



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New Orleans District

Riverside

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July 2005



New leadership

Wagenaar, Starkel, Breerwood, Scheid

Harvey Canal concrete placement



Commander's Exit

by Amanda Jones

Lt. Col. Stephen Jeselink came to the New Orleans District in 2002 intending to “bounce around” to Construction, Operations and Project Management divisions. But after only 10 months in the New Orleans Area Office, everything changed. The district needed a new deputy and Jeselink was asked to temporarily fill the position. The Executive Office then became his home for the remainder of his time here.

“It wasn’t a shoo-in...other people interviewed for the job and then it was decided that I was going to remain in the job. So, that was certainly by stroke of luck. I was in the right place at the right time.”

Then, when Col. Peter Rowan got the call to go to Iraq and Col. Richard Wagenaar couldn’t get released from Korea early, “By luck, I’m here again,” he said, referring to his two-month stint as district commander.

Jeselink’s next assignment, “going back to the troops” as he put it, is battalion commander at Fort Jackson, S.C.

“That’s why I joined the Army, to lead troops. Although this assignment has been rewarding...on the professional side and on the personal side...we made a lot of good friends.”

He’s also enjoyed getting to know “the good genuine people who love what they do and love where they are at” in MVN.

“I’ll miss the work environment. I’ve never ever been in an assignment with so many professional

and so many technically competent people to interact with on a daily basis. It really stretched my thinking ability. Everyone has taken me out of my comfort zone at some point.”

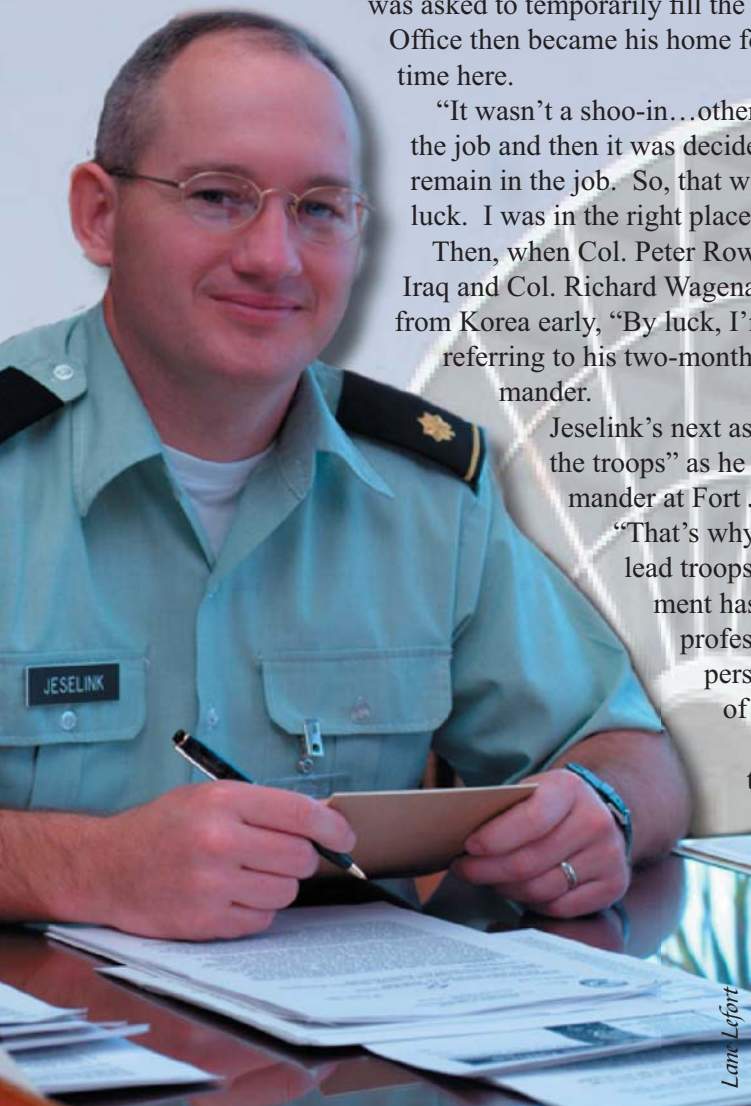
Asked about his personal accomplishments at the district, he said, “I couldn’t tell you any one thing I personally accomplished. Anything that was done while I was deputy was done solely because the people who work for me made it happen. Maybe I had to guide and steer...but it wasn’t because I did them. Everything that I’ll get credit for and everything I will be awarded for is solely based on the actions of other people.”

