



ST. LOUIS ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT

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A downbound 15-barge tow transits lock 25 at Winfield, Mo. The first nine barges wait in the foreground for the remaining six barges and their towboat to enter the lock chamber and be lowered some 13 feet. They will then be rejoined to continue their southbound journey. Fifteen-barge tows — the maximum for Upper Mississippi River navigation — must be broken into two “cuts” to pass through the 600-foot lock chambers at many Corps locks on the river.

River Navigation Returns Throughout St. Louis District

A look Back at 2002-2003

The St. Louis District, especially the 300 miles of the Mississippi River that it encompasses, has endured a wild ride in the past year. And many of the events recorded over the past months have had significant impacts on the navigation industry on the Mississippi.

The scheduled winter three-month closure of Lock 24 at Clarksville ended a day early when M/V Sir Randy J began the first lockage at 2:30 p.m. on March 14. The same vessel had been the last to lock through there on December 15, 2002 before the lock’s scheduled closure for major rehab work.

But those two scheduled events were about the only planned impacts on the navigation industry during the past 12 months.

During the spring of 2002 the gage at St. Louis reached the 14th highest mark in recorded history at 37.29 feet — some 7 feet above flood stage.

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Commander's Perspective



COL Kevin Williams

When I last wrote for *Esprit*, the United States and our coalition partners were poised to strike Iraq if that became necessary. In the days that have come to pass, major combat operations have occurred. The cruel and dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein has been removed from Iraq and the Mideast. The armed forces of our nation and our partners have performed magnificently.

As a professional soldier it was incredible to watch the progress of this conflict. The embedded reporters brought slices of the complex story to viewers and readers that showed just how good, brave and professional our military people are.

As I told you last month, our contribution here in St. Louis has been and remains, to do the level best job we can to ensure that the critical navigation waterways that course through our District remain open and operating to support the economy of our nation. And we must continue to do that work.

But there's more emerging now. In the aftermath of this war, the United States isn't simply declaring victory and coming home. We are committing to stay the course in Iraq and help to rebuild that once proud nation.

I can't begin to guess how Iraq will be administered or who will play various roles in the rebirth of the country. Obviously the U.S. and Britain will play key roles. Other nations and the United Nations will doubtless be part of the solution as well. And of course, the Iraqi people will be critical to their own future.

In the meantime, the military and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are getting on with the mission, and the Mississippi Valley Division has been tasked with generating a Forward Engineering Support Team – Main, or FEST-M to deploy to Iraq, perhaps as early as June.

FESTs are made up of experts who are good at many disciplines and unparalleled at one: getting things done quickly and correctly.

This is both an exceptional professional opportunity for people who want to shoulder this tough task and a way for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to showcase our value to our nation's military.

This is not to downplay the contribution we make everyday here in the District. But one of the reasons we have the engineering capabilities that the Corps of Engineers embodies is to support military operations around the world. The same skills that build and maintain navigation projects, limit flood damage and restore critical ecosystems are directly and immediately applicable

to rebuilding Iraq.

Consider the opportunity to participate in a historic time and place. Weigh the pros and cons. No one will think less of you for not volunteering, whatever your reason. But your Army and country are calling for the expertise that is so well, and in many cases uniquely, represented in our District family. If you can and if you want to, throw your hat in the ring. It will be an experience that you will never forget.

Esasayons!

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River Navigation Cont from page 1

The flood passed with little notice however, except for extremely high levels in the Corps of Engineers lakes in the District, and by summer the river was hosting very normal navigation throughout the District.

As the area experienced a relatively dry summer and fall, the river fell steadily, but predictions held that it would remain functional with only routine maintenance dredging being necessary.

But as fall gave way to winter, Mother Nature continued to threaten the barge industry with more dry weather. Suddenly in early December, the river's flow diminished to some 84,000 cubic feet per second – about two-thirds of normal flow – and the Mississippi tumbled three feet in a number of days.

The District's dustpan dredge, Potter, which was completing her scheduled season of maintenance dredging near Chester, Ill., was called to respond to news of grounding barges just north of the Jefferson Barracks Bridge at the end of the St. Louis Harbor.

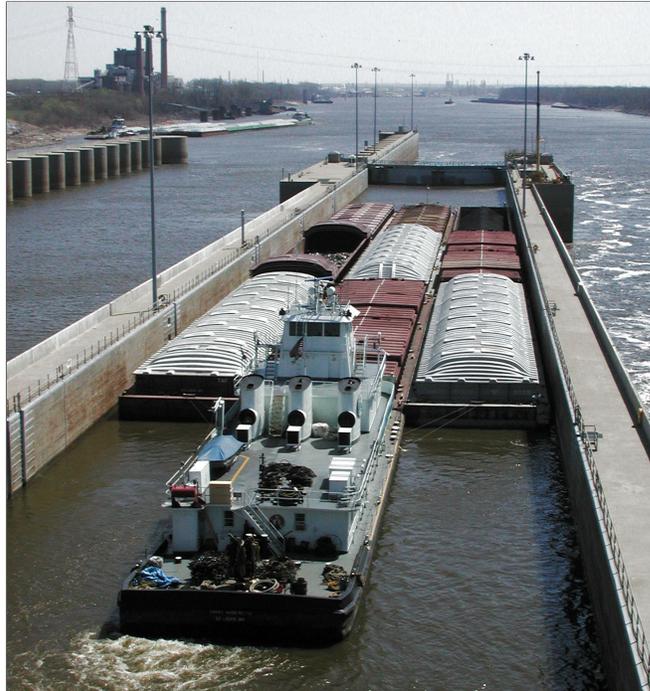
Potter moved north to restore the channel, and instead of her predicted pre-holiday return to the Service Base, continued to dredge over the holidays before coming home in early January.

Not long after she was tied up and crewmembers were dispatched to other duties or sent home, Mother Nature threw another curve at the river and those who depend on it for a living.

She injected extreme cold into the equation and the river began to rapidly freeze to the north.

The river's already low flow was worsened as water either froze in place or its flow was restricted by ice blockages. By January 16, the Mississippi at St. Louis had fallen to its lowest stage since 1989, recording a gage reading of minus 4.4 feet there.

Assuming that a St. Louis gage reading of "zero" means a nominal depth of 12.5 feet, that meant that theoretically there could be as little as 8.1 feet of water in the channel at that point. However, surveys indicated that the nine-foot channel was maintained in St. Louis throughout spring 2003's low water period.



