



US Army Corps  
of Engineers.  
New Orleans District

# *Riverside*

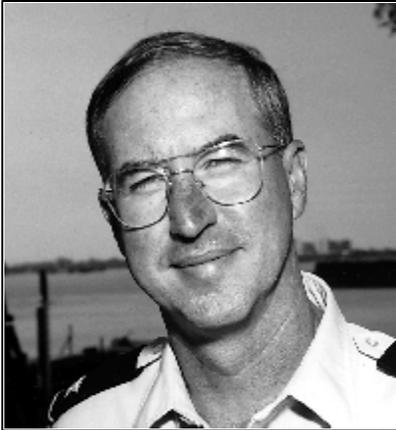
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March 2001

Below the levee

Catching up  
with the past

# Carrollton Gage



## Col. Thomas F. Julich Congressional Staff Visit

On 20-22 February our district hosted six congressional staffers from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The purpose of their visit was to see firsthand the water resource challenges that we face here in south Louisiana. We were able to brief them on Corps projects currently authorized, and those that are in the works awaiting authorization. An important portion of their visit was focused on our coastal marsh loss issue. They were able to see and hear about this enormous problem from a wide assortment of state, federal, and local organizations that we brought together to speak to the group. We also had Mr. R. King Milling, president of Whitney Bank, talk about the economic ramifications of this issue if major action is not taken soon.

As most of you know, action is being taken now through the Breaux Act, providing many good projects to slow down the amount of losses we are experiencing. It is not enough. Our I-10 Canal Area feasibility study will identify the efforts that, in conjunction with the Breaux Act, will go a long way to help us solve this problem. The importance of this effort to our state cannot be overestimated.

I'd like to commend all of you who worked to put this congressional staff visit together. I believe the staffers got the message we wanted to convey.

## 2001 District Doubloon

The theme for our district doubloon this year is "protecting Louisiana's coast through interagency and community cooperation." I selected this theme because of the increased emphasis and effort being taken on this issue by the district and by many others here in Louisiana.

## Be Healthy!

On the back of the "Just do it!" card issued to each of us from LTG Flowers, our Chief, is his philosophy on the responsibilities of every USACE employee. One of those responsibilities is to "be healthy." I'd like each of us to reflect on what that means, and how we can apply it. It's not easy for any of us to find the time to spend on our physical well-being. But, those who do take the time and effort know the many benefits that you derive from eating well, exercising, and/or knowing your physical condition and limitations. Doing those things can have an overall positive impact on a person's attitude towards themselves and their work.

Our new Wellness Program addresses all of the things I mention above. I have received numerous positive notes from district employees on this program so far. I am pleased that so many of you are availing yourselves of this program. If you have not already done so, give it a try! Or at least take some other measures to make sure that you stay healthy.



## Riverside

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### On Our Cover:

Test trench excavations at the former Brazier Baptist Church Cemetery, alongside the Mississippi River levee near White Castle.

Photo by Doug Spinks

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# Big help for small businesses

by Shari Thomas

**S**ometimes small businesses need a helping hand landing contracts with the government. Bob Dempsey is that helping hand.

As the deputy for small business, Dempsey teaches small businesses how to be successful selling products and services to the federal government. He helps them overcome their fear of the

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**"Last year we obligated a little over \$105 million to small businesses."**

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mountains of paperwork by "reducing it down to reality" so it's "not so scary."

The small business function was in Contracting Division until about two years ago. It is now part of the Executive Office with increased duties and responsibilities.

The Small Business Office explains different small business programs typically through presentations and seminars. One on one meetings are also common in getting across what is needed to make a bid and avoid the common pitfalls.

Col. Julich has been outstanding in supporting the program. "He even visited the Small Business Administration headquarters, a first for a DE. This impressed me," said Dempsey.

Helping small businesses also involves working with large businesses. Dempsey helps the large businesses locate the small businesses for subcontracts and ensures the subcontracting requirements are met. Once the work has started, Dempsey's office has to maintain contact with the large business to assure that the subcontracting requirements are being fulfilled. This requires the large business to submit a plan and produce follow-up reports.

