

A Publication Produced By and For Federal Highway Administration Employees

Keeping America Moving

By Gregg Miller



Acting Administrator Jim Ray speaking at the Spring Business Meeting.

This year's Spring Business Meeting, held April 16 to 19, in Washington DC, was a flurry of activity. From the 7:00 a.m. Division Administrator's (DA) Council Meeting on opening day, to the closing remarks by Secretary Mary Peters and Acting Administrator James Ray on Friday,

participants found themselves completely wrapped up in breakout sessions, policy discussions, and strategic planning considerations.

But as many know, there is more to the Annual Spring Business Meeting than future business. This is also a time when FHWA Leadership takes time to recognize employees, events, and milestones that have shaped the past year.

This year's "kick-off" began immediately following the DA Council Meeting. Joe Toole, Associate Administrator for Professional and Corporate Development, opened the day's events by welcoming attendees, and declaring the Meeting to be officially underway. *(continued on page 3)*

Jeff Paniati Tapped as New Executive Director

By Gregg Miller



Executive Director Jeff Paniati.

Jeff Paniati, Associate Administrator for Operations, was appointed as FHWA's new Executive Director. Mr. Paniati, who joined FHWA in 1983 as a Highway Engineer Trainee, has been in the Senior Executive Service (SES) since 2000.

The Executive Director position is the only one in civil service that requires the approval of the President. President Bush gave his final approval for Jeff's selection in early April on the recommendation of DOT Secretary Peters and Acting Administrator Jim Ray. *(continued on page 3)*

Deputy Administrator Jim Ray Takes Helm as Acting FHWA Administrator

By Gregg Miller

When Jim Ray joined FHWA as Chief Counsel in April 2006, he probably had no idea just how busy he was about to be.

In February of 2007, Mr. Ray was asked to serve as Acting Deputy Administrator in addition to his duties as Chief Counsel. He was appointed as the Agency's Deputy Administrator in December 2007. He has served in both of these positions with distinction, leading the oversight and coordination of all FHWA activities



Deputy Administrator Jim Ray took the helm as FHWA's Acting Administrator.

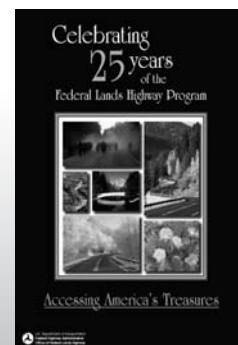
related to the ceiling collapse in the Central Artery/Tunnel Project in Boston, including the process of reopening closed sections of the tunnel.

As if that wasn't enough to fill his calendar, he drafted model Public-Private Partnership legislation, and is one of DOT's leading authorities on innovative financing and contracting. Jim also helped develop the DOT's Congestion Initiative under Secretary Mineta and leads the DOT Corridors of the Future program under Secretary Peters.

Recently, Jim has provided the Agency with a renewed focus on President Dwight D. Eisenhower's original direction for the Agency – the responsibility of delivering a safe, efficient and reliable transportation network to the country.

And when Administrator Rick Capka announced his plans to leave the Agency earlier this year, it *(continued on page 3)*

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On Kili, They Call Me Babu
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Keeping America Moving *(from page 1)*



Joe Toole, Associate Administrator for Professional and Corporate Development, welcomed attendees.

Before employee recognitions began, however, Joe asked everyone in the room for a few moments of silence in remembrance of two FHWA employees who recently passed away—Toni Wilbur and Don Tuggle.

Toni Wilbur, who retired as Director, Office of Operations R&D last year, was responsible for developing one of the first computer programs (ITS Program) to be widely distributed to FHWA and State users. She retired after 35 years of service with FHWA. *(Read more on page 23).*

Don Tuggle was Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division Director of Program Administration, and former Special Assistant to the Executive Director. He died at the age of 54, after losing his fight with cancer. *(Read more on page 23).*

Recognitions

Length of Service

There were plenty of recognitions to go around this year, and Joe didn't skip a beat when it came time to thank and congratulate these FHWA employees.

The first on the list was the FHWA Length of Service (LOS) recognitions. These honor employees who have served for 30, 35, 40, and 45 year milestones in their career. They receive an FHWA LOS certificate, pin, and a special item that they can choose from an online catalog. This year, Wisconsin Administrator Allen Radcliff and Iowa Division Administrator Philip Barnes were honored for their Federal Service.

Allen Radcliff, who joined FHWA in 1973, was recognized for 35 years of service. After completing the Highway Engineer Training Program, Allen worked in the Tennessee Division as an Assistant Area Engineer. He was promoted four years later to Area Engineer in the Illinois Division, reviewing designs and environmental documents for the Central Illinois Freeway.

Allen has served in Headquarters in the Construction and Maintenance Division, Region 8, in Lakewood, Colorado, and the Montana Division. Before accepting his current position in 2007, he also served as Wyoming Assistant Division Administrator, and Division Administrator for North Dakota.

Philip Barnes was recognized for 40 years of Federal Service, having entered the Highway Engineer Training Program in 1968. His engineering career was temporarily interrupted when he was drafted into the U.S. Army two years into the program. When he returned, he completed the Program and worked in the former Hydraulics Lab as well as the Virginia and Maryland Divisions. Upon his promotion to Headquarters, Phil served as Highway Engineer in the Pavement Branch of the former Direct Federal Programs Office and Highway Design Division. He moved to the Nebraska Division in 1985 to serve as Field Operations Engineer.

Previously, he served for three years as Deputy Director of the ITSJPO.

Before coming to the ITSJPO, Jeff held the position of Chief, Safety Design Division, in the FHWA Office of Research and Development. He led the Agency's efforts to develop new technologies, procedures, and methods to advance the state of art in highway safety.

Jeff has received numerous performance and honor awards, including the Presidential Rank of Meritorious Executive and the *Secretary's Award for Meritorious Achievement* in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the ITS program and USDOT. In 2000, he received the *Secretary's Gold Medal Award* for leadership in advancing the strategic goals of DOT and was selected for the *Distinguished Alumni Award* from the University of Connecticut School of Engineering.

New Executive Director *(from page 1)*

Jeff has played a key role in leading change within FHWA and sustaining a focus on making America's transportation systems work safely and efficiently. His extensive and varied experience with FHWA includes leading work in such priority areas as congestion management, workforce development, intelligent transportation systems, highway safety design and analysis, and highway safety information.

As Program Manager for Intelligent Transportation Systems in DOT, he led the more than \$200 million annual Federal Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) program and directed the day-to-day operations of the ITS Joint Program Office (ITSJPO). The ITS program is focused on bringing advanced communication and information system technologies to the management and operation of the surface transportation system. The ITSJPO has responsibility for planning, directing, and coordinating this program across the USDOT.

Phil also served as Assistant Division Administrator for Wisconsin until 2003, when he accepted his current position.

Retirements

It was announced that Nebraska Administrator **William Brownell** will retire in August of this year, after 34 years of FHWA service. Having served the past five years as Nebraska Administrator, Bill was recognized for many accomplishments, notably for greatly reducing the fatality rate in his State.

Bill also began his career in 1974 as a Highway Engineer Trainee, and has held numerous engineering and planning positions in Kansas, New York, South Dakota, Alaska, Vermont, and Olympia Fields. He served as Assistant Division Administrator in North Dakota, and was on the Board of Directors of ITS Midwest. He also Chaired the Incident Management Workgroup for the Gary/Chicago/Milwaukee ITS Priority Corridor.

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Deputy Administrator Jim Ray Takes Helm as Acting FHWA Administrator

(from page 1)

was Jim Ray—Deputy Administrator—who stepped up and took on the role of Acting Administrator.

As Acting Administrator and Deputy Administrator, Mr. Ray is a very busy man. But then, he seems to have always kept himself on the move. Before joining FHWA, he served in DOT's Office of the General Counsel where he advised the General Counsel and other senior Department officials on a variety of legal and policy matters relating to all modes of transportation.

Jim is a member of the North Carolina Bar Association and received his law degree from Georgetown University. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He worked as an associate at the law firm of Alston & Bird, LLP, representing clients in a wide range of legal issues, including mergers and acquisitions and Federal Government relations. In 2003, he joined the President's re-election campaign where he served as Deputy General Counsel to the Bush-Cheney campaign and the subsequent Presidential Inaugural Committee until 2005. Prior to his legal career, Jim worked on Capitol Hill in the offices of Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) and Senator John Ensign (R-NV).

FHWA News joins employees in welcoming Jim Ray as Acting Administrator and looks forward to working with (read "keeping up with") him as we continue to work toward our goal of *Keeping America Moving!*

Keeping America Moving

(from previous page)

Fred Skaer, Director, Office of National Environmental Policy Act Facilitation, will also be retiring in September of this year after 34 years of service. He began his career in 1974 as a Transportation Planner in the Urban Planning Division and has held many key positions during his career, including Chief, Environmental Programs Branch; Assistant Division Administrator of Columbia; and Planning and Research Engineer in Puerto Rico.

Recognition of SES

Five new "SESers" were recognized this year. They stood as their names were called:

Elizabeth Alicandri was named Director, Office of Safety Programs, on November 11, 2007, having previously served in the Office of Safety as a Supervisory Transportation Specialist. Beth joined FHWA in 1989 as the Human Factors Lab Manager in McLean, Virginia. She is in charge of administering programs and advancing best practices related to highway safety.

Marc Lemon assumed the position of Chief Counsel on January 14, 2008. Prior to joining FHWA, he worked as a Senior Attorney for Corporate Transactions with the American Education Services Corporation, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. He also served five years as a Senior Associate Attorney in two law firms, worked in the Department of Defense as a Special Assistant, and worked as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Inspector General. Marc is a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General Corps.

David Nicol was named Director, Office of Safety Design, on January 20, 2008. David joined FHWA in 1979 as a Highway Engineer. Prior to his SES appointment, he served three years as Colorado Division Administrator. He has held positions of Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Division Administrator in the California Division and held key positions in the field, including Programs Operations Engineer in Delaware and Transportation Engineer in Georgia.

Gerald Solomon was named Director, Office of Real Estate, on February 3, 2008. Prior to being appointed to SES, Gerry served as a Realty Specialist in the Office of Real Estate Services for two years. Before joining FHWA, he served as Director of the Right-of-Way Bureau in the Massachusetts Highway Department. He also served there as the Right-of-Way Manager for the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project. He has held many State government positions, including Assistant, Associate, and Acting Chief Counsel in the State of Massachusetts.

Joyce Curtis became Director of Field Services-North, on March 16, 2008. She previously held the position of Assistant Division Administrator in the Virginia Division before becoming Resource Center Director in 2002.

New Federal Lands Highway Director

Terry Haussler was named Director, Office of Program Development, in the Federal Lands

Highway Division on March 2, 2008. He was previously the Planning and Programs Manager in Central Lands Highway. Terry has also served as a Project Manager and Highway Design Manager in Central Federal Lands, and was involved in the Hoover Dam Bypass Environmental Impact statement. He began his career with FHWA as a student in Central Federal Lands.

SES Reassignments

Thomas Holian was named Deputy Chief Counsel on March 2, 2008. He had been serving in another SES position as the Assistant Chief Counsel, Legislation and Regulations Division, since 1999. Tom also served as an Associate Chief Counsel providing legal advice and services on all aspects regarding the Agency's regulatory program. He joined FHWA in 1978 as an Attorney Advisor in the Office of Chief Counsel.

On March 16, 2008, **David Gibbs** became Director of Field Services, South. His previous SES position was as the Florida Division Administrator, which he had held since 2005. Prior to that assignment, he was Division Administrator in Utah. Other key positions include Assistant Division Administrator in Texas, and Director of Engineering and Operations in the former Region 3 Office. David joined FHWA in 1975 as a Highway Engineer.

SES Transfer

Jeff Paniati, Associate Administrator for Operations, was appointed as FHWA's new Executive Director. (See cover story, "Jeff Paniati Tapped as New Executive Director.")

SES Flag Presentation

Jim and Jeff teamed up to welcome and present an SES Flag to Ian Saunders. Ian was named new Director, Office of International Programs, on April 13 and has 17 years of Federal International experience. He had previously been serving in Homeland Security as Director of the International Policy and Programs Division in U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Ian has also served in the International Training and Assistance Division as Director, and Special Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner, and held a position as the Regional Programs Branch Chief in the Office of International Affairs.

Plaques for New Division Administrators

Jim and Jeff recognized and presented a plaque to two new Division Administrators.

Jeffrey Kolb was selected as New York Division Administrator on September 10, 2007. Since 2003, he had been serving as Mississippi Assistant Division Administrator. In 2000, he served as the Chief of District Operations, South, in Sacramento, California, where he was responsible for the facilitation of several large projects involving complex environmental issues.

Jeffrey has held key positions in various Divisions, including Utah, Colorado, and Florida. He joined the FHWA in 1982 as a Co-Op student in Washington, DC, and upon graduation in 1986, as a Highway Engineer Trainee. Jeff has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from North Carolina State University and an M.S. in Civil Engineering.

On August 29, 2007, **Wendall Meyer** was named North Dakota Division Administrator. He was serving as the Kansas Assistant Division Administrator since 2003.

Wendall previously served as the Mobility and Safety Team Leader in Springfield, Illinois, where he was responsible for safety, traffic, and transportation system management and operations. He held positions in various Divisions, including Indiana, Arkansas, and Kansas.

Wendall joined the FHWA in 1987 as a Highway Engineer Trainee in Vancouver, Washington. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska.



Deputy/Acting Administrator Jim Ray.

Jim Ray

As someone with a keen interest in history, Acting Administrator Jim Ray is well aware of the significance of history when planning for the future. And, as a self-described passionate individual, he wasted no time getting the room's attention. Known for his off-the-cuff oratory style, he delivered his vision of FHWA's continuing mission. Drawing on the words and charge of President Dwight D. Eisenhower when the Interstate was originally conceived, Jim drew a clear and concise picture of his vision of the future of FHWA. He distilled these into one simple phrase, printed on a banner behind him on the wall:

Keeping America Moving

"We have built the Interstate," He proclaimed. "Now we have to operate it."