A downbound 15-barge tow heads south from the 1200-ft. main lock at Mel Price, near Alton, Ill. This size tow can accommodate the equivalent of 870 truckloads.

Representatives from the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Weather Service and the barge industry huddled on frequent teleconferences and developed plans to sustain navigation. Then Chief of Con-Ops, Wally Feld, told everyone that if navigation ceased it would be hard to get going again. "We get some dredging effect simply by carefully using the channel" he told everyone."

Barge operators agreed to reduce the numbers of barges being moved, and to limit loads to reduce their drafts. The District called Potter's crew back, stopped her planned maintenance and rapidly initiated her return to service. Throughout the month of January, with temperatures hovering near 0 in St.

Louis, and falling lower to the north and west, the river continued to fluctuate slightly, but stayed very low. With spring's arrival and long-range predictions of another dry summer, it's easy to predict a summer of low water, and without relief, yet another stretch of low water for the coming winter.

The industry and the District are all aware of the dynamic nature of the Mississippi. One has only to view the large sheet pile structure on the Illinois side of the river a few yards north of the Eads Bridge for a visible reminder of that.

A large tree trunk lies securely wedged near the top of that structure. At January's low water mark, it was nearly 40 feet out of the Mississippi's waters as the Casino Queen stood into the channel just down stream so a crane could scoop out sand where she had come to rest on the bottom. The floating casino had suspended operations – something she doesn't normally do even for Christmas.

Only eight months earlier that tree had disappeared under the river's surface, and in January it illustrated how mankind doesn't control or harness the Mississippi. We can only slightly modify her extremes of nature.

For the Mississippi is a constantly changing creature, offering unforeseen challenges between periods of relative tranquility. She is not to be taken for granted, especially if you depend on her for your livelihood.

Every year, nearly 90 million tons of goods and commodities enter or leave the locked river system to the north via the Chain of Rocks Locks. More than 60 percent of our nation's agricultural exports transit the Mississippi en route to ocean-going transport terminals on or near the Gulf of Mexico.

Keeping that critical flow moving is just one of the Missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its St. Louis District.



Shift Leader Carolyn Garrison supervises as Sugar Babe (L) and Queeny greet each other at the start of a new day.

the District Assistant Chief of Con-Ops told us once that monkeys could run this place. So we don't want her to get overqualified and take our jobs."



Sugar Babe sports her summer hair style

Another candidate for the lock's "adopt-a-stray program" is Sugar, who came on the scene during major rehab work at the lock a few years ago.

She's small and wary. Her story began with begging from the construction workers. She would grab tossed tidbits and run. It was a long time before she trusted anyone.

Sugar has a real owner now. Shift Leader Carolyn Garrison adopted Sugar and brings her to work every day. Carolyn can't bear Sugar spending the night at the lock.

Dogs aren't the only species left at the lock. Lock Master Jerry Stroud can personally attest to 12 abandoned cats. Lock secretary, Theresa Montgomery made a home for five of them. Jerry admits to taking the other seven home.

Sometime ago, a down bound towboat crew found a kitten atop one of the barges they were pushing. The captain's distaste for cats required the crew to hide her until they could decide what to do with her.

They hid the poor waif from view and "borrowed" food for her from the galley. The towboat pilot called his wife on his cell phone. She drove from Batchtown and crossed on the Mississippi ferry to meet the towboat at Lock 25. Today, you'd still recognize the beautiful golden eyes, but the kitten has grown to be a 23 pound gray cat.

Animals receive a friendly welcome at the lock, but please, don't dump any of yours off there. It is evident that more than sufficient number already seem to be finding their own ways there.

Can we keep her? Can we keep her?

Lock & Dam 25, near Winfield, Mo., seems to have a powerful "stray magnet."

A young, unwed mother hound was abandoned there about a year ago. She was severely underweight and due to give birth very soon.

What ever was she to do?

Thus begins the happy-ending saga of Queeny, a pregnant "Heinz 57" dog that wandered in and took over the hearts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers crew at the lock when she arrived – probably on a dark and dreary night.

She met her initial food needs by begging. Deck crews of passing tows frequently tossed her a tidbit from their galleys. The big day came soon, and Queeny – now so named – delivered a litter of nine pups that quickly became

the talk of all lock personnel. They banded together, first to care for the puppies and then to find homes for each and every one.

More than a year has passed. Queeny – who after months of begging, developed a less-than desirable body shape – was able to run down a rabbit recently. From underweight to overweight, and finally back to rabbit catching physique, it has been a long journey to her position as an unofficial Corps employee.

While Queeny is afraid of loud noises, she is willing to befriend everyone. She begins with a quick inspection and then a guarded friendship. Her tail pops up and starts to wag once you prove yourself. Queeny loves to be petted and she belongs to everyone at the lock. They've all chipped in to get her shots and a collar.

Lockmaster Jerry Stroud reports that she is very smart. "We don't let her see too much around here. Wally Feld, then



The Voice of Lock 25

Meet Teresa Montgomery. She's been the secretary at Lock 25 for 25 years. She started as a stay-in-school in high school and became full time upon graduation. She handles all administrative duties, including payroll, travel, procurement, budget, and personnel matters. Teresa communicates daily with local residents and towing companies. She's even assisted the Lock Operators in locking towboats. This winter a shift leader taught her how to weave the 3/8" lock lines used for handling pleasure craft. Teresa said "We wove "eyes" or loops onto the end of the lines. It was sort of like doing macramé and it gave me a break from my computer."

Teresa's hobbies include keeping up with three daughters, quilting, and reading. She also organizes outreach programs through her church. She's trying her hand at gardening under the watchful eye of maintenance mechanic John Robinson. Together they've planted two flower beds at the Lock.

Her family is owned by a variety of stray or special needs pets. They include Riley, the three legged Cocker Spaniel, Angel Kisses the cat with no hair, and Paige, the abused cat they saved. There are also Tiger, Punkin and Lilly, all stray cats — also roadside rescues. Teresa sums it up, "My husband gave up years ago trying to curb the tide of stray animals we have adopted over the years."

Permit "Violation" Found at West St. Louis County Site.

Individuals or groups that plan to excavate, dredge or place structures in the waters of the United States must seek and obtain permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – either a Section 10 or Section 404 permit. Failure to do so can lead to heavy penalties and restoration costs.

An individual has violated these requirements, constructing a dam across a stream, inundating surrounding wetland and possible threatening a neighboring commercial area.