"This process is very time consuming, but it has to be done," Dempsey said.

How is a business qualified as small? "Small businesses are determined by the National American Industry Classification System," Dempsey said.

"They have a standard for every type of business. For example, the construction and service industries' determination is based on the company's gross average sales over a three-year period, whereas a shipyard's determination is based on the number of employees."

Although a small office of only two people, Dempsey's shop helps people in a very large way.

"Last year we obligated a little over \$105 million to



*photo by Scott Riecke*

**Bob Dempsey reveals for small businesses the process of working with the Corps.**

small businesses," he said. Of the Mississippi Valley Division's \$572.2 million in total contract obligations, the New Orleans District obligated \$207.5 million. "That's 50 percent of our money directed to small business firms," he said.

Dempsey is a very busy man and says, "People come in looking for work all the time." Last year he had 317 scheduled meetings with small business contractors and 138 walk-in meetings, along with trade fairs and seminars.

Dempsey started working with the Corps in March 1987 in Logistics Management. After six months, he moved to Contracting and then became deputy for small business in March 1999.

A New Orleans native, he received his BBA in management from Northwood Technical Institute and worked for the Department of the Army in the Second Military Law Center before the Corps.

When away from work he enjoys arranging and teaching music.

# NOD hosts students during National Engineers Week

by Shanell Williams

The district hosted 24 high school students last month as part of National Engineers Week.

The 24 physics students from Archbishop Rummel High School arrived at the district at noon for a district mission overview, panel discussion with civil engineers, short presentation on the SELA program, and a bus tour of several Orleans and Jefferson Parish SELA projects.

Participating in the engineering panel were Al Naomi (PMD), Mike Park (OD), Walter Baumy (ED) and Mike Bourgeois (CD). Beth Cottone (PMD) spoke on SELA.

Instead of hosting 200 middle school students and breaking them into groups, as in previous years, the district

decided, for recruiting reasons, to invite high school students with an interest in engineering.

"This format involved fewer district people, but it was a good overview for the kids," said Jay Joseph (ED), E-Week coordinator.

Each student and teacher received educational packets about the Corps, including employment information for students.

Thirty math and engineering club students from Grace King High School were also invited, but had to cancel at the last minute when their bus was vandalized. The district will host them later this month.

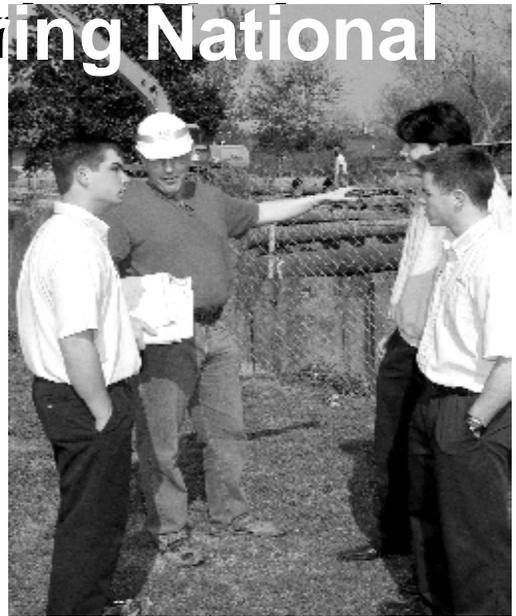


Photo by Mike Maples

**Civil Engineer Mark Hantz (CD) discusses construction on flood drainage improvements to three Rummel High School students.**

## Future engineers see how it's done

by Shanell Williams



Photo by Mike Maples

**Chris Wagner (CD) shows students Jocelyn Lewis and Jabarron Darbon sheet piling underneath a guidewall at Robert E. Lee Bridge.**

Four students from New Orleans Charter Middle School visited the district last month in conjunction with the New Orleans Outreach Power Ties Program.

The focus of Power Ties is to form partnerships with professionals and create educational opportunities for public school students. The program consists of four phases: job application processes, career fairs, site visits and internships.

During their visit, the students were given a brief overview on our mission and paired with employees.

