



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

# Riverside

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May 2005

*Jeselink steps up as interim commander*

## Change of command



### Photo issue:

- *Wheeler open house*
- *Step Outside Day*
- *Blessing of the Fleet*



# Commander's exit

## Col. Rowan bids adieu, dons flak jacket



Lane Lefort

Col. Rowan sat down with Riverside for a Q&A before the change of command and his Iraq tour-of-duty.

**What are you most looking forward to at this point, with only a few weeks left as the New Orleans District commander, and your upcoming assignment in Iraq?**

Being a part of the 'real work' in Iraq. The Corps is rebuilding infrastructure and offering that nation the opportunity to stand on its own ... without our services, they can't do that.

We're providing force protection, as well ... rebuilding police stations, putting in hardened structures, so that when our people are in there, they're as safe as they can be.

Historically, in the wars we've fought, whenever we've packed up our bags and gone home, things have ended badly. World War I, everyone slapped an onerous peace on Germany. What happened? We fought World War II. The Gulf War, same thing. We declared victory and went home, and now we're back.

We need to "keep focused on the outcome of an effort rather than the process used to achieve it."

But look at the wars when we stayed engaged: World War II, we held on rebuilding Japan, the Marshall Plan ... and avoided World War III. In Bosnia, we went in for one year and stayed for nine. You don't hear anything about Bosnia now.

I think we'll be able to count Iraq, ultimately, as a victory. But we have to stay engaged. The Corps is an important part of that, in this current phase, because it's creating the stability that will enable the Iraqi people to use more of their resources.

**What personal accomplishments here are most memorable for you?**

It's not a matter of personal accomplishments. It's a matter of organizational accomplishments. This was a good organization to start with. Look at the things that get done on a daily basis in Operations and Maintenance ... this is essentially the largest port complex in the nation, in terms of tonnage, and it's routinely kept operational through the efforts of this district. That's a huge organizational accomplishment. SELA, West Bank, Lake Pontchartrain ... those projects put work on the ground and protect homes and lives.

Remarkably, in spite of changes in appropriations, people continue to move those projects forward.

Every piece of SELA that we complete saves somebody's house. Every gap we close, that's more people that don't have to worry about sandbagging their front door when a hurricane comes in. Every bridge that's floodproofed means more convenience for people during hurricanes. You don't have the detours you had two or three

years ago. We're down to a couple now; Hammond Highway will be done this summer.

And look at the studies that were completed ... three chief's reports: Morganza to the Gulf, Bayou Sorrel and LCA.

### Riverside

May 2005  
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#### Commander

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**Winner:** The "J" Award, the highest Department of Army journalism honor, 2000 and 2003. 2004 Civilian Journalist of the Year, editor Eric Lincoln.

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### Riverside



Lane Lefort

Lt. Col. Jeselink speaks as the new commander, May 17, joined by Brig. Gen. Crear and Col. Rowan.



**Regarding stakeholder and inter-agency communications, are there any elements that you would like to have changed or done differently?**

The communication system here was pretty strong when I arrived. The involvement of all the agencies—the co-located team or CWPPRA task force members—just the engagement of the state and stakeholders, was pretty strong. We’ve tried to sustain that and make it stronger, partially with the three partnering conferences we’ve hosted. We want to convey that we’re listening, and make sure to redirect their feedback within the organization ... and take those fundamental principles about what made the communications strong in the first place and stay true to those. I think we’ve done that.

**How can we improve?**

Employees here do so many things well. One thing I’d like to see continue, and get better, is for people to keep focused on the outcome of an effort rather than the process used to achieve it.

For example, The MRGO is considered a project that has serious impacts on the community. A lot of the folks who are against it just want it closed, end of story. That may not be the right outcome; that’s focusing on the alternatives, or a particular means to the outcome. The outcome is, stop the damage and, where you can, restore the functions of the natural system. Whether it’s 36 feet deep or 50 feet deep may not reach the outcome of restoring the ecosystem. You have to describe the outcome you want: a healthy, sustainable ecosystem. You can do that with the MRGO open or closed, just go about it different ways.