Fortunately for this individual that has snubbed its nose at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, they have four legs, a broad flat tail, a sleek fur coat and overdeveloped front teeth.

He or she, or most likely they, are beavers.



This tranquil wildlife scene lies just a few feet from busy Manchester Road.

The scene of the violation is in West St. Louis County.

Beavers are commonly thought of as creatures inhabiting remote reaches far from human development. All school children are familiar with the trappers who explored North America while seeking the valuable pelts of these animals.

For decades they were hunted nearly to extinction and their habitat severely restricted by draining land for farming. Today, though numbering only a small percentage of their population before Europeans came to the new world, beavers, very adaptable and inclined to reclaim former living territory, are widespread.

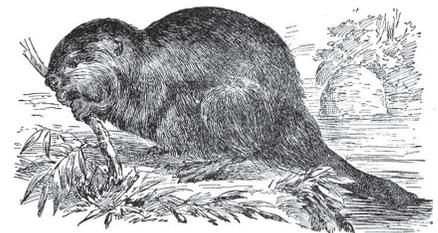
Occasionally they come into conflict with humans, flooding roads or creating ponds on former dry land. This is not mischief, but rather is a natural activity to isolate their homes from predators and to ease the movement of their primary food source, leaves and green bark from branches and small logs, usually from aspen or other fast growing trees.

While much of their behavior is viewed as being instinctive, Dr. Donald Griffin, author of *Animal Minds*, writes: "When we think of the kinds of animal behavior that suggest conscious thinking, the beaver comes naturally to mind."

Beavers can grow to more than 40 pounds. At age three they select a lifelong mate and rear young, called kits, once a year. They tend to be self-regulating in their numbers, decreasing their reproduction rate when populations reach a certain level. They are also normally quite gentle, and in one Indian language, the word for beaver also means "affable", or friendly and gregarious.

They can be difficult to remove permanently from an area. One reason is that when you remove a beaver from an attractive plot, another is likely to find its way into that same place. Killing them with snares and traps is viewed by many as being cruel and unacceptable.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through its Partners for Wildlife, has made devices available to appropriate agencies and groups to restore water flows that may damage property while permitting the beaver to coexist with human neighbors. In fact in some cases, far from being damaging, beaver populations can aid in maintaining valuable wetlands.



North American beaver, *Castor Canadensis*



New Vehicles Delivered to St. Louis District

Nothing smells like a new car, and 18 new vehicles were delivered to St. Louis District activities Thursday, April 10, 2003.

The 18 new vehicles, ranging from compact pick-ups to full-sized SUVs – most with no more than 2 miles on their odometers – were all delivered at the General Service Administration’s (GSA) delivery site at the Gateway Auto Auction in Granite City, Ill.

GSA’s policy is to rotate and replace vehicles to ensure that the fleet consists of dependable, economical cars and trucks. These new vehicles replaced vehicles from Carlyle, Rend, Mark Twain and Wappapello Lakes, Rivers Project, Engineering Division and the Central Area Office.

The District Logistics Management Office and GSA worked together to arrange this “refreshing” of the District motor vehicle fleet. If you didn’t get a chance at driving one of the new vehicles, take heart. Another block of new cars and trucks is slated to arrive later this summer.



There’s nothing like a brand new truck! Here an employee of GSA’s delivery contractor attaches the government license plate before a waiting Corps employee will drive it away.



Summertime = Picnic Time, Golf Time, and Family Fun

One of the most anticipated events of the summer is the annual St. Louis District picnic and golf tournament, and 2003’s edition of this family favorite is slated for Thursday, June 12. This year the picnic returns to Forest Park’s Worlds Fair Pavilion, and will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The District’s Civilian Affairs Council (CAC) is the sponsor of this summer highlight.

Catherine Cummings (EEO) is heading up this year’s picnic and tells that the event will feature a catered barbecue luncheon, bingo, door prizes and games for the kids.

“People who have attended several of these events tell me that Forest Park is a great place, and we are really pleased both to be able to schedule it there and to bring it in at a really low cost. Tickets will be \$6 a person. It’s actually costing more than that, but the CAC – which is the driving force behind this event – is picking up \$4 on each ticket,” Cummings reports.

Food will include hamburgers, hot dogs and bratwurst, all the fixings and non-alcoholic beverages. And best of

all, nobody is being asked to volunteer to cook or wash dishes.

She also says, “We want to especially emphasize that this is a family event, and a big part of our District family are our retirees. We’d love to see a lot of them turn out to enjoy the day with everyone.”

Carolyn Ruebusch is organizing the golf tournament, and reports that the event will be a four-person scramble with a shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. The cost will be \$30, which will cover 9 holes on the newly refurbished course, cart fees and prizes.

Carolyn says she is still looking for a few more players, and fees will need to be in to her by May 9. You can reach her at 314-331-8151 for additional details.

Forest Park also offers a host of other fun things to do, such as paddle boating and visits to the zoo, although none of these other offerings are included in the price of the picnic ticket.

Picnic tickets will be available in the near future, either through work center representatives or directly from Catherine Cummings at 314-331-8060. Catherine will also accept volunteers at this number who may wish to help plan and conduct this event.



Mel Price locks and dam is also future home of the National Great Rivers Museum, Alton, Illinois. The museum is looking for volunteers to help man the facility which opens this summer.

National Great Rivers Museum Volunteers Sought

With the approaching debut of the National Great Rivers Museum at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in East Alton Illinois, the Corps is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to assist in manning the facility.

Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age or older and will assist in a variety of important roles alongside the museum's permanent staff.

Former Corps employees are especially invited to apply as a way to continue their role as part of the Corps family and to provide insight through their own personal contributions at many of our projects. Volunteers will play an important role by assisting staff in providing services for our visitors. The National Great Rivers Museum, one of 11 Corps Regional Visitor Centers, is

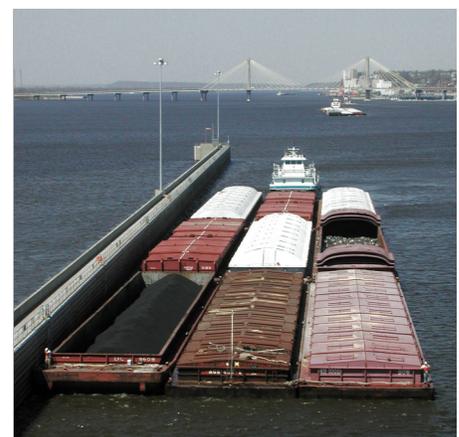
expected to be opening its new exhibit gallery by mid July. Because of the large influx of visitors expected, the Corps is looking for volunteers to assist them with visitor relations.

Volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to: Staffing the reception desk, meeting and greeting visitors, giving tours of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam, presenting educational programs, answering questions about the Melvin Price Locks and Dam, museum and the surrounding areas, and working in the gift shop.

Volunteers may put in as many or as few hours at the National Great Rivers Museum as their schedule will permit. While there are no minimum hour requirements, many volunteers at other Corps of Engineers projects enthusiastically contribute substantial time, and this greater involvement would be welcomed at the museum.

The opportunity to play an important role at the National Great Rivers Museum is yours. Choose to make a difference.

Interested parties are urged to contact Philip Manhart at the Rivers Project Office at 636-899-2600 x 244.



Tow approaching the main lock chamber at Mel Price Locks and Dam.



Prescribed burning

At one time America's vast midwestern plains were covered by seemingly endless stretches of prairie grasses. Early explorers told almost unbelievable tales of these prairies, extending to the horizon, teeming with equally limitless herds of buffalo, or more precisely, bison.

Naturalists today know that such areas of grasses, if left on their own, will tend to develop in a succession of briars, cedar, locust and other early stages of woody plant growth. Eventually forests will encroach on these grasslands and replace them.

Nature's answer to defending the prairies against this relentless onslaught was twofold: fire and bison.

The bison grazed in huge herds across the entire region, eating many pounds of rich grasses per animal each day, and in turn "recycling" this food as fertilizer. As the bison grazed, the grasses grew and died off each winter.

Like modern lawns, this produced thatch.

But the thatch in turn, was controlled by periodic prairie fires, usually started by lightning from the summer storms that often raced across the grasslands.

These fires, fed by the same winds that bore the storms, burned with intense heat and often burned for long periods and over vast stretches.

Demonstration areas of prairies grass show us that the root systems supporting these plants extend an average of 18



Wappapello Lake personnel make sure prevailing winds won't affect adjacent wooded areas. Every precaution is made to ensure a safe, successful burn.



Mark Twain Lake Prescribed Burn Season Has Begun: The Mark Twain Lake Fire Team has started to execute its prescribed burn program. Prior to the season, the team underwent its annual fire training at the Project Office. Prescribed burns are currently being implemented on cool season grass fields, successional fields, and upland hardwood burns.

inches into the ground. These deep roots protect the heart of the plant and once fires have passed or burned out, and exhausted vegetation is gone, new growth emerges and the prairie's lifecycle begins all over.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis has several prairie grass areas that it nurtures. While we don't have herds of bison at our disposal, we can recreate the fires to simulate their naturally occurring counterpart wildfires, which must occur no less often than every 3-5 years for optimal growth.

Of course, we cannot allow them simply to run their course, endangering adjacent areas, especially developed areas. So the Corps must coordinate with local fire officials to ensure safety and to ensure neighbors are forewarned. Weather conditions must also be perfect, with neither rain nor high winds in the forecast.

Burns were conducted this year at all lake and rivers projects. Sections of each area are burned every 3 to 5 years

unless there are reasons to do so more often. These periodic events are both attention getters and necessary to sustaining these diverse environmental treasures. They are clear examples of how the Corps of Engineers turns to nature for the best practices to manage the environment.



The burn at Lake Shelbyville takes place under the watchful eye of many personnel. Safety is utmost in everybody's mind.



Update on Operation Enduring Cookies

Great work by all who baked, boxed, shipped and encouraged in support of Operation Enduring Cookies! Special thanks to Marge Robbins and the CAC for coming up with the idea and making it happen!



COL Michael Morrow. Check out that name tag! We thought GSA's was bad.

The District received the following email from COL Morrow:

The mail arrived today and I received two boxes of cookies from the St Louis District's *Operation Enduring Cookies*.

They could not have come at a better time. I distributed the first box among the soldiers in the shelters here in the headquarters and I took the second box out to a young sergeant at the guard post.

I explained to him where the cookies came from and asked him to share the cookies with the guard force. He was excited when he looked inside. He told me that they were sending a group of soldiers north tonight and he was going to distribute the cookies among those young soldiers for the long journey.

He wanted me to be sure that I thanked everyone in the St Louis district on behalf of the soldiers.

Please pass on my sincere thanks and gratitude to all the wonderful people at the St Louis district. Their heartfelt support is deeply appreciated. There are soldiers going in harm's way tonight that are carrying with them the love and prayers from the St. Louis District.

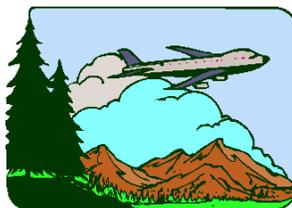
Sincerely

COL Michael R. Morrow

Travel Tips

• Don't fly with the cheese

New, high-tech baggage scanners used at airports have been designed to find explosives, among other things. But there is one problem



with that: It seems that a significant package of chocolate or cheese will trigger problems. They have the density and makeup of an explosive, according to InVision Technology, a company that makes the new baggage screening machines.

The government won't let them say how much candy or cheddar will cause the machines to sound an alarm.

• More about new bag scanners

New bomb-detecting scanners won't hurt digital cameras, but they will damage any film left in checked bags, so pack it in your carry-on.

To speed up screening and prevent flight delays, travelers are advised not to

lock their luggage. If it has to be searched by the Transportation Security Administration employees, they will have to smash the lock.

• Charging for no-shows

While rental car companies used to charge cancellation fees only on specialty cars such as SUVs and convertibles, more companies are now charging them for all cars. Rental car companies have tight budgets since fleets are down by 10 percent. Cancellation policies have always been intentionally vague so they could be enforced at any time.

About 23 percent of reservations are being booked online. Some travelers say cancellation warnings are an attempt to discourage comparison shoppers from making duplicate reservations.

• "Improved" may not be better

A worldwide boom in new and renovated hotels has produced some great prices for grand openings and reopenings. Caution: The situation often means the staff is new, service is spotty, and some features aren't up and running. It's so common that some hotels renovate and don't tell.

Five steps for coping with change

Finding effective ways of dealing with uncertainty can go a long way toward keeping you on track with your work and your career.