As for our new commander and deputy, having held both positions, Jeselink left behind some words of wisdom.

“Listen to the specialists. They have only the Corps and the federal government at heart. Have an open door...be a positive influence.”

“Don’t lose focus of responsibilities to your organization and to your people,” he says to the commander, and adds that he should go to the field sites and get to know the people.

According to Jeselink, the employees here are what make this district improve every day. “We’ve had challenges, but there’s nothing this district can’t overcome.”



Riverside

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Commander

Col. Richard P. Wagenaar

Public Affairs Chief

Jim Addison

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Amanda S. Jones

Winner: The “J” Award, the highest Department of Army journalism honor, 2000 and 2003.

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Col. Wagenaar address employees at the Change of Command Ceremony July 12.

Starkel comes aboard as deputy commander

by Amanda Jones

He's energetic about his new assignment as deputy commander and deputy district engineer of New Orleans District. So far, it has been rare to see Maj. Murray Starkel without a smile on his face.

"I am just very happy to be here. My choices were Iraq, Afghanistan, or New Orleans and it was real simple."

However, he does say that he will volunteer for Iraq again the first chance he gets and encourages others to do so.

"When I go, I am going to ask as many people as I can to go with me because I would rather go with people I know and know their capabilities."

In the meantime, he plans to focus on some of the greater challenges of New Orleans, like learning how to pronounce all of the names of the geographic locations.

"On a serious note, the biggest challenge is going to be helping the commander and the district work through the sticky problems, like cypress logging, and working with all of the politics and our various stakeholders to get to a good solution. I think that's one of the strengths that I

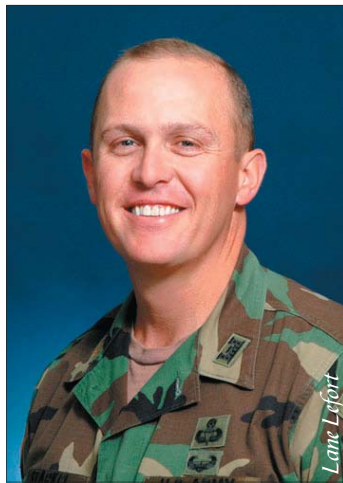
have. I'm a really good facilitator."

This is not his first assignment working with civilians, but Starkel says, "We have a much bigger scope, and on a proportional basis we have more issues" than San Francisco District, where he had been deputy since 2002. He says he'll continue to have an open door policy. He'll make his home number available and he checks his Blackberry often, something his wife, Wendy, has gotten used to over time.

Starkel received a bachelor's degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1988. He holds two master's degrees from Carnegie Mellon University, one in business administration, another in environmental engineering. He is a graduate of the Engineer Basic and Advanced courses, U.S. Army Airborne and Air Assault schools, French Armed Forces Commando School, and the Command and General Staff College.

His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, the

see STARKEL, page 6



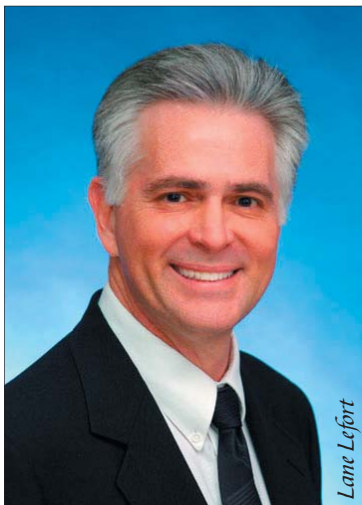
Breerwood takes charge

by Amanda Jones

Greg Breerwood on June 27 became deputy district engineer for Project Management and chief of Planning, Programs and Project Management.

“My biggest challenge in this position is to help bring together a

coalition of all the interests in coastal Louisiana. Although we all want, I think, the same thing. We all have to come together and realize that we're all in this together.”



Breerwood has been with the Corps for over 36 years and, with the exception of one developmental assignment, he's spent every bit of that time in Operations Division. He had been chief of Operations since January 2002

“I've been fortunate. I happened to start employment in a place that I liked when I was

younger. The projects, the work, and the people were things that I enjoyed.”

