



# ST. LOUIS ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT

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Dredge Equipment Operator Eddie Allen watches as a southbound tow passes down Dredge Potter's port (left) side, during dredging operations on the Mississippi. Allen has slackened a cable running from the right side of Potter's bow, across the navigation channel to an anchor on her far left side, to allow the tow boat and barges to pass safely over it.

## Mississippi River Snarls Barge Traffic - Dredge Potter Responds

The Mississippi River presents an ever-changing face to those who live and work on it. Recently it fell precipitously and the St. Louis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was called to take immediate steps to restore the 9-foot deep, 300-foot wide navigation channel south of St. Louis.

Following summer and fall of near-drought conditions throughout the Mississippi and Missouri valleys, the Mississippi, which only months earlier

reached its 14th highest flood stage at St. Louis, saw a long and gradual decrease in water depths. By early December it began dipping below the zero mark on the St. Louis gage.

National Weather Service, Corps experts and navigation industry interests had monitored the decreasing depth, but suddenly the river's flow diminished from a seasonal norm of about 120,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) to some 84,000 CFS. Its depth

dropped nearly three feet in a matter of days. After consultation with the navigation industry and the Corps, the Coast Guard issued recommendations to lighten barge loads and to position heavier barges at the back and center.

By Saturday morning, December 6, the river was running some six feet below its normal early-winter depth.

That same morning, barge tows began to run aground north of the Jefferson Barracks Bridge, near mile



### Commander's Perspective



**COL Kevin Williams**

It is the last month of 2002. Last month I reflected both on this year that is nearing its end, as well as my six-month's involvement with you during this year. As I said, you make me proud.

With 2003 drawing near, I'd like to look ahead now. For many, we will already be into the year when you read this.

As I said at our town hall Tuesday the 17th, the coming year will be filled with many opportunities to provide outstanding service to the country. Concrete is being blasted from the walls of Lock 24 as I write these words, and soon the chamber will be dewatered for a winter's intensive work during phase 2 of a major rehabilitation of this critical structure.

Last weekend I took part in a

ground breaking for the flood protection levee we will build over the next 18-20 months at Festus and Crystal City, MO. It was a beautiful day made even nicer by the many, many kind comments I received from local citizens about the professionalism and skill you have shown them in bringing this project to the beginning of its end.

While our budget for the next year is about the same as for 2002, throughout recent months, there has been a relentless drumbeat of gloom, doom and uncertainty concerning the future makeup and direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

While wisdom tells us that in reality, things are seldom either as bright or gloomy as they may appear, I must reiterate that what we are hearing now appears to me - and many others - to be arising from a very vocal minority.

To be sure, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, Army Secretary White and other government officials are continuously looking for better ways to get the department and nation's work done.

But much of what has been cast as an overarching goal for the Department of Defense has already been accomplished in the Corps. We are a smaller Corps today than even two years ago. And we are accomplishing more with these fewer numbers. In business vernacular, we have already very substantially increased productivity. A main way we have done so is by partnering with civilian, non-governmental contractors throughout the nation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is on the path everyone is being encouraged to travel. And we

are a good part of the way to our destination.

In the meantime, while some — many who have agendas that have little or nothing to do with better government or efficiency — are scrutinizing us, I will tell you that there is something that every Corps employee can do about his or her future as well as the Corps'.

That is to do our jobs - to do them to our level best and to leave no stones unturned in our quest to be the best we can be at what we each do.

Lieutenant General Flowers is

**Cont. page 13**

#### In This Issue:

Dredge Potter to the Rescue!  
..... Cover Story

Commander's Comments  
..... Page 2

Best Little Restaurant ... Page 4

Way I Remember It ..... Page 6

Festus and Crystal City . Page 8

Around the District ..... Page 9

Retiree Shifts Focus ... Page 12

Change is in the Air .... Page 13

Holiday Season 2002.. Page 14

Retiree's Corner ..... Page 15

Happy Holidays ..... Back Cover



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St. Louis District®

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Dredge Potter's a welcome sight just north of the Jefferson Barracks Bridge.

169.5 in a channel that had been surveyed only days earlier. The Coast Guard and barge firms called for help and after hurried consultation, District Construction-Operations Chief Walter Feld, made the call: "Bring Dredge Potter North."

According to Dredge Pilot J. T. Stefanko, "The river was cut from a two-way highway to one way."

Potter was working near Chester, IL when Feld's call came. Corps operators onboard the vessel assessed that they were close enough to finishing their work there to stop and proceed north with all haste.

It is not without some effort that this is done, as Potter's 800-foot dredge material disposal pipe must be broken into sections and stowed alongside the 247-foot, 1,600-ton dredge. Also, a fleet including a work, storage, fuel and derrick barge must be assembled into a tow and the tenders Prairie de Rocher and Kimswick made ready for the transit. Together, the vessels make up a tow some 585 feet long.

With the sun setting on the river, Potter and her entourage departed en route to the site of the groundings.

By Sunday afternoon, Potter arrived at her destination. Her workboat M/V Barron had surged ahead and District Inspector Red Mezo had surveyed the river to locate problem spots. Mezo quickly found spots with depths of about 7 feet and prepared a dredging plan.