Quoted in *Corporate & Incentive Travel* magazine, recognized problem-solvers give this advice:

- Ignore those who say it won't work, and stay positive. Whether the change is in a process or in a business plan, people in every kind of business have had to make the "back to the drawing board" decision, coped with it, moved on, and were better off for doing so.
- Keep your sense of humor, no matter what. One of the most difficult

aspects of change is coping with the details. Don't let the small stuff get you down.

- Get prepared. Take time to decide what kind of background information you will need, and find it. Remember that every kind of business is making basic changes now, so you aren't alone.
- Look for the silver lining. You will learn more with any change, and some problems you had before will be solved by doing things the new way.
- Take time to relax before a meeting and at the end of the day. It's important. Take twenty minutes before going to bed to read or to relax with television. It will help you to realize that there's more going on in the world.



Computer kids are the new vacation planners

If you and your spouse both work and your kids program the VCR, surf the Internet for you, and watch TV in their own rooms, chances are they are planning your family vacation.



Children ages 8 to 20 appear to have replaced their parents as vacation planners, according to New York University Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Travel Administration.

For generation Y, vacations are viewed as a right, not a privilege. The travel industry is beginning to recognize that kids as consumers are becoming as important as their parents and maybe more so.

Why is April 15 tax day?

When the 16th Amendment was added to the Constitution it allowed Congress to institute the income tax. That was on February 3, 1913.

At the time, Congress picked March 1, a year and a couple of weeks later, as the deadline for filing returns. Then, with the Revenue Act of 1918, Congress moved that date forward to March 15 without telling anyone why.



The next change came in 1955 when, buried in tax code revisions, another deadline was named. This time the date was moved to April 15.

An IRS spokesman tells Fortune magazine the new date allowed more opportunity to spread out the peak workload." But law professors at the University of Southern California note that the date allows the government to use your money longer before giving refunds.

On the other hand, it gives you a little longer to prepare tax returns. And if the IRS doesn't mail your refund within 45 days, they have to pay you interest.



This is an example of the water contest coin Carlyle Bank and Carlyle Lake Management Office created to promote water safety.

Carlyle Lake Water Safety Coin Contest

Carlyle Lake, Carlyle, Illinois, April 8, 2003. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Carlyle Bank will be kicking off a summer-long water safety contest with a chance to win many fantastic prizes during the months of May through September of 2003.

It is estimated that approximately 600 people drown in the United States each year alone. Carlyle Lake, having approximately 26,000 acres of water and over 3.5 million lake visitors each year, has high potential for many unwelcome water related accidents and fatalities. We hope this contest will bring much needed awareness to water safety.

Enter to win by picking up your water safety coin and registering at one of these locations: the Carlyle Bank, the Carlyle Lake Visitor Center or the Carlyle Lake Project Office.

Coins will be at these locations beginning April 5th. Each coin is numbered, and one coin number will be drawn each week for a fantastic prize given by local business.

Winning numbers will be announced each Monday on WCXO and in the Union Banner. Contest winners will also be notified by telephone and will have until Friday of the same week to collect their prize.

The Corps of Engineers and the Carlyle Bank would like to thank the

many local businesses listed for their donations given to this years water safety contest, including.

Pizza Hut, Dockside Diner, Governors Run, Subway, Carlyle IGA, Henkel's Bait Shop, Flowers by Tess, Super Value, Scoops Ice Cream, Plant Land of Breese, J&W Produce, Fisherman's Cove, Super Wash, Napa, Mariners Village, Carlyle Lake Boat Rentals, Super 8 Motel, Carlyle Wal-Mart, and Carlyle Bank. Without their help we would not be able to get out valuable water safety information in a fun way.

With this we hope everyone will think water safety this 2003 recreation season and help us spread the water safety message!

Remember to wear your life jacket and always swim with a buddy. Other tips and informative information will be heard on WCXO through out the summer. Just tune in to 96.7 FM or read the Carlyle Union Banner.

For more information about the Water Safety Contest contact park ranger Kim Hammel at the Carlyle Lake Project

Office 801 Lake Road Carlyle, IL. 62231 or (618)594-2484





Wappapello Lake Project Manager Garry Stilts (L) and Assistant Manager Cynthia Jackson flank St. Louis District EEO Community Service Award winner Andrew Jefferson at Wappapello Lake where they work together.

First EEO Community Service Award for the St. Louis District

Park Ranger Andrew Jefferson with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Wappapello Lake recently received the first EEO Community Service Award of the St. Louis District for his significant contributions in education, recruitment, employment, and other activities aimed at improving the quality of life for the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers and his community.

As the Interpretive Park Ranger at Wappapello, Andrew is the bridge between the Corps and the community. A veteran of nineteen years service to the Corps, he manages the Bill Emerson Memorial Visitor Center there.

His responsibilities include coordinating annual Corps-sponsored special events, administering the public safety education awareness program, and active involvement in community relations meetings, the Missouri Division of Tourism and local chambers of commerce.

Andrew is also the Corps of Engineers representative for the Natural Resource Career Camp (NRCC).

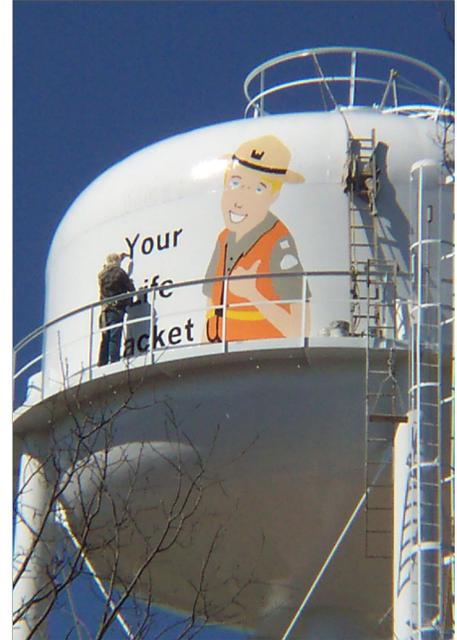
This camp exposes minority high school students to the outdoors through conservation related activities. In addition, he seeks opportunities to

recruit at local schools where he provides career information to students preparing to make their transitions from school into the workforce.

This EEO Award, which will be presented annually, was established to recognize those in the St. Louis District Corps family who are outstanding in promoting enhancing EEO-related activities in the District.



Willie B. Safe always wears his P.F.D.