In his first all hands meeting as deputy and chief of PM, he said, “My comfort zone is in Operations Division...I am going to continue to try

and draw from those things that I've learned there.”

As for his new position, he says, “To me, I think it is a privilege if I can help the state of Louisiana, our region and the district.

“I'm looking forward to bringing our coastal restoration projects on line and actually getting some work done so that we can see a difference in the degradation of our

coast.

“I took this job because I wanted to be a part of some of the really good projects that we have in our state... So much can be done for Louisiana and the nation. I want to be a part of that.”

“To me, I think it is a privilege if I can help the state of Louisiana, our region and the district.”

Wagenaar now Commander

by Amanda Jones

Col. Richard P. Wagenaar became the 59th commander and district engineer of the New Orleans District in a formal military Change of Command Ceremony on July 12.

After Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, passed the flag, symbolizing the command of the New Orleans District, to Wagenaar at the 10 a.m. ceremony, he addressed the crowd of employees and invited guests.

“Let me start by saying thanks to Lt. Col. Jeselink.

He has done exceptionally well on his watch at the helm of the New Orleans District, providing steadfast leadership, direction and credibility.”

He served on the Regional Business Model Development Task Force, as chief of Resource Management and Internal Review and has been a leader of the New Orleans District’s budget task force.

“Lt. Col. Jeselink conducted a workload/workforce

management review and took personal interest in resolving labor relation challenges and

reducing workman’s compensation costs. His work in these areas is unmatched within the division.”

Crear went on to say to Wagenaar and his family, “Welcome to the New Orleans District. Welcome to the Mississippi Valley Division. And, welcome, once again, to the Corps family. We’re glad to have you.”

After speaking about Wagenaar’s accomplishments, including most recently as chief of Engineer Plans Division in the Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command, and before that as military assistant at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army at the Pentagon, and commander of the Walla Walla District, Crear said, “Richard and Heather, welcome aboard. You’re in for the thrill of a lifetime.”

Jeselink responded in his remarks, “I could not have asked for a better job or a better assignment...with the most technically competent people ever.” He went on to introduce some of the “shining stars, you know, the people who really make things happen.”

“It’s fortunate for me that I get to take credit for a lot of things, but I really do want to show you and introduce you to a couple of people that, of the 1300 we have here, that really do the work.”

He spoke briefly of



Lane Lefort



Lane Lefort



Scott Riecke

seven employees who stood out to him: Jim Montegut (CD), Mekava Addison (RM), Edmond Russo (OD), Mark Woodward (ED), Lisa Crescioni (PM), Aline Smith (CT) and Lucille Johnson (RE).

“So, yes, it does look good when Gen. Crear stands up here and he tells you all about the things that are happening

and all the things that I’ve done. But, it’s really not about me. It’s about you and I just wanted to let you know that.”

On taking command, Wagenaar admitted to only visiting southern Louisiana twice. His first trip was about two years ago when he came with Washington officials to “view and discuss the loss of coastal Louisiana, America’s largest and premier wetland.”

“I guess that trip was a primer for me and a snapshot of things to come in my future.”

He said he has come to understand “the significance of this region to the energy and economic wellness of our great nation – from the ports and waterways to the flood protection along this great river.”

“And so I’ve come back for more and I guess I’ll stay a little longer this time.”

Wagenaar is an ROTC graduate from New Mexico



Lane Lefort



Lane Lefort

Military Institute where he earned an associate’s degree in biology. He attended Syracuse University in New York, graduating with a bachelor of science degree in environmental science and forestry. He earned a master of science degree in management from Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wis., and a second master’s in national resource strategy from the National Defense University, Washington, D.C.

His professional military education includes Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Army Command and General Staff College, Combined Armed Services Staff School, and Engineer Officer Advanced and Basic courses.

His awards and decorations include eight Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, two Overseas Service Ribbons, two National Defense Service Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense

Service Medal, Army Reserve Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Parachutist Badge.

Wagenaar, a native of Carthage, N.Y., is married to the former Heather Turner and they have two children, Chelsea and Hunter.



Arnie Marino

Humanitarian Service Medal, Master Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

In his spare time he likes to play golf and loves just about any sport. His 9-year-old daughter Lexi and 7-year-old son Nicholas are just getting into sports and he's now trying to get them into music, too. You may have heard Starkel sing the national anthem at the Change of Command. He says he won't sing every time he steps up to a microphone, but puts in plug, "I am available for special occasions."