After giving the audience a moment to absorb his message, Mr. Ray gave the attendees a little insight into his management and personal style. At ease in front of a crowd—a handy bottle of water resting on the podium—Jim Ray spoke to the fellow members of the FHWA Leadership. With video montage of earlier Interstate days flickering on the screens behind him, Jim made his point visually. As black and white shots of older model

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Keeping America Moving

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cars zooming along on open, newly built highways gave way to newer models—trapped and stagnant in bumper-to-bumper traffic—it soon became obvious what Jim was alluding to. We [FHWA] have indeed built the Interstate as charged by President Eisenhower, but have yet to complete the ultimate mission of *Keeping America Moving* with a safe, efficient, reliable transportation system.

Celebrating

Federal Lands Highway is celebrating their 25th Anniversary this year (see story this issue), and as part of the day's events, Jim and Jeff Paniati invited Larry Anderson, Director of Program Administration for Central Lands Highway Division (CLHD), to the stage to say a few words,



From left to right: Executive Director Jeff Paniati; Central Federal Lands Highway Director of Program Administration Larry Anderson; and Deputy/Acting Administrator Jim Ray.

and a little cake-cutting.

And more . . .

Susan Binder headed the Strategic Planning Session for most of the remainder of Wednesday, which included a Table Top session on strategic planning goals and wrapping up with a challenge to all the participants.

Thursday's schedule included a status report by Mary Phillips on key transportation policy developments, and breakout sessions on four topics. Attendees were invited to choose which session to attend, and included: Core Functions Phase II, Oversight and Stewardship, the FHWA Go Deep study, and the FHWA Career and Workforce Development.

Friday, though only scheduled for a half-day, was equally packed as updates were given on new key Agency initiatives by Jeff Paniati, Cheryl Walker, Byron Lord, Sandy Otto, and Jeff Lindley. Virginia DOT Deputy Secretary Barbara Reese was also on hand to highlight Public-Private Partnerships.

As the Meeting was nearing its close, Jim Ray introduced DOT Secretary Mary Peters. And, after a very well-received address from the Secretary, Jim presented her with a special Dwight D. Eisenhower inaugural coin.

"Secretary Peters is a transportation leader who is committed to solving our Nation's problems with solutions that work. She is not afraid to break from tradition where necessary and to employ innovative

ideas in search of a better outcome.

"Secretary Peters is carrying forward President Eisenhower's original charge to us—to move people and goods from place to place in a safe, efficient and reliable manner. She has set the bar high for what an Eisenhower coin recipient should epitomize."

Mr. Ray then explained his plan—all attendees of the Meeting would receive one Eisenhower coin. But they were not to be permanently held on to. They were to be "paid forward" to an employee the current holder thinks most embodies President Eisenhower's charge to the Agency of *Keeping America Moving* with innovative solutions that work. These employees would in turn pass the same coin on to someone they believe is equally deserving, and so on.

"We have a number of awards and mechanisms to recognize superior efforts at FHWA, but Eisenhower coin recipients should exemplify the President's determination to deliver performance and efficiency to America's road network and to do so in bold new ways."

With the departure of the Secretary, Jim was left



Jim presented DOT Secretary Mary Peters with a special Dwight D. Eisenhower inaugural coin.

on stage to conclude this year's meeting. Continuing his train of thought from his address earlier, he again made his point as to the true nature—the basic purpose—of FHWA.

Returning to the large screens in the room, Jim showed photos of World War II battle scenes. Each scene told an individual tale of war. They contained people with very different roles in the war. The photos showed soldiers, medics, women, and children in various parts of the world. Some were in a foxhole while others were on landing craft. One photo depicted a cook and another depicted a pilot. Each person had a different job to do. But no matter what the job, each had the same mission.

"What was their purpose for doing this—what were they thinking about as these things happened around them?" he asked the audience. "Why were all these people there? Their reason was pretty straightforward: To fight and stop the Nazi Regime—to stand up for freedom—to make the world a safer and better place to live."

"And why is FHWA here?" he continued. "What is the charge to our Agency?"

"To Keep America Moving . . . And We're Not Done Yet."



Who is Keeping America Moving? Tracking the Eisenhower Coins

Late Breaking Eisenhower Coin Update
A tracking Web site is being setup to record who receives the coins, and an explanation of why they received it. As coins are circulated and names are collected, the site will expand as a forum to share ideas and practices. Or, as Jim Ray explains it, "We can use this site as a vehicle to say to our entire FHWA family that 'We're (definitely) Not Done Yet.'"

The first two coins have already been passed along, forming the first links of the chain:

Michael Harkins was the first to receive a coin, given to him by Acting Administrator Jim Ray. As a senior attorney advisor and special counsel in the Office of Chief Counsel, Michael has been a key contributor to the Agency's goals in reducing congestion and facilitating innovative project delivery mechanisms. In particular, Michael continually provides sound legal advice and develops innovative solutions that enable our State and local partners to utilize innovative contracting mechanisms, Public-Private Partnerships and tolling in practical and sensible ways. For example, Michael was a key contributor to the development of the revised design-build regulations, which enable States to enter into Public-Private Partnerships in the

early stages of project development, and is the primary legal expert who advises the Agency in the interpretation of all tolling and pricing authorities. These are just a few of Michael's invaluable contributions to deliver performance and efficiency to America's road network in bold new ways.

The second coin was presented to **Jeff Graham** by Oregon Division Administrator Phil Ditzler. Jeff "Keeps America Moving" as an operations engineer in the Oregon Division with primary responsibilities for Federal-aid activities in the Portland, Oregon region. Jeff is a leader within the Division and the transportation community in Oregon, known for his bold thinking and collaborative, practical, and open minded approach. His ability to integrate innovative and creative solutions into challenging transportation issues exemplifies the President's determination to deliver performance and efficiency on America's highways.

Jeff's involvement in a wide range of diverse transportation projects—including the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Project, the State's Solar Highway Initiative, and the I-205 Light Rail Project—epitomizes an innovative and value-added approach that has led to better transportation outcomes in Oregon.

Oklahoma Division's Focus Inspection Program

By Michele Conroy



Oklahoma Division's Engineering and Operations Team from left to right: Waseem Fazal, John Lairet, Calvin Karper, Nabeel Abusadah, and Souzan Bahavar.

Engineers from the Oklahoma Division's Engineering and Operations Team took a break to pose for this picture during their Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) Focus Inspection at the SH-18 Project near Shawnee in Pottawatomie County.

As part of the Oklahoma Division's Focus Inspection Program, checklists are developed and used to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and consistency of the project construction oversight. The data gathered is more reliable and the decisions made using the collected data are more representative of the project construction quality. As each checklist is developed, it is put through a test run at an ongoing construction project. This inspection focused on PCC Mix Design, Concrete Batching, Concrete Testing, and Placement.



Help Shape FHWA's Future! Catch-ball Process will Advance the New Strategic Plan



Utah Division Administrator Walter "Butch" Waidelick speaks during the Strategic Planning table-top session.

The new FHWA strategic plan was at the forefront of topics discussed by Agency leaders at this year's Spring Business Meeting. They discussed the proposed strategic goals developed by the Leadership Team during an off-site meeting in February. The four strategic goals are:

- National Leadership
- Program Delivery
- System Performance
- Corporate Capacity

Now it's your turn! A catch-ball process will be used during the coming weeks to provide everyone with an opportunity to participate in the development of the new FHWA Strategic Plan. Agency leaders were asked to hold a similar discussion with staff upon returning to their offices. Comments are being solicited between now and May 29, 2008 via an e-mail link posted on the StaffNet home page. Links to a discussion template and more information about the Strategic Plan update are also posted there for your review. Preferably, comments will be collected and submitted after your office or team has met as a group but individual comments are also welcome.

Your suggestions and comments will be forwarded to the members of the Leadership Team charged with drafting the new Strategic Plan in June. Please take this opportunity to join in the effort and watch for more opportunities to engage in the process. This will continue until a final version of the Strategic Plan is prepared this fall.

Your input is valued and needed! If you have any further questions, feel free to call Woody Stanley at 202-366-9070.

Former Administrator Meets With Wounded and Disabled Veterans in Virginia

By Mohamed Sulaiman Dumbuya



Administrator Capka met one-on-one with veterans during his visit.

Former FHWA Administrator Mr. J. Richard Capka took time from his busy schedule to visit with participants of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Transitional Work Initiative for Wounded and Disabled Veterans, on January 25, 2008, at VDOT's Fredericksburg District Office. The purpose of the meeting was to meet and personally thank the veterans for their service to the Nation, learn about their experiences while serving in their

respective campaigns, as well as their experiences and feelings about the transitional program. Besides, he wanted to see how his idea of a transitional program for veterans was being realized.

The notion of a transitional program for veterans was first proposed by Mr. Capka about two years ago. This was perhaps in solidarity with the men and women in uniform. Mr. Capka himself had a military career that spanned 29 years with service in the United States, Europe, the Pacific, and Far East. He retired as an Army Brigadier General in 2000. Mr. Capka's proposal could also be construed as a means of showing his and the Agency's support for their courage and contribution in the war on terror. Moreover, Mr. Capka's initiative could be regarded as a way of emphasizing the strong relationship between security of the Nation and the Federal Highway Administration. This relationship was ushered in by the signing of the Federal-aid Highway Act of

1956 by President Eisenhower, which authorized the Interstate Highway System. President Eisenhower, it has been reported, justified the Interstate Highway System project as essential to American security during the Cold War. He argued that as large cities become targets in a possible future war, the highways were designed to evacuate people and allow the military to move in.

Nonetheless, Mr. Capka's initiative was called the American Hero Support Program (AHSP). His vision was to develop a program for veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq who were on medical hold and/or undergoing physical and mental rehabilitation to explore options in the transportation field through an "internship" program at a facility closer to their place of rehabilitation, home, family, or community. His plan was that this effort would start as a pilot and eventually grow to become a fully integrated national internship program for wounded, disabled veterans as well as active duty soldiers available in all State Departments of Transportation.

(continued on next page)



Former Administrator Meets With Wounded and Disabled Veterans in Virginia *(from previous page)*



FHWA and VDOT Leadership met with wounded veterans at the VDOT Fredericksburg District Office.

Working closely with the Virginia Division Administrator, Mr. Roberto Fonseca-Martinez, and his Civil Rights Manager, Mohamed Sulaiman Dumbuya, VDOT took Mr. Capka's idea and ran with it. They worked diligently to develop a comprehensive program that is the first for a State department of transportation in the Nation. VDOT's Transitional Work program was developed as a two-year non-traditional transitional "internship" program for about ten wounded and disabled veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns. The veterans would be Virginia residents, provided with the necessary resources, and placed in an individually tailored and flexible work environment at a VDOT facility close to the veteran's home or rehabilitation center. There is no restriction on the candidate's academic background (from GED to PhD) and he or she can work part-time or full-time. Moreover, the "intern" would have a mentor or coach to ensure that his or her needs are met. This undertaking is considered to be a pilot with the ultimate goal of going national, whereby other States will replicate VDOT's example.

The VDOT's initiative is partly funded by FHWA for \$500,000 from our discretionary fund, while VDOT is providing about \$100,000 of State funds to cover administrative costs, ADA-related accommodations, and other stipends. As of this writing, VDOT has exceeded its goal. It presently has 17 participants with one graduating to a full-time job with a private company in the transportation industry. The program has also been relaxed a little to include veterans from campaigns other than Iraq and Afghanistan, such as Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Kosovo, Macedonia, and South West Asia. VDOT's program also has veterans from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines with ranks ranging from Private First Class to a Major.

The VDOT program is very successful and is being considered a model. Its Program Director

continues to receive calls from various State departments of transportation and similar entities, to provide technical assistance and advice on how a similar program can be developed and administered.

Upon his arrival at VDOT's Fredericksburg District auditorium, Mr. Capka was received by FHWA Virginia Division Administrator, Mr. Roberto Fonseca-Martinez; VDOT's Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gregory Whirley; VDOT's Chief for Employment and

Business Opportunity, Ms. Grindly Johnson; and the Director of VDOT's Transitional Work Program, Mr. Levi Cary. Immediately after saying hello to the leadership team, Mr. Capka went around the room and personally introduced himself to each and every one of the veterans. After a brief welcome by VDOT's Deputy Commissioner and an introduction by Virginia's Division Administrator, Mr. Capka started his remarks by thanking the veterans for their service to the Nation. He encouraged them to display their professionalism, passion, and skills that they have acquired in the service, at every given opportunity, but especially while in the program. He noted that the intent of the transitional program was not only experimental but also designed to allow the veterans to spotlight their acquired skills and knowledge. He likened the transitional program at VDOT to test driving. He maintained that it was not only a test drive of the program, VDOT, consultants, and contractors, but also to the participants as well. Mr. Capka appealed to the veterans to make good use of the opportunity provided them and to suggest improvements that could be made to further enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, reach, and impact of the program. He thanked the veterans again for their service to the Nation and VDOT for developing, supporting, and implementing such a worthy and necessary program.

After his remarks, Mr. Capka asked the veterans to say a few words about themselves and comment on their experiences in the program. The comments included:

- Overwhelming excitement about the program and the opportunity.
- The need for full-time employment for the veterans at VDOT.
- Lack of knowledge on what will happen to veterans when the 1,500 hours of transitional internship is up.

- The need to keep the program funded.
- VDOT does not get the recognition they deserve; they are not just about pot holes and congestion but do have programs for people to channel their passion, energy, and skills after service.
- The need to bring the transitional program opportunity to active duty people as well.
- Exposure to permanent jobs.
- Willingness to take part in programs that teach kids to drive safely.
- Time on program should count on a permanent offer.