Recently, there have been stories about a diversion at Bonnet Carre. That’s just an alternative; a project. What you want to do is allow fresh water into the Pontchartrain Basin and help the ecosystem out through the Mississippi Sound area. Whether it’s through the Bonnet Carre or another diversion within the LCA plan shouldn’t matter.

Reasonable, trusting people can differ on which alternative and processes to use, but if both sides understand and agree on what you want to achieve, then you have multiple ways to get there and can determine which way best suits it. You have common ground.

So if anything needs to sustain or improve, it’s that focus on outcomes over means or methods.

**What projects should the district absolutely move forward on in the next few years?**

We need to look at the hurricane protection study that analyzes a category 4 or 5 storm. We don’t know what the actual outcome of New Orleans taking the “perfect storm” will look like. There’s lots of urban legends and speculations and pictures of people standing in the French Quarter with 20-foot survey rods. Scientifically, with the best geophysical data

we have, we need to figure out what that storm will do and if there’s a way to protect the city against it. For a relatively small amount of dollars in terms of the overall program, that study will provide some vital information for the metropolitan area.

The second thing I’d say is, close the gaps in the existing system. Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project still has gaps. The ones being closed now are at the airport, and the Canadian Northern Railroad crossing, one of those gaps is still in the Gulf South pipeline. There’s little protection on some of the pump stations in Orleans, making some of them vulnerable. And essentially the whole West Bank system is incomplete. This is the system that generally ought to protect us in all but the perfect storm. We’re playing odds, but that’s all we have right now.

The third thing I would sink money into is pumps and SELA. The pumps have to work; they have to move water

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**“I think we’ll be able to count Iraq, ultimately, as a victory.”**

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**Col. Rowan shares a moment with his family at the traditional “roasting” held for the outgoing commander, May 16 at The Balcony in Metairie.**

out of neighborhoods and away from businesses every day. A flash storm in the CBD sends water over the curbs, and cars are floating in the street. That shouldn’t be happening. The pumps are the lifeblood of the metropolitan area.

And outside of that, there are major projects that still need to be completed to protect the state. Every year work on the coastal project is delayed ... there are probably areas there that we won’t ever be able to restore. You still need hurricane protection in low-lying areas like Morganza and Donaldsonville to the Gulf. People in lower Terrebonne get flooded out

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in relatively minor storms. Maintaining the systems we have that protect the economic engines of the state ... the navigation infrastructure, the viability of various channels to support commerce and activity now and in the future. Projects that protect oil and gas and the environmental infrastructures and keep them healthy and functioning ... those are critical activities that have to keep moving forward.

Because of funding, some of those elements are hit and miss any given year. The financial profile is a roller coaster.

If you have predictable funding, you can work smarter and faster. If you know from one year to the next what level of appropriation you can count on, and you build a plan to that level, it allows you to shape expectations and deliver work in a rational fashion. But if one year we have \$30 million and the next year we have \$10 million, or zero, we can't really plan and execute a rational program.

Funding predictability right now is less than optimal. That needs to change so these projects can get up and running.

***What memories will you take from New Orleans?***

It's really a collage more than individual scenes. One of the strange, beautiful things about this area is that mix of cultures and influences ... rather than one particular thing, you tend to get a series of memories and activities that all merge together. There's very seldom been a dull week ... The kids have had some wonderful opportunities to experience this unique culture. They've lived overseas and in other parts of the country, but this part of the country is unlike anything else. It's certainly been a great education for them, in different ways.

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**“The Corps and Southern Louisiana are absolutely intertwined.”**

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**Col. Rowan and his secretary, Kitty Miller, exchange a hug after Rowan's wife, Jeanne Marie, presented her with flowers.**

***What will you miss the most about working with the district?***

The unique position the Corps has in Louisiana. Every day, there's an activity that somehow involves us. In other places, the Corps is mostly an adjunct to everything else that's going on. Here, it's involved in the daily rhythms and activities. The Corps and Southern Louisiana are absolutely intertwined. I don't think you get that experience anywhere else."

(Col. Rowan worked previously at Omaha District, and then as commander at Chicago District.)

***What are your thoughts on recent initiatives such as 2012 and Regional Business Centers?***

When I got here, the Corps was engrossed in internal workings. We were looking hard at how we did things. What we have to do now, as an organization, is reap the benefits in terms of what we're delivering to people that were envisioned as an end result of these processes.