Scheid new chief, Internal Review

by Amanda Jones

With 18 years of service to the New Orleans District in budgeting, accounting and auditing, Julie Scheid is the perfect fit as chief of Internal Review. Though, it isn't going to be an easy road.

"The biggest challenge

that I see right now is that our entire mission is changing. We recently had a change in job descriptions from auditors to evaluators and our mission has literally changed from previously performing audits on compliance to now a focus on management controls and risk assessment. The good thing is that our mission will be much more management oriented; however, implementing these changes will be a big challenge.

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"And then, with that, I guess as my vision for the office, I want to move forward with new auditing tools that are now available. I would like to implement automated work paper and use more sophisticated technology in order to do queries and searches of entire databases..."

Scheid has a "very definite vision" of where she wants her office to be and is anxious to start "working on that vision to move it forward."

But, the major tasks at hand will not be easy. When district morale declines, it creates more work for Internal Review.

"Whenever there's an environmental condition of low morale, that's one of the factors for increased risk as far as fraud and errors and irregularities. When the work environment is negative, and people don't feel rewarded, more errors occur and the risk for irregularities increases. So, it definitely increases all audit risks because the environment itself is now riskier."

"To negate that increased risk, we would

have to take larger samples...and review internal controls very carefully because the internal controls are pivotal...and we would actually consider a lower error rate because there's a higher risk involved."

Still, Scheid says, "I just love auditing work and I really love what I do and enjoy working, basically, with everyone at this district. And so I'm very much looking forward to doing what I do."

Scheid earned a bachelor of science degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans. She is an unlicensed certified public accountant and an active member

of the Louisiana Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Scheid has two daughters, Amanda and Catherine, and enjoys the great outdoors.



Scott Ritcke



Steel rebar, foreground, are for structure's wall.

Pouring it on thick

Harvey Canal concrete placement

by John Hall

When mixing a cake intended to be eight feet thick, 80 feet wide and 100 feet long, it's smart to call in the culinary experts.

So before laying a foundation for a \$38 million hurricane floodgate on the Harvey Canal, the New Orleans District got help from ERDC, the Corps' Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss.

The recipe called for 2,500 cubic yards of concrete. Baking, however, had to be avoided, and this magnified the importance of selecting the ingredients. As did the desire to reduce the cost.

"We didn't want the concrete to get

too hot, or there would be a danger of cracks," said Mark Gonski, technical manager for ED's Structural Design Branch.

The structure – and its mirror-image twin being built just across the canal – must be strong. By the summer of 2006 each must support a 175-ton sector gate that will swing out to block hurricane storm surges.

"We worked closely with the ERDC scientists in order to get the right mix of flyash, limestone, cement and other materials," Gonski said.

The result was a new mixture that minimized heat gain and piped from the mixer trucks through a pump truck, up and over the cofferdam and over

dense webs of steel reinforcing bars.

Concrete placement was done in two, four-foot-thick layers in June. Mixer and pumper trucks

were driven aboard barges to get as close as possible to the cofferdam. The

crews worked most of the night each time, beginning at midnight.

Night work also minimized traffic congestion.

"This is one of the largest mass concrete pumping jobs that the Corps has ever undertaken," said Lary Yorke, the job supervisor for the New Orleans Area Office. "Our contractor, Boh Brothers, did an excellent job with the logistics, and our mixture flowed through just fine. Working at night also helped to keep the heat down."

Pumping through long pipes and avoiding the use of a crane and bucket proved to be a big money saver.

"Pumping was the most efficient manner of placement," said Jackie Purrington, project manager of the West Bank and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. "Construction estimated that it would have cost an additional \$500,000 to place with crane and bucket."

Next step: Placing the east bank concrete foundation, probably in August. The sector gates, each 28-foot tall, will be installed and the floodgate placed in service in 2006.

"This is one of the largest mass concrete pumping jobs that the Corps has ever undertaken."

Lary Yorke



Operations

BONNET CARRE - On June 28 and 29, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists John Forester and Cedric Doolittle, Bonnet Carre Spillway Ranger Adam Tarplee, along with Natural Resource Management's Michael Saucier and Michael Stout, conducted electro-fish sampling of the ponds within the spillway. The ponds contained largemouth bass, crappie and various sunfish, as well as carp, buffalo, garfish, shad, eels, paddlefish, mullet, catfish and bowfin. This information will be used for future fisheries management for the ponds.



