in this year's Employee Climate Survey ... did you? If you have ever wondered why we do the survey, or what happens to the information after it's collected, read on.

The Employee Climate Survey is done on a regular basis to monitor both the climate of the District and to identify those issues most critical to the success of our employees. On a scale of one to 10, the District has averaged about 7.7 for the last nine years.

The first climate survey was a product of the Department of Defense and entered the District in 1995. At that time, the District was embarking on our Total Quality Management journey, and the survey was developed to determine the climate for quality and productivity within the District. The survey set a benchmark for our quality climate and quality management strengths and weaknesses.

The same basic survey questions were purposely used for several years so that the responses could be compared over a period of time. However, it became apparent that the questions used were not the right ones.

The analysis done on the responses did not show any strong correlations between the questions being asked and the employee's response to the final question, "Overall, is the Rock Island District a very good place to work?" The survey results did not identify the issues District employees thought were the most

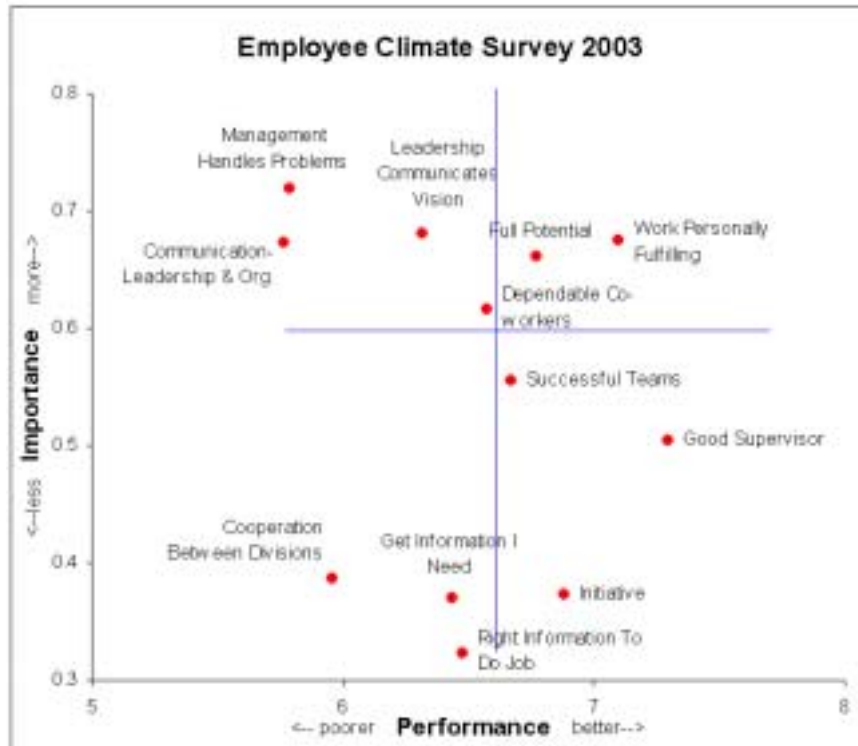
critical to their success. We needed to improve the survey.

In 2001, the survey questions were redesigned using the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria as a guide. Specifically, the survey questions were designed using the

after an analysis of the open-ended responses was made. These responses suggested the most likely areas for improving the work environment of the District. Some of the issues identified included leadership, cooperation, communication, and potential.

After discovering these issues, the new information was used to redesign the survey yet again. These key issues were used to develop the 2003 survey questions.

This year's Employee Climate Survey was conducted in March, the responses have been analyzed, and the results this time now appear to clearly identify the issues that employees believe are most important. In the opinion of most employees, the



Baldrige Category 5 questions regarding Human Resource Focus. When the 2001 results were analyzed, we were disappointed to find that, as in the past, none of the questions clearly correlated with employee satisfaction. Thus, the 2001 survey still had not yet asked about the most critical issues driving employee satisfaction. However, we added an open-ended question to the 2001 survey that asked, "In your opinion, what is the most important issue or problem that the leadership of the District should improve during the next year?"

Several new key issues were revealed

important issues the District needs to address are:

- Management recognizing and handling problems early;
- Leadership communicating the District vision; and
- Communication between senior leaders and the rest of the organization.