Upon Dredge Potter's arrival, she set two bow anchors in the river bottom to help her maneuver and maintain station.

A steel cable was run from her starboard, or right side, to an anchor

down, paying them out until she was at a predetermined point and stopped.

There, she slowly lowered her dustpan dredgehead into the river toward the sandy bottom. The mechanism is so named because it resembles a very large (35-foot wide) dustpan. Water jets along its leading edge stir the sand into a water-sand slurry which is sucked into the



The Potter's dustpan head during recent work at our Service Base.

"dustpan" by a powerful pump.

Passing through internal pipes, the water and sand emerge near Potter's

stern and are sent through up to 800 feet of 32-inch pipe to a point outside the navigation channel.

At the pipe's end there is a small "shed" that is manned continuously while the dredge is in operation. The operator there can move the pipe back and forth by adjusting baffles that direct the water's flow.

The dredge is both held in place and moved slowly by powerful electric winches that slowly rewind the crossed anchor cables. Altering the pull on one cable or the other allows her to be positioned within a foot or two as she moves forward into the sandbank.

As Potter worked, barge tows continued to pass carefully. According to Dredge Equipment Operator Eddie Allen, "I have to stop and slack off on the cable running from right to left across the navigation channel so the tows can pass safely over it."

Once they pass, work resumes. Sometimes the entire dredge must be moved to enable commercial tows to pass, but commercial tows avoid interfering as it is in their best interests for Potter to complete her work as quickly as possible.

During her four days in view of thousands of motorists crossing the Jefferson Barracks Bridge between Illinois and Missouri, the gleaming yellow and red dredge attracted intense attention from regional



It's a long walk -- nearly three football field lengths -- to the end of the Potter's discharge pipe. It seems even longer in bad weather.



newspapers, television and radio, as well as national wire services.

The Corps' quick response enabled navigation to resume during dredging and by Thursday, a safe channel had been fully restored.

Throughout dredging, life continued around Potter as well.

From the pilothouse one could look west as towboats and barges passed, their pilots radioing Potter to thank the crew for their quick work.

To the east, on the Illinois shore, Bald Eagles strutted on the sand, looking out over the river at Potter. Finally two of them took wing and soared high overhead, perhaps to get a better view of the curious operation.

When she is underway and working, Dredge Potter operates 24 hours

a day. There are three watches, or sections, each of which can operate the dredge by itself. Two sections are aboard at all times during operations. Some people work 12-hour shifts - 12 on, 12 off. Others work two 6-hour shifts each day. A third watch is off duty and ashore, at home if they wish. Some crewmembers live as far away as Mississippi and commute.

It certainly is not a "feet-on-the-railing" life on the river, but men and women tough enough to survive the rigors of working the river, derive satisfaction from the results of their work.

Seeing themselves on the front page and in the evening news are just icing on the cake.

### What's this River Stage Stuff About?

Zero feet on the river gage at St. Louis was set arbitrarily during a low water period in 1861.

When the reading at St. Louis is "0 feet," the actual channel depth is approximately 12.5 feet. Flood stage is set at 30 feet.

The river gage at St. Louis has a record high of 49.5 feet in set 1993 and a low reading of -6.2 feet reached in 1940. As recently as 1989 it reached -5.2 feet.

- Visit our Corps web site for other river gages on the Mississippi and other rivers.



Lunch aboard the Potter is a time for the crew to enjoy a wonderful meal, rest from the morning's work and to just socialize.

### The Best Little Restaurant on the Mississippi River

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Dredge Potter hosts numerous guests while underway.

Some claim to visit to see her new 2,000-horse power diesel-electric power plant in operation. Others say they come to monitor dredging operations as Potter tends to her mission, maintaining the 9-foot deep, 300-foot wide navigation channel. And there is the occasional "assist visit."

But what most go away remembering – and some will honestly admit

that they came for in the first place – is the food.

Under the watchful eye of Chief Cook Darryl Heck, a small team feeds the crew of Potter and several guests three scrumptious meals each day, plus a midnight breakfast. The dredge works 24 hours a day while underway, and nobody goes hungry, regardless of their shift assignment.

Heck is ably assisted by Elvis Cargil, Roger Weaver and Night Cook Joe Tanner, while Tammy Mezo and

Tony Harris shuttle steaming platters and bowls of food back from the kitchen – or galley – to the single long table that runs the length of the dining area on the second deck. If the servers aren't available, the cooks fill those roles.

There are no food stores specifically serving the needs of people who live and work on the numerous large commercial and government vessels plying the river.

"I make up my list and the dredge clerk faxes it to the closest grocery store," Heck says. "I try to keep a two week-supply on hand and I have to make it on a budget of \$9 per person per day. I've done that successfully for years now."

The only special shopping stop is at Fruitland Meat near Cape Girardeau. "They have really good meats and give us slaughterhouse-direct prices," Heck chuckles.

How much do Potter's crew and guests consume every day? It varies, but Heck reports they go through six pounds of coffee a day, and that figure increases as the weather gets colder. "Everyone enjoys fresh-baked rolls too," Heck points out. "So I make them six days a week in 60-roll batches," he says.



Chief Cook Darryl Heck keeps his famous fried chicken warm in the oven.

Potter is 70 years “young”, but like her new propulsion system and pilot-house, the galley is as new as today.