Aside from the overwhelming excitement about the program, the urgency for permanent employment at VDOT and the transportation industry and continued Federal funding of VDOT's Transitional program stood out as critical wishes. However, VDOT, through its Human Resources Division and partnerships with the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Department of Veteran Services is working hard to assist the veterans in gaining full-time employment opportunities.

Mr. Roberto Fonseca-Martinez, who was very instrumental in the development of VDOT's program, commented on the impression that the program may not be flexible enough to accommodate changes or adjustments. He provided a brief overview of the program's evolution and emphasized that it is not bound to any rigid formula. He noted that from the onset there was a deliberate attempt to make the veterans' talents, conditions, and experiences drive the program. That is why, for instance, there are no specific academic qualifications to enter the program—you can have a GED or PhD. In the meantime, Fonseca-Martinez urged the veterans to take advantage of their opportunities, undertake rotational experiences in various areas at VDOT, pursue employment opportunities vigorously, and network aggressively.

In his concluding remarks, Capka indicated that he is pleased with the way in which the program is being administered. He said that there are certain things that he will take with him about the veterans in the program. These include that they are very outspoken, articulate, smart, skillful, passionate, hardworking, promising, and forward-looking. He also said that the quality of VDOT's program, the tremendous support from VDOT's leadership, the Governor and the legislature, coupled with the caliber of the participants, have provided him with ample ammunition to pursue resources for the continued support of the program.

For information on the Virginia Transitional Work for Wounded and Disabled Veterans, you may contact:

Mohamed Sulaiman Dumbuya at:
(804) 775-3339
Mohamed.dumbuya@fhwa.dot.gov
or
Freddie L. Jones at:
(804) 786-4552





Instructors of Excellence and Team Administrative Awards

Honoring quality in delivery of NHI training

“Top notch.” “Funny, enthusiastic, down to earth.” “Great motivator.” “Best in the business.” “Excellent in every conceivable way . . .” These are just a few of the accolades showered upon the top-ranked instructors of NHI training programs by grateful course participants.

To recognize and show appreciation for outstanding leadership in transportation training, the National Highway Institute (NHI) recently named three of its instructors as recipients of the first annual *Instructors of Excellence Awards*. NHI also recognized three contracting firms and their instructors with *Team Administrative Awards* for 2007.

The awards applaud the efforts of NHI instructors and underscore the importance of consistently delivering high-quality instruction. “NHI is proud of our team’s accomplishments in 2007 and is committed to maintaining the highest standard of technical ability and delivery competence for our contracting firms and instructors,” says NHI Training Programs Team Leader Rick Barnaby. “These awards enable us to honor the year’s top performers.”

NHI congratulates the following instructors and administrative teams for winning the 2007 awards:

Instructors of Excellence

- Susan Mosher, Perform Tech., Inc.
- Robert Merryman, O.R. Colan, Inc.
- Ted Pluta, O.R. Colan, Inc.

Team Administrative Awards with Instructors

- Applied Pavement Technologies, Inc., for Principles and Practices for Enhanced Maintenance Management Systems (FHWA-NHI-131107), instructors Katie Zimmerman and Dean Testa.
- Ryan Berg and Associates, Inc., subcontractor The Collin Group, Ltd., Geosynthetics Engineering Workshop (FHWA-NHI-132013), instructor Jim Collin.
- Owen Ayres & Associates, Inc., for River Engineering for Highway Encroachments (FHWA-NHI-135010), instructors Peter Lagasse and Larry Arneson, FHWA.

The winners were selected by a team of NHI staff. Criteria for earning the Instructors of Excellence Award consist of the following:

- Nomination from an NHI training program manager.
- Achievement of NHI certification.
- Attendance and successful completion of the

NHI Instructor Development course (FHWA-NHI-420018 or FHWA-NHI-420018A) within the last 5 years.

- Consistent achievement of an average ranking of 4.5 or above (on a 5-point scale) on instructor satisfaction surveys completed by course participants.

Recipients of the *Team Administrative Award* were judged according to the following criteria:

- Timely and accurate submission of session administrative packages (which include participant registration forms, class roster, sign-in sheet, and participants’ course/instructor evaluations) within 10 working days of the session end date.
- 100 percent of administrative packages submitted to NHI for fiscal year 2007.
- Timely response to scheduling requests.
- All instructors in the group achieved and maintained a minimum 4.0 average for participants’ overall rating of instructors for fiscal year 2007.
- All instructors in the group attended the NHI Instructor Development course (FHWA-NHI-420018 or FHWA-NHI-420018A) within the last 5 years.
- All instructors in the group requested or completed NHI observation for certification.

“We sincerely appreciate the skill, hard work, and dedication to training demonstrated by these NHI instructors and firms,” says NHI Instructor Liaison Carolyn Eberhard. “We thank each of them for their help in delivering critically needed training to the transportation community.”

For more information, visit the NHI Web site at www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov or contact Carolyn Eberhard at (703) 235-0010 or carolyn.eberhard@fhwa.dot.gov.

Crucial Conversations Training

By Melanie Twehues

As part of the Ohio Division’s efforts to improve communication, the Division staff participated in a two-day training course on *Crucial Conversations*. The training was conducted by Anne Luedders from the FHWA Resource Center in Lakewood, Colorado.

During the course, employees learned how to create conditions where people speak with “100 percent candor and 100 percent respect” in order to improve their communication skills. A crucial conversation is a discussion between two or more people where stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong.

This course helped all of us share opinions, feelings, and information safely and freely, when dealing with tough issues.

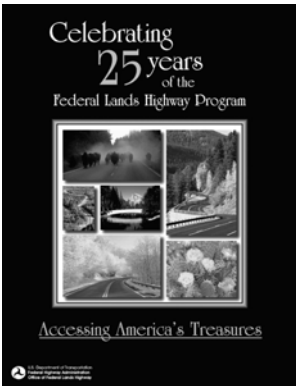


The Ohio Division participates in the Crucial Conversations Training. Left to Right, seated: Rickie Longfellow, Herman Rodrigo, Joe Watson, Cheryl Cattledge, Noel Mehlo, and Mike Armstrong. Standing first row: Ken Harvey, Yolona Jordan, Joe Glinski, Sara Lowry, Jessica Patterson, Melanie Twehues, Dave Snyder, Roger Ryder, Rise Stevens, and Mark VonderEmbse. Last row: Andy Blalock, Dennis Decker, Dan Dobson, Tom Lefchik, Frank Burkett, Dick Henry, Marcus Wilner, Bob McQuiston, Matt Shamis, Adam Johnson, and Jim Buckson.



The Federal Lands Highway Program and People Celebrate Its 25th Anniversary

By Christy Darden and Bonny Falk



In our last *FHWA News* (FN) Holiday issue (Vol. 21, No. 3), we published "Americans Most Modern Motorways: Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and the George Washington Memorial Parkway," which told a story of a partnership between Federal Lands Highway with the National Park Service to create an outstanding tribute to the landscape architects and engineers responsible for its concept and construction. It is also an "All American Road" and a "National Scenic Byway."

In January 2008, former Administrator Rick Capka signed a memo that commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the Federal Lands Highway Program as "... significant because it brought together for the first time a consolidated and coordinated long-range program funded through the Highway Trust Fund." It doesn't take a great deal of reflection to recognize the great work that has been accomplished and is currently being accomplished, such as the Hoover Dam By-Pass Bridge and the Going-to-the-Sun-Road in Glacier National Park!

What is the Federal Highway Lands Program?

The work of Federal Lands Highway Accessing America's Treasures on Federal lands is not new to FHWA. For close to 100 years, FHWA and



Going-to-the-Sun-Road in Glacier National Park.

its predecessors like the Bureau of Public Roads have been doing this work. However, it was only 25 years ago that the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) was created by the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) signed by President Ronald Reagan on January 6, 1983. Today's FLHP is subdivided into four core areas, namely, the Indian Reservation Roads, Park Roads and Parkways, Refuge Roads, and Public Lands Highway Programs. The Public Lands Highway Program consists of the Forest Highway and the Public Lands Highway Discretionary Programs. The primary purpose of the FLHP is to provide financial resources and technical assistance to support a coordinated program of public roads that service the transportation needs of Federal and Indian lands. It brought together for the first time a consolidated and coordinated long-range program funded under the Highway Trust Fund for public roads that serves the transportation needs of the Federal lands, which are not a State or local government responsibility.

Did you know that the total area of America's 50 States is 2.3 billion acres and that the Federal Government has title to about 650 million acres, or about 30 percent of the total area of the United States—and has almost 500,000 miles of roads? These 650 million acres of Federal and Indian lands are managed by various agencies within the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Defense.

The Office of Federal Lands Highway (FLH) works with numerous agencies while overseeing the FLHP. The Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs)—Federal agency or organization that manages or maintains a portion of the lands that are under the direct jurisdiction of the Federal Government—are the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), U.S. Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Navy, Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The FLH also works closely with many State and Territorial partners, such as the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

The FLHP provides funding (about \$1 billion per year) for constructing, preserving, and improving public roads and highways that access and cross through federally owned and Tribal lands. These roads are not a State or local government responsibility, but a Federal responsibility. Conversely, the Federal-aid Highway Program provides Federal financial resources (about \$40 billion per year) and technical assistance to State and local governments for constructing, preserving, and improving the roads that make up the Federal-aid System and the Interstate System.

Administered through partnerships and interagency agreements between FHWA's Office of Federal Lands Highway and FLMA and Tribal customers, the FLHP supports partners beyond design and construction oversight by also providing funding and expertise for integrated transportation planning, road and bridge inspections and other technical assistance activities. It is important to remember that each FLMA and each individual site managed by the FLMA has a unique mission for preserving and protecting its resources while

providing access to those resources for the enjoyment of the public. Federal and Indian lands have many uses including but not limited to recreation, range and grazing, timber, minerals, watersheds, fish and wildlife, and wilderness. These lands are also managed to protect natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values. Recreation use has increased significantly over resource extraction and continues to increase. Balancing the access needs of the traveling public to places that are in the general public's memory, family vacation spots, and personal fishing, hiking, hunting, or picnic stories with safe, congestion free access is the direct result of the FLHP.

Did you know that FHWA has about 2400 employees and that about 650 of those work for Federal Lands Highway? One of the major factors associated with the success of the program is the strong relationship with our Federal, State, local, and Tribal partners.

In *Strategic Plans – The Office of Federal Lands Highway Business Plan 2008-2012* "What Success looks like in 2012," it says:

"FLH employees are the most valued asset in the organization and are the key component to our continued success. Professional development opportunities allow employees to have a more diverse set of skills, reflecting the increasing diversity of FLH programs. Human capital programs recognize the continual need to identify and develop leaders with technical and professional skills to solve tomorrow's challenges."

So, in the year 2008, the *FHWA News* wants to celebrate the Federal Lands Highway Program's 25th Anniversary by interviewing a few of its employees on their successes and challenges working with FLH. We are starting with FLH's Senior Leadership and will focus on a cross section of employees within the Federal Lands organization in the next article.

Who are the Federal Lands Highway Program's Senior Leaders?

The first interviewee, appropriately, is **John Baxter**, Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Lands

(continued on next page)



Federal Lands Highway Senior Leadership Team from left to right: Clara Conner, Division Engineer, Western FLH Division; Ricardo Suarez, Division Engineer, Central FLH Division; John Baxter, Associate Administrator, Office of FLH; and Melisa Ridenour, Division Engineer, Eastern FLH Division.



Federal Lands' 25th Anniversary *(from previous page)*

Highway. On April 9, 2007, John became the Associate Administrator. He provides leadership to FLH and has assisted in planning the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, supporting the delivery of Utah's \$1.59 billion I-15 mega project. So John knows about partnering to get a job done.

John, with your background at FHWA in safety, coordination and fiscal issues, has it been a natural to go to Federal Lands Highway?

Coming from a Federal-aid background, I was curious to see just how different the Federal Lands part of the organization might be. What I found is that fundamentally the issues are similar. Both Federal-aid and Federal Lands offices achieve success by establishing a strong relationship with our partners, and by working with our partners on a daily basis to understand their needs and delivering a value-added service for them. Both programs have a strong customer service element, as well as a stewardship role to play. From a program perspective, we have aligned our Five-Year Plan to better reflect the goals of FHWA, which we share. We are addressing safety issues (particularly on Tribal lands), environmental challenges, infrastructure investment, fiscal management, and even congestion through capacity and alternative transportation options.

The operational aspects of managing an organization of 650 folks, and the "fee-for-service" aspect, certainly make Federal Lands unique not only within FHWA, but within government. We are also one step closer to the delivery of projects and programs, which makes for a great training opportunity. In fact, there are numerous recent examples of Federal Lands' experts who have moved into positions within the Resource Center, Federal-aid Divisions, and Headquarters. And we have brought in excellent staff from other parts of FHWA. This cross-pollination is great for FHWA, and the Agency's challenge to grow and maintain the leaders of tomorrow. We are looking forward to strengthening those already strong ties.

What is the most vital part of your job, and the part you like the most?

The most vital part of my job is to ensure strong communication within the organization and with our many partners and customers. Listening is an important part of that strong communication model. Being new to Federal Lands, I have learned tremendously from listening to our staff throughout the organization. They are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and willing to share their expertise and ideas. Meeting so many Federal Lands folks over the past year, and seeing the beauty of this country that they are challenged to protect while also providing access and transportation services to the public have certainly been the highlight.

Following are comments from the three Division Engineers, who were asked similar questions.

Melisa Ridenour,
Division Engineer, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division

It has been my pleasure to be able to work with such great employees who have such pride in the work that we do in building scenic roads for everyone to enjoy our national treasures within Federal lands. It is just amazing to be able to work where others come to play in our national parks, forests and refuges.

What would you like to add about your job? In coming from the Federal-aid side of our business?