Willie B. Safe icon raised to a new level

Wappapello Lake

Ranger Willie B. Safe furthered his icon status in the community of Wappapello when his image and message were placed on two water towers. These water towers have been erected by the newly formed Butler/Wayne Public Water Supply District #4 (PWSD#4). This District has been successful in forming a public water supply system within the community of Wappapello.

This water safety message was made possible through the dedicated efforts of several individuals and organizations. Frank Carroll, Senior Engineer with Schultz Engineering, worked with the Corps of Engineers, PWSD#4 Board of Directors, and Phoenix Fabricators and Erectors to make this possibility a reality. Phoenix Fabricators and Erectors from Avon, Indiana, constructed the 100,000 gallon, 120 foot high tower and agreed to include the message free of charge. The towers are located near the junction of State Highways KK and T and at the junction of Wayne County roads 523 and 522. Thousands of visitors to the Wappapello Lake area will be reminded to wear their life jacket from the friendly Park Ranger Willie B. Safe.



The Way I Remember It



The Way I Remember It!

Editor's note: Readers of Esprit are blessed to have Claude Strauser's recollections, many of which are of times and events which he has personally experienced during his career with the St. Louis District. Claude would occasionally have us believe that his heritage reaches back further than that. For example, he has been heard to say that he was close enough to then-Lieutenant Robert E. Lee to have called him "Bob." But this trip via Claude's "Way Back Machine" (with apologies to Bullwinkle and Rocky) sets a new record for how far Claude has reached into the St. Louis District's history. Enjoy!

I am sure that those of you who have seen it were impressed with the Niagara Falls. Powerful, magnificent and awesome are words often used to describe this mighty force of nature. In geological terms, Niagara Falls is quite young.

The waterfall formed at the end of the last Ice Age when torrents of water from the melting ice drained into what is now the Niagara River. About 12,300 years ago, the water plunged over the edge of the Niagara escarpment, a cliff at what is now Lewiston, New York. The force of the water since has worn away the rock layers and the Niagara Falls have moved upstream to their present location.



The Maid of the Mist looks fragile as she approaches the Horseshoe Falls at Niagra.

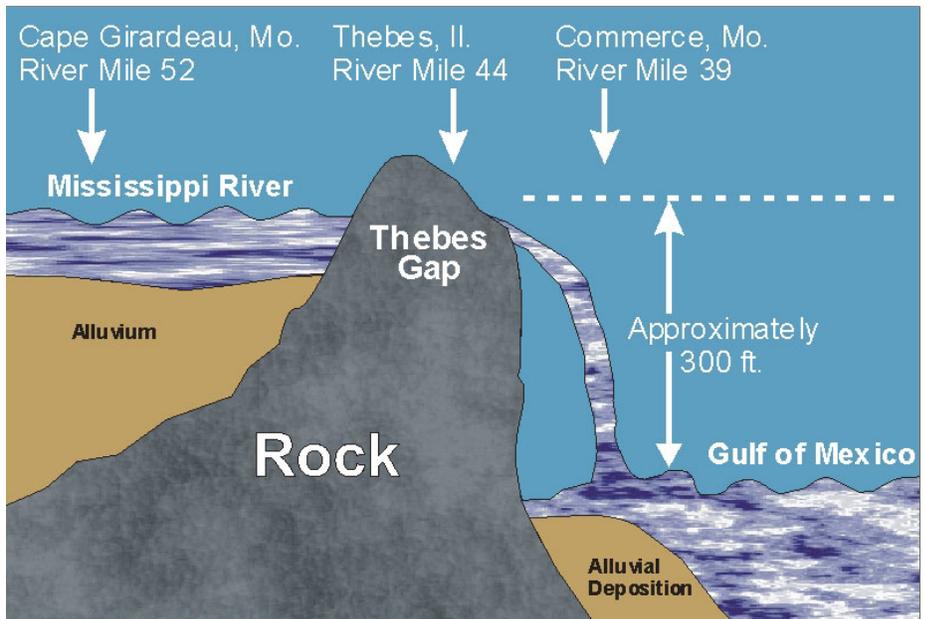
Native Americans living in the Niagara region were most likely the first people to see Niagara Falls. The first European to document the waterfall was a French priest, Father Louis Hennepin. During a 1678 expedition, he was overwhelmed by the size and magnificence of Niagara Falls.

When he returned to France, Hennepin published an account of his travels in a book entitled "A New Discovery." The book brought Niagara Falls to the

attention of the "Old World" for the first time, and ignited readers' imaginations, driving them to see Niagara Falls for themselves.

Mark Twain – of Mississippi River fame – visited the falls at Niagara and said this about the plunging water, "Although it was wonderful to see all that water tumbling down, it would be even more wonderful to see all that water tumbling up."

Compared to the waterfall that existed



Artist concept of the Mississippi River elevation change from Cape Girardeau, Mo. to the Gulf of Mexico



on the Middle Mississippi River, the falls at Niagara are pretty pitiful. Are you asking, what falls on the Middle Mississippi River?

Well, there was once a waterfall located below Cape Girardeau, Mo. To be more specific, the falls were located immediately below the Thebes Gap, at river mile 39.0 (near the present day location of Commerce, Mo.).

You see, this is where the Gulf of Mexico and the Mighty Mississippi River came together. The river poured through a gap in a rock ledge and plunged into the waters of the gulf. The falls located at Niagara are only 180 feet high. The falls located below Thebes Gap were over 285 feet high.