Tammy Mezo mixes two quarts of topping for strawberry short cake.

State-of-the-art ovens with digital thermometers and a deep fryer that would make a McDonalds manager cry are centerpieces of the galley.

A modern Hobart dishwasher ensures that every dish and utensil emerges sparkling and sanitary.

In fact, the only vestige of the past is a cast iron skillet known as “Big Bertha” and reserved for smaller frying tasks. The day I visited the galley she was being hoisted out of the rinse water by one of her two handles.

The entire place, from freezer to table, is meticulously clean. “We’ve never had a case of food poisoning here,” Heck observes. “That’s better



Tony Harris serves a platter of sumptuous chicken.

than some of those cruise ships brag.”

“If the regular meals aren’t enough, we keep a stash of lunchmeat too,” Heck notes. Sometimes somebody has to work through a meal or they just get real hungry between meals,” he says.

Different days of the week feature different items. Perhaps the favorite meal each week is seafood on Fridays. “Prime rib is a real vote getter too,” several crewmembers reported.

Whatever your favorite dish, you’ll find it prepared with attention to detail and a sense of pride that runs deeper than the river.

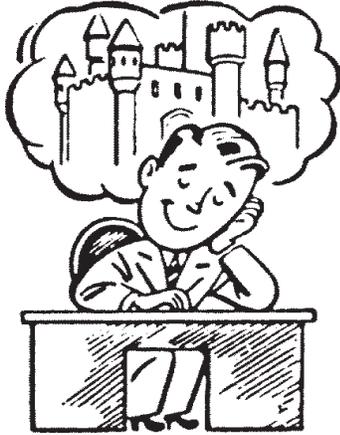
In case you are expecting 32 guests as Potter hosted Wednesday, December 11, here is what you will need:

- 40 lbs. of chicken
- 10 lbs. of potatoes
- 3 qts. gravy
- 8 cans of green beans, (the large size of course)
- 8 cans of carrots (ditto)
- 60 fresh-baked rolls
- 4 - 9x13 sheet cakes
- 2 quarts of whipped cream topping
- 5-dozen deviled eggs
- Drinks and condiments (generous portions a must!)

Or just visit Dredge Potter – and let Darryl Heck fix it for you.



## The Way I Remember It



Many of you know of the Motor Vessel Boyer. It is undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated and technologically advanced vessels on the Mississippi River. Its capabilities are always being upgraded and refined to remain the “state of the art” vessel it has always been.

Have you ever wondered about the name “Boyer”? Who is he? Where did he work? Why was his name given to this vessel? I will attempt to answer these questions with the following article.

When I began work with the St. Louis District of the Corps of Engineers I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do. In fact, the training program for Junior Engineers was one of the main factors for choosing the Corps for employment. I thought the training program would give me the opportunity to experience a full range of engineering specialties and then I could decide an area of interest. During my rotational phase of the training program I was introduced to river engineering. Of course I immediately became totally and completely infatuated with this field of engineering and have enjoyed working with rivers and lakes for over three decades.

One of the first people I met in river engineering was Lester J. Boyer. Les was a senior engineering technician



Motor Vessel Boyer on the Mississippi above Lock and Dam 25, Winfield, MO.

and was a long time employee of the Corps of Engineers. I was assigned to Les and he began teaching me about the rivers in the St. Louis District. Les was 47 years old in 1969 and I was 22 years old. I am sure it took a lot of patience for him to put up with me. Les began telling me stories about the rivers, the locks and dams, the dredges, the floods, the ice jams and on and on and on. For several months I went with him on field trips where we observed the “real world” and met dozens of river people that he knew.



Lester Boyer 1922 — 1990

Even though Les was not formally trained, he was a storehouse of knowledge and he was willing to share this with me.

Here is some background information on Les (most of this was supplied by Stephen L. Redington - who also trained with Les). Les was born in

1922 and passed away in 1990. He retired from the Corps of Engineers in 1982. He had obtained the status of being a Certified Engineering Technician. During Lester's career he had worked in the Lock and Dam Section of the Operations Division and he had been an inspector on the dredges in the Channel Improvement Section of the Operations Division. Les was also a Sector Engineer on the flood fight team (St. Peter's area). When I met Les he was in the River Stabilization Branch of the Engineering Division.

Lester was a World War II veteran. He had been in the “Battle of the Bulge”. I remember him telling how cold it was during that winter and how desperate things were when the Germans had them surrounded. Les was a big fan of General Patton. He told me how General Patton had saved them from defeat by a daring plan with his armored division. Les had many wartime medals but he never made a “big deal” out of his military decorations. I remember one war story Les told Steve Redington and me. Les was driving a military truck carrying supplies in Europe. He stopped to get something to eat in a mess tent at breakfast. While he was eating his meal, incoming rounds from the Germans landed in the camp. When Les went back to his truck it had been destroyed by the bombardment. He used to laugh when he told us, “pancakes saved mylife!”