Engineering

FLOOD MAPS - The New Orleans District is currently working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on updating digital flood insurance rate maps (DFIRMs) for Orleans Parish. The maps, last updated in 1984, will allow FEMA and the parish to identify the current flood risk areas in New Orleans. Southeast flood control projects (SELA) and parish improvements necessitate the updates, which may also reduce flood insurance premiums for those in some areas. This \$1.6 million project began in September 2003. The hydrology and hydraulics portions are complete and draft DFIRMs are due in August. Other ongoing DFIRM updates include Ascension and Lafayette parishes. St. John, St. Charles, Lafourche and Plaquemines are scheduled to begin DFIRM updates this month.

Get physical

by Amanda Jones

Guest speaker Mackie Shilstone, influential sports performance manager, motivated the district's Active for Lifers and others to get fit by comparing his own "ruthless" personality to "the devastating enemy...the opponent, among others, cancer." He began by explaining that "this is the locker room and we are a team," which led to talk of "game strategy" and the road to success.

"We need to pivot with life. Move with life. Each one of us in on a tight rope." And, according to Shilstone, we need to manage our fears.

"It's better to face it. Your fear is in the form of anxiety, frustration, anger. That's the first team. That's who we have to face."

The tight rope is just like life. "The minute you step on it, it's unstable. And, there are sharks down there. This is the balance beam of life and I

put everyone of my athletes on it."

Over 1,000 professional athletes have gone to Shilstone for game strategizing, including boxer Roy Jones Jr., whom Shilstone taught to break his opponent's nose to win the fight.

"I sometimes wear a coat and tie and I'm this easy going guy. You better hope disease isn't as good as I am because if you think I enjoy taking out the opponent...I'm emotional. It's not. That's



Mackie Shilstone and Reuben Mabry (ED) on the balance beam of life on June 29 at the district.

the worst opponent you'll ever face in your life. That's the shark."

Mackie Shilstone has a master's degree in both nutrition and business administration and is the executive director for the Center of Performance Enhancement and Lifestyle Management at Elmwood Fitness Center, board member of the National Mental Health Association in Washington, D.C., and director of Health and Fitness for the Cardiovascular Health Center of Ochsner Heart and Vascular Institute.

New Orleans Area Office HAMMOND HIGHWAY BRIDGE

UPDATE - The New Orleans Area Office reports that hurricane flood protection on the difficult, multi-part Hammond Highway bridge, connecting New Orleans and Metairie at the Lakefront, was completed late in June. And a swing floodgate has been installed nearby on Orpheum Avenue, closing a 24-foot gap between the floodwalls on land. These two steps mean that, excepting a short stretch of on-land floodwall, that the hurricane flood protection is complete. It is expected that the 4-lane bridge and connecting 4-lane roadways will be opened to traffic in August.

Safety & Security Office

NO STOPPING- It's hard to miss the brightly painted signs on the pavement at the Burdette Street entrance. Many have questioned their purpose at a place where cars tend to collect. According to Gene Taylor, chief of Safety, Security and Occupational Health, it is a safety zone for the new electronic gate, which was tested June 27. It has a sensing

device, but should electronics fail, the gate will automatically close. Now that the card swipe operation is working correctly, the Safety Office is compiling a list of employees who are approved for access to the district before 5:30 a.m., after 6:30 p.m. and weekends. Should an employee forget his card, there's always a guard on duty to assist.



Lane Lefort



Lane Lefort

Congratulations

to Angela Desoto Duncan (ED) on her appointment as as-

their first child, Elaine "Lainey" Louise, on June 16.

to Jules (CD) and Lucretia Boudreaux on the birth of their

President, Col. Richard Wagenaar (DE); Junior Vice President, Chris Dunn (ED); Treasurer, Michelle Daigle (OD); and Secretary, Charlie Settoon (ED, retired).

Kudos

to Mitchell and Joshua Bourgeois, sons of Diane and Mike Bourgeois (CD). Mitchell qualified for the National AAU Junior Olympic Track and Field Games, July 25-August 7. He placed first in shot put and fourth in long jump at the qualifying meet. Joshua qualified for the National AAU Junior Olympics in indoor soccer.