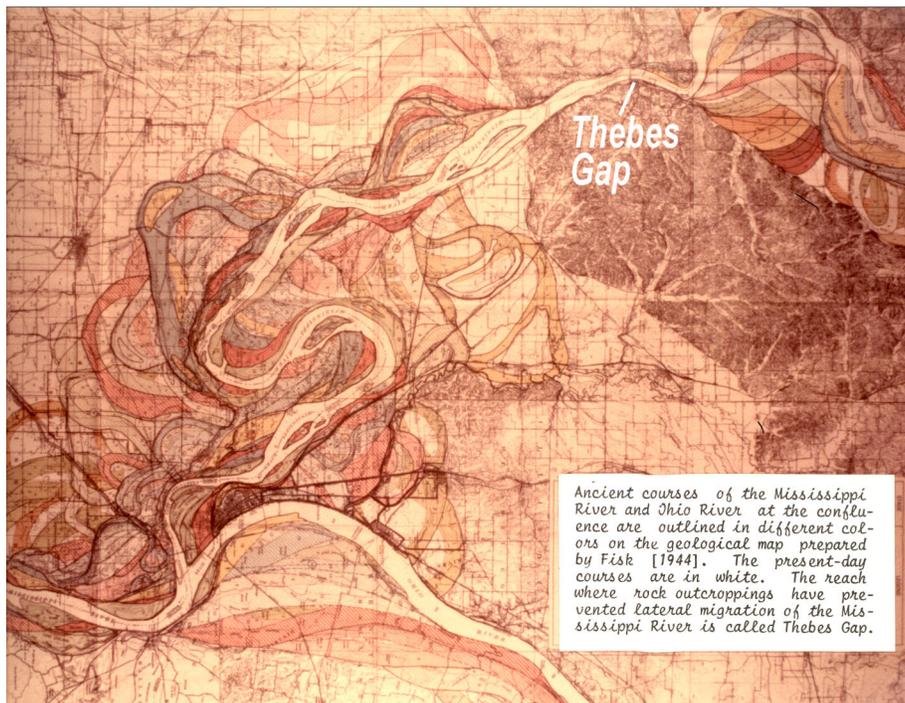
Just south of Cape Girardeau (at its airport) is a perfectly flat area wide enough to be an old riverbed. Here the Mississippi River took a sharp right turn, and spilled out across the Missouri Boot Heel, between present day cities of Advance and Poplar Bluff.

The obstacle that forced the river's right turn there was a line of rocky hills (Crowley's Ridge) that extended from Arkansas, and connected with other hills at Thebes, Illinois.

What broke the "Thebes Gap" and let the Mississippi make its way past the present Commerce and on to Cairo, Illinois? It was likely a combination of natural evolution and a big earthquake or two. When the Mississippi is low at Thebes, cracks in the rocks have a consistent direction that seems to match the theory of a big shake.

Civil engineer Charles Ellet, Jr., in his 1853 report, entitled "The Mississippi And Ohio Rivers", writes the following: "The elevation of the low water surface of the Mississippi, between Commerce and Cape Girardeau, is 285 feet above the level of the ocean; and if the present level of the sea ever extended up to that point, the Mississippi must then and there have precipitated its waters over a ledge 285 feet high.

It follows, therefore, that if, at the period when the formation of the delta may be supposed to have commenced,



Ancient courses of the Mississippi River and Ohio River at the confluence are outlined in different colors on the geological map prepared by Fisk [1944]. The present-day courses are in white. The reach where rock outcroppings have prevented lateral migration of the Mississippi River is called Thebes Gap.

This historic map shows a number of previous channels for the river. Thebes Gap, located in the upper right continues to force the mighty Mississippi river to remain within its narrow confines.

the level of these rocky hills (Thebes Gap) and the level of the ocean were the same as they are now, then there must have been, as before stated, a cataract, or rapid above the mouth of the Ohio, with a fall of two hundred and eighty-five feet at low water, or nearly double the actual height of Niagara Falls.

In the course of time, the sea must have been filled up by the sediment brought down by the Mississippi River; and the Mississippi has thus gradually risen upon the bed formed by its own deposits." So concluded Ellet.

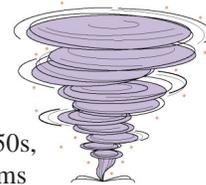
So if by some quirk of fate and history, either people had lived millions of years ago or the geological events of the region were shifted to present days, people might be honeymooning at the "Mississippi Falls" in Missouri and Illinois versus New York's Niagra Falls.

Or, as Mark Twain said, "There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns on conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact."

Claude

Don't mess with Mother Nature!

An average of 1,200 tornadoes touch down in the U.S. each year. Property damage is tremendous. Wind velocities can exceed 200 m.p.h.



In the early 1950s, these violent storms resulted in an annual death toll of more than 500. Recent improvements in National Weather Service forecasting has reduced that figure to between 50 and 60.

Even with today's computer technology, severe weather can develop very quickly and, you still may be caught off guard. Should you happen to hear a warning announcement or siren, that's not nearly enough time to gather what you'll need in an emergency.



Information Management Office (IM)

Meet Vanessa Alexander and Deborah Davis. They're the IM employees who distribute our computer passwords semi-annually. They also answer Corps of Engineers Financial Management System (CEFMS) hardware related problems. Locating Vanessa or Deborah is vital when your card reader won't work or your computer just refuses to run CEFMS. Taking their photos was easy. The smiles just come naturally.

Vanessa Alexander started her civil service career at the St. Louis Record center in 1979 and transferred to the Corps in 1981. She began as a clerk typist and switched to Computer Operator with the assistance of military training with the Army Reserves. She worked the second shift in the Computer room. That meant coming in at noon and working to eight. The Corps operated mainframe computers, with card readers and tape machines. The computer room closed at midnight.

Her new training allowed Vanessa to switch from a Computer Operator to Computer Technician in the brand new age of networking micro computer (desktop). Vanessa assisted in wiring our network system prior to the Corps move from 210 Tucker to the RAY building. She's become a computer programmer and is now the Database Administrator for CEFMS. Since then she's added UPASS administrator, District DSO administrator, and REMIS coordinator. Many of her duties have stringent security requirements.

She distributes system passwords and CEFMS signature cards. That allows her to meet and talk with basically every District employee. She's a people person so you may find her greeting



Vanessa Alexander, Information Management Office

employees or addressing the needs of one of IM's many clients.

On a more personal level, she loves children and working out. She's in charge of the youth department for her local fellowship. Vanessa also leads a bible study. Her daughter is a CPA. She loves family and friends.

Deborah Davis began her civil service career as a file clerk at the 4300 Goodfellow Record Center. She transferred to the Commissary, Granite City Army Depot a year later. She worked there first as a cashier and later as Supervisory Lead Cashier.

Five years later, she returned to Goodfellow, this time with the Disbursing Office of the Finance Center. She took an extended maternity leave in 1984 and moved her family to Stockton, California.

Deborah joined the Corps family in June, 1985. Her career began with a six-week appointment as a temporary clerk-typist. Luckily for us, management decided to offer her a permanent position.

She became a secretary in what was then ADP (Automated Data Processing). Deborah was fascinated with computers and eager to learn more. She sought out

ever more complicated assignments and her bosses listened. Her motivation earned her a promotion from the secretarial position to computer assistant. More hard work allowed her to become a computer specialist and finally Information Technology (IT) Specialist.