Steve Redington and I used to smile



at some of Lester’s unusual habits. Many people that endured the depression had a strong distrust of banks and the banking system. During the depression the banks closed their doors and their customers could not get their money. As a result, folks like Lester minimized their interactions with the banks. One day Les arrived at work late. He was perspiring and was exhausted. We wondered what the heck had happened! Les told us he had buried some money in a can in his back yard and he had forgotten where he put it. He spent the morning digging holes in his back yard looking for the can of buried money. Steve and I could not stop laughing while Les was telling us this story. Les did not have a checking account and he paid all his bills with cash. He told me that the banks would never get his money again.

I asked Gene Degenhardt to share his memories of Lester. Gene remembers that Les was the type of person who could relate to people from all walks of life. He could chat with a local landowner and convey to that person a feeling of total empathy. By his unique listening skills, eye contact, and storytelling ability, he could defuse the most

volatile of situations. “I understand your problem, and let me tell you about something I ran into the other day . . .” would be a familiar phrase of his. In contrast, he was equally



Les Boyer with Gene Degenhardt, July, 1970

effective discussing a constituent’s eroding bank line complaint with their Congressman and leaving everyone with a feeling of assurance that something would be done to alleviate the problem.

People would become mesmerized, as he would relate stories, for ex-

ample, of a landowner who insisted that the landing pod pressure of a flying saucer was responsible for their caving bank line. Without berating the landowner’s account, Les would tactfully explain that other factors were also responsible for the problem.

Although Les had no formal engineering education, he had an intuitive ability to assess a troublesome river problem and recommend a dike field solution that would solve the problem and create a safe and dependable navigation channel for river traffic.

Lester Boyer had a distinguished career with the St. Louis District of the Corps of Engineers. He also had a distinguished military career during World War II. He was a kind man, a devoted family man and a true friend. He helped many young engineers and taught them about the elusive facts and mysteries pertaining to the Mighty Mississippi River. The M/V Boyer is a daily reminder to all of us about this great man.

*Claude, Steve and Gene*



Christmas 1972 at 210 Tucker Building



Christmas 2002 at Robert A. Young (RAY) Federal Bldg.

**At least the soft drinks improve with age!**

Almost exactly 30 years separate these two photos. Left to Right Claude Strauser, Ron Dieckmann and Mike Hamm. The young woman is Barb Rundle, now Jake Scanlon’s sister-in-law. She married Jake’s brother.



The first seven shovels of earth start work on the Festus and Crystal City levee.

### Ground Breaking for Festus and Crystal City Levee

More than 50 people gathered Saturday, December 14 to start a new 3,600 foot levee at Festus and Crystal City, MO. The \$11 million project will protect the central business area from periodic flooding.



Congressman Dick Gephardt looks on as project champion Rita Lovelace tells of earlier floods and how the new levee will prevent future damage.

Congressman Dick Gephardt (D-MO) told ceremony attendees how a local mother, Rita Lovelace, worked relentlessly to persuade federal, state and local bureaucrats to support the project and voters to pay for it.

Gephardt noted that several times he went the extra mile because he did not want to face Lovelace if he failed.

Lovelace, in turn, spoke of the devastation of the 1993 flood. She

told how her young grandson, then 6-month-old Anthony Kloss required emergency hospitalization and how difficult it was to get to the hospital with numerous bridges and roads flooded. She also spoke eloquently of repeated damage during other floods.

She said that as a lifelong area resident she had been a victim of repeated floods and didn't want this to go on. "We're not going to live like that anymore," she concluded.

Finally, she introduced District

Engineer, Colonel Kevin Williams, invoking the words of Samuel Clemens from his book, *Life on the Mississippi*. Corps detractors often use the first half of this quote, but Lovelace continued with, "the rest of the story." (see sidebar).

Colonel Williams thanked Congressman Gephardt, local officials and the audience for helping to bring about the great day. "This is a great day for the cities and for the Corps of Engineers," he told listeners. "We are proud to be a part of this effort."

Finally, seven people: Congressman Gephardt, Rita Lovelace, Colonel Williams, civic leaders, contractor Goodwin Brothers representative and Anthony Kloss, now 11 years old, wielded shiny-chromed shovels to move the symbolic first shovel of dirt.

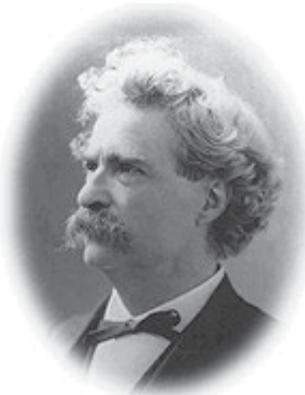
Area leaders note that the project, slated to be completed in 18-20 months, will enable Festus and Crystal City to replace their shared sewage plant with a new one that will not flood. This will in turn result in the end of a court-ordered ban on new sewer hookups and with reduced flood insurance rates, they hope for a building boom in the area.



District DP Joe Kellett (L), Congressman Gephardt and Colonel Williams discuss a map of the Festus and Crystal City levee following the groundbreaking.



### Samuel Clemens, on the Mississippi River



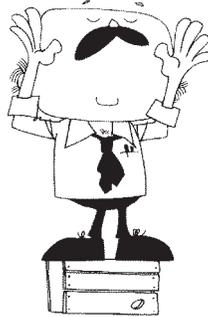
People, trying to ascribe the Corps' navigation and flood control missions to the realm of the impossible, often invoke the words of Samuel Clemens, who wrote under the pen name, Mark Twain. The following Clemens quote is from his book, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883:

“One who knows the Mississippi will promptly aver— not aloud, but to himself—that ten thousand River Commissions, with the mines of the world at their back, cannot tame that lawless stream, cannot curb it or confine it, cannot say to it, Go here, or Go there, and make it obey; cannot save a shore which it has sentenced; cannot bar its path with an obstruction which it will not tear down, dance over, and laugh at.”