These results were presented to the Executive Steering Committee and are now being used in the District's Strategic Planning Process. The Employee Climate Survey results are an important part of the strategic goal identification and decision-making process.

## Survey Changes Reveal District Issues

Sharryn Jackson, Programs and Project Management, and Kelly Gilhooly, Executive Office

# Congressman Dedicates Pleasant Creek Habitat Project



Story by Public Affairs; photo by  
Justine Barati, Public Affairs

**Water gushes out of a pump at the conclusion of the Pleasant Creek Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project ceremony filling the Moist Soil Unit to mark the completion of the project.**

The District recently celebrated a significant milestone for one of its projects that has restored 54 acres of land for use by migratory birds and other resident wildlife.

Congressman Jim Nussle, 1st District Iowa, was the keynote speaker for the ribbon cutting and reservoir immersion ceremony for the Pleasant Creek Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project on Aug. 22.

"Preserving our precious natural resources through restoration and rehabilitation projects along the Mississippi River, such as this one, is essential," Nussle said. "Generations of river community residents will enjoy this legacy for many years to come."

The \$1.2 million project is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge and the Upper Mississippi River Flyway, a major migration route for waterfowl and other migratory birds. The

enhancements at this site are expected to benefit wildlife for generations.

The ceremony was open to the public and took place at the project site, located six miles south of Bellevue, Iowa, just off of U.S. Highway 52.

The project is part of the multi-million dollar Upper Mississippi River Environmental Management Program. This program is a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the state natural resource agencies of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. The goal of the program is to plan, design, build, and monitor a variety of environmental enhancement projects to restore critical habitats for fish and wildlife in backwaters and side channels of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The EMP serves as a national model for riverine ecosystem evaluation and enhancement. 📍

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## New Neighbors - American Kestrels or Peregrine Falcons?

By Scott Strotman, Operations Division

In early July, a small crowd gathered outside the south entrance of the Clock Tower to observe a rare event. Down in a corner of the moat, a recently fledged bird was happily eating a small rodent, while high above on a ledge one of its uneasy parents squawked out warnings. Meanwhile, its sibling went almost unnoticed, sitting on the grassy hill between the annex and the Clock Tower.

At first glance, many thought they were peregrine falcons and the excitement grew over thoughts that such a rare and amazing bird had taken up residence on a high ledge of the Clock Tower. Thanks to the astute observations of several folks such as Karen Hagerty, Programs and Project Management, and Gene Walsh, Operations Division, the birds have been correctly identified as American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), sometimes referred to as sparrow hawks. 📍



# Equality Day Luncheon Draws Crowd, EEO Champion Recognized

Story and photo by Mark Kane

The purpose of the Equality Day luncheon is to celebrate diversity and the anniversary of the 19th amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

"I think that by maintaining a positive work environment and hiring employees with a diverse array of skills and experiences we can best prepare the District for future challenges," said Col. Duane Gapinski, District engineer. "By capitaliz-

work well with others, regardless of their sex, race, or culture provides the District with a competitive advantage. It allows us to analyze issues from multiple perspectives, thus more completely."

The Equality Day luncheon keynote speaker, Maj. Melody Smith, deputy District engineer, spoke to more than 100 attendants at the Rock Island Arsenal Club Aug. 28, about the past struggles she has overcome in her life and how

everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can find the strength and resolve to face and beat the odds no matter how high they're stacked against them. She stressed four principles of success: create your own destiny; never fall victim to ridicule; always do your best; and most importantly - never give up. She said she came up with those principles from a poem entitled, "The

Race," by D.H. Groberg.

"There will always be others ahead of us in the race, but my focus is on where I am, and what I can do to succeed, and not on anyone or anything that is behind or ahead of me," said Smith. "If you do that, success will be at your finish line just as it will be at mine."

The Equal Employment Opportunity Champion of the Year award was also presented during the Equality Day Program. Justine Barati, Public Affairs, received the award for the numerous hours she has spent initiating and coordinating employees' efforts in the Community Relations program.

The purpose of the award is to recognize District employees who have made outstanding contributions to the District's EEO program and to serve as a model for supervisors, managers, and other personnel for support of the overall goals and purpose of the EEO program.