"The kids were pretty eager and asked a lot of questions," said Chris Wagner (CD), team leader for Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. "I was very impressed with them."

Wagner exposed the kids to the kind of work they do in the New Orleans Area Office. He

also took them out to the flood-proofed Robert E. Lee Bridge and showed them pile driving at Pump Station Six.

Assistant Chief of Operations Greg Breerwood also hosted two students. "It's good to reach out to young people on what the Corps and engineers do," Breerwood said.

Breerwood introduced the students to how the Corps works in conjunction with the local community. He talked to them about flood control, navigation and our mission and also took them on a harbor boat trip, their first-ever ride on the river. In addition, they went to the Emergency Operations Center and Breerwood explained how it operates when there is a hurricane.

When it was all over, the students left the district with souvenirs and a variety of information about the Corps.

"It's always satisfying that kids want to learn and are interested in the future," Breerwood said.

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# *Should you buy long-term care insurance now, later, or* **Just let the government take care of you? Part II**

by Dave Harris  
Seattle District

## **Buying Long Term Care Insurance at a Reasonable Price**

*FedWeek* says if you know how LTC coverage works, you can buy a high-quality policy at a reasonable price. Here's how to do it:

Buy enough coverage, but don't overbuy. As you'd expect, buying a policy that pays a \$100 daily benefit costs about twice as much as a policy with a \$50 daily benefit. Chances are, a sales rep will try to sell you a policy with a \$100 or \$150 or even a \$200 daily benefit, if that's the average cost of a nursing home in your area.

You probably don't need that much coverage, however. To calculate your true need:

- a. Establish how much income from other sources (Social Security, government pension, bank interest, investment income) will be available to pay nursing home bills.
- b. Subtract that amount from the nursing home costs in your area, and buy a policy to bridge the gap.

**Example:** Suppose you estimate you'll have \$50 per day from other sources of income (\$1,500 per month, or \$18,000 per year). If nursing homes in your area average \$130 per day, you can buy an LTC policy that will pay \$80 per day.

## **Buy Early but Not Too Early**

Buying LTC insurance at age 60 or 65 has certain advantages: (1) You'll lock in a premium that's about half of what you would pay at age 70 or 75; (2) You'll be covered in case you need nursing home care before 70 or 75, and (3) You'll eliminate the chance that a subsequent illness will make it more difficult for you to find insurance.

## **Don't Buy Lifetime Coverage**

Such policies will pay the promised

benefits for as long as you're in a nursing home, even if that's 10 or 15 years. However, LTC policies with lifetime coverage are extremely expensive. The average stay in a nursing home is 2.1 years for men and 3.2 years for women, so you probably won't need lifetime coverage.

To cut costs, buy a policy that pays benefits for up to four years. With a four-year benefit period, you'll have time to transfer assets to loved ones after institutionalization begins and the LTC policy starts paying.

Here's where things can get confusing. The same publication company has what seem to be two conflicting examples: *FedWeek* says, "Under current law, you may apply for Medicaid coverage 36 months after transferring assets. This will keep your assets intact and provide for government funding in the unlikely event your nursing home stay lasts more than the four-year benefit from your LTC policy."

But then its sister publication, *Retirement and Financial Planning Report*, offers this option:

"If your parent or your spouse needs to go into a nursing home and no preparations have been made, what can you and that loved one do to preserve family assets? First, get him or her admitted to a first-rate nursing home on a "private pay" basis. Then, arrange an asset transfer, leaving the nursing home resident enough assets to pay nursing home bills until he or she can apply for Medicaid.

"For example, if your widowed mother has \$90,000 in assets, she might give away \$50,000 to you and your siblings while keeping \$40,000. Assume that the average monthly cost of a nursing home in her area is \$5,000; she can apply for Medicaid after a 10-month waiting period (\$50,000 divided by \$5,000). During those 10 months, she can spend down her \$40,000 on nursing home payments. The

shortfall can be covered by her income (from Social Security, for example) and perhaps by contributions from other family members.