Farewell

to John M. Interanto, who retired on July 1 as a civil engineering technician after 37 years.

to Linda McNamara, who retired on July 1 after 24 years of service at MVN.

to Noah Wiltz, who retired on July 1 with a career of 29 years.

to Audrey Tilden, who re-



Audrey Tilden receives a gift from Lt. Col. Jeselink at her retirement party on June 27.

sociate childcare coordinator.

to Anna Bruno, daughter of Denise M. Trowbridge, who was on the winning team at the SAME Southeast Engineering & Construction Camp held in Vicksburg, Miss.

to Kristy Cancienne (CD) and her husband Tom on the birth of their

first child, Cameron Josephine, on June 23.

to Denise (CT) and Bill (OD) Morrison on the birth of

Maj. Starkel, Kimberly Crump (OD), and Chris Accardo (OD) cut the cake to celebrate the Army's 230th Birthday on June 14.

their second child, Braden Jules, who was born on May 18.

to the newly elected officials of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME):





Environmental Branch salutes and says farewell to Dave Carney and his wife at his retirement party June 10.

tired on June 30 as chief of Contracting Division. She worked almost 14 years for the Corps of Engineers.

ner (OD), a shipmate aboard the dredge WHEELER, who passed away June 24.

to the friends and family of

Tina Smith (PM), who passed away June 17.

to the friends and family of Andrew Maxwell (OD), a retired dredger operator, who passed away May 31.

to the family of Dorothy Johnson Carroll, mother of Sylvia Smith (ED) and mother-in-law of Robert Smith (ED), who passed away May 30.

to the friends and family of Carol Powell, sister of Mike Maunoir (OD), who passed away in July. Carol was the former secretary to the chief of Construction .

to the family of Butch Marsalis (CD), who's mother, Doris L. Marsalis, passed away July 12.

Condolences

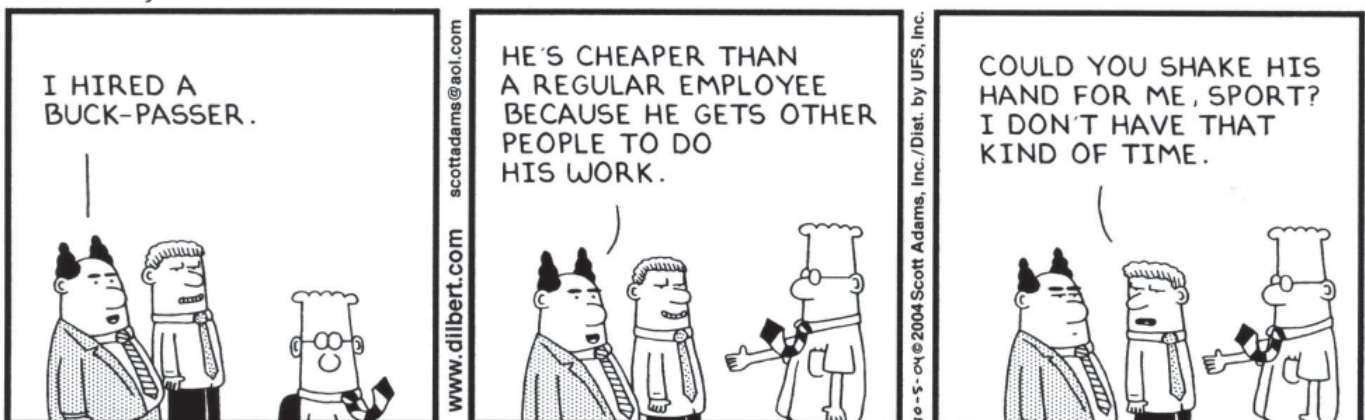
to the family of Lillie Benton, mother of Beulah Harrison (RE) and grandmother of Lekesha Reynolds (PM), who passed away June 25.

to the friends and family of David Skin-



Lt. Col. Jeselink receives a tool bag from Larry Plaisance and the Safety Office at his farewell luncheon July 22.

DILBERT® by Scott Adams



Still Standing — This oak tree, living partially in water, became a dramatic symbol of our eroding coast. It was mistakenly believed to have fallen over and died. But, this June photo is proof that it still lives on the Lake Salvador shoreline and is now protected by a Corps-built rock dike (below) under the Support for Others program. The dike, funded by the National Park Service to preserve Jean Lafitte National Park, was built for shore protection and marsh creation.