All District personnel are eligible for this award and may nominate a candidate for this award. Past recipients include: 2002 -- Joe Raoul, and Cliff Artis, Engineering Division; 2001 -- Jeanne Elliott, Information Management; 2000 -- Mike Bunch, Resource Management; and 1999 -- Barb Carlock, Resource Management.

The event also recognized the 2003 Pathfinders graduates. Pathfinders works to pair employees with mentors who can assist them with career development. This was the first year for the program, which officially began in January with a kick-off orientation and ended in July with the last of the mentoring sessions.

The 2003 Pathfinders graduates are: Damon Barati, Information Management; Adrienne Blackwell, Joanne Lieving, and Denise Tyler, Real Estate; Charlene Cole, Marsha Dolan, Marshall Plumley, and Tracy Street, Programs and Project Management; Amy Moore, Engineering Division; and Victoria Terronez, Operations Division. ■



ing on our social and cultural diversity and the variety of our experiences, the District can turn diversity into a competitive advantage and build an even more effective work force.

"Equal employment opportunity is an important part of the equation for a successful organization. Our ability to

**Photo:** Maj. Melody Smith, deputy District engineer, speaks to a crowd of more than 100 people as the keynote speaker during the District's annual Equality Day luncheon held at the Rock Island Arsenal Club, Aug. 28.



# Thomson Causeway Recognized in Will

By Mark Kane



John Knoble, Thomson Causeway, presents a plaque to Jean Law, Edith Gilroy's daughter, during a special ceremony at Thomson Causeway honoring the placement of four park benches donated in memory of Gilroy. Other members of Gilroy's family watched the presentation.

"Since 1992, when I started here, this is the largest donation to ever cross my desk."

- John Knoble

By Mark Kane

While some people offer a certain amount of gratitude to individuals that work in public service, such as an occasional smile, handshake or hearty "good job," not often do they show their appreciation in the form of putting it in their will ... but in this case it happened.

On Aug. 8, the family of the late Edith Gilroy from Morrison, Ill., gathered for a dedication ceremony at the Thomson Causeway. Gilroy died last year, and being a frequent visitor to Thomson Causeway and a proud supporter of their program, graciously willed \$2,700 to the Causeway Recreation Area to be used for park improvements.

Gilroy loved to camp along the Mississippi, and she loved to simply sit on its bank and watch the ever-changing nature scene that the river provided year after year.

The Morrison woman particularly

enjoyed the Thomson Causeway Public Use Area and spent many hours camping there with her extended family.

Gilroy died last year, but set aside some funds to be donated for use at the Causeway.

Her daughter, Jean Law, contacted John Knoble, Thomson Causeway, and inquired what might be done for the area in her mother's memory.

After discussion, Knoble, his staff and Gilroy's daughter decided they would purchase and install four park benches.

Law coordinated the donation of the park benches -- all 8-foot-long made out of durable recycled plastic timbers with a galvanized framework. Each bench includes a routed background that states: "Donated in memory of Edith Gilroy."

Three of the benches have a direct view of the river, while the fourth bench welcomes bicycle riders at the beginning of the recreational trail in the Causeway.

"All of Gilroy's sons and daughters, and their families, took part in a dedication ceremony to honor their mother and to allow the Corps to officially thank all of them for their generous donation," said John Knoble, park ranger, Thomson Causeway. "Since 1992, when I started here, this is the largest donation to ever cross my desk."

Knoble presented a framed certificate from the Corps to Law and all of Gilroy's family who were on hand.

"The family was very appreciative and pleased with the way the benches added to the enjoyment for all visitors of the park, their strategic and scenic locations throughout the park, and the manner in which they were so professionally installed by the Mississippi River Maintenance Crew, under the leadership of Danny Till," said Knoble.

*Jon Whitney, Carroll County Review, contributed to this article.*

# Junior Achievement An Investment Worth Making

When most individuals hear the word, investment, they may immediately think of money, stocks or bonds, but for some Rock Island District employees that word has taken on quite a different meaning after participating with Junior Achievement.

As a non-profit organization, Junior Achievement presents a unique opportunity for business people to become involved with education in schools. The purpose of Junior Achievement is simple. First, volunteers aim to educate and inspire young people. Then they aim to improve the quality of their lives. Offering programs in virtually all schools, kindergarten through 12th grade, Junior Achievement allows today's business people to partner with educators and bring basic skills to life in the classroom.