"After the 10 months are up, your mother can apply for Medicaid, which will pay her ongoing nursing home bills. The nursing home is not likely to evict her and your family will have preserved most or all of the \$50,000 asset transfer."

You will get all kinds of advice. Be particularly careful with charming advisors who get a commission or salary from selling you something. Be sure to check with a trusted CPA or attorney before you sign—or before you consider an asset transfer.

## **Make Your LTC Policy a Family Affair**

Suppose LTC insurance still looks pricey, after taking the steps described above. Coverage for you and your spouse will be \$4,000, say, while your budget won't stretch further than \$2,500 per year.

Ask your children to make up the shortfall — \$1,500 per year in the above example. They may well be willing once you point out that these payments will keep their inheritance intact and reduce the chance they'll have to provide in-home care or help to pay your nursing home bills some day.

## **Annualize Your Premiums**

Once you lock in your premium obligation, shop the market for the best deal on an "immediate annuity." A 65-year-old, for example, might spend \$60,000 to buy an annuity that pays \$4,000 per year, aftertax, for life.

Once that annuity has been purchased, you're guaranteed the money you need for LTC premiums. The remainder of your assets likely will be preserved for yourself and your family: they won't wind up in the pocket of a nursing home operator.

*See Insurance, page 9*

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# Preserving the past, pr

by Eric Hughes

**T**he district has made it a standard to preserve the past while protecting our future. In 1999, plans to enlarge and improve a section of the Mississippi River levee within Iberville and Ascension parishes were altered because three major historical sites, including a cemetery, were found within the proposed construction area.

The three sites, located on the west bank of the river between White Castle and Donaldsonville, include the former Canonburg, Babin/Africa and Old Hickory plantations. They are located within two levee projects, labeled the Alhambra to Hohen Solms and Hohen Solms to Modeste projects. Both require the existing levee to be slightly raised and paved with concrete on the riverside slope.

Excavation on the three sites began last October and was completed last month.

The Canonburg Plantation includes the site of the former Braziel Baptist Church Cemetery, which was a pre-emancipation slave church that dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Archaeologist Ken Ashworth (PMD) said historical records indicate the church was relocated in 1933 when the levee was set back, and a new cemetery was established about 300 yards from the old cemetery.

"Most of the remains were not



Photo by Mike Maples

**Ken Ashworth and Senior Project Manager Troy Constance look over one of the archaeological maps.**

we estimate the cemetery may contain up to 850 burials," Ashworth said.

The cemetery site is about 1.3 acres in size and located between and underneath the

Plantation for contractor Coastal Environment Inc. "We hand excavated the artifacts and then water-screened them in buckets to process the dirt out."

Several structures dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> century were uncovered, including a school, farm and other structures relative to the plantations.

The Corps routinely conducts archaeological investigations prior to levee construction. Remote sensing investigations and historical background research verifies any historical artifacts below the surface. A testing phase follows that includes limited excavation to see if the area is historically significant.

"The Corps determines if the area is historically significant through research based on criteria set by the National Register of Historic Places," Ashworth said, adding that cultural resources need to be more than 50 years old to be considered.

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**"...Based upon our tests we estimate the cemetery may contain up to 850 burials," Ashworth said.**

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relocated in 1933," said Ashworth.

Atchafalaya Levee District records report that the Braziel Baptist Church agreed to relocate the cemetery. Based on recent Corps excavations, it's apparent that only a small number of the graves were actually removed.

"We identified 76 burials in our test excavation units, and based upon our tests

existing levee and old borrow pits. Artifacts found include glass, brick, ceramic, metal and faunal materials.

These types of artifacts also were found in the Babin/Africa and Old Hickory plantations.

"We mechanically stripped all the overburdens (on top)," said Don Hunter, project manager of the Babin/Africa

# Protecting the future

The district began the cemetery testing last October. The goal of the testing was to determine the number of intact burials and locate the boundaries of the cemetery, Ashworth explained.

Since the three plantation sites are significant, a mitigation plan was developed to recover the buried historical

Americans," Ashworth said.