Often, however, they leave off Clemens' follow-on statement, which Rita Lovelace included:

“But a discreet man will not put these things into spoken words; for the West Point engineers have not their superiors anywhere; they know all that can be known of their abstruse science; and so, since they conceive that they can fetter and handcuff that river and boss him, it is but wisdom for the unscientific man to keep still, lie low, and wait till they do it.”

### Around the District



### Lake Shelbyville

After serving 6 months active duty with the US Navy, Lake Shelbyville park ranger, Leanne Cruitt is home and back to work at a new position with the Army Corps of Engineers.



Leanne J. Cruitt, Chief Petty Officer, US Naval Reserves

In wake of the terrorist attacks in the fall of 2001, Leanne was called up joining 7,000 other Naval Reservists to augment security at Navy bases in the US and overseas.

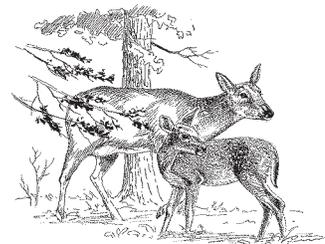
Leanne's reserve unit was called to duty at the Naval Surface Warfare Center located near Crane, Indiana. She was stationed there for her full six months active duty. “I was lucky enough to only be 4 hours away from my home in Troy, Illinois, and I managed to make it home a couple of times a month,” Leanne said. “The hardest part was not being able to be home for the holidays. I spent

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years either guarding railroad tracks, on patrol, or working at an entrance gate.

The base comprises 64,000 acres and is very isolated. “It's a huge weapons development and testing center out in the middle of wooded wilderness. You could patrol for hours and not see another human.” Cruitt said, “What you did see, everyday, were deer, wild turkeys, bald eagles, wolves, and plenty of coyotes. “We even had a civilian jogging early one morning near the Industrial complex, “attacked” by a coyote. He said it was just a pup and it nipped him on the leg. But it did break the skin so of course he had to have the rabies shots.”

“I didn't get to see much wildlife when I rotated to the midnight shift”, said Leanne, “but when we were assigned to guard the tracks, we used night vision goggles and I was able to watch a bobcat walking down the railroad tracks - that was pretty cool.” Another thing I saw on the midnight shift was a UFO ... but that's another story!”

Returning to work in June of 2002, Leanne found herself reassigned from the Interpretative Services Department to the Natural Resources Department at Lake Shelbyville. “The year 2002 had been pretty eventful for me”, said Leanne, “being away from home on active duty, and then coming back to a new job - that was pretty stressful and I was worried at first”, “But I really love the new work and the people I work for are great. I'm having a lot of fun learning the ropes of my new position. I worked in the Interpretative Department for over ten years and was really feeling stagnant. Change is good!”





Park Ranger Eric Lemons and Natural Resource Specialist James Gracey team with Missouri Department of Conservation Fisheries Biologist Mark Boone to place fish habitat materials in Wappapello Lake.

**Fish Habitat Improvement:**

Members of the Wappapello Lake Team and Missouri Department of Conservation personnel enhanced fish habitat in the waters of Wappapello Lake. The Missouri Department of Conservation furnished the habitat barge used to haul and place brush

and branches. The brush had been cleared from interior roadways and along field edges on Corps property. It is hoped that this habitat improvement will increase the quality of Wappapello Lake's fisheries.



Park Ranger Doug Nichols shows his full stringer of Crappie

**Catch of the Day:**

Doug Nichols, Park Ranger at Wappapello Lake enjoyed a great day of fishing recently. Doug caught his limit of "large crappie". This abundance of fish is attributed previous efforts by the Wappapello Team, placing fish habitat into the lake.



Seasons Greetings from Wappapello Lake: The Team at Wappapello Lake gathered last week for a group holiday photograph. The Team at Wappapello Lake wishes everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season.



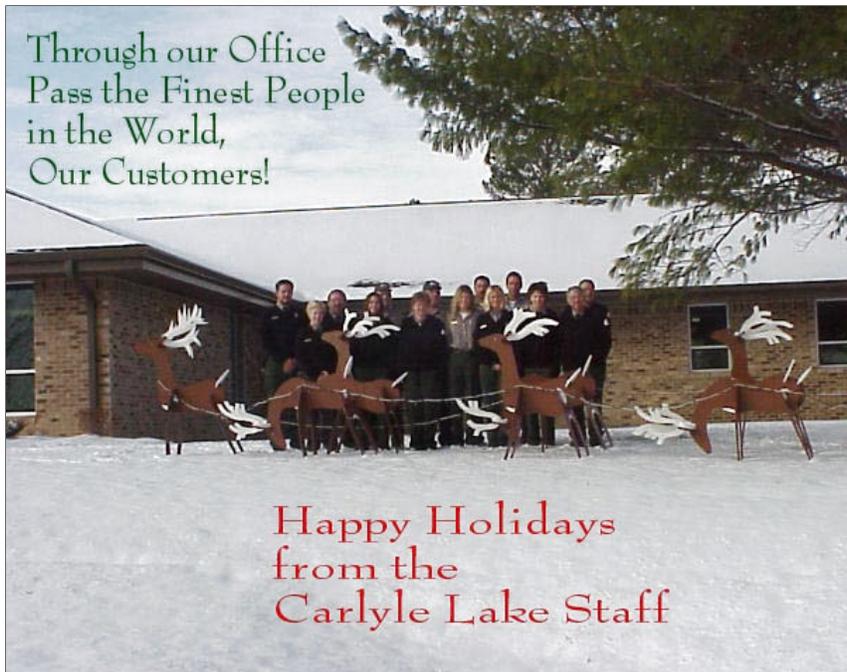
### Poplar Bluff Preschool Tours the Festival of Lights:

The Wappapello Lions Club and Park Rangers have been busy giving tours of the Redman Creek East Campground Christmas decorations to preschool children from Poplar Bluff, MO.

Three groups of children toured the area over a two day period, visiting with Santa Clause and talking with Corps Rangers.



Wappapello Lions member George Doerr, Santa Clause and Park Ranger Andrew Jefferson.



Through our Office  
Pass the Finest People  
in the World,  
Our Customers!

Happy Holidays  
from the  
Carlyle Lake Staff

The Carlyle Lake Staff took advantage of our early-December snow fall to pose for a holiday group photo.

### St. Louis District Tops CFC Goal for 2002



St. Louis District CFC Coordinator Angela Gorenz receives an on-the-spot cash award from Colonel Kevin Williams for her successful efforts heading up the District's 2002 CFC Campaign.

The employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District have again exceeded the District's goal for its annual campaign to support the Combined Federal Campaign.

This year, District employees dug deeply into their pockets to achieve 104 percent on the campaign's goal — \$60,000 - with a combination of cash and periodic payroll allotments totaling \$62,578.

According to Angela Gorenz, CFC Coordinator for the District, this was especially gratifying this year. "In the wake of 9-11, a lot of charities have found it a lot tougher to reach out and match previous levels of giving. This is a great accomplishment."

Gorenz also noted that the goal was exceeded and the campaign was wrapped up on time.





## Retiree Shifts Focus to Artwork

by Ken Kruchowski

My art has centered around charcoal. I used to watch a guy named John Nagey on television when I was a kid. Yes, they had TV way back then. He did charcoal drawings. My parents bought me his starter kit and away I went. It took me 15 or 20 years to perfect my technique. I gained complete control over the medium.

The nice thing about charcoal is that it doesn't cost much of anything. Oil painting and watercolor, on the other hand, are quite expensive to do. The price of paint is beyond belief.



A picture perfect charcoal rendering of the crystal vase.

One day in the 70s I saw a display of Norman Rockwell paintings and came out on fire to try oil painting. I did seven in all before the fire burned out and I went back to charcoal.

They didn't turn out too badly. Oil stays wet forever and my technique (which was "fiddle with it until it looks right") worked fine with oils.

I was always afraid of watercolor because I figured once you touched the brush to the paper it had to be perfect. You couldn't "fiddle with it until it looked right." So I never tried.

When I moved to O'Fallon, MO and went on nine hour days at work,

my workday and commute took up all my time. I barely had a half hour to myself in the evening before it was time to get ready for bed. So I gave up art altogether.

After I retired I naturally had more time and decided to try to get back into charcoal. I had a picture of a crystal vase that I stole out of someone's magazine that I wanted to attempt to duplicate in charcoal for years. But it was so complex I was afraid to try. I decided that would be the thing to do to get back into charcoal. When I started it I didn't know if I could do something that complex or not. But 120 hours of hard concentrated work later, there it was. And away I went. I finished several complex charcoals that winter.

Then I decided I wanted to try color again. So I started an oil painting. My wife, whose olfactory capabilities rival those of a blood hound, objected to the smell. She said it permeated the house. So I had to stop. I still wanted to do something in color though, so I finally got up the courage to try watercolor. My daughter gave me a set of paints and a book on watercolor for my birthday. I read the book, but it wasn't until January of 2002 that I finally set to work. I learned a lot from my first attempts. The most important thing I learned was that even with watercolor you CAN "fiddle with it," at least somewhat. You can go back over it and take off color and blend some color. I did several watercolors over the winter and spring and finished my last one, a still life of spring flowers, by the first of July.



Watercolors aren't always made up of muted tones as this vivid image shows.

My paintings, as with my charcoals, come from pictures I see in books and magazines, or pictures that I, friends and family take. My daughter gave me a book of mountain photos. I painted several of those. The still life (above) came out of a photo magazine. I changed some of the colors to suit myself. I found a seascape on an old calendar. That will be my next watercolor. I'll begin work sometime in mid winter 2003. It might take me a couple of months.

The reward comes from being able to express myself with something beautiful and from the encouragement and appreciation that come from those who see my work. I have done some work on commission, but most of what I do I do for myself, just to see if I can create something worthwhile.