There is the misconception that you have to know how to teach in order to participate with Junior Achievement, but this is not the case. Corps employees from all experience levels and occupations participate in the program, providing students with information about the free-enterprise system and their perspective of the Corps and the important work we do to serve the nation.

Volunteers are given updates, along with step-by-step materials, activities, and discussions developed by professional educators. Also, there is a one-time training course held before an employee enters the classroom.

The volunteer program usually lasts for a period of five weeks with around one hour of classroom teaching time per week, this does not include the preparation time for the lessons.

During the 2002-2003 academic year, 19 Corps employees from different offices around the District volunteered their time and effort to various schools throughout the Quad-City area. Junior Achievement has been credited as a five to eight hour investment for a lifetime of benefits.

Tom Heinold, Engineering Division, has been a volunteer for Junior Achievement since the Fall of 2002. He has worked with both Hayes Elementary in Davenport, Iowa, and Hoover Elementary in Bettendorf, Iowa. Although Heinold feels that Junior Achievement may not be for everyone, he does recommend it to "anyone that

feels comfortable going before 20 or so rambunctious children and trying to impart a little about 'real life' to them. Then, it can be a very rewarding experience. Knowing that I made a difference in some of the kids' education, and even maybe their lives in the long run, is the most rewarding aspect of participating with Junior Achievement to me."

Because contact with the public provides the District with an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the work we do for our communities, employees of the Corps are granted a labor code to use for their time with the program. Once an employee receives his or her code, they are able to bill up to 20 hours of their time spent on Junior Achievement activities.

While, employees of the Corps have the opportunity to participate with Junior

Achievement during work hours and still be paid, others find time for volunteering on their own time. For example, Janel Schaeffer is the student aid in Emergency Management. She not only balances school and work, but time for Holy Family Elementary in Davenport, Iowa, as well. This will be her second year of participating with Junior Achievement after she first started in 2002 when she heard the Corps was in search of volunteers.

Schaeffer is not paid for any of the time she devotes to Junior Achievement outside of her work at the Corps—in money that is. "It's something that I think everyone should do at least once because you're not only allowing children to learn more about their community and world, but you learn more about yourself as well," said Schaeffer.

Junior Achievement is part of the District's outreach program. It is through this program that investments are made; investments that leave lasting impressions upon the youth of today and help eager young students understand the world around them. If you are interested in learning more about how you can become a part of the Junior Achievement Program, contact Justine Barati at ext. 5204. Fall recruitment for the 2003-2004 academic year began on August 11. ■



**Tom Heinold, Engineering Division, works with children at a local Quad-Cities school as part of the District's Junior Achievement program.**



# Allergies

By Al Mitten, Evans Army Community Hospital,  
Fort Carson, Colo.

**H**ay fever affects one in every five Americans. Millions of school days and work days are lost each year by people suffering from hay-fever symptoms.

Lost productivity costing billions of dollars per year occurs because of allergic diseases. Although childhood hay fever tends to be more common, this condition can occur at any age and usually occurs after years of repeated exposure to allergic substances.

Hay fever is a misnomer. Early descriptions of sneezing, nasal congestion and eye irritation while harvesting field hay promoted this popular term. Many substances cause the allergic symptoms noted in hay fever and hay represents only a small percentage.

"Allergic rhinitis" is the correct term used to describe this allergic reaction. "Rhinitis" means irritation of the nose and is a derivative of "rhino" meaning nose. Allergic rhinitis can occur throughout the year. For example, fall is the time of year for weed allergies, such as tumbleweed and ragweed pollens. In the winter, it may be caused by pet allergies.

Symptoms include nasal congestion, a clear runny mucus from the nose, sneezing, nose and eye itching, and teary eyes. There may also be general tiredness,

inability to think straight, and difficulty concentrating.

According to Dr. William Storms, a clinical professor at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center who has published more than 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals on asthma and allergies, there is no reason to suffer from allergy symptoms. The key to relieving symptoms is rapid recognition and treatment by your primary physician.

One way to treat the allergy is to avoid the allergen. This may be possible for people with pet allergies. It is less practical for those who are sensitive to pollens and molds.