The district currently has not made a decision on the cemetery's outcome. It is discussing the

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**"The cemetery site...contains the remains of both pre and post emancipation African Americans," Ashworth said.**

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evidence through archeological excavation. Archeological excavations are only conducted as a last resort. In most cases, projects are redesigned to avoid impacts to significant archeological sites.

"Once the excavations are complete the levee project will go on as planned," said Wayne Naquin (ED), technical manager for the project.

According to David George, project manager for contractor R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, which is documenting the Canonburg site, the burials are filled back in and the location is now fenced.

"Now that the excavations are complete, we will write a history of the site and work with the Corps to develop future plans," said George.

"The cemetery site is unique because it contains the remains of both pre and post emancipation African

options with Reverend John Baptiste of the Braziel Baptist Church, and determining the costs of relocating the entire cemetery or realigning the levee around it.



*courtesy photo*

**Contract workers at a test trench excavate the site of the old Braziel Baptist Church cemetery.**



*Photo by Doug Spinks*

**There are an estimated 850 burials in the 1.3-acre cemetery, located near White Castle by the Mississippi River levee.**

# NOD at Work

## Corps Cub Scouts



Photo by Mike Maples

**CUBS COME TO THE CORPS--** Hydraulic Engineer Tonja Koob (ED-HM) explains the weathering and erosion of rocks to five kids from Cub Scout 34 (pictured here with their Scout leader). The scouts placed the rocks in their appropriate location on an Atchafalaya Basin map according to their size.

The children are required to understand 10 different roles of engineers in order to receive their Engineers pin. Koob's office was one of the ten stops the pack made on their mission to learn about the many different hats engineers wear.

## Engineering

**ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION CHARTS**—A Corps-wide effort has begun to develop electronic charts for navigation safety. Cost is estimated between \$45 million and \$50 million over six years. Immediate attention is the Lower Mississippi, where demand and ability (NOD) to produce the charts are highest. A contractor will be selected in March for a July start. In the meantime, NOD is conducting a pilot project, having converted digital geographic data into River Electronic Nautical Charts for the Atchafalaya River, to be tested data on the river in April.

## Project Management

**BARATARIA BASIN RESTORATION**—In conjunction with the "Louisiana Coastal Area, Louisiana-Ecosystem Restoration, Barrier Island Restoration, Marsh Creation, and River Diversification, Barataria Basin Feasibility Study," the Corps and the LA Department of Natural Resources are incorpo-

rating data and public input to determine the best strategy to restore the Barataria Basin. There were two strategies in play: dedicated dredging for marsh creation along LA Highway 1 and in Caminada Bay; and restore barrier island shoreline from Belle Pass to Sandy Point.

**TUNNELS FOR CANAL CROSSINGS**—The Corps will study the engineering feasibility of constructing tunnels in place of new bridges at St. Claude and Claiborne avenues as part of the Industrial Canal Lock replacement project. The study is in response to the citizens and government of St. Bernard Parish who have expressed concerns about future traffic flows. San Francisco-based URS Corp. will perform the feasibility study and assess the costs, risks and construction impacts.

**BIKE PATH**—The LA Department of Transportation and Development has acquired funds for the second phase of the east bank levee bicycle path, running from the Jefferson Parish line to Ormond Boulevard. The eight-mile

asphalt stretch will connect St. Charles Parish with levee paths in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. Construction could start as early as August.

The St. Charles levee path under design runs about 36 miles, 18 miles on each bank. The 13.5 miles of the path built to date have cost \$175,000 per mile. The federal government finances 95 percent and the parish five percent.

## Operations

**GUIDEWALL REPLACEMENT**—Work began in January to construct a large cement-filled cylinder, called a dolphin, and replace the southwest guidewall of the Bayou Boeuf Lock. The dolphin helps boat and barge traffic avoid hitting the wall and helps slow erosion. The lock will remain open to navigation, closing only when work must be done on the channel side of the guidewall and dolphin. The construction is expected to be complete Oct. 20 at a cost of \$1,944,975.

# Two little letters make a big difference

by Amanda Padalewski

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Internet has become a mass form of communication at home and the office. There's also a new tool called the INTRAnet that people at the district may tend to overlook.