I've come to appreciate that everyone here in Federal Lands understands ALL the cost of delivering a project. Whether it is the equipment and software or the financial and administrative services or the planning, programming, environmental and engineering staff or the training, awards and leave, all these costs and many more not named must be paid for in some manner.

Clara Conner,
Division Engineer, Western Federal Lands Highway Division

What is the most vital part of your job, and the part you like the most?

Leading the Western Federal Lands Highway Division means that I have the most rewarding and enjoyable position in FHWA. The Federal Lands organization has a mission that employees and our stakeholders find personally and professionally challenging and valuable – that of improving access to and through Federal and Tribal lands. When you are given an opportunity to lead an organization that understands its mission and whose mission is valued, then the challenge is to constantly renew and reinvent the people, process and stakeholder relationships to keep the organization energized and vital. This is the job that I like the most.

What do you find the most "challenging" or the part that needs the most enhancements?

When you lead an organization of 200 people, it's a constant challenge to know the individuals. When you work with 100 or so parks, forests, refuges, and tribes, it's hard to keep up to date with their interests and needs. The challenge and the part of the job that I think will also need enhancement, is staying connected with the people with Western Federal Lands and those outside Western Federal Lands whose interests are vital to our success—other Federal Lands offices, others in FHWA, NHTSA, FTA, the Parks, Forests, Wildlife Refuges, tribes, counties, and State Departments of Transportation.

Ricardo Suarez,
Division Engineer, Central Federal Lands Highway Division

What do you find the most



Columbia River Gorge near Crown Point, Oregon. Photograph courtesy of John Baxter.

"challenging" or the part that needs the most enhancement?

The constant focus and attention needed to outline where we believe we need to take our organization to meet future demands and maintain our stature as a strong, and growing organization.

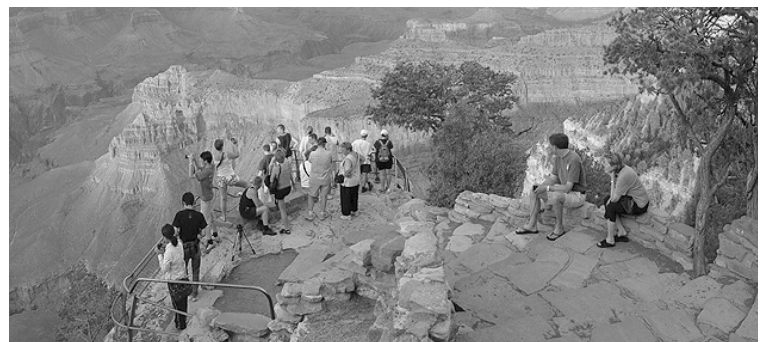
During your tenure at the Federal Lands Highway, what benefits have you received?

I have had the privilege to work with a most talented and capable team of employees and partners with extreme dedication to our joint success in some of the most special places in this country.

What would you like to add about your job?

It is an awesome responsibility to work with so many dedicated employees and partners to meet the many transportation challenges we face for such a large part of our country. It is both humbling and an honor to serve in such a capacity.

Throughout 2008 as FHWA celebrates the 25th Anniversary of the Federal Lands Highway Program, we hope that those of you who have worked at one of the four FLH offices in DC, Sterling, VA, Lakewood, CO, or Vancouver, WA, have great memories of your time spent with FLH, the people with whom you worked, and the special places where you visited. We could not have done it without everyone who has worked or supported the program. Please go to our Web site: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/flh> or contact any of the offices for events that are being scheduled to join in the celebration! And watch for the next edition of the *FHWA News* when we focus on a cross section of employees within the Federal Lands organization!



Public access at Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. Photograph courtesy of the National Park Service.



Ohio School Wins 2008 National Engineers Week Future City Competition

By Rickie Longfellow



Students Glen Gainer, Emma Henderson and Jeremy Boyd display the first place trophy above the city of RA, with Franklin County Engineer, Ted Beidler, and their teacher Debbie Pellington. Photograph courtesy of Ben Zweig/DCEventphoto.

On February 20, 2008, Glen Gainer, Emma Henderson, and Jeremy Boyd, all 13 year-old students from Heritage Middle School in Westerville, Ohio, competed with 35 other middle schools from various States to win the 2008 National Engineers Week Future City Competition with their creation, the Egyptian city of RA. The fictional city features solar and wind energy as well as hydropower in the Nile River and the Mediterranean Sea, providing clean air and a healthy and lucrative life to each of its citizens. Other features of RA are top-notch educational and recreational systems and advanced research centers in a healthy economic environment.

A lot of thought, facts, science, engineering, and creativity went into the building of this ideal city. Read the complete abstract of RA at: <http://www.gisuser.com/content/view/13977/>

The second place winner went to Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland, New York; third place went to Our Lady Help of Christians School, Abington, Pennsylvania; fourth went to Westminster Academy, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and fifth place went to Queen of Angels Catholic School, Roswell, Georgia.

This year's Future City competition, held at the Hyatt Regency, Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., celebrates its 16th year.

The winning team won the Ohio regional competition on January 19, at the Center for Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus. FHWA Ohio Division employees are active each year in this event. Richard Henry, Right-of-Way Officer, and Joseph Glinski, Safety Program Engineer, serve on the Standing Committee for the annual State Competition. This year's VIP judges included Ohio Division Administrator Dennis Decker. Also from the Ohio Division were Jim Buckson, Mobility and Traffic Operations Engineer; Hilda Velasco, ITS Engineer; Noel Mehlo, Planning Specialist; Matt Shamis, Bridge Engineer; Roger Ryder, Program Delivery Engineer; and Sara Lowry, Transportation Engineer, participating as judges at the State Competition.

Thank you to Richard Henry and Matt Shamis of the Ohio Division Office, Lisa Huelskamp of Heritage Middle School, and photographer Ben Zweig for their contributions to this article.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in this annual event!

National Engineers Week Provides a Fun, Exciting, and Educational Engineering Experience

By Martha Soneira



Students from Royal Oak Middle School won the 2008 Future City Special Transportation Award from FHWA for their creative design of a Siberian transportation system in the year 2278.

to apply elements of math, science, computer science, social studies, language arts, and art to hands-on projects that stimulate creative problem-solving abilities—designing a city of the future. The national competition culminated in Washington, DC during Engineers Week, the week of February 18, 2008, with schools that won regional competitions earlier in the year competing for national recognition.

Cities are designed by student teams using SimCity 3000 software. Their Future Cities must date from the year 2150 or later and have a population of at least 50,000 residents. This year's theme for the competition was "Keeping Our Future City's Infrastructure Healthy: Using Nanotechnology to Monitor City Structures and Systems."

In addition to the computer design, students select an area of their Future City to be represented in a three-dimensional scale model. Models are

evaluated on creativity, accuracy to established scale, infrastructure, a moving part component, quality of workmanship, and use of recyclable materials. Teams are limited to \$100 for their materials in building and presenting.

National awards were presented for computer design of the Future City, scale model representation, research essay, abstract, and oral presentation. In addition, special awards were presented by technical societies, corporations, government and other entities to recognize students' efforts in specific areas.

Judges from the Federal Highway Administration reviewed 37 student projects for a special award for the best transportation system, rating creativity for design of a transportation system that allows both mobility and transport of goods and services. The student team from Royal Oak Middle School in Michigan won the Special Transportation Award this year, for their future city called Nexus. We were welcomed to 2278, the year of nanotechnology and renewable energy. Located on the east coast of Siberia, near the tunnel from Alaska, Nexus is on the forefront of emerging technologies.

Competition was tough, because these students were imaginative!

What's better than visiting an exciting city? Designing one! The Future City Competition affords an opportunity for students in the Seventh and Eighth Grade

Kentucky's Future Engineers Celebrate Engineers Week

By Bernadette Dupont



Elkhorn Middle School Future City Team. From left to right: Sadie Meyer, Jeannece Luhrs, Stephanie Robinson, Dennis Luhrs (FHWA-KY), Erin Marshall and Thamara Pires.

Two schools in Frankfort, Kentucky—Elkhorn Middle School and Good Shepherd School—competed in the statewide regional competition for the *National Engineer's Week Future City* competition held at the University of Kentucky's College of Engineering, in Lexington, Kentucky. Both schools emerged victorious. For the second year in a row, Elkhorn Middle School won first place in the *Future City* competition. Shelby County won second place, and Good Shepherd School, a first time contestant, proudly took third place. The Kentucky Division provided engineering mentors for the two Frankfort teams.

"Mentoring young people is very rewarding," said Dennis Luhrs, engineering mentor for Elkhorn Middle School and Assistant Division Administrator for the Kentucky Division (FHWA-KY). "I get as much out of it as the students do. I enjoy the enthusiasm that the students bring to the project, and I share in their trials and tribulations. When they won the regional competition, I had a great sense of pride."

John Ballantyne, FHWA-KY's Program Delivery Team Leader, echoed those sentiments, "I really enjoy helping the students set and reach their goals. The students are creative and their design ideas are proof of that. Their excitement is contagious."

Excitement only begins to describe how the winners of the regional competitions felt as they

anticipated their trip to the National finals in Washington, D.C. from February 17, 2008 to February 23, 2008. This was the 16th year of the *National Engineer's Week Future City* competition, and is one of many events held during *National Engineer's Week*. *National Engineer's Week* is celebrated at the end of February, and its purpose is to increase public awareness and appreciation for engineering professions. The *Future City* Competition is open to seventh and eighth graders, and provides an avenue for students to broaden their understanding of engineering. This year's theme was nanotechnology, an applied science that utilizes components on the atomic scale.

To enter the competition, students have to work as a team under the guidance of a teacher and an engineer, submit a computer simulation model that they have built using SimCity3000 software, demonstrate their writing skills by writing an abstract and a research essay explaining how a nanotechnology was applied to their city design, build a physical scale model of their future city using recycled materials, and make a team presentation.

Elkhorn Middle School's SimCity3000 winning team consists of three eighth graders: Sadie Meyer, Thamara Pires, and Stephanie Robinson. They also have an alternate on their team, Erin Marshall. Their teacher, Jeannece Luhrs, is one of the teachers for the Science Gifted and Talented program at Elkhorn Middle School in Frankfort, KY. Mrs. Luhrs learned of the competition and decided it would be perfect for her students. She enlisted her husband, Dennis, to serve as the official engineering mentor for the *Future City* team. As a Planning and Environmental Engineer for FHWA-KY, this author also mentored the winning team.

The students located their future city in Italy, making sure to add "Italian flavor" to their "meaty" presentation. Their city was named Fortana, and the students wore Italian hats, and rolled their R's when saying "Fortana" and "Arrivederci".

According to Stephanie Robinson, "Italy was chosen because all three students wished to one day travel to that part of the world. Fortana is also a place that everyone in the world would want to live in, as it was a seaside resort, rich in culture and history, but very technologically sound."

The citizens of Fortana are privy to multiple uses of nanotechnology. "We applied nanotechnology in multiple areas, in the transportation system, communication system, educational system, as well as in the health industry.

Sadie Meyer stated that they were most proud of their transportation system. "Each model has to have a moving part, and one of our moving parts was our tubular transportation system. Our transportation system utilized nanotechnology and magnets to transport the people of Fortana in a safe, fast, and economical manner."

Thamara Pires focused on how nanotechnology was utilized in the construction industry, saying, "In the future, we'll be using pumicecrete, a lightweight building material that will allow us to build 400-story buildings—200 below ground and 200 above ground. Nanobots, or atomic robots, will monitor and repair the building on a continuous basis, checking for structural damage, leaks, and other things like that."

These three students are creative and forward thinking. According to Mrs. Luhrs, these students are definitely leaders of the future. "They are hardworking and good team players. All three are in the Gifted and Talented program, so they have a lot on their plate, but they get the job done."

The Elkhorn Middle School did more than get the job done; they won the regional competition and a special award at the national competition.

Kentucky's Future City Team at the national competition competed for scholarships, a variety of awards, and the national grand prize—an all-expense paid trip to the U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. The Elkhorn Middle School students again distinguished themselves, by winning the national special award for Best Use of Innovative Construction Materials and Techniques. This award was sponsored by the American Society for Quality-Design and Construction Division. The students all had a great time, and it was an experience that they'll never forget. Well done! Or—as they say in "Fortana"—Ben Cotto!

Quick Pics: The 2007 Missouri Division Show Me Award

By Carolyn Bartel

Mary Ridgeway, Environment/ROW Team Leader, and Pete Clogston, Bridge/T2/Research Team Leader, were the recipients of the 2007 *Missouri Division Show Me Award*. The *Show Me Award* was established in 2005 and is a cash award given annually to an employee(s) who exhibits leadership initiatives, contributes to the efficiency/effectiveness of the Division Office, promotes teamwork, and willingly assumes additional responsibilities.



Missouri Division Administrator Allen Masuda presenting the award to Mary Ridgeway and Pete Clogston.



2007 Engineering Excellence Award Winners

By Sheila Duwadi

The *Engineering Excellence Award* was established to recognize outstanding engineering achievements within the past three years by an FHWA engineer or teams led by an FHWA employee with a degree in engineering. The first winner was recognized in the year 2000. This award allows FHWA an opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions our engineers make to the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in this country. Nominees are judged based on the significance of their engineering achievements, and for their education, professional honors, and contributions to the community.

The winners are selected by a panel of judges established by the Executive Director. The Panel includes representatives from each of the FHWA offices, (i.e., Research, Development and Technology, Headquarters, Federal Lands, Divisions, and the Resource Center).

2007 Winners

Bill Prosser
Highway Design Engineer,
Office of Infrastructure, Program
Administration



From left to right: Joe Toole, Associate Administrator, Professional and Corporate Development; Bill Prosser, Highway Design Engineer; and James Ray, Acting Administrator.