*Ken Kruchowski was the first editor of "Esprit" and retired from the Public Affairs office in 1999.*



**Welcome to:**



Vel Swindle, GS-7  
Secretary in the  
Executive Office.

Tom Connell,  
GS-5 Vehicle  
Operations and  
Maintenance  
Clerk in LM-T.



Sharon Gebhardt,  
GS-11 Manage-  
ment Analyst in  
RM-B

Michelle Schreiner,  
GS-6 Management  
Assistant, in RM



Pernell Ridley,  
General Supply  
Specialist, GS-9  
in LM-S.

Steven Armstrong, General Engineer,  
GS-12, ED-P. (no photo available)

Vel, Tom, Sharon, Michelle, and  
Steven, were employed by Defense  
Contract Management Agency  
(DCMA) in the metro area and were  
affected by a reduction in force to be  
effective in December.

**Welcome also to:**

- Ryan Singleton, Student Trainee (Engineer) GS-4 in ED-HPR.
- Timothy Eagan, Student Trainee (Engineer) GS-2 in SD.

**Congratulations to:**

- Tony Luther, converted from STEP to SCEP and promoted to Student Trainee (Park Ranger) GS-2 at Lake Carlyle.
- Jerry Brooks, temporarily promoted to XF-4, Dredge Potter.
- Ryan Hummert, converted from STEP to SCEP and promoted to Student Trainee (Park Ranger) GS-4 at Lake Carlyle.
- Kimberly Rea, promoted to GS-9, Rivers Project Office, Riverlands Section.
- Russell Elliott, promoted to GS-11 in IM-P.
- Jaynie Doerr, converted from SCEP to career conditional appointment and promoted to GS-7 in CONOPS, Regulatory Branch.
- Debbie Warner, permanently promoted to GS-7 in LM-T.
- Roland Murdock, promoted to GS-10 in ED-GE.
- Nick Carroz, promoted to GS-3 at Mark Twain Lake.
- Jeffrey Hopkins, promoted to XH-9, Master Tender, CO-NP.
- Donna Bryant, promoted to GS-2 at Wappapello Lake.
- Charlotte Stenger, promoted to GS-2 at Wappapello Lake.

**Farewell to:**

- Norman Carlile, retired from Rend Lake on 10/31/02.
- William Hedger, retired from Mel Price L&D on January 3rd.
- Stacy Friesenborg, Student Trainee (Engineer) in CONOPS, Construction Branch.
- Phil Brown, left us for a job at Barkley Lake, which is in the Nashville District

**Commander's Column cont. from page 2**

carrying our message and making sure that our leaders know what we do. He is making sure that they know that our mission is well thought out, is absolutely critical to our nation's well being, and is not possible to execute piecemeal or divided up in some illogical scattering of resources.

I think that detractors will find out that if our nation didn't have a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it would have to invent one.

I urge you to continue to be the best. I urge you to strive always for excellence.

2003 lies before us next. I believe in you. I believe that together, doing our day in, day out jobs well, we are the best testimony in our own favor.

Essayons.





Tree trimming was a group activity. In addition, participants enjoyed refreshments provided by the Civilian Activities Council (CAC) (L) COL Williams, Sharon Wolf, DeAnn Chambers, Diana Bartels, Kathrine Kelley (kneeling)

## St. Louis District's Holiday Season 2002

The St. Louis District family celebrated the year-end holiday season in a variety of ways, with the official kick-off being a tree decorating party in the District's 4th floor lobby.

Decorations included traditional glass, metal and wood ornaments, lights and candy canes. But these were quickly supplemented with homemade ornaments from various offices and one individual's shiny PMBP discs.

One decoration was the object of a special vigil, as Contracting's Archie Ringgenberg inserted a dollar bill into a bow on the tree. "I'm going to see how long it stays there," Archie offered.

On the Monday after Christmas, Archie was disappointed to find the dollar gone. But his faith in his fellow employees was restored when he learned that his office mates had "invested" for him in the \$315 million Power-Ball lottery. Needless to say, Archie won nothing and is back at work.



Archie Ringgenberg finds dollar gone!

Thursday, December 19 was the CAC-sponsored District Holiday Party. This year it was more festive than formal, as more than 325 employees and guests repaired to the Arena Sports Club a block away.

Following the catered luncheon, District Engineer Colonel Kevin Williams was finally able to subdue the noise with much shouting and whistle blasting, to conduct a drawing for door prizes.

Numerous prizes were given, running the gamut from RAY Building Fitness Club memberships, to gift certificates and finally, coveted days of admin leave.

The party continued with dancing, darts and a cash bar before it broke up about normal quitting time.



Smiles and good cheer were everywhere (L) Christy Husky, Sharon Leeker, Ann Meehan, Jaquelyn Arbeiter, Lisa Wilner.



The CAC-sponsored holiday party drew unprecedented participation. More than 300 District employees, retirees and guests all gathered for the afternoon festivities.



## Retiree's Corner



The Esprit editor, Russ Elliott, invited the retirees to consider writing short stories of their amusing experiences with the District. He realizes that the retirees are not polished authors, but if they would just jot down the facts and some explanations, the staff will be happy to create an article for the Esprit. The plan is to make Esprit a more personal publication. He wants to include articles that reflect all aspects of the Corps including retirees. We have a great wealth of knowledge and stories. Now you'll have a chance to share them. Articles may be brought to the monthly retirees luncheon or sent directly to Russ at the District Office. Efforts are under way to get a District representative to the luncheons "more frequently".