The prefix "intra" means being within or inside. The Intranet is an internal browser-based network that doesn't allow public access and is only for employees at the district.

Ralph Scheid (ED) played an important role in the birth of NOD's Web site and now dreams of seeing the Intranet boom like the Internet has.

"It's an underutilized tool. We're not fully exploiting the technology," says Scheid.

The Intranet is a fairly new reference and there are still some kinks to work out, such as the placement of certain pages and the development of others. PMD's pages are a great example of effective Intranet use. They include scheduled meetings, and project and team information; however, the problem is trying to find the actual homepage, because there isn't one!

The most recent contribution the district has made to its Intranet site is the GIS (Geospatial Information System) Image Server. This technology allows district employees to locate project areas on a map and print Quad maps, a standard planning and design tool for the Corps. On its first day on the Intranet, over 40 employees registered to use the Image Server (<http://www.intra.usace.army.mil/eng/imageserver/>).

There currently aren't any classes teaching district employees how to start their own branch site on the Intranet; but, Scheid says, "We would be happy to coordinate a class if there was an interest."

When trying to get started, Scheid says there are a few

things you need. The first is to get support from your supervisor or branch chief. Secondly, have someone within each branch focus on developing the Intranet site. Finally, once the site is up, it's important to have someone in the office with the capability to maintain it.

There will also soon be a Web development specialist in IMO to provide assistance, and IM is establishing a three-member team to help develop and maintain Web sites. PAO is responsible for content and design.

The Intranet is a tool that may be somewhat misunderstood. Scheid says that it's not for top-secret, classified information. More specifically, "Its purpose is to give people organized access to information that will help them do their job."

Many employees are unfamiliar and unaware of the information the Intranet offers, so be alert and check it out at [www.intra.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.intra.mvn.usace.army.mil).

## Five things you may not know:

- 1) 9 out of the 15 divisions and offices have a link to their Intranet homepage using *Organization*.
- 2) Many of the other districts have a fully developed Intranet site.
- 3) NOD's Intranet was set up in July 1998.
- 4) CT, CD, LM, OD and Internal Review haven't developed Intranet sites yet.
- 5) The NOD library has an Intranet site located in *Information*.

## A look at what our future Intranet homepage will feature:

- \* Missions news
- \* Cafeteria menu
- \* Mission FAQ
- \* People news
- \* Calendar
- \* Rules FAQ
- \* News you can use
- \* Phone directory
- \* Who's Who

*Insurance, continued from page 5*

## LTC Insurance Benefit Considerations

When purchasing LTC Insurance you must make three main decisions:

**Daily Benefit** - the amount of money you will receive from the insurance company on a daily basis for your care. You usually can select between \$50 and \$250 per day. Find out what the current cost of care is in your area and it will help you make the decision as to what daily benefit you want. (also see inflation protection below.)

**Benefit Period** - the length of time you will receive payments from the insurance company once you need care. You usually can select a specific number of years or lifetime plans are also available. The average length of stay in a nursing home is 2 1/2 to three years. Note: A three-year plan will be less expensive than a lifetime plan.

**Elimination Period (deductible)** - the number of days that you will be responsible for paying for your care before the insurance begins to pay. This works like most insurance deductibles except it is stated in a number of days instead of dollars. Most plans have a variety of options like 0 days, 20 days, 60 days, or 100 days. Be sure to check if this deductible

is once in a lifetime or if it can repeat.

Also, there are three optional decisions that can be added to your plan:

**Inflation Protection** - this ties back to your daily benefit and allows it to grow on an annual basis to help keep your plan in step with inflation. It is built into your original premium and therefore will increase your annual premium. You may have choices of 5 percent simple or compounded. You do not have to add this to your plan - but it is certainly recommended if you are younger when you buy your policy.

**Home Health Care Coverage** - some policies will also give you the option of receiving insurance benefits in your own home. This option will allow you greater choice as to where your care can be paid for by the insurance. It may cover community care like Adult Day Care Centers and Assisted Living Facilities as well as care in the home. This option will increase your premium.

