



The Palmetto Castle

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Charleston District

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REGULATORY DIVISION HOSTS BACK-TO-BACK CONFERENCES

By Carol Weart, Editor, and Debbie King, Project Manager and Conference Planner

The first full week of December was exceedingly busy in the Regulatory Division as the RD team hosted back-to-back conferences.

The Regulatory Team invited South Carolina consultants to participate in the Dec. 6 conference concerning permit applications, enforcement actions and wetland delineations. The consultants learned from the experts as individuals and panels presented information on six topics: (1) individual permits, requirements, 404(b)(1) guidelines, NEPA, ESA, and cultural resources; (2) the new general permit for docks; (3) the proposed nationwide permits; (4) mitigation; (5) jurisdictional determinations and (6) a discussion on the Rapanos and Carabell case by Stephen Samuels from the Department of Justice.

Ninety-eight consultants attended the one-day conference. Feedback from the conference has been very positive and most attendees requested that these meetings be hosted on a recurring basis.

The second conference, the fourth annual Southeastern Federal Wetlands Enforcement Conference, lasted two days and brought together a



Stephen Samuels of the Department of Justice speaks to the audience about the interpretations of the ruling on the Supreme Court Rapanos and Carabell case.

new group of participants and subject matter experts.

Enforcement personnel working within the geographic boundary of the Environmental Protection Agency Region Four District, which encompasses all of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division and a portion of the Mississippi Valley Division discussed enforcement issues.

The Department of Justice and EPA co-hosted this event with the Corps and led conference sessions. Stephen Samuels, Assistant Chief of the Environmental Defense Section, U.S. Department of Justice, spoke on the Rapanos and Carabell Supreme Court decisions and the pending guidance on making jurisdictional determinations. Numerous other enforcement issues were covered

as well. The 2007 conference will be held in Memphis.

LTC Fleming welcomes attendees to the consultants conference.





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FROM THE COMMANDER

During this holiday season my family and I would like to wish you and yours a very happy and safe holiday as well as express my deep gratitude and admiration for your service to the Nation.

This is the time of the year when we think about others - our coworkers, our friends, our families and even those less fortunate than us. I also find myself thinking about my childhood and how I celebrated the holiday season as a kid. My parents would set up the Christmas tree in the basement. I can remember waking up early Christmas morning trying to peek down the stairs and around the corner with my brother holding my feet as I strained to see what Santa brought us while not getting caught by Mom and Dad. More recently, I remember Barbara and I assembling toys on Christmas Eve for Megan hoping that she would think the noise in the other room was Santa.

However, I can also remember Christmases alone in Korea and Kosovo where the only thing that made it different than any other day was a bigger dinner and a church service. I know that each of you have memories of the way you have celebrated the holiday season. Keep those memories alive by sharing them with friends and family. Continue the family traditions or start new traditions. As you celebrate this holiday

season, please take time to relax and enjoy well deserved time with family and friends.

Also, remember the fine men and women - Soldiers and Civilians - that are away from their families this holiday season. It is because of their sacrifice that you can celebrate this season in your own tradition.

I also want to say thanks for the things that you do for the District, the Corps and the Nation. Your choice of civil service is a noble calling. I depend on you, and the citizens of the State of South Carolina depend on you. You protect the environment, keep the harbors open and develop solutions to complex problems. I am proud to be a part of your district family and am uplifted by your energy. Thanks again for your hard work, dedication, patience and flexibility.

Again, Barbara, Megan and I wish you all the best. Have an enjoyable and relaxing holiday and a very Happy and safe New Year.

Respectfully,

Ed Fleming



*Have a Safe
and Happy
Holiday Season !*

HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM LTG STROCK



Corps Family,

During this holiday season, Julie and I extend our heartfelt thanks to you -- our Corps family.

I am extremely proud to serve with each and every one of you and of your extraordinary commitment to support our Nation's missions abroad and here at home.

Selfless service is a core Army value, and one that is embodied in so much of what we as proud members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers do on a daily basis. Your commitment to others makes the world a better place.

Our families are also a vital part of this commitment, which is why I am forever thankful for the many contributions and sacrifices they make on our behalf. As you go about celebrating this holiday season in your own special way, please take time to relax and enjoy well deserved time with family and friends.

My special request to each of you is to remember in your thoughts and prayers the courageous men and women – in and out of uniform – who are spending this time of year serving the Nation away from their loved ones. Their selfless service is a gift to be treasured by all who live in freedom.