Storms said most over-the-counter medications offer little, if any, temporary relief and, in fact, can make the allergic conditions worse. Some of the over-the-counter medications even cause drowsiness and decreased mental alertness and can render you unfit to drive a motor vehicle.

He recommends an

early visit to your primary physician, who may prescribe either an intranasal steroid spray or a non-sedating antihistamine (neither of which will cause drowsiness).

With successful treatment of allergies, symptoms should improve. Any new or worsening symptoms should be reported to your physician. Failure to treat allergies early can predispose an individual to sinus infections and asthma. ■



## **On the 'Net**

[www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/allergy.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/allergy.html)

# Saylorville Lake Rangers Go

The seven member Saylorville Lake bike team, pictured from left to right, are: Emily Crane, Kelli Burton, Jeff Rose, Chuck Berry-Jensen, Steve Fairbanks, Hilary Johnson, left photo, and Aaron Steen. Photos by Tom Guillaume, Saylorville Lake.



## Story by Jeff Rose, Saylorville Lake

Is that Lance Armstrong or Anriette Schoeman riding in the Prairie Flower Campground? Campers, picnickers and boaters are used to seeing Saylorville Lake's park rangers patrolling by vehicle, boat or even on foot, but this summer they may find themselves doing a double take when they see a ranger.

Those same customers may have already seen a new ranger vehicle that started showing up this recreation season ... rangers on bikes! Which rangers will they see? The seven-member bike team is comprised of Operations Manager Steve Fairbanks, Chief Park Ranger Jeff Rose and park rangers Aaron Steen, Kelli Burton, Chuck Berry-Jensen, Emily Crane, and Hilary Johnson.

Bike patrol is not a new program for Corps rangers, several districts across the country have implemented bike patrol for visitor assistance duties. The program is new to Saylorville Lake and has already reaped benefits.

Why start a bike patrol program? Park rangers need to be seen and be accessible to our customers. Rangers on bikes meet this requirement and do so in a non-aggressive manner. The practice of using

bicycles makes park rangers become more approachable while patrolling in a campground or day-use parks. Campers always love to see rangers, and when they see a ranger on a bike, it becomes a good topic of conversation. Children like to see the bikes too and often compare the ranger's bike to the bike they are riding in the parks or have at home. Customers also don't expect to see rangers on bikes, so that is an advantage to rangers performing visitor assistance duties.

Violators usually would stop what they were doing when a ranger vehicle was seen, but with bikes, rangers can almost ride up to an area and not be seen until the last minute. One ideal location for rangers on bikes is on the Neil Smith Trail. Sixteen miles of the twenty-six mile trail is situated on Corps property. Rangers didn't patrol the trail in the past because operating a vehicle on it is dangerous to trail walkers, bikers and roller-bladers, and walking it took too long. Bike rangers can patrol the trail and go from one recreation area to another without any trouble.

"The bike patrol team for Saylorville Lake will provide a number of positives for both the project and our visitors," said

Steve Fairbanks, operations manager, Saylorville Lake. "First, it will get rangers out of their patrol vehicles and make them more accessible to visitors and increase the amount of interaction with campers and other users. Bike patrol will also reduce our visitor-assistance costs over the long run by reducing the number of miles our ranger-vehicle fleet is driven. Finally, I feel bike patrol will improve our enforcement efforts, especially on the Neal Smith Trail and in the campgrounds. Visitors who are only interested in creating problems won't be able to just hang around and look for that white ranger vehicle any longer."

Rangers are benefiting from this and our trail customers are benefiting because the trail is safer and, should the need arise for an emergency on the trail, a ranger can be there quickly.

"Bike patrol allows rangers to get more one-on-one contact with the many different recreational users at Saylorville Lake," said Emily Crane, park ranger, Saylorville Lake. "The bike patrol program didn't require a large investment from the project's budget either. The two bikes and upgrades, vehicle carrying racks and

# On Bike Patrol



safety equipment for the team, were purchased with a credit card. With tightening budgets, the project can save money on fuel and mileage on vehicles. Rangers will drive to a recreation area, park their patrol vehicle, and unload their bike for patrol. With the trail connecting the parks, a ranger doesn't have to return to their vehicle for a few hours. A small investment has already paid off and has provided a huge benefit to our customers and rangers at Saylorville Lake."