The structure was shaped to empower the activities that focused on partners and delivery of projects. Organizing the Regional Business Center and the Regional Integration Teams at Headquarters was meant to advance the needs of the region, from their position in, and knowledge of, Washington. Unless we follow through with that, all this organizational stuff is just changing letterheads and doesn't get us to the performance that was envisioned.

We need to take advantage of these empowering tools that the system is intended to give us, so we can work better and in ways that satisfy multiple missions and stakeholders. We need navigation projects that are environmentally sensitive, and flood control projects that support recreational interests. That multipurpose work broadens the stakeholder base and gets more people involved in Corps activities.

LCA is an ecosystem restoration of national importance, for instance, and so our stakeholders are nation-

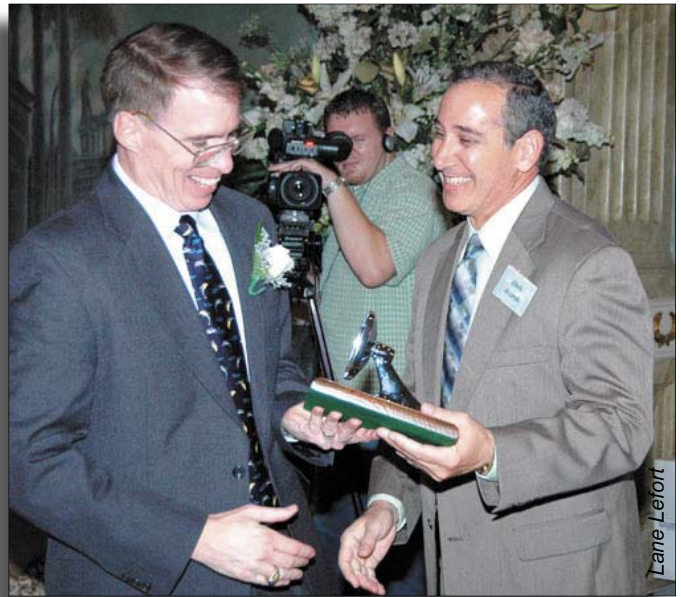


wide. That's the type of thing that was envisioned under 2012. In the long term, reaching those stakeholders will strengthen the Corps' overall program.

In P2, you can look at projects from a national perspective and the resources supporting them that may be available on a national level. Until we have a system like that across the Corps, we don't have the tools to engage those resources.

The easy stuff is changing organizational wiring diagrams. The hard stuff is changing the organizational thinking.

*Col. Rowan will be assigned to Iraq for one year. After Iraq, Rowan will go back to his native state, Virginia, for his next Army assignment and to be with his wife, Jeanne Marie, and two younger children, Kelley and James. The Rowans' two older children, Catherine and Miles, will attend college in New York and Baton Rouge, respectively.*



**Col. Rowan accepts a car rearview mirror with a picture of New Orleans from deputy Chris Accardo.**

## Wheeler Open House



The Dredge Wheeler docks in front of Woldenburg Park for its annual open house, May 20 and 21. Employees and crewmembers—including Capt. Edward Morehouse, left—staffed numerous displays onboard the vessel to explain to over 2,000 visitors how the Wheeler keeps the river open to navigation and helps other projects.



# Change of command



## Lt. Col. Jeselink is interim commander

Command of the district was handed over from Col. Peter Rowan to Lt. Col. Stephen Jeselink, May 17, in a formal military change of command ceremony under the main canopy.

Lt. Col. Jeselink is the interim commander until the arrival of Col. Richard P. Wagenaar in July.

Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, division engineer, Mississippi Valley Division, and president-designee of the Mississippi River Commission, placed the Corps of Engineers flag, symbolizing command of the New Orleans District, into the hands of Jeselink at the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Col. Rowan is deploying to Iraq where he'll serve as the commander and district engineer for the Gulf Region Central District in Baghdad.

The one-hour event included music by the New Orleans Naval Band.

A reception was held in the DARM afterwards.





Amanda Jones



Most images, Lane Lefort



Ann Marino





# Blessing of the Fleet

By Susan Jackson

**T**he district hosted its second ‘Blessing of the Fleet’ ceremony May 13. In honor of the 15 vessels and over 80 crewmembers serving on the Mississippi River, coastal waterways and Gulf of Mexico, Col. Rowan led the time-honored maritime tradition.