Again, Julie and I wish you and yours a very safe and joyous Holiday Season, and a very Happy New Year.

Thanks for all you do to keep our Team Army Strong!

Essayons!

LTG CARL A. STROCK

NEW SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SWORN IN DECEMBER 18TH



Dr. Robert M. Gates was sworn in Dec. 18, 2006, as the 22nd Secretary of Defense. Before entering his present post, Secretary Gates was the President of Texas A&M University, the nation's seventh largest university. Prior to assuming the presidency of Texas A&M Aug. 1, 2002, he served as Interim Dean of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M from 1999 to 2001.

Secretary Gates joined the Central Intelligence Agency in 1966 and spent nearly 27 years as an intelligence professional, serving six presidents. During that period, he spent nearly nine years at the National Security Council, The White House. He served as the Deputy of Central Intelligence from 1991 until 1993. He served as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from 1986 until 1989 and as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser at the White House from January 1989, until November 1991, for President George H.W. Bush.

Until becoming Secretary of Defense, Dr. Gates served as Chairman of the Independent Trustees of The Fidelity Funds, the nation's largest mutual fund company, and on the board of directors of NACCO Industries, Inc., Brinker International, Inc. and Parker Drilling Company, Inc.

Dr. Gates has also served on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the American Council on Education, the Board of Directors of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America. He has also been President of the National Eagle Scout Association.

A native of Kansas, Secretary Gates received his bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary, his master's degree in history from Indiana University, and his doctorate in Russian and Soviet history from Georgetown University.

MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEE



Tim Lanford, an accountant, is the newest addition to the Resource Management Division. Tim left Defense Finance and Accounting Service to join the district team. He brings more than 20 years of Navy financial accounting experience and expertise with him.

The newest addition to the Managerial Accounting Branch is a native Charlestonian and has worked his way up through the ranks by being chosen to participate in an upward mobility program in 1991. Tim is working towards a degree in Management.

WORK FRIENDLY TIPS, AKA SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY



Southern Hospitality-Showing graciousness, kindness and warmth to others.

Take the time to show our new employee some true Southern Hospitality!

Try to remember your first day with the District...all the new names and faces... Now is your opportunity to make the newest team member feel welcome.

Give your new employee a tour of the building with stops at the break room, office supply cabinet, copier, the refrigerator-microwave areas, and coffee pot.

Make a trip to the Safety and Security Office to get a parking tag and door pass along with the CAC card.

Stock the newcomer's desk with items such as pencils, pens, tape, stapler, and paper clips.

Don't abandon the newcomer after the first day, take a few minutes each day to ask how things are going, how the family, dog, cat, kids, etc. are doing, and if there are any questions that you can answer. Just be southern friendly, like the days of sitting on the front porch and talking to the neighbors....Have a Merry Christmas y'all!

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Yolanda Brown Grant is the November Employee of the Month. Yolanda is dedicated, reliable and hardworking. This year as the fiscal yearend approached, she monitored and assisted the RM team, silently nudging them along to clear up showstoppers to ensure that the yearend closing flowed smoothly, and it did. She is always resolving user problems with CEFMS: especially those errors resulting from the operator's inattentiveness to details or fast fingers. It doesn't matter if it's your travel, labor, credit card, or just your esig again; she does all this while remaining cool, calm and professional. She has supported the district during yearend initiatives, shortage of personnel in the RM arena, assisted with numerous auditor reviews and inquiries and has extended herself above and beyond to assist in other areas as needed.

NINETY-SEVEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE RETIRES FROM THE CHARLESTON DISTRICT

By Carol Weart, Editor

I recently had the honor of interviewing the soon-to-be District retirees. They graciously shared their insights and humor gained through more than 97 years of experience in Federal service.



Doug Holmes joined the Charleston District in October 1986 after working for the Bureau of Reclamation for 11 years. When the Bureau started going through reorganization, he was contacted by Wayne Bigenously about a job in the Corps and was soon a District employee. Doug is currently the Chief of the Navigation Section, Technical Services Division.

What were your expectations when you came to work for the Corps and were those expectations met? That I would be involved with many different and interesting types of projects (flood, civil, build-ings) and yes, they were met for the most part. Our workload has gone down and some of the work has had to be sent out. We can no longer meet the requirements of military and DOE work.