The Saylorville Lake office began their bike program by purchasing two Trek law enforcement model mountain bikes, as well as the required safety equipment such as gloves, helmets and water bottles for the bike team. The bikes, and all the accessories, were ordered in April, and the bike team was trained and ready to go for the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Training took place on the campus of Iowa State University by one of the campus police officers. This was a good partnership since the campus police have a bike team and had qualified individuals available to provide training for Saylorville rangers. The Corps was not charged for

the training. Rangers also took part in classroom training, which covered an explanation on the components of a bike, proper operation and handling of a bicycle, proper sizing for each individual on a bike, changing a flat tire, and safety aspects.

The classroom part was the boring part of the training. Rangers could not wait to get out in the field and do the practical exercises -- the fun stuff. Rangers were put through exercises involving proper breaking and shifting of body weight, balancing, slow speed maneuvering, operating in different gears at various speeds, hand signaling and proper technique for checking traffic behind a rider, and everyone's favorite -- jumping over curbs without falling. Every ranger made it through without any bruises.

Additionally, the rangers participated in a 10-mile ride through Ames, Iowa, to the lunch destination, which also allowed the rangers to become familiar with riding the bikes, and to practice the techniques learned during the practical exercises.

Lunch was great, but the challenge

rangers encountered was having to make that long journey back to campus. One thing is for certain; there were some sore muscles after that ride.

As of July 3, the rangers had pedaled 148.3 miles while patrolling and have had many positive experiences. Weather permitting, rangers are scheduled for bike patrol every weekend and holiday during the recreation season.

Park Ranger Hilary Johnson said, "It is great to be able to interact with the public on a more personal level."

Fellow Park Ranger Chuck Berry-Jensen adds, "While on bicycles, we have had the opportunity to talk to more people than I imagined. We ride in all the recreation areas, not just on the Neal Smith Trail. We've stopped and talked to kids and campers in the campgrounds, swimmers at both beaches, and picnickers in the day use areas. People are amazed to see us out there on bicycles, just like them, and I think we're more accessible to them."

Rangers had 280 direct contacts with customers as of July 3 and an immense amount of positive exposure while in Saylorville Lake's recreation areas. ■



# Investing In Our People

## Around the District

### District Commander's Award

**Emily Crane and Hilary Johnson**, Saylorville Lake, received the June District Commander's Award.

Crane and Johnson earned the award for taking on the additional workload of an interpretive program ranger who had left the project office to take a position outside the Corps.

**Amy Moore**, Engineering Division, received the May District Commander's Award.

Moore earned the award for contributing to the Lake Belle View Section 206 Project by performing study manager duties after the current study manager was detailed to another job. She also continued to perform her own job as a project engineer.

**Roberta Carson**, Information Management, received the District Commander's Award for April.

Carson earned the award for role she played in resolving a variety of billing issues and was solely responsible for the District receiving more than \$64,000 in credit. 📧

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### Rentz Earns Civilian Service Award

**Christopher Rentz**, Information Management, received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service Award.

Rentz earned the award for his analysis and programming support to the Mississippi Valley Division Water Control public website. Rentz was solely responsible for the programming and testing work on the project. 📧

### Old Boundary Cap Unearthed

Joe Lundh and Al Frohlich, Mississippi River Project Office, investigated the beginnings of a private logging operation adjacent to Corps Fee Title property in the Wapsi Bottoms area of Mississippi River Pool 14.

The private sector logger was interested in knowing the location of the government property line.

As is true with many sections of Corps' federal boundary along the Mississippi River, much of it lies buried beneath decades of accumulated silt.

Lundh and Frohlich located one of the concrete markers, topped with a brass cap, by using the original 1930s survey notes, a metal detector, and a shovel. After locating the marker, they were able to re-establish the location of the original boundary line.

Finding the location of the boundary was essential to protect federal interests and prevent a potential new timber trespass in the area.

When the marker was originally set, it would have been placed on a concrete pedestal that elevated the brass cap three or more feet above the ground. 📧

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### Sympathy ...

**Paul Miller**, 71, died Aug. 15, at his home in Apache Junction, Ariz.

Miller retired from the District in 1987 after serving as the lockmaster at Lock and Dam 13.