“We’re gathered to honor the men and women who work on the waterways, especially the Corps employees,” said Rowan. “In February, there were eight vessel accidents with loss of life and property ... it’s an inherent danger that they face each

and every day as they do their missions.”

Former Archbishop of New Orleans Philip Hannan gave the benediction for 23 vessels, including the Dredge Wheeler.

Hannan, who served as a U.S. Army chaplain with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division in Europe during World War II, shared memories of his encounters with engineers on the field of battle.

“It was the engineers’ continued presence there that added tremendous value to the fighting power of U.S. forces.

“Everyone down here also knows how essential it is the Corps of Engineers oversee the waterways. We are all dependent on them for the kind of living we have here.”

Hannan said it was an honor to bless the employees and vessels that ensure our waterways remain safe.

Forty-two members of the American Legion Post 175 Concert Band performed at the





# Step Outside Day

Step Outside Day, sponsored by the Corps, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was held in the Atchafalaya Basin May 14. The event was open to all children and adults but targeted to those with special needs. Outdoor activities took place at the Sherburne Wildlife Management Headquarters near Krotz Springs. There were exhibits on adaptive equipment, water safety, black bears, trapping techniques and duck calling. Activities included fishing, archery, boating, .22 rimfire target shooting, nature photography and bird watching. Step Outside is a national program administered by the National Shooting Sports Foundation to increase participation in outdoor sports.



ceremony, including some who served in Europe during World War II.

Bandleader Frank Rosato, 90, led the Armed Forces Band at Potsdam, Germany, when President Truman, Soviet Premier Stalin and British Prime Ministers Churchill and Attlee conferred. Band member H.J. Louviere, who fought on Omaha Beach during the war, said the band was happy to be invited to the ceremony and be surrounded by great fellowship.

Also at the ceremony were the Port of New Orleans fire and emergency boat Gen. Roy S. Kelley, named after a former Corps officer; the MV Pebble Beach, the tug Point Clear; the tug G. Shelby Friedrichs; the push boat Mr. Cass, and the U.S. Coast Guard harbor patrol boat 25518.