Mr. Prosser is noted for the engineering accomplishments in advancing the highway design practices nationally in his 42-year career with the FHWA. His influence is demonstrated through his leadership in the many initiatives he has worked on (e.g., developing and updating national design standards; designing access to the Interstate System; and developing and implementing Federal regulations and policies on design issues), and through technical assistance provided to our partners. Examples of his recent accomplishments include:

1. *Accessible Public Rights-of-Way: Planning and Designing for Alterations Guide*, 2007.
2. Updated FHWA policy on compliance with ADA requirements, 2006.
3. Proposed revisions to FHWA I-System Access Policy and the draft technical guide providing guidance on changes in access to I-System, 2006.

Mr. Prosser is also noted for the significant influence he has had over several decades in developing and implementing the *AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book)* since 1982; and since 1994, he has served as the Secretary of AASHTO

Technical Committee on Geometric Design, the group responsible for the *Green Book*.

Raj Ghaman
Research Highway Engineer, Office of
Operation RD&T



From left to right: Joe Toole, Associate Administrator, Professional And Corporate Development; Raj Ghaman, Highway Research Highway Engineer; and James Ray, Acting Administrator.

Mr. Ghaman is a leader in the development and application of advanced transportation controllers. Additionally, he advances, directs, and conducts national research related to mobility and safety. He is noted for his most recent accomplishment in providing leadership in the development and deployment of the Lite version of Adaptive Control Software (ACS). Mr. Ghaman is responsible in the development, testing, and technology transfer of: the Advanced Transportation Controller, the next generation of multi-function, multi-tasking hardware that can operate a number of ITS applications; and, Adaptive Control Software and the new live version of this traffic signal control software with automatically updated traffic signal timing plans in response to changing traffic demand. Field evaluations have shown that full ACS software reduces congestion from five to 25 percent when tested against best signal timing plans.

Clayton Chen
Highway Traffic Engineer, Office of Safety,
R&D



From left to right: Joe Toole, Associate Administrator, Professional and Corporate Development; Clayton Chen, Highway Traffic Engineer; and James Ray, Acting Administrator.

Dr. Chen is noted for his leadership in updating the Crash Reduction Factors (CRFs), a first effort in more than 20 years. This decision-making process simplifies the means to determine which countermeasures should be included for adequate investigation as rigorous evaluations of each countermeasure in all possible situations that would not be practical. It provides the States that have long used a variety of techniques and tools to determine which countermeasures have the best potential for saving lives and reducing serious injuries—an updated tool. Dr. Chen's effort will make a significant difference in improving the quality and effectiveness of safety projects that are implemented.

Dr. Chen is also noted for his civic and humanitarian activities outside of FHWA, specifically his involvement in teaching Chinese language classes and culture. He is a certified instructor for Enrichment Pre K-12 Schools Education Program Foreign Language Experience Program (FLEX-Chinese) for the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Fred Skaer
Director, Office of Project Development and
Environmental Review



From left to right: Joe Toole, Associate Administrator, Professional and Corporate Development; Fred Skaer, Office of Project Development and Environmental Review; and James Ray, Acting Administrator.

Mr. Skaer is noted for his recent roles following Hurricane Katrina and the collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis. In both cases he participated on a SWAT team and worked on developing processes to arrive at favorable expedited outcomes. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, Mr. Skaer, working with local FHWA-DOT teams advancing the design-build contracting for two replacement bridges on U.S. Route 90, developed a process whereby the environmental agency and citizen groups could provide input in the design of the replacement bridge thereby ensuring the integrity of public involvement. In the case of the I-35W Bridge replacement, Mr. Skaer worked to ensure that the Federal reviews and complete environmental processes were expedited within three weeks of the Bridge collapse.

Furthermore, Mr. Skaer is also noted for his civic and humanitarian activity outside of FHWA, most notably for his involvement over the years as the mentor at the City of Alexandria Court Services Department, as Commissioner for the Town of Vienna Planning Commission, as Commissioner for the Transportation Safety Commission, and as an Assistant Scoutmaster.

FHWA and FMCSA in Utah Having Fun and Giving Back!

By Barbara Redwing

From the Editor:

As Winter gives way to Spring, the Holiday Season becomes little more than a memory. But when people join together for a good cause, the time of year just doesn't seem so important. It's never too late to hear good news . . .

FHWA Western Director of Field Services (DFS), Utah Division and Utah Resource Center with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration enjoyed the year and the 2007 holiday season. The 2007 Social Committee kept the office in a positive and fun working atmosphere all year. The Social Committee consisted of Anthony Sarhan, Area Engineer; Brenda Redwing, Area Engineer; Carlos Machado, Major Projects Manager; and Debbie McKnight, Administrative Assistant, also known as ABCD. They coordinated and provided numerous activities throughout the year. Some of the activities organized were a winter bowling league, potlucks, summer picnic, holidays, monthly birthday cakes, Administrative Professionals Day, Bosses Day, Cookie Exchange and Sub-for-Santa Family 2007.

On October 31, 2007, FHWA and FMCSA celebrated Halloween in costumes and enjoyed a Thanksgiving potluck. For a Christmas Charity, FHWA and FMCSA raised over \$400 for Sub-for-Santa Family 2007. Brenda Redwing spent the weekend shopping with her children throughout the Salt Lake City area. Some of the items she bought were a digital camera, pizza oven, bicycle, rocking horse, clothes, Guitar Hero III and more.

Canstruction® Takes Off in Baltimore

By Shay Burrows

Teams from the Baltimore office of the Resource Center (RC) and the Maryland branch of the DelMar Division faced off in some friendly competition for a good cause on December 4, 2007. The two groups held the first annual can construction competition based on the Society of Design Administration's Canstruction® foundation to collect resources for the Maryland Food Bank.

As part of this year's Harvest for the Hungry campaign, the Baltimore Resource Center location decided to do more than just collect canned goods for the area's hungry families. Always a little on the competitive side, the RC staff challenged their downstairs neighbors to a little competition. The DelMar Division couldn't pass up a challenge and the collections began.

The two offices quickly decided that just collecting cans wasn't enough and decided to launch the can construction competition. As you might guess, Canstruction® involves building structures with full cans of food. At the Resource Center, structural engineer Shay Burrows developed a plan for a stop light made entirely of cans. Since this stop light stood more than 8 feet tall, it required a lot of



The Halloween Party, pictured from front to back: Roland Stanger, David Blauer, Kim Frankforth, Ria Wilkerson, Brenda Redwing, Anthony Sarhan, Debbie McKnight, Bryan Cawley, Steven Call, Kelly Lund, Trevor Hart, Butch Waidelich, Deb Sauers, and Carlos Machado.

The Sub-for-Santa Family was a single mother with two children—a 6 year old boy and 18 month old girl. Last year, the family was in a car accident on I-80 near Park City, Utah. The mother was thrown from the vehicle leaving her paralyzed from the waist down and now she uses a wheelchair. Luckily, the children sustained only minor bruises. The car accident changed their lives forever and continues to be a financial strain.

On Tuesday, December 11, 2007, FHWA and FMCSA held a cookie exchange and wrapping party to celebrate the gift of giving. Thirteen FHWA employees baked 96 cookies to exchange. Those who waited until the last minute to do their baking were stressed out. But in the end, everyone was thrilled to bring 96 cookies home to their loved ones to enjoy.

Debbie McKnight did an awesome job and blessed

us with a Christmas Veggie Tree to eat at the wrapping party. FHWA and FMCSA always like to eat healthy even with 96 cookies to eat.

Trevor Hart, PDP Financial Specialist, checks out the presents and learns how to wrap presents as he watches Ria Wilkerson and Steve Call teach him.

Presents were all wrapped up and ready to give. The Social Committee took the gifts and a box of 96 cookies from the cookie exchange over to the Sub-Santa Family. The family was amazed and extremely grateful to FHWA and FMCSA for their generosity during a difficult time for the family.

Idaho Division Awarded the Southwestern Idaho CFC Presidential Award

By Frank Tooke



Front Row, left to right: Scott Frey, Debbie Apsey, Ross Blanchard, and Paul Ziman. Middle Row, left to right: Lance Johnson, Peter Hartman, Frank Tooke, Renee Sigel, and Ed Hanson. Back Row, left to right: Ed Miltner, Michael Caliendo, Ed Johnson, Gary Kunz, and Kevin Movius.

The Idaho Division was awarded the Presidential Award (highest rate of participation, highest dollar amount raised, and highest per capita donation) for agencies of less than 25 personnel by the Southwestern Idaho Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The Idaho Division achieved 100 percent participation during this year's campaign. In total, the Division contributed more than \$5,300—130 percent of its 2007 goal. Overall, the Southwestern Idaho CFC campaign raised an all-time record of more than \$500,000.

The Combined Federal Campaign enables Federal employees to contribute to local, State, national and international charitable entities that provide aid and assistance to those in need.



Garrett A. Morgan Program Generates Excitement among Students in Pennsylvania

By Gwen M. Sutton

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), one of seven educational agencies to receive a 2007 Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Education Program grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), held its first *Southwestern Pennsylvania Highway and Bridge Construction and Design Career Day*.



The career day activity was a huge success with almost 600 high school students attending.

The event was hosted at the Western Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC) in December 2007. The career day activity was a

huge success with almost 600 high school students, 60 exhibitors, and 40 educators from seven counties in attendance. Mr. Dan Paul, Program Coordinator, Career Dynamics Program, AIU, coordinated the recruitment of participating school districts, educators, and students, and stated that there was an overwhelming positive response to the event, which brought information and hands-on activities together in a day focused on careers related to building bridges and highways.

Students took part in welding, masonry, material testing, and other interesting hands-on workplace

tasks. Job requirements, career planning, and college preparation were explained as students moved to each exhibit. "The [FHWA] is to be saluted for its foresight in funding the development of a career pipeline for careers related to transportation," said Ms. Mary Mulroy, Director of Adult Education & Workforce Development Programs at AIU. "The opportunities for employment in this field are limitless and should be on every high school educator's, parent's, and student's radar screen. Events like the career day really spread the word." Students were also given an opportunity to sign up for further apprenticeship information, college contacts, or a mentor relationship with a transportation professional.

For each student participant, business partners donated a backpack, hand-held calculator, hard hat, and safety glasses. Each student also received information about apprenticeship opportunities and a Career Day Program developed by the Career Dynamics program at AIU. A review of a follow-up questionnaire completed by the students revealed that the students increased their knowledge and understanding of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as they related to occupations in transportation.

"This is a wonderful example of the important role the Garrett Morgan Program has in preparing today's youth for future careers in transportation," stated Ms. Gwen Sutton, Program Manager, Universities and Grants Programs, FHWA. "Improving students' STEM skills through interesting and informative transportation-related activities such as AIU's Career Day is what the Garrett Morgan Program is all about."



Students were given the opportunity to take part in many hands-on workplace tasks.

Leadership in Operations Awards

By Marianna Rizzo and Martin Knopp



Left to right: Jeff Paniati, Mike Schauer, Tracy Scriba, Regina McElroy, and John Sullivan.

In November 2007, Jeff Paniati, then Associate Administrator for Operations, introduced a *Leadership in Operations Award* to recognize employees for their demonstrated leadership skills in enhancing system performance through improvements in system management and operations.

The *Leadership in Operations Award* will be presented on an annual basis to one Field employee and one Headquarters employee. The recipients were nominated by their peers. The 2007 annual award recognizes Mike Schauer from the New York Division and Tracy Scriba from the Headquarters Office of Operations.

Both Mike and Tracy have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills on a daily basis in the pursuit of excellence in performance, fostering teamwork, and furthering the transportation operations discipline.

Jeff was honored to present the award at the Operations Council Meeting on January 17. John Sullivan, Division Administrator, North Carolina Division and Regina McElroy, Director, Office of Transportation Operations in Headquarters, co-chairs of the Operations Council, were also present for the award presentation.

Mike Schauer has often demonstrated his ability not only to lead a team but also to contribute in his role as a team member, including his work with the FHWA Operations Council, the Arterial Operations workgroup, and the New York State Public Safety Conference. Through his leadership as Co-Chair, the Operations Council's Arterial Management working group developed several useful resources as well as best practices information. Mike was also a member of the Traffic Analysis Team that earned FHWA's *Strive for Excellence Team Award* last year. More persistence as part of the New York State Department of Transportation's Statewide 511 Steering Committee contributed greatly to the new contract to develop the Statewide 511 system. Mike's breadth of program and technical

knowledge, and his ability to communicate and apply that knowledge, are a model of FHWA's approach to working with our State and local partners.

Tracy Scriba has been a leader and a driving force in advancing the Work Zone Safety and Mobility final rule. She consistently provided sound technical advice and quality customer service in fostering a close working relationship with the Divisions, and helped set the stage for implementation of the final rule. Tracy co-chaired and utilized the work zone working group within the Operations council to lead the effort and mapped out a strategy to ensure that all of the States would be prepared to meet the deadline. She skillfully provided insight and innovative strategies to overcome limited resources and other constraints; discussed national technology opportunities; shared policy examples from lead States; and helped foster and facilitate inter-State dialogue. Tracy's efforts and leadership were crucial to the successful implementation of the final rule across the country.

The Operations discipline looks forward to discovering and recognizing future emerging leaders. The 2008 nominations process will begin in October 2008.



An Extraordinary Call To Duty

By Karen Damiani

From Connecticut to Northern Iraq and back, last month FHWA welcomed back one of its own.

In January 2008, U.S. Army Reserves Lieutenant Colonel Stephen J. Cooper returned back from service after a more than fifteen month active deployment to Iraq to serve the United States in *Operation Enduring Freedom* and *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

After a September 2006 sendoff, which left colleagues and friends with a mix of emotions—most notably pride—the Connecticut Division was thrilled to welcome back its Pavement and Materials Engineer.

“We are so happy to have Steve back home safe and sound,” said Bradley D. Keazer, Division Administration, Connecticut Division. “He and his family were in our thoughts and prayers throughout his period of service abroad and we are so thankful to have him rejoin his FHWA family.”