Miller was a veteran of the Korean War, was active in the American Legion, and served as commander of his local Veterans of Foreign Wars post.



**Allen "Fritz" Gibbs**, 85, of Geneseo, Ill., died Aug. 11, at Hammond-Henry Hospital, Geneseo.

Gibbs was employed by the District as a boat pilot for 26 years and retired in 1978.



**Gayle Randolph**, 82, of Bettendorf, Iowa, died July 2, at Genesis Medical Center-West Campus, Davenport, Iowa.

Randolph retired in 1982 as the director of Human Resources for the District.

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### Congrats ...



Congratulations to **Heather and Charlie Bishop**, Engineering Division, on the birth of a baby girl, Annabelle, Aug. 17. She weighed 6 pounds and 15 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.



Congratulations to **Mark and Lori Kane**, Public Affairs, on the birth of a baby girl, Ciara Lynn, July 25. She weighed 7 pounds and 11 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.

## Notes from the Mississippi\*

### *Lock and Dam 11, Dubuque, Iowa*

- ✓ Fuses in upper tow-haulage unit replaced.
- ✓ New Scooter received.
- ✓ Logs from dam roller gates removed.

### *Lock and Dam 12, Bellevue, Iowa*

- ✓ Old plumbing removed and replaced.
- ✓ Loose concrete from deteriorated sections of the lockwall removed.

### *Lock and Dam 13, Fulton, Ill.*

- ✓ Repairs on upper landside dike finished.
- ✓ New tugger scooter received.

### *Locks and Dam 14, Le Claire, Iowa*

- ✓ "Restricted Keep Back" signs installed on dam.
- ✓ Protective rock placed at designated site areas.

### *Locks and Dam 15, Rock Island, Ill.*

- ✓ Repairs made to all scooters.
- ✓ Gate walkway painted.
- ✓ Roller chains replaced.
- ✓ Safety rails installed on pontoon.

### *Lock and Dam 16, Muscatine, Iowa*

- ✓ Weed control applied to storage yard.
- ✓ Drift from behind the upper wall cleaned out.

### *Lock and Dam 17, New Boston, Ill.*

- ✓ Upper gate area surveyed for scour problems.
- ✓ Joints on anchor-bar pads sealed.

### *Lock and Dam 18, Gladstone, Ill.*

- ✓ Crane maintenance completed.
- ✓ Motor on lower lifeboat repaired.
- ✓ High water pumps removed.
- ✓ Lawn sprinklers repaired.

### *Lock and Dam 19, Keokuk, Iowa*

- ✓ New pedestrian-access gate at upper land fence installed.
- ✓ Observation deck benches painted.
- ✓ Smoking shelter removed and relocated.

### *Lock and Dam 20, Canton, Mo.*

- ✓ Old generator building painted.
- ✓ New garage door installed on old generator building.

### *Lock and Dam 21, Quincy, Ill.*

- ✓ Small compressor rebuilt.
- ✓ Six buckeye trees planted.
- ✓ Lockwall signs repaired.

### *Lock and Dam 22, Saverton, Mo.*

- ✓ Safety blocks along lock chamber painted.
- ✓ Roller-gate machinery cleaned and degreased.

\*This is a small sample of work completed at District locks and dams throughout the month.

## Recent Retirements ...

**Pauline Zitzke**, lock and dam operator, Dresden Island Lock and Dam, Operations Division, retired Sept. 2, after dedicating 35 years to the federal government.

**Jack Brown Jr.**, lock and dam Operator, Peoria Lock and Dam, Operations Division, retired Sept. 1, after dedicating 23 years and five months to the federal government.

**Frank Current**, master, tender, Structures Maintenance Unit, Maintenance Section, Mississippi River Project Office, Operations Division, retired Sept. 1, after dedicating 33 years and six months to the federal government.

## Speakers Bureau

By Shannan Walsten, Public Affairs

On July 21, **Jim Ross**, Programs and Project Management, spoke with more than 40 senior citizens about the photographs of Henry Bosse at the Sauk Trail Scottish Rite Club's quarterly meeting held in Cambridge, Ill.