**Nonforfeiture** - this option provides some form of paid-up benefit if the policy should lapse if you are unable to pay premiums. This option increases your base premium.

# Robinson attends Conference

Carl Robinson, chief of Facility Management Section, Operations, was one of two black engineers chosen this year to represent MVD at the national Black Engineers Conference held in February in Baltimore.

"The conference was about getting people interested in engineering, and a recruitment for employees," Robinson stated. "It was also about helping people with their business or getting a business started. It was a good place to meet a lot of other engineers and learn about new things that are out there."

A job fair was held with many major companies, and for the first time the Corps was able to offer jobs on the spot to graduating students, Robinson said.

The Black Engineers Conference also featured many workshops on issues such as effective networking, mobile and electronic commerce, diversity in the



photo by Scott Riecke

workplace, job opportunities in engineering, internships and starting a business.

One day prior to the Black Engineers Conference, the Corps held its own workshop in Baltimore for black engineers attending the conference.

Robinson also attended that session, where he said the main theme was developing a capable work force by focusing on the work environment, mentoring, and

# Black Engineers

career progression. Workshops were held on job interviewing, the Corps Registry of Skills database, the leadership development program, and the future Corps Paths Program on CD-ROM.

"The panel members discussed career progression in the Corps—the quickest way to move up the career ladder is to become mobile and move around not only within the districts but to other districts as well," Robinson said. "Becoming an expert in an area but also becoming well-rounded was discussed."

Robinson joined the Corps in June 1982 in the engineer training program after receiving an electrical engineering degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, now University of Louisiana at Lafayette. In November 1983 he started working in Operations Division in Dredge Management, and eventually became chief of Facilities Management in October 2000.

# Send in the Contracting clown

## Contract specialist lifts children's spirits

by Eric Hughes

Cathy Torlage doesn't like to clown around when it comes to helping children.

As a contract specialist and 23-year NOD employee, she doesn't get much of a chance to interact with children.

However, in her spare time Torlage is involved with Daughters of the Nile, a charitable organization started in 1913 consisting of wives, sisters, daughters and mothers of Shriners.

The Shriners is an all-male organization, started in 1872, that helps children with burns and crippling diseases.

The Daughters of the Nile have been working for outpatients and furnishing prosthetics for children, and their 155 groups across the U.S. and Canada raised \$1.6 million for hospitals in 2000.

Last May, 13 members here started a new way to bring enjoyment and smiles to sick children—they started dressing up as clowns! The group clowns it up as N'awlins Clownettes.

"We had to get special permission to be clowns and perform," said Torlage,

who's been with Daughters of the Nile for 12 years and became a queen of the group six years ago. "We were all excited, and it took a lot of work to get it started."

Torlage said being a clown is more fun than she expected. Her transformation includes several hours of putting bright-colored makeup on her face, a wig, and a costume she made herself. As of now, she dresses as "Sarah Crow" and "Mother Goose."

When asked if she prefers dressing up for work or as a clown, Torlage absolutely favored the latter. "Everyone loves a clown. We blow balloons, give candy, and this past Christmas we gave little stuff animals," she said.

The Clownettes put on different skits and have taken their show on the road to the Shreveport Shrine Hospital. These clowns are for hire, and perform at numerous occasions such as birthday parties, picnics and even grocery stores. The fees for the parties are then given to Shrine hospitals.



photo by Scott Riecke

**Cathy Torlage is "Sarah Crow" or "Mother Goose" to the sick children she cheers.**

Torlage's fondness of children is a life-long joy. She's raised three children, has nine grandchildren, and taught school kids for 14 years. "I love kids," Torlage said. "It's a two-fold situation. They give to us as well as we give to them."

# Around the District

## Congratulations

to **Clyde Sellers** for being selected as the new chief of Real Estate Division in the South Atlantic Division.

to **Burnell Thibodeaux** for being selected as the new chief Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch, Engineering Division.

to **Steven Schinetsky (OD)**, whose son Philip placed second All-Around at the 2001 Pelican State Invitational Gymnastics meet on Feb 10 in Mandeville. He also placed second All-Around at the 2001 Tabasco Invitational Gymnastics meet Feb. 25 in New Iberia.