A 1985 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) with a B.S. in Civil Engineering, Steve began his career as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. After more than six years of service as a Combat Engineer Officer, Steve left active duty in 1992 and began his civilian career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Geotechnical Engineer and Pavement and Materials Engineer. He later joined FHWA as a mid-career hire in 2000, having dutifully served the Connecticut Division and its State counterparts in delivering our Federal-aid program ever since. Steve also continued his service in the Army Reserves and was eventually promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 2004.



In June 2006, Steve received a call informing him that his unit—Facility Engineer Team 23, of Fort Devens, Massachusetts—was being called to active duty.

Leaving behind his wife and three sons—including a newborn baby boy not yet a year old—Steve determinedly answered the call to service and begin his trip to the Middle East, which would include stops at the Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri Mobilization Station, and Kuwait Camp Buehring along the way.

With his Engineer unit’s specialty area of base camp development and infrastructure-building, Steve commanded a very diverse team of professional engineers assigned primarily to manage all engineering work at Contingency Operations Base Speicher in the vicinity of Tikrit, one of the four large military bases in Iraq. Key initiatives under Steve’s leadership included Master Planning; Project Development and Management; Cost Tracking; Construction Management; Roadway Infrastructure Construction and Repairs; Airfield Repairs; Utility Improvements including Electrical, Water, and Waste Water improvements; Area Drainage; and Force Protection. Steve’s team also strongly supported the “Iraqi First Initiative” to train and teach locals in the vicinity of Tikrit, Iraq to develop and maintain their transportation infrastructure. Steve’s long assignment abroad helped to greatly improve the living and operating conditions of our soldiers and civilians operating in Iraq. He also brought tremendous hope to a war-torn nation via new construction, maintenance operations, and the facilitation of training delivery to locals to ensure that contracts in Northern Iraq stayed with locals rather than be awarded to business entities in other countries.

Steve is extremely appreciative and grateful for all the support Federal Highways—and especially the Connecticut Division Office—provided to his family during his extended separation from his



Steve, (far right) sits with his family. From left to right: sons Skylar, Ryan, wife Bridget, and son Kyle.

family. “It was a comforting feeling knowing my wife could rely on the Office in times of need,” said Cooper.

Recently, Steve received a special recognition from Mary Peters entitled, *Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Award*, for his dedication to our country and year-long deployment overseas.

“Steve’s long awaited return from duty has come not a moment too soon. ‘You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone’ is an understatement,” said Keith R. Lane, Director of Research and Materials, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Office of Research and Materials.

“During his absence, Steve’s level headed, technically based approach to any and all materials and pavement issues was sorely missed. No topic is too small, too large, or too sensitive for Steve to guide us in State, regional, and National issues. It’s great to have you back, Steve!”

Steve considers it an extreme honor serving for both the Department of Transportation and the Department of Defense. He enjoys serving his country and—looking toward the future like his father before him—aspires to eventually get promoted to full bird Colonel.

The Kentucky Division’s 2007 Photo Contest

By Bernadette Dupont

The Kentucky Division held their annual Division Photo Contest in December 2007. The categories were “Made in Kentucky” and “Kentucky Roads.” Each person in the Division could vote for his or her top three choices in each category. The entry with the most votes was declared the winner. Winning entries were announced at the annual Christmas party. Not



A bourbon barrel graveyard.

everyone in the Division enters a photo in the contest, but everyone enjoys looking at the beautiful photography and casting their votes for the winning entries.

The first place winner in the “Made in Kentucky” category was Tony Young. His picture featured what he referred to as “A bourbon barrel graveyard.”

Second place in this category went to Rita Wallen, who took a picture of horses on Stoney Farm in Woodford County.

Third place went to Teresa Witt for a picture of her cat. The cat’s name is P.R. Henry. P.R. stands for Pea Ridge Road where she found him.

“Henry was a cat that had been left behind by a family that was forced to move, Teresa explained. “When I found him he was starving, you could see the vertebrae in his back and his feet were all bloody. The vet said that his paw injuries were the worst he’d ever seen. His paw pads had to be reconstructed. It was bad. However, he now weighs 20 pounds!”



A road in Frankfort.

The first place winner in the “Kentucky Roads” category was Olivia Michael. Olivia took her picture on a road in Frankfort.

Second and third place went to this author, Bernadette Dupont. The second place photo was taken in the spring along a country road in Woodford County.

The third place photo was also taken in Woodford County on Old Frankfort Pike on a wintery day.



On Kili They Call Me Babu

By Peter Kopac



A chance for me to pose for a photo in Camp Barafu before the clouds moved in.

Himalayas where she had gone just over 14,000 feet. All I could say for myself was that I had been to Denver twice and Mexico City once.

Getting Ready

The plan was that we would go toward the end of the rainy season, trek very slowly, drink a lot of water, take Diamox pills if necessary to speed up acclimatization, and follow the more scenic Machame route. The Marangu route was said to be easier and thus used by more novices, but it required sleeping in huts. Both Jennifer and I preferred sleeping in separate tents, where we might actually get some sleep and not have to put up with snoring and other noises. Further, we felt it important to memorize a few basic Swahili words and phrases to show respect and to use when we needed to communicate with our guides.

Physically, I felt prepared as our departure date neared. I owed that to having faithfully worked out (biking, swimming, weight lifting) an average of about 15 hours per week after my hip operation. In the last eight weeks, I also added to my regimen long-distance hiking, running up and down bleacher steps with a weighted backpack, and all sorts of leg, foot, toe, and abdominal core exercises. I felt like I was in the best shape of my life.

Starting the Trip

Our ascent on Kili began the morning of December 20. Jennifer and I had a crew of ten to support us—Harold our lead guide, Basso our assistant guide, a cook, and seven porters. Both Harold and Basso and a couple of the porters spoke some English.

After eating, we put on our inclement weather gear and headed down to Barranco Camp, elevation 12,960 feet, where the porters had already set up tents. We would spend the night there, in keeping with the acclimatization principle of “walk-high, sleep-low.” Upon reaching Barranco, I developed an intense headache. Could this be AMS? I downed 1.5 liters of water and two aspirins, and the headache went away. It had been a case of dehydration; had it been AMS, the headache would not have disappeared so quickly.

Climbing on All Fours

The next morning, we were to climb the great Barranco Wall, which from a distance looked like a sheer rock wall at least 700 feet high. As we neared it, however, I could see potential ways to get up there (the engineer in me) and began to think that it might be conquerable. It required considerable use of our hands to get over, around, and in between rocks as well as great care not to slip over the edge in some places. Neither Jennifer nor I ever looked down. As we climbed, I also experienced one of the side effects of the Diamox I had taken the previous evening. The Diamox had made my fingers tingly, making it difficult to get a good grip on the rocks. My grip, however, did not fail me, and we made it to the top of the wall just before the rains came.

During the trek, Jennifer and I had been developing a good rapport with our crew. It was obvious they wanted us to succeed, and we welcomed their advice. As we walked with our crew using a smattering of the phrases we had learned, we shared numerous stories, humor, and jokes.

Their jokes were more of the riddle variety, typically about jungle animals. In camp, Jennifer taught the crew a few Western card games, and in return they taught her a dubious African card game that called as much for playful intimidation as for card skills. I taught them some English words, such as the rock types (obsidian, basalt, slate) that we encountered on the way, and the subtle differences in words such as “excellent,” “fantastic,” “awesome,” “extraordinary,” etc. They called me Babu—or grandfather—in Swahili. Jennifer went along with it and called me Babu, and I proudly referred to myself in the third person as Babu.

Walking has always been my least favorite mode of transportation. Running rated higher, but it led, in part, to my hip replacement surgery three years ago. After the surgery, my doctor told me I had a total of “x cycles” in my new artificial hip. He could not define “x” although he painted a picture of the effects of walking versus running—one walking step is one cycle and one running step is ten cycles. Not wanting to accumulate x cycles too fast, which could one day lead to an additional hip replacement, I decided to stop running completely and to walk only when necessary. Thus, it surprised my 29-year old daughter, Jennifer, when I suggested we climb Mount Kilimanjaro (Kili).

Beginning of a Dream

What had captivated me was a calendar picture. It showed the snow-capped mountain rising majestically over the African jungle, a giraffe grazing in the foreground. The mountain looked easy enough to climb. I told Jennifer I could do it in one day. “Yeah, right, Dad!” was her response.

I quickly developed second thoughts about climbing Kili after doing a search using the Google® online search tool. Not only could it not be done in one day, but many people claimed it was the toughest challenge they ever undertook. Most of these people were experienced trekkers who had already succeeded in what they considered less daunting climbs—Machu Picchu, Mt. Fuji, etc. Then there was the issue of altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), which results from ascending too fast without properly acclimating. A majority of climbers get at least a mild case of AMS above 14,000 feet. The Kili summit, Uhuru Peak, is 19,340 feet. The symptoms of AMS (consisting primarily of a headache; but accompanied with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, or difficulty sleeping) can be difficult to distinguish from those of normal physiological changes that occur in every person at high altitudes. And AMS can quickly lead to the more serious and often deadly High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE).

The research resulted in my gaining a healthy respect for the mountain. I concluded that Jennifer and I would have to plan very carefully to gain every advantage to compensate for our lack of experience—should I say my lack of experience. Jennifer had previously done some trekking in the



Jennifer on the second day near Camp Shira (elevation 12,300 feet) with the Kilimanjaro peaks about 4 miles behind her. An avalanche caused the deaths of several Americans a few years ago, and the Tanzanian government no longer permits direct ascents from here.

Jennifer and I carried backpacks weighing ten to 15 lbs., containing primarily water and what else we thought we would need on a given day. The porters each carried about 30 lbs., consisting of their own gear and water, plus the tents, extra clothes, food, and supplies we all would need during our one-week trek.

By midday on December 22, we reached Lava Tower at an elevation of 15,180 feet, already higher than anywhere in the continental United States. As snow began falling, Jennifer and I ate lunch in a cold and damp cave and were visited by a small welcoming committee of several small mice looking to pick up some of the crumbs left behind.

Reaching the Summit

You could say our first five days on Kili essentially were practice for the sixth day. During the first five days, Jennifer and I learned to walk and breathe properly at high altitudes, and we got to better understand the mountain, ourselves, and each other. On the sixth day, Christmas Day, we were to make the ascent to Uhuru Peak from the Barafu base camp, elevation 14,910 feet. It was to be by far the most grueling day, estimated to take 6 to 8 hours to reach Uhuru and another 6 to 8 hours to go back to Barafu and continue further down to Mweka Camp, elevation 10,170 feet.

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On Kili They Call Me Babu

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Harold, Basso, Jennifer, and I started for Uhuru at 12:05 a.m., carrying only essentials in our backpacks. It was a cool, crisp, clear night with a full moon and numerous bright stars overhead. In the distance, we could see flickers of light from the headlamps of trekkers who left camp ahead of us. As we gained elevation, it got colder, the wind picked up, and the decreasing oxygen content in the air became more noticeable. When we stopped for water (about every half hour), I could not get much water to pass through the frozen rubber tap on my insulated water and energy drink bottles. Jennifer was quick to switch from gloves to much warmer down mittens, and I did the same a little later.

As we continued uphill, we passed a number of trekkers who looked like they were struggling and/or stopping too long to rest. The danger in stopping too long is that one might fall asleep and/or freeze. Jennifer and I stopped only for water. What helped us most was halfway up, when Harold and Basso started whistling Silent Night. It was quite a spiritual moment. Here we were on Christmas Eve, above the clouds, with an occasional shooting star in the sky, in absolute awe of our surroundings, and in complete peace. At that moment, we both knew we would make it to the summit. Christmas songs occupied my mind most of the rest of the way, and Jennifer later told me they occupied hers also. The last mile was the most difficult, with over-packed snow, and we reached the summit just before 5:30 a.m. It felt great!

After celebratory picture taking, I felt so exhilarated that I half ran and half slid nonstop down the scree (loose rock debris) to Barafu, with Basso right behind me. Just a few hours earlier, I had kiddingly told the porters I would see them at 7 a.m., not really expecting it, and here it was a little after 7 a.m. I was the first successful trekker to make it to Uhuru and back to Barafu that day. Jennifer, who arrived a little after 8 a.m., was the first successful female.



Jennifer and I on the Uhuru summit at 5:30 AM on Christmas Day. What a feeling!

Coming Down from the High

That evening, in Mweka, Jennifer and I decided to give Christmas gifts to our crew in addition to the monetary tips they would receive the next day. Between the two of us, we gave out considerable clothing items and trekking gear, most of it brand new or only slightly used. I figured I would no longer have a need for my items. The crew was very appreciative and serenaded us with African songs and dances (I'm sure they would have anyway). We

parted ways the next day, after exchanging e-mail addresses with Harold and Basso.

About a week later, back in Virginia, I was one day leaving the office a little later than usual. I had planned on going biking that afternoon, but now it would be too dark and it was raining. So instead, I opted to go out for a long walk in the rain. As I walked, Babu found himself humming Christmas songs. Walking never felt this good before Kili. You know, this year I just might accumulate a whole lot of walking cycles on that artificial hip of mine.



This picture of our crew, with Jennifer on far left and me second from right, was taken at Camp Mweka the morning after our ascent. Harold is next to Jennifer, and Basso is next to Harold. The 10th member of the crew is not in the photo as he experienced altitude sickness on the third day. The Kilimanjaro peaks are in the background, with the Uhuru summit exactly 10 trekking miles away.

Vacation of a Lifetime

By Bonny Falk

The last time FHWA's Phil Roke visited Hawaii was in May 1993 just after the local tiger shark attack problem seemed to get resolved. Phil obtained his Professional Association of Diving Instructors open water certification while on Oahu. His wife, Theresa, was unable to attend because of her work schedule.

When Theresa found out that her nephew was retiring from the Navy on Oahu, the Rokes began to plan the vacation of a lifetime! Phil's idea of a relaxing vacation is very different than his wife's expectation of soaking up the sun's rays on a tropical beach.