What changes have you seen over the past 30 plus years? The biggest change is that there is a computer on every desk.

What has been the best/worst part of your job? The best: I've worked with a lot of very knowledgeable, hard working people over the years. I've gained a lot; learned a lot. I was able to go to grad school. The worst: the budget cuts don't allow us to do all that we need to do.

What is your funniest memory of your time at the District? I heard about someone trying to launch one of the boats and they forgot to set the brake. The boat, truck and trailer all rolled into the water.



Ron Nesbit was a military engineering officer before joining the civil service ranks, first with the Air Force, then the Army. He was a project manager with USACE Frankfurt for 12 years before coming to Charleston District in June 1990. Ron retires as the Formerly Used Defense Site Program PM.

What were your expectations when you came to work for the Corps and were those expectations met? As a civilian I initially wanted a career as an engineer and that expectation was met. I looked for advancement potential in civil service; my goals expanded and so did my objectives. As the Corps changed, so did they. He gained experience perspective, but not promotions but that was "self imposed."

What changes have you seen over the past 30 plus years? The direction of the Corps has changed drastically. We no longer design; we were the innovative designers of the world. Now we manage other civilian agencies for better cost effectiveness.

What has been the best/worst part of your job? The best: Bringing people and agencies together to meet an objective, like designing and constructing a building. The worst: We have embarked on P2 to keep people informed and it's been highlighted as a advantage to the Corps but it's cumbersome and not advantageous.

What is your funniest memory of your time in the District? When I was work-



Bruce Seltzer spent 10 years as a cost engineer with the Middle East Division prior to his move to the lowcountry in October 1986. Bruce has been the Chief of Information Management and Emergency Management (twice!), has deployed to Iraq and has made numerous trips to Puerto Rico and other locations in support of the hurricane missions. Bruce is currently serving as the Chief of Emergency Management.

What were your expectations when you came to work for the Corps and were those expectations met? I had no expectations, so yes, they were met. I was interested in international work so I went to work for the Middle East Division.

What changes have you seen over the past 30 plus years? A dwindling civil works mission and a lack of funding. We're concentrating too much on the process and not enough on the execution right now.

What has been the best/worst part of your job? The best: We can help people. The response and recovery that we do. The worst: the layers of political stove-piping that we have to go through to respond to those needs.

What is your funniest memory of your time at the District? Seeing (LTC) Ed Fleming play Santa Claus with his thick Boston accent.

(all three interviews are continued on page 6)

RETIREES

(continued from page 5)

(Doug Holmes continued)

What do you plan to do with all of your free time now that you're retiring? I'll probably continue to work somewhere in the engineering field in the local area.. In the meantime, I have to clean out the garage because my wife wants to buy garage furniture.

What would you do differently if you could start all over again? I'd probably do something crazy like be a sports writer.

If you could be the DC for one day, what would be the one change that you would make? I would like to see the District organization changed back to the way to was before we had to change it for regionalization.

Barbara Gathers will retire on December 31st. She has worked for the Army for over 22 years and returned to the Charleston District in October of 2000. In keeping with her wishes, if you' would like to bid her farewell, please stop by her office. We all wish her a fond farewell, good health and happiness in the future.



(Ron Nesbit continued)

ing with the Hurricane Andrew emergency relief in Miami we finally had a day off after working 2 1/2 months straight. We all went out and there was an "audience participation show." I participated, which is very unlike me, and I won! Pictures were taken and my wife saw them before I could tell her about it.

What do you plan to do with all of your free time now that you're retiring? My wife has a long "honey-do" list.

What would you do differently if you could start all over again? The path I took, although not the most efficient towards upward mobility is broad. It's allowed me to grow intellectually and professionally, but not progress grade-wise.

If you could be the DC for one day, what would be the one change that you would make? I would try to reduce the amount of time spent in PRBs.

(Bruce Seltzer continued)

What do you plan to do with all of your free time now that you're retiring? Projects around the house; be a house Dad and play with my boxers. I owe all of my success to my wife, Roxy and I plan on spending a lot of time with her.

What would you do differently if you could start all over again? I would have stayed in the Middle East Division. We loved Winchester.

If you could be the DC for one day, what would be the one change that you would make? I would insist that ALL of our policies and procedures be written down and followed. Right now, everything is being done "ad hoc."