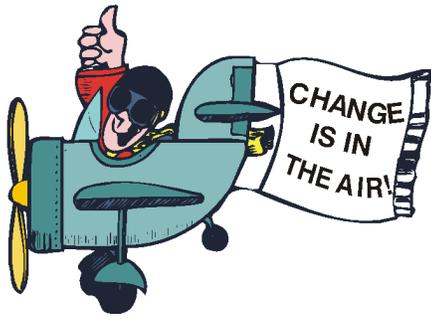
Deborah deals with many District personnel. She upgrades software, issues passwords, and smart cards. One of the more difficult aspects of her job involves troubleshooting various software related problems. She's also the technical point of contact for the Automated Training Management Program (ATMP) program. She's also the backup for CEFMS and our District webmaster.

Deborah and her husband James live in the country. They both enjoy the



Deborah Davis, Information Management Office

open space and fresher air. Their wildlife friends include deer, rabbits, raccoons, and more. They made a special effort to help the deer last winter and were rewarded as five deer approached within twenty feet of their back door. She especially loves humming birds. The Davis' are the parents of five children and four grandchildren. Deborah spends her spare time doing genealogy research, traveling and creating webpages.



Congratulations to:

- Dawn Walgate, promoted to GS-12 in DS.
- James Steele, promoted to WA-10 at Locks 27.
- Alan Foreman, promoted to GS-12 in ED-SG.
- Harold McCollum, promoted to GS-12 in ED-SG.
- Shane Nieu Kirk, promoted to GS-13 in ED-DME.
- Christopher Wheeler, promoted to GS-5 in ED-GE.
- Tyron Zobrist, converted from STEP to S CEP and promoted to GS-3 at Carlyle Lake.
- Marilyn Kwentus, promoted to GS-9 in ED-GE.
- Erin Duffy, promoted to GS-9. Erin is in an Army-funded intern training program working in ED-G.
- Christina Bates, promoted to GS-5 in ED-SD.
- Angela Gorenz, promoted to GS-4 in IM-P.
- Travis Little, converted from STEP to S CEP and promoted to GS-3 at Carlyle Lake.
- William Williams, promoted to GS-6 in ED-HPW.
- Angie Sally, promoted to GS-5 in IM-P.

Welcome to:

- William Redecker, WG-8 in CO-NP.
- Nicole Dowell, GS-9 in PAO.
- Greg Walgate, GS-12 in ED-P.
- Phillip Rustad, GS-9 at Lake

Shelbyville.

- Randolph Olmsted, returned from Japan to GS-10 at Lake Wappapello.
- Lanny Shaw, GS-5 at Rend Lake.

Farewell to:

- Avenant Melidor, retiring from ED-HPR.
- Wally Feld, Chief of CONOPS.
- Joyce Pruitt, retiring from RM-B.
- Jackie Evans-Jones, retired from RM-B
- Gary Tune, retired from the Dredge Potter on 18 Feb.
- Alan Berman, retired ED-SD.
- Martha Plyler, retired from RM-B.

Retiree's Corner



The retirees had their monthly luncheon at the Salad Bowl on March 20th. Although the group wasn't very large, they did have a great time.

Larry McCarthy brought some photos that he had accumulated over the years, of various District functions and asked the retirees if they could identify those in the photos. Some were rather easy, but others were difficult, due to the "maturing" of the individuals. It brought back many memories and this led to some rather interesting stories. Larry mentioned that he is attempting to get some of the retirees from the Procurement area of the District to make one of the luncheons.

Joe Bisher mentioned that he is still working on getting Ruddle Spring and

John Jansen to the luncheon.

The three of them should be a great source of stories about the life on the River. As usual, Joe came late and left early. Seems that he is always on his way somewhere and is just dropping in.

Lew Scheuermann recounted his trip to Springfield, Missouri for a Seniors bowling tournament and then a trip to visit Bob and Barb Lutz. Lew said that they were very gracious hosts and convinced them to stay a few days.

Even though they are in the depths of the "country" on an arm of Table Rock Lake, they are never in want for doing something. Lew had some pictures of their stay and since not many retirees were at the luncheon, he said that he would bring them to the April luncheon.

Lew mentioned that the Puricelli's were out of town, doing whatever Pete is suppose to do. (No one really knows what that is.)

They are expected to be at the April luncheon. Lew reminded the group about the Spring golf tournament on April 11th. He hopes there will be a good turnout.

Many of the regulars were absent, hopefully doing something more interesting than getting over some sort of illness.

Remember that we meet on the third Thursday, of every month, 11:00am at the Salad Bowl, 3949 Lindell.

District learns of death of Mr. Erwin J. Roesel

"We were recently informed by Corps retiree Gloria Hurley, of the passing of former St. Louis District Corps employee, Erwin J. Roesel.

Mr. Roesel worked in engineering in St. Louis until he left in 1952 to practice law, which he did until his death, March 31.

While working here, he also served as president of Local 405 of the National Federation of Federal Employees and as national vice president of that organization. "

Thrift Savings Plan Open Season



The current Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Open Season began on 15 April and ends on 30 June. Employees that have retirement coverage under FERS or CSRS are eligible to contribute to the TSP. You must initiate your TSP transaction either on the ABC-C website or through the ABC-C telephone system.

The limits of contributions remain at 8% for CSRS employees and 13% for FERS employees. If you decide to contribute an even dollar amount, you need to ensure the amount will not exceed the percentage you are allowed as well as the overall limit of TSP contributions of \$12,000 for the year 2003.

To see when changes you elect will be effective, please review the chart below. Terminations of contributions are effective at the end of the pay period in which the termination transaction is initiated.

Created	Effective	Pay Week
15 Apr-31 May	1 Jun	23-27 Jun
1-14 Jun	15 Jun	7-11 Jul
15-28 Jun	29 Jun	21-25 Jul
29-30 Jun	13 Jul	4-8 Aug

If you have not yet made an election during this open season, it is not too late!

For more TSP information, go to www.tsp.gov or <https://www.abc.army.mil>.



Thrift Savings Plan Catch Up Contributions

Have you read about the TSP Catch Up opportunity? If you are contributing the maximum amount to TSP and are 50 years of age or older, this may apply to you!

Employees that are eligible and elect to contribute additional funds to their TSP are limited in the amount that can be contributed per year. This amount does not affect the regular contribution limits for the TSP open season elections.

Year	Maximum Contribution
2003	\$2,000
2004	\$3,000
2005	\$4,000
2006 and after	\$5,000*

*May be adjusted to reflect inflation

More information will be coming soon to clarify when the catch up contributions can be started.