Atlantis Submarine's Eco-Tour in Honolulu.

Upon arriving on Oahu, Phil and Theresa were greeted with very colorful hand crafted flower leis and a warm family welcome from their niece and nephew Michele and Jimmy. Everyone had a busy schedule planned for the upcoming week. Michele and Jimmy were packing to leave the island after having lived there for nine years, and Phil and Theresa had a series of adventures just waiting to be experienced.

For the first vacation adventure, Phil and Theresa boarded a 48-passenger Atlantis submarine and descended 100 feet underwater in Honolulu Bay to see real marine life up close like Hawaiian fish, coral, large green sea turtles, and white tip reef sharks lying motionless under the wings of a plane wreck. The submarine also glided past sunken shipwrecks and artificial reefs from Japan. Upon surfacing, the famous Diamond Head volcanic cone was seen waiting in the background for that special Kodak moment.

The next day began at 4:00 a.m. on a cool dark morning. A one-hour drive to the North Shore brought them to *Hawaii Shark Encounter Tours* and a 32-foot boat called the Kainani. Phil and Theresa got to know their fellow divers as the boat headed for a three-mile trip off shore to about 460 feet of water. When the shark cage was dropped into the water, the sharks swam energetically to the surface to get their morning fish treats. The crew said that local fishermen had conditioned the sharks to equate the sound of a boat engine with mealtime (leftover bait from the daily emptying of crab traps). A few years ago, a 20-foot great white shark (*Carcharodon Carcharias*) even appeared for a snack.

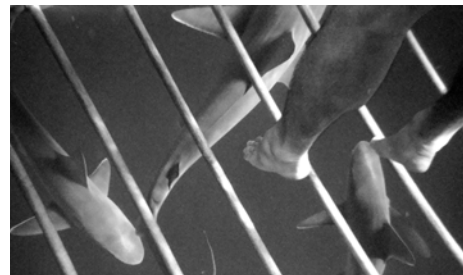
A cameraman videotaped the Rokes' 45-minute shark cage adventure. A variety of eight foot Sandbar Sharks (*Carcharinus Plumbeus*) and Galapagos Sharks (*Carcharinus Galapagensis*) arrived for breakfast. After the dive, Phil gave a customized Tiger Shark diving hood (topped with

a fake shark fin) that he wore into the cage to the very grateful boat Captain!

According to Hawaiian legend, each island had its own shark god. The king shark god of Oahu was Kamohoali'i (also known as Moho) and his elder brother was Pete. Moho provided the canoe that brought Pele to Hawaii from Tahiti.

From the shark cage, Phil and Theresa drove to Dillingham Airfield on the North Shore where Phil got into an 18-seat King Air 100 twin-turboprop airplane to complete a 14,000 foot tandem skydive. One of the divers from the shark cage expedition had made a comment on the return boat trip to shore that he thought jumping out of a perfectly good airplane was more dangerous than swimming

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Phil Roke with sandbar and Galapagos Sharks.



Vacation of a Lifetime

(from previous page)

with sharks. Phil laughed and told him that riding a motorcycle is more dangerous than diving with sharks and skydiving!

Phil left the plane at 14,000 feet. The shark cage was seen floating off shore where it had been left for the next dive (good thing the wind was blowing them in the opposite direction). The skydiving landing site was the runway along the shore below and, fortunately, the parachute successfully opened at 5,000 feet!

The next day, Phil and Theresa boarded the Norwegian Cruise Line's *Pride of Hawaii* for a seven-day round trip of the islands, including Honolulu, Hilo, Maui (Kahului), Kona, and Kauai. The *Pride* carried 3,000 passengers and offered a dozen different restaurants to dine at while touring the amazing islands.



Phil and Theresa's love of wild caving required a stop at the Thurston Lava Tube. Lava tubes like the Thurston formed 300 to 500 years ago as lava was expelled during an eruption and eventually drained from the tube. The Thurston Lava Tube was named after a newspaper publisher, Lorrin Thurston, and is also known by its Hawaiian name, Nahuku, which refers to the small protuberances on the tub walls.

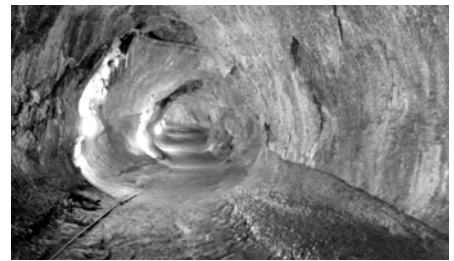
Phil Roke with skydiving instructor and cameraman 14,000 feet above Ohau's North Shore. The hand in the picture belonged to the cameraman.

The *Pride of Hawaii*.

Phil and Theresa participated in the Old Lahaina Luau on Maui where they watched an incredible sunset and saw fantastic views of Lanai and Molokai. The food was out of this world. For you food connoisseurs, Emeril hosted his recent Maui visit program from the grounds. This luau told a story that was immersed in Hawaiian history and culture beginning with the migration across the Pacific to Hawaii, the history of the hula, and the influence of missionaries.

Maui also offered the exciting Blue Hawaiian helicopter tour of West Maui and East Hana/Haleakala's rainforests and waterfalls in an

interesting places and met some great people on the big island. Stops included the Volcanoes National Park, Halemaumau Fire Pit, Kilauea Iki Crater, the Hawai'i Volcano Observatory, Jaggar Museum, the Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Factory, and the Holualoa Kona Coffee Estate. Bob and Pam Cooper provided a tour of their Original Hawaiian Chocolate Factory where chocolate products were purchased. The Rokes also met Jim and Tracy Redekopp, who own the first vanilla farm in the United States named the Hawaiian Vanilla Company. The tour shows guests how vanilla beans are harvested from the farm's vanilla orchid vines. Among its other offerings are Vanilla



Thurston Lava Tube in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Experience Luncheons, which feature a bountiful buffet of cuisine and beverages subtly flavored with vanilla and other local ingredients served by the owners' five young children.

On Kauai, Phil and Theresa enjoyed a movie tour of locations where *Donovan's Reef*, *South Pacific*, *Blue Hawaii*, *Six Days Seven Nights*, *Gilligan's Island*, *Honeymoon in Vegas*, *Lilo and Stitch*, *Dragonfly*, and many more popular movies were filmed—this is the only tour that has access to *Coco Palms* for Elvis fans. Kauai also provided a spectacular view of the Na Pali coastline.

When friends learned details of the Roke vacation, they asked if Phil and Theresa were completing a "bucket list." You remember in the 2007 movie *The Bucket List* where Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman create a "bucket list," or a collection of all the things they wanted to do, see, and experience in life before they kicked the bucket. According to Phil and Theresa, they enjoyed this vacation of a lifetime that could be considered a "bucket list;" although Theresa was heard saying she could have enjoyed a little more beach time! And Phil was heard quietly mumbling about a future 18,000 foot skydive in Florida and staying the night in an underwater hotel! Oh, their thirtieth wedding anniversary is approaching this year! *Who knows what this adventurous couple will do next!*

Symphony of Disaster

By Tom White

What began as a promising romantic evening of a classical music morphed into an absurd comedy of errors. I just couldn't make this stuff up.

Friday, March 28 started normally enough. It was my RDO (Rotating Day Off) and I was enjoying a late lunch after an early morning bike ride along the northern tip of Rock Creek Park in Rockville, MD.

At about two in afternoon, my friend Russ called up on the telephone. Seemed he had two tickets to the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) that evening at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and couldn't use them. He wanted to know if my wife and I wanted to take them. I told him I was definitely interested and wanted to call my wife Amy up real quick to make sure we didn't have evening plans (she is usually the social organizer of the pair). I told Russ I would call him back within five minutes with an answer after I called Amy. After a brief pause, and in an homage to her favorite 80s Saturday morning cartoon about little blue gnomes, she replied "abso-Smurfly!"

Amy, you see, is a classically trained pianist with a degree in music from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. She often went to see the Richmond Symphony Orchestra while attending school, but hadn't been to the Kennedy Center since high school and hadn't seen the NSO in more than 10 years. I also am a piano player, but not at the level (or intellect) of Amy. I rattled off the evening's composers to Amy—"Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Poulenc, and Shostakovich"—and she perked up instantly at the mention of Poulenc. She loved his work and he was a favorite composer of hers. To be honest, out of the four, I was only familiar with the name Stravinsky but couldn't distinguish a piece of his from another composer's. My knowledge and appreciation of classical music is woefully limited to Mozart, J.S. Bach, and Beethoven. I could, however, tell you whether a certain recording of *Eyes of the World* was made by Jerry Garcia and the Dead at Soldier's Field in 1982 or whether it was made at RFK in 1987 and whether or not it was Brent or Vince helming the keys that evening (with Bruce Hornsby tickling the ivories at their side). I could also tell you that the Police's *Synchronicity* album was a concept album about noted psychologist Carl Jung and his

strained relationship with Sigmund Freud; and that Pink Floyd's album *Animals* was George Orwell's *Animal Farm* put to music—but I couldn't tell you squat about which classical composer did which piece during which era under which style. Classical was Amy's art form and this was her evening.

After Amy got off work at 5:00 p.m., we went to pick up our friend Russ. He was going to accompany us to the Kennedy Center, pick up the tickets from will-call under his name, and then give them to us. Russ is a fine artist and, in between painting portraits and elaborate murals, works part-time at a private art gallery in Georgetown on Wisconsin Avenue called L'Enfant Gallery. We got there just before closing at 6:00 p.m. and Russ locked the door and gave us a private tour. We saw paintings and artworks ranging in price from \$18,000 to \$1 million. Too rich for our blood to be sure, but we were getting a private tour, I had my tie and sport jacket on, Amy was in a fine evening gown, and we were headed for the NSO that evening. If only for a moment, we felt like the upper crust of society.

(continued on next page)



Symphony of Disaster

(from previous page)

Russ accompanied us to the Kennedy Center, got the tickets for us, and then gave us some sage advice before taking off for the evening: "If you're going to eat here, eat at the café and not the restaurant. The café is a lot cheaper."

Amy and I parked our vehicle and then heeded Russ' advice and headed towards the café on the upper floor. At first we arrived at the restaurant—or at least what we thought was the restaurant. "Twenty-five dollar entrees," I thought and told Amy. "This must be the restaurant. Let's go find the café." But lo and behold, we were at the café. After traversing to the other side of the center we were faced with a menu of \$37 to \$45 entrees. Now, I don't have an unsophisticated pallet per se, but I think a \$20 steak at The Outback tastes nearly as good as a \$50 steak at Ruth's Chris Steak House (at least not enough to warrant the \$30 difference). "Come on," I told Amy, "we're going back to the café." After all, I am an average GS-level worker just like most of you, and not a Congressional representative, lobbyist, or hot shot DC lawyer—the prices were a bit exorbitant for us common folk.

Some school had the bright idea to usher in a field trip of fifth graders for the Friday evening performance (more about them later), and the café was packed with them. They were running around playing tag, knocking things over, and laughing awkwardly as they were trying to deal with the onslaught of puberty. Don't get me wrong, Amy and I are not curmudgeons and appreciate the youth culture (she used to be a grade school music teacher and taught private piano lessons to children of all ages), but we thought that having a field trip attend a weekend evening performance of the NSO was a bit odd timing. We remembered being that young and how "boring" it was to attend symphonies and how difficult it was to behave ourselves. When we were in the fifth and sixth grades, we would go to the symphony on a random Wednesday afternoon and the audience would be packed with other schools—like minded patrons.

As a result of this field trip, the café was packed. Amy and I were able to find the last available table in the corner right by the door to the back end of the kitchen where we had a good view of busboys bringing in trays of garbage and dirty dishes. Then, over dessert, it happened: the first of three distinct chaotic evening events. We were finishing up our entrees of pork chops (Amy) and prime rib (me)—which were tasty enough—and moving on to our fruit parfait when Amy looked down and then stared at me, her face turning a pale shade of green. She tugged at my sleeve and pointed to what was the most mammoth cockroach either of us had ever seen. The thing was creepy-crawling across the floor right between our chairs like some prehistoric nightmare. I kid you not, the thing was the size of my thumb. "This is the Kennedy Center," I thought. "This stuff isn't supposed to happen here." We watched the creature skittle across the floor where it crawled up to a table of senior citizens. Good grief! It was like Mothra or Godzilla descending upon the poor citizens of Tokyo. A busboy came running up the floor and promptly crushed the thing underneath his sneaker. We then had the oh-so-pleasant experience of watching a man from that table screaming at the

café manager—right in front of our table. Needless to say, we did not finish the fruit parfait.

We then headed to find our seats. They were good seats, ground floor center, about 25 rows back.

Picture this, like most symphony halls, the Kennedy Center not only has balcony seats situated around the concert hall, but it also has a back balcony of five or six rows of seats directly behind the orchestra, facing the general audience. Bright idea number two: some teacher thought it would be a good idea to sit the entire fifth grade class in these exact seats. (Insert sarcasm here:) No, this isn't going to be distracting at all!

Much to our pleasant surprise though, the grade-schoolers were well behaved during the first half of the show. They sat quietly and firmly in their seats and did not whisper or giggle or squirm or anything. I was thoroughly impressed.

I wish the same could be said about the people behind us though. They appeared to be on a first date. A May/December romance (there were several of those around us) where she appeared to be in her early 40s and he appeared to be in his late 20s. Surely I have an open mind and had no problem with this "here's to you Mrs. Robinson" romance. Except, if you thought she would be the more mature of the two, you'd be wrong.

It started off innocently enough. She would whisper quietly between pieces or make an occasional joke during a light section of a piece and they would giggle in a volume slightly louder than that of a mouse sneeze. However, they must have had a few cocktails during intermission because they came back for the second half of the performance in "loud and obnoxious" mode.