Elsie Kalafatich was quick to offer a bit of trivia. Did anyone know the location of Mecklenburg Avenue? Elsie and her husband, John used to live there. John was told not to say a word. What's new about that? [Answer at the end of the article]

Joe Bisher "blew in" for a brief stay, just long enough to recount a funny situation. Shortly after he was appointed Small and Disadvantaged Business Advisor (SADBUA), he received a call. Tom Miano asked if he was involved with some movie about a little boy and the elephant. This threw Joe. After some explanation, Tom convinced Joe that it had nothing to do with movies, but it did concern procurement. Joe was somewhat bewildered, but seemed satisfied.

Joe shared an old copy of a document issued by the District, filled with project information. It was dated 1979 and contained all the pertinent information for the various District projects.

The document originated in the Comptroller's Budget Branch and was up dated every two years. Joe found it to be a valuable tool for the various offices and the field, and wondered if something like it existed today?

Charlie Denzel will be having lunch with John Jansen. John should have a wealth of District stories, some even funny. John was there when they built the original Lock and Dam 26, back in the 1930's. John doesn't venture too far from home, these days. John just recently gave up tennis, because he couldn't find anyone his age still able to play.

Rich Mills invited Paul Kornberger to the luncheon, but Paul had to decline. Paul's time is currently occupied in a labor of love—baby sitting his only grandchild. (Now that is edifying.) Paul considers himself a "kept man" since his wife is still working and all he has to do is play with the grandchild. Rich and about 20 employees or retirees went on an October golf outing to Tour du Lac. (look for a photo in a future issue of Esprit) They played golf and told a lot of lies about how good they used to be. (For many, it was good that they could remember that far back.)

Larry McCarthy and his wife have been very fortunate lately. They have visited several Bed & Breakfasts and have been the only guest there. It was great. They had the entire staff at their beck and call. You get all the best services. He hopes it continues, since they have a few more scheduled.

Lew Scheuermann was pleasantly surprised at the luncheon. Dennis Gould presented him with his winnings from the golf tournament. He wondered if Dennis had deposited the "large sum" in a local bank and pocketed the interest. Dennis assured Lew that he kept the "large sum" safe

under his pillow all this time.

Dennis had two reasons to attend the luncheon. He had Lew's winnings and Charlie Denzel threatened bodily harm if he did not attend. Charlie merely smiled in response.

Pete Puricelli and his wife Marie visited Bob and Barb Lutz last month. The Lutz's are very gracious hosts. They treated the Puricelli's to a very tasty lunch and asked that they sign the table cloth. The Lutz's have a tradition that everyone who visits them must sign and date the table cloth. Bob served as tour guide and shared his new design concept — an attic basement. Their home is built on solid rock and it would have been prohibitive to blast for a basement.

They just added a third story and use it as their "basement." Everything is well organized and won't get damp. The original plan was for a two car garage in front and a single garage in the rear, for their boat trailer. Bob measured for the trailer, but he missed it by just 5 inches. The trailer wouldn't fit, but now Bob has a great workshop! (Sounds like the old carpenter story of cutting the board off twice and it is still too short.)

Their beautiful home overlooks Table Rock Lake. It's about a good 5 iron from the lake in golf terms.

It's a good distance from the main road to their house, but the drive is very beautiful. Bob and Barb have extended an open invitation to any of our retirees in the neighborhood. Just call or drop in. Bob is always ready to fish or play golf.

We always meet on the third Thursday of the month, 11:00 am. Our next meeting will be January 16th. The Salad Bowl is located at 3949 Lindell. There's plenty of free parking. Everyone's invited. Hope to see many of you there.

Elsie's trivia answer: *Mecklenburg Avenue ran from Gravois Avenue to just past Morganford Road, on the County side of the River des Peres. It was renamed Carondelet Blvd.*

# Happy Holidays from your retirees!



Jane and Charlie Denzel



Helen and Lou Scheuermann



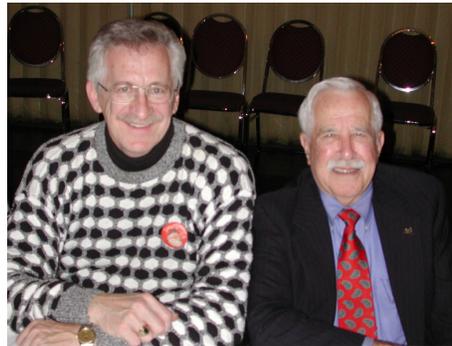
Mary and Rich Mills



Pete and Marie Puricelli



John and Elsie Kalafatich



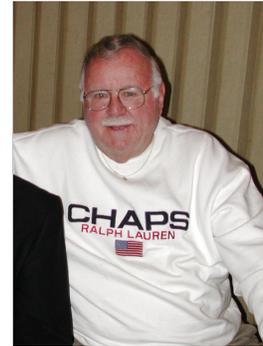
Larry McCarthy and Dennis Gould



Sandor (Alex) Dombi



Ron and Lois Bockhorst



Joe Bisher