All images, Lane Lefort

All images, Lane Lefort



# Around the District

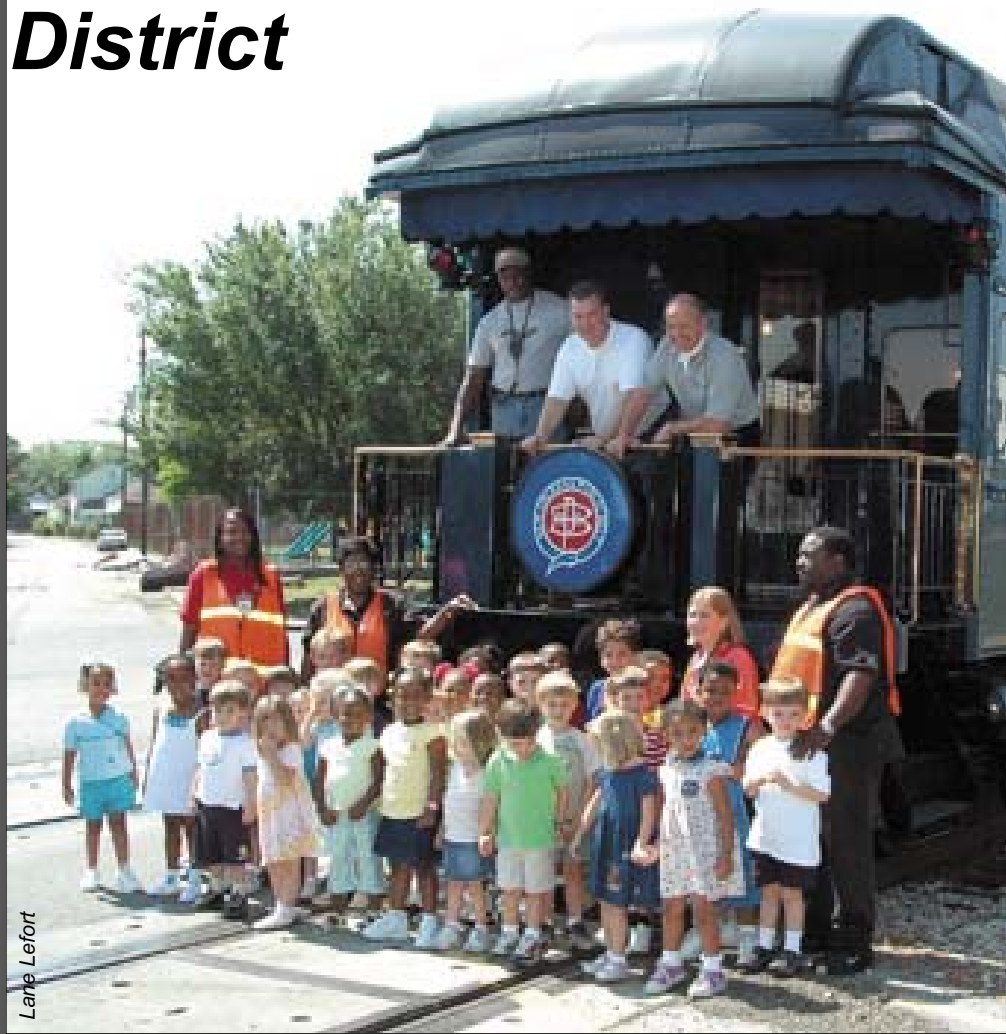
## Kudos

to **Partners In Education (PIE)** for kicking in \$350 for the third year so children from Castle Kids could enjoy the wild animals for Earth Day.

to Senior Project Manager **Al Naomi**, who spent four hours May 22 hosting science reporters attending the American Geophysical Union conference. He led them on a tour of the Lake Ponchartrain hurricane protection system.

to **Jan and Alan Schulz (OC)**, whose daughter Katie, age 17, was a Louisiana representative for the American Automobile Association High School Travel Challenge Geography Contest in the national competition, May 8-9 in Orlando. Her three-person team won second place, entitling each to a \$10,000 college scholarship.

to **Lisa and Frederick Wallace (OC)**, whose son Robert Wallace, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, recently placed first in the Louisiana High School Literary Rally at LSU and was awarded a scholarship to Brother Martin High School. He also played with the school's football, basketball and softball teams who were undefeated in their division two years in a row.



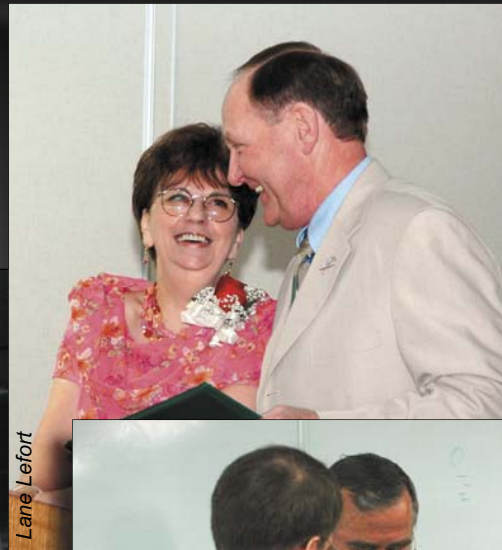
Lane Lefort

## Farewell

to (clockwise) Jim and Jackie Perry (CD), who retired May 2 with 42 and 30 years of service, respectively; Bill Caver (ED), who retired with 37 years of service May 3; and Margaret Tucker (CD), who retired with 37 years of service April 1.



Lane Lefort



Lane Lefort



Scott Riecke





**Train stop --** Castle Kids pose for a shot in front of the morning train outside of the district, May 16. The 4-year-olds were doing an educational unit on trains, and Mike Palmieri (RE), the district's train guru, set up the pit stop with the railroad so the kids could get a close-up.