Now if you recall earlier, Amy was a big fan of Poulenc, and this was a piece she had never heard performed before. It was written for a private function by a wealthy couple and only performed by the original composer once. It was the piece Amy was most looking forward to hear and it was the piece to start off the second half of the concert. It was also the piece that our lovely neighbor behind us thought it was "show time!"

She whipped out her camera phone and was talking about a meeting she just had with high-profile clients this past week. She was showing her date pictures of this famous hip-hop star and that famous supermodel and all the oh-so-important people that she is friends with or has as clients. We gathered from her ridiculously loud conversation that she worked in some form of PR. In between bragging about her client base she would make some obnoxious joke—usually about some grotesque bodily function—and they would giggle incessantly as their breaths reeked of cheap gin and apple martinis. This was all during the one piece Amy really wanted to hear. I could feel my wife steaming mad right next to me.

I did what any husband would do in this situation. At the conclusion of the piece I turned around and said, "Do you mind? You were talking all through that last piece and ruined it for everybody." The guy looked highly embarrassed and muttered the words "I'm sorry," as our whole row turned to me with smiles on their faces that indicated they were silently applauding. Amy and I then found two

empty seats further away from these clowns so we could listen to the last piece of the evening.

Then, IT HAPPENED—the penultimate event to top off the entire evening. It was a beautiful piece by Shostakovich and was turning out to be my favorite. The first movement of the piece was calming down and three strings were left playing a soft drone. You could hear a pin drop against this quiet tone. Then the whole hall heard a sound that was disturbing, yet familiar. Our eyes trained north towards the fifth graders up in the back balcony, and to the horror of all those in the audience, watched as a boy in the front row promptly hurled out the contents of his stomach upon the floor to his feet. This was no ordinary small-time expulsion of his dinner; nay, this was a streaming flow of vomit that would've made little girl Regan from the movie *The Exorcist* rage with jealousy at this boy's mad power-booting skills. He was convulsing and couldn't move despite his chaperone's attempts in vain to pry this poor chap from his seat.

It was at this time that the culmination of the evening's events caused me to burst out loud laughing. I am sure my guffaws could've been heard throughout the concert hall. Amy was laughing under her breath trying to tell me to stop. I couldn't help it. "It's just that nothing could go right tonight," I laughed in ear. A couple of guys in my row started laughing as well and pretty soon the whole pew was shaking (interesting observation on differences between the two sexes: it was all men in my row who were laughing out loud while their wives and/or dates looked appalled but were secretly trying to stifle laughter themselves).

Keep in mind that this last piece was the granddaddy of 'em all and was 30 minutes long. The kid puked at about the 8-minute mark, so I had to try to stifle my laughter for another 22 minutes or so; but, the audience and orchestra were not helping matters. Shortly after the "the incident" I looked over to the first-chair violinist—a stunningly beautiful, sophisticated woman with long flowing auburn hair. She had turned a lovely shade of white, looked up at the kid hurling, and then quickly glanced at the audience with a horrified look on her face. Granted that exchange lasted all of three seconds, but I could tell she was having great problems concentrating the remainder of the show. And the fifth grade girls in the back row above the orchestra didn't help either. For the remainder of the show they were sliding away from the vomit chair, some were sharing seats to get away, and they were all huddling far from the offending pile while covering their noses with their arms, shirts, and sweaters.

I just couldn't help it. I just tossed in the towel and resorted to laughing the rest of the performance—Amy's constant elbows to my ribs not having any effect. My laughter finally died down as we were walking out of the hall when I overheard an elderly couple behind me exclaim, "You mean someone threw up?" I instantly burst out laughing again. Amy was not amused.

The next morning I woke up to an elbow in my rib cage.

"Ouch! What was that for?"

"You were laughing in your sleep."



Back In Time

Plank Roads By Rickie Longfellow

Many of our Nation's roadways were once dirt and mud paths until the early to mid-1800s. A modern movement at that time called for the building of wooden roads, a great improvement in transportation. These planks—boards—were laid over the roadway on log foundations in various lengths, but most were eight feet long. Built for wagons, the width of the roads was 12 feet or more. In downtown areas the roads were wider.

Maintenance involved digging ditches on each side of the plank road to drain the water and keep mud from accumulating under and over the planks. By doing this, wagons loaded with merchandise and agricultural products—and the animals pulling them—were not slowed or stopped by mud, but could enjoy a hazard free ride once they reached a plank road. Bridges were also made from planks. Even now, we occasionally find a wooden bridge on our travels, similar to an old plank bridge.



Many gravel roads were later built over with planks.

Plank roads resembled a large set of train tracks in appearance, but felt and sounded much as boardwalks do today except most were wider than an average boardwalk. Early turnpike companies built these roads and there was often a toll charge of one to two cents per horse. The cost of building a plank road was from several hundred dollars to several thousand per mile, depending upon the climate and condition of the terrain. Plank roads replaced dirt paths along rivers, greatly improving travel and trade.

Plank roads were still popular into the 20th century where the first motorists, struggling to negotiate muddy roads and bumpy gravel roads with their Model T, were all too happy to have a level surface on which to drive. Great fanfare often accompanied the opening of a plank road, just as today when a new stretch of highway is completed. In Lansing, Michigan, in July 1852, citizens gathered to celebrate the opening of the Lansing-Howell Plank Road. The stagecoach carrying the speaker for the ceremony could be heard approaching a mile away as it traveled over the new plank road. When the stagecoach came into view, the crowd began cheering. Finally, they had a roadway they could depend upon.

Like many inventions, the plank road was a progressive idea and enhanced local travel tremendously. However, after a few years of wear, the planks began to warp and rot away. The cost of repair, more lumber, gravel, toll buildings, employees, and management all came into play. As the planks deteriorated, gravel was used to compensate, making for a slower and bumpier ride.

A plank road was built in 1915 in Imperial County, California, as a way of crossing the from Southern California to Arizona. However, during high winds, sand blew onto parts of the

roadway, preventing America's first automobiles from traveling any further until the sand could be removed. In addition, there was not enough room for two-way traffic. Still, despite the problems, many people reported that going out for a drive on the plank road was exciting and an important part of life at that time. The road is now Interstate 8.

Railroads continued their expansion, connecting more towns than the deteriorating plank roads so travelers began traveling more by rail. As for later plank roads, like California's Algodones Dunes plank road, progress in highway construction meant the eventual demise of the plank, but not before a two-way plank road could be constructed and used to cross the dunes.

Plank roads fell into history, many still lying forgotten underneath today's paved roads. During some construction, the City of Fayetteville, North Carolina, uncovered the log foundation of the Fayetteville Plank Road in the downtown area. One of the longest plank roads, it had been built in 1849 to connect this once remote area with current day Winston-Salem—129 miles away!

Gone but not forgotten, today's homeowners and businesses build small plank bridges over streams and flower beds with Cedar planks and pine arches. A six or eight-foot bridge can hold 500 pounds. Pedestrian plank footbridges lead the way into forests and over swampy areas in parks. Although not well known after all these decades, the original Plank Roads of the 19th and early 20th centuries had a prosperous impact on our economy and led to the need for the better, less costly roads we now enjoy.

Thank you to Jim Bremner of Desert USA. Read more about desert plank roads at: <http://www.desertusa.com/sandhills/plankrd.html>

Revisiting History Before the Interstates By George Austin Hay

It is with considerable interest one looks back at the beginning to the gradual development of not alone the horseless carriage, but also on the roads on which it traveled—or tried to travel. Roadways scarcely were up to handling such a thing as a pleasurable spin in the country.



In the early teens, the country largely was steeped in muddy-road quagmires.

Routes had grown little by little from trails and well-beaten paths through dense forests. Then came the horse, traveling with a coach and six.

Alongside the beginning of the 20th century came a startling invention of something new in transportation—the gas buggy.

The engine at first was situated under the seat. A guiding mechanism, the tiller, gradually gave way to the steering wheel. In year after innovative year a legion of changes took place in developing this new fangled manner of conveyance.

During this time of incredible automotive progressive growth, public roads suffered widespread neglect.

At the same time dirt roads—on which the buggies attempted to travel—were in calamitous condition and became pitfalls for the wary traveler.

In 1896, the U.S. Postal Service instituted the Rural Free Delivery (RFD)—i.e., free delivery of mail in rural areas. Routes for RFD were authorized by an act of Congress.

With makeshift highway construction, drivers—wearing the customary duster (a loose fitting canvas or linen coat worn to protect clothes) and goggles—often became hopelessly bogged down.

Enterprising farmers developed a profitable sideline as the earliest professional towers. Using a team of mules and stout rope, they would pull the stalled "lizzies" out of the mud. Toll roads became



With the annual spring thaw, primitive roads such as this one in Michigan each year became impassable. Circa 1915.



U.S. Mail Wagon—Rural Free Delivery—on an unimproved road near Port Royal, Tennessee. Circa 1915.

extant but remained in barely passable condition.

Fortunately for everyone, coming to the rescue was a Scottish highway official named John Loudon McAdam. He invented a method of building thoroughfares

with an effective hard surface. Ultimately known as macadam roads, these were developed on the McAdam plan, principals of which were tested by upcoming road builders. These roads consisted of broken stones laid in tight symmetrical patterns and surfaced with lighter stones effectively forming a hard surface.

Public roads—on which vehicles attempted to run—were left in disrepair. Pavement proved to be the material needed for better roads. A few were gravel, but mostly they consisted of macadam surfaces.

The arterial highway of today must be able to handle hordes of travelers—and for years to come.

Memoriam In Memoriam

Bernard Atwood Halver, age 83, Dec. 6, 2007, Adams, Minnesota, passed away at Austin Medical Center.

Bernie was born January 8, 1924 to Dr. Glenn and Mrs. Halver in LeRoy, MN. He has two brothers, Eugene and Donald, four nieces and one nephew.

In school he enjoyed participating in all sports as well as band and chorus. He was also involved in the LeRoy Lutheran Church Choir and the youth activities. As an active boy scout he received the Eagle Award from Governor Stassen. He was a scout master for many years. As an adult he received the Lamb Award, the highest honor from the Lutheran Church of America, for his service to youth.

After graduating from LeRoy High School in June of 1942, he enrolled in summer school at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN and enlisted in the U.S. Army in the fall of that year. In March of 1943 he was called to active duty. He completed basic training at Camp Robinson, AR. The following nine months, he was at St. Norberts College in West De Pere, WI under the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) in an accelerated engineering program. After completion, he was assigned to the Army Signal Corp. at Camp Crowder, MO before going overseas where he spent the remainder of his 3 1/2

year enlistment in the Western Pacific. After his discharge from the Army in 1946, he attended Iowa State University in Ames, graduating in 1949 with a B.S. Degree in Landscape Architecture and a minor in Civil Engineering. On December 26, 1948, he married Joyce Anderson at Little Cedar Lutheran Church in Adams. They started Halver Nursery (now Herman's Gardens) in Adams. He was the Planning Director for Minnesota State Parks and later the Environmental Coordinator for the Federal Highway Administration in Kansas City. In addition to his family, Bernie's lifelong interests have been his church, scouting, involvement in Minnesota State Parks, Prairie Visions, Shooting Star Trail, and other environmental programs and issues.

Bernie is survived by his wife, Joyce; three daughters: Judy of Duluth, MN, Joni (John) Varner of Onamia, and Jeanne (John) Rodrigue of St. Francis; three sons: Terry of Adams, David (Debbie) of Duluth, and Jim (Karen) of Detroit Lakes; 13 grandchildren and one great grandchild; and two brothers: Eugene of Mahtomedi, and Donald of South St. Paul. He was preceded in death by his parents. The funeral service was held at Little Cedar Lutheran Church on December 10, 2007.

He was a kind, faithful, loving husband and father and will be greatly missed by us all.

Roy Wooton Tidwell, 89,* died on March 17, 2008, at The Virginian, a retirement community in Fairfax, VA. Mr. Tidwell worked for the Federal Highway Administration for 22 years before retiring as the Director of the National Highway Institute in 1979. He received the Secretary of Transportation's Award for Meritorious Achievement in 1974. He was the devoted father of Nancy (Dave) Beck and John (Debbie) Tidwell and loving grandfather of Courtney Tidwell. There was a private funeral service at

Earl H. White, 77, of Topeka, Kansas, passed away on January 2, 2008, at Midland Hospice House, surrounded by family. Earl suffered a stroke on Christmas Eve and did not recover consciousness.

He was born in Pittsburg, Kansas on June 22, 1930, the son of Guy and Helen Ruckle White. For the first twelve years he grew up on the family farm near Lamar, Missouri; then the family moved to Sedalia. Earl graduated from Smith Cotton High School in Sedalia, Class of 1948. He graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. He served in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954, where he was stationed in Germany. Earl married June Theel Gillette on November 18, 1977. They celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2007.

Earl worked as an Appraiser with the Iowa Highway Commission from 1958 to 1963. He started working as a realty specialist for the Bureau of Public Roads in 1963. He worked in the South Dakota and Missouri Division Offices before being promoted to the Kansas Division Office in 1965 as

Division Right-of-Way Officer. Earl retired from the Federal Highway Administration on October 9, 1994.

After retiring, Earl and June enjoyed traveling around the country in their motor home with their grandchildren. Earl spent many hours attending activities of the grandchildren and fishing. He was a member of the First Christian Church in Topeka, the Audubon Society, and the Washburn Walkers Club.

Earl is survived by his wife, June; two stepsons: Mike and his wife, Lorri Gillette, of Olathe, and Dave and his wife, Kay Gillette, of Topeka; five grandchildren: Brandon, Christopher, Melinda, Savannah and Kalli; and one brother, Melvin and wife, Dee White, of Florida. Funeral services were held Tuesday, January 8, 2008, at First Christian Church in Topeka. Memorial contributions may be made to the Audubon Society, c/o Paul Willis, 2821 SW Allen Drive, Topeka, KS 66605.

Submitted by Kathy Facer, Office of Real Estate Services