In addition, Philip scored a 98 on the placement exam for admission to Archbishop Rummel High School next year for 8th grade. Philip's score earned him the Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel Honors Scholarship for all 5 years. This is the most prestigious and competitive scholarship offered to incoming students at Rummel.

to retired Corps employee **Robert Habisreitinger (OD)**, who broke a state record by hooking a bass which weighed in at 121 lbs., 98 oz., and was 26 inches long with a 20-inch girth. Robert caught the bass near his home at Crane Lake in Bush.



**Krewe of Looney Tunes parades across the reservation.**

## Condolences

to **Robert Hess (MS)**, whose mother Shirley Kern died March 1.

## New Beginnings

to **Tammy Bouche (IM)** and her husband Roger on the birth of their son, Roger Celestine Bouche IV, born Jan. 1 at 1:33 p.m. Roger weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz. and was 21 inches long.

## A Job Well Done

to **Jack Fredine (PM)**, who made a presentation Feb. 22 to the United Commercial Fisherman Assoc., Plaquemine's Oyster Assoc., and Delta Commercial Fishermen, explaining the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion project.



*photos by Scott Riecke*

**Chad Britton, son of Charleston Britton (CT), pleads for beads at the annual Castle Kids Mardi Gras parade Feb. 23.**



**Amy Goodlett's (ED) son, Noah Goodlett steers his Looney Tunes float through the parking lot.**

# Talk Back

**Last month we solicited your comments on 'Team Achievement.' Here is the response we received:**

## **Improve team achievement by increasing attendance**

When TAC began several years ago, many bemoaned the event saying that it was a waste of time and that the only way to receive such an award was to be in the right place at the right time. I never shared in this negative view by others and tried to encourage attendance. I also saw these celebrations as the best means of finding out what is really going on here at NOD.

Having been a recipient of several TAC awards over the last few years, my initial views have only been fortified. For me, these Team Achievement Awards say more than any monetary award ever could, as someone else on the team thought highly enough about our efforts to nominate us for an award.

Being recognized for work that one enjoys doing qualifies as the best compliment in my book. The recently added time off awards now add icing to the cake. This says that our efforts are very much appreciated and to keep up the good work.

Perhaps the best way to improve attendance is to start with some insight into teamwork. No one is an island, especially within this organization. Many still consider themselves as self-sufficient and not having to rely on anyone else. For those who do not have outgoing personalities, I can see where the concept of teamwork can be a major psychological barrier to overcome. But the needs of our organization

now require that we all work as a team.

When working on a team, one eventually finds out who are the right people to contact for the needed information. As the project becomes closer to a reality, the amount of contacts that saved several weeks worth of solitary effort has now grown by leaps and bounds. In other words, the team evolves based upon the needs of the project. In the end, the main team members are asked for their recommendations on who helped to contribute to the overall effort. Being true team members, no one gets left out for the final nomination. Without everyone's help, another successful project would not have been possible.

So, for those of you who have never received a Team Achievement Award, I urge you to start attending the celebrations, as you now have some insight as to what happens on a successful team. And remember, the next time any other team member asks you for information and you eagerly provide it, then this could wind up being your first nomination for such an award. Also keep in mind that what seems like minimal effort on your part could save your team member many times this effort if it were not for you.

Each and every one of us is vital to the mission, and it is important that we all share what we know.

**-Paul Bellocq, Engineering**

*\*Paul is the winner of a reserved parking space*

**TO HAVE YOUR IDEAS PRINTED IN THE NEXT ISSUE**

**AND**

**WIN A RESERVED PARKING SPOT FOR AN ENTIRE MONTH**

**RESPOND BY APRIL 7**

**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS MONTH'S Talk Back TOPIC:**

## **WEB SITES**

**>WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NOD'S INTERNET OR INTRANET WEB SITES?**

**>HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THEM?**

***The editor reserves the right to determine which responses to publish and award.***

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