**Take Our Daughters/Sons to Work Day --** Employees showed their sons and daughters a day in the life of the Corps April 28. Kids from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades were escorted around the building to different offices for half-a-day, and given a guest presentation by local television personality Sally Ann Roberts.



to **Mary and Randall Merchant** (OC), whose son Christopher graduated from Archbishop Rummel High School with Honors and received a scholarship to Mississippi State University.

to **George Popovich** (CD), whose daughter Claire graduated from the UNO Honors College with a bachelor's in history, with a 4.0 GPA. Claire received the Dean's Award, Edward M. Socola Award, Women's Club Outstanding Woman Graduate Award for the College of Liberal Arts, Early Achievement Scholarship by the UNO International Alumni Association, Joseph Logsdon Scholarship for Excellence in Historical Studies and the Academic Excellence Award by the UNO Honors Program.

to **Srilatha Kris** (CD), whose son, Manu, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, received a Summa Cum Laude gold medal in the National Latin Examination for the second year in a row.

### **Condolences**

to **Tom Podany** (PMD), whose father, Joseph, passed away May 9.

to **Kay Dorcey** (CD), whose mother, Audrey Rabalais Clark, passed away April 25.

to **James Mashon** (ED), whose wife, Gertrude, passed away May 15.

to **Michael Maples** (IM), whose father, Raymond, passed away May 23.

## *Dredge Wheeler* Crewmember of the Year *John "Jack" Bochynski*



Operations Division selected John Bochynski Crewmember of the Year. This annual award salutes those crewmembers who consistently demonstrate work ethic, demeanor, and technical competence worthy of special recognition. Bochynski has been a Third Mate (Bridge Officer) aboard the Wheeler for 21

years. "He is known for his excellent bridge watch skills, his shiphandling abilities and calm, steady demeanor under a wide variety of often difficult circumstances," said Captain Morehouse. "When Jack's on watch, we all sleep soundly through the night."



# Emancipation proclamation: Lincoln signs off



It's a strange feeling to sit down and try to write a few words for my last issue of *Riverside*. It's overshadowed, for one thing, by the change of command. Who's thinking about *Riverside* when a new DE is coming in, projects are being pushed forward, etc.?

Well, I guess that's still my job, as it has been for the past three and a half years, though I'm leaving it this month.

At the change of command, as I watched Col. Rowan receive medals and accolades for a job well done, I pondered the job I've done as editor. Compliments are few and far between in this business. I learned that usually "no news is good news" when it comes to reader feedback.

*Riverside* received some positive comments and notable honors during my stay, however, with the magazine as a whole winning the prestigious "J" award in the Keith L. Ware awards in 2002, and Civilian Journalist of the Year going to yours truly in 2004. It's great to get recognition like that.

But I've wondered about the impact *Riverside* makes to the district or outside readers. We try to report fairly on different issues, but this is, after all, the commander's publication, with focus on employee moral. That can be limiting in terms of what we publish. To be sure, a few dissenting articles and comments have been cut along the way. In one instance, regarding a letter we received, I was literally given a face-to-face "no" by the commander for publication. But that's the way it goes. I hope the mate-

rial has been well received otherwise, and that folks have enjoyed the changes and growth in the magazine.

I enjoyed creating *Riverside* each month. I worked on it with a strong sense of personal responsibility and put a lot of time into layout and content. It's been good to know that folks around the district are seeing their photos or reading articles that concern them. I hope whoever fills this spot puts an even higher level of commitment and personality into it.

I relate well to the editor of the *Tulsa District Record*, who said in her last issue, "I've often thought of this magazine as one of my children – the really, really difficult one." That district, by the way, just put out its last hard copy magazine before the division shifts to the regional *Pacesetter*. We don't know if *Riverside* will meet a similar fate. But as I walk away from my last issue, I can say, as the Tulsa's editor did, "I'm probably sadder, and happier, about it than anyone."

Thanks go to the people who have helped bring *Riverside* to new levels and been such great friends to boot: James Addison, my supervisor; Elena Napolitano, graphics; Lane Lefort, photographer; John Hall, PAO guru; and to the rest of the Repro and PAO staff for their input, overall assistance and understanding. Thanks also to the folks with whom I shared the Intern Leadership Development Course, for a most enlightening week. And to the district staff and *Riverside* readers: thank you for allowing me to get to know you, for welcoming me, for giving me the chance to write and push my boundaries a little, and for letting me stand as editor for a publication that expresses the voice of the New Orleans District.

**Eric Lincoln**  
*Editor*

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