**Camie Knollenberg**, Programs and Project Management, met and spoke with more than 50 4th through 8th graders about her career as a geologist at a science camp held at Prospect Park in Moline, Ill., on July 24.

Geography was the topic of discussion when **Mary Craig**, Programs and Project Management, spoke with more than 28 freshmen and sophomores from Davenport West High School at the Clock Tower on July 18.

The Speakers Bureau is part of the District's outreach program. Through these programs, employees work to foster positive relations between the community and the Corps. Contact with our public provides an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the District's role in our communities, the Midwest and the nation. District employees interested in these outreach opportunities can learn more by visiting our website at [www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/CommunityRelations.htm](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/CommunityRelations.htm) or by contacting Justine Barati at ext. 5204. 📧

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15, 2003

**HISPANIC AMERICANS: HONORING  
OUR PAST, SURPASSING OUR  
PRESENT, AND LEADING OUR  
FUTURE.**

September is

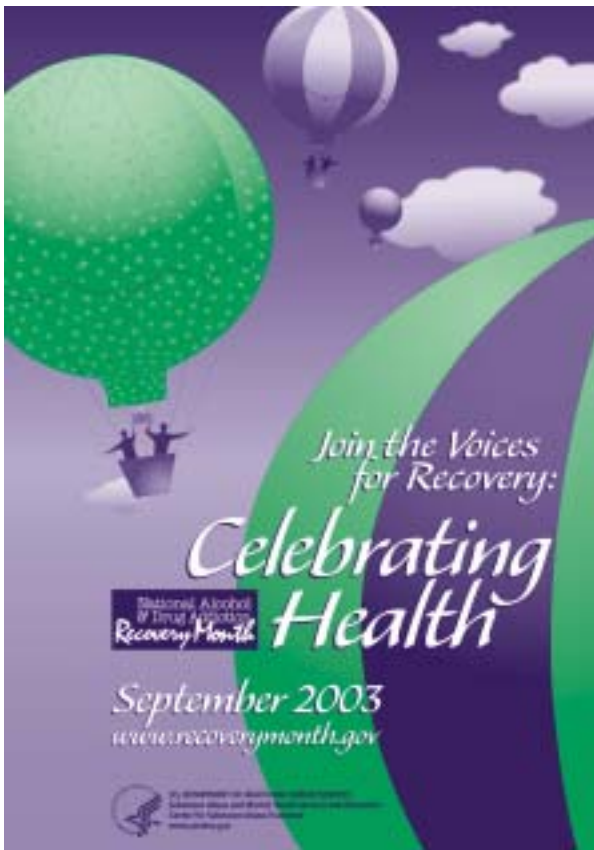
# *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month*

## Excerpts from the Presidential Proclamation

Alcohol addiction and drug addiction continue to challenge our nation. Addiction to alcohol or drugs destroys family ties, friendship, ambition, and moral conviction, and reduces the richness of life to a single destructive desire. During National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, we seek to remind all Americans, particularly those who struggle with alcohol or drug addiction, that recovery is possible. This year's theme, "Join the Voices of Recovery: Celebrating Health," salutes the thousands of Americans currently striving to address their alcohol or drug addiction, and the many professionals, volunteers, clergy, community groups, friends, and family members who support others in overcoming addiction.

For those who become addicted to drugs or to alcohol, my administration is committed to tearing down the stigma attached to recovery so that more people will seek the help they need. Alcohol addiction and drug addiction are diseases that touch all Americans -- young and old, rich and poor, male and female. As a nation, we must continue our efforts to offer the best possible opportunities, settings, and approaches to prevent and treat alcohol and drug addiction. By caring for those who need treatment, we are building a more welcoming and compassionate culture that values every life.

- George W. Bush



## *Corps Water Safety Committee Sponsors Photo Contest*



**T**he Corps' National Water Safety Committee sponsors a Corps-wide photo contest, with a focus on promoting water safety. This contest is open to all Corps employees. Submissions should depict the promotion of water safety, demonstrate safe water practices, and/or showcase our water-based recreation facilities. All uniformed employees shown in the photos should be wearing the appropriate uniform for the activity they are engaged in. Photos will be judged for clarity, composition, originality, visual impact, and theme. 📷

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS FEB. 1**

More information is available on the 'Net at:

<http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/photocontest.htm>