Best Wishes for a great retirement to these special Corps employees

ARMY CIVILIAN CORPS CREED

I am an Army Civilian – a member of the Army Team

I am dedicated to the Army, its Soldiers and Civilians

I will always support the mission

I provide stability and continuity during war and peace

I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve the Nation and its Army

I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage

I am an Army Civilian

HOLIDAY SEASON SAFETY

From our Safety Office

Decorations

Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton snow are flame retardant when used alone. However, if artificial snow is sprayed onto them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. When spraying artificial snow on windows or other surfaces, be sure to follow directions carefully. These sprays can irritate your lungs if you inhale them.

Fireplaces

You should not try to burn evergreens or wreaths in the fireplace or in a wood stove. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials which can be toxic if burned.

Candles

Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains, drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

Toys and Gifts

Be especially careful when you choose toys for infants or small children. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you give toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences; the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids' toys.

Older adults

Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle. For persons with arthritis, make sure the gift does not require assembly and can be easily opened and closed. Choose books with large type for anyone with vision impairment.

Plants

Small children think holiday plants look good enough to eat., but many plants can cause severe stomach problems. Plants to watch out for include: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis. Keep these plants out of children's reach.



Stress

The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can't avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief. Allow enough time to shop rather than hurry through stores and parking lots. Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands. When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items. Take time out to relax, read or enjoy your favorite hobby.

Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving This Holiday Season

The holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the deadliest and most dangerous times of the year due to an increase in impaired driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 1,201 people during December 2005, were killed in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC level of .01 or higher. In these crashes, 1,033 involved a driver with an illegal BAC level of .08 or above.

That's why **the Charleston district** is joining with national, state and local highway safety officials to remind all holiday partiers that *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving* and to always designate a sober driver before the festivities begin.

Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime. In 2005, nearly 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or a motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 or higher, according to NHTSA.

Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving just don't mix. Too many lives are being lost and we need everyone's help to stop it.

Several simple steps for a safer holiday include:

- Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement;
- Wear your seatbelt or use protective gear on your motorcycle; it is your best defense against an impaired driver;
- Remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*. If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

Palmetto Proceedings

News you should know

Congratulations:

To **Colton Bowles, Elizabeth Jackson, and Angie Williams**, for being chosen for the District's Leadership Development Program.

To **Dean Herndon** on the birth of his grandson. William (Will) Edward Robinson III was born December 11 and weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz. and was 20 inches long. Will has red hair just like his "pop-pop" Dean.

To our **IM Contract Group, Tom Milne, Dave Kappel, Jerry Stone, Mark Thrower, and David York**. The USACE Charleston District IMO Support Team was named the winner of the first ever EnGenius Team of the Year. The award was given in "recognition of sustained teamwork, performance excellence, exceptional customer satisfaction, and going above and beyond to get the mission accomplished for the benefit of enGenius and the Charleston District IMO."



Kudos to Contracting:



Amy Bryant and Henry Wigfall represented the Charleston District contracting office during an awards ceremony in Savannah. The award cited the CO for our contributions in awarding FY 06 OMA projects to improve the CONUS Replacement Center Dining Facility and Barracks as well as numerous other expiring projects. Savannah District Engineer, COL. Held, personally thanked them. "Contracting really had to work hard to multi-task between SAC, SAS, Ft. Benning Directorate of Public Works and several contractors to make this contribution significant. HOOAH!" said Colonel Held.

RM Rocks

Many thanks to the Resource Management personnel who taught a series of CEFMS courses to the District employees. Courses taught included: PR&Cs and DD1556s; a ULO Review, as well as Travel Orders and Vouchers. Instructors included Yolanda Grant, Gladya Clemons, Woody Wallace, and Vanessa Stoney.



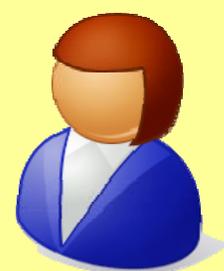
Scholarship Committee Update:

The Scholarship Committee sponsored a spaghetti lunch Dec. 7 selling 25 lunches for a net profit of \$125. For a small fee you could choose from meat sauce, marinara sauce or alfredo sauce, garlic bread and "lotsa pasta." The Committee is pleased to announce that they are almost half way to their goal of \$3500.00 and they still have two of their biggest fund raisers coming up.

Remember — you can still volunteer to serve on the Scholarship Committee. Just let Lisa Metheny know you are interested in joining in the fun!

Do You Know Me?

You sit next to them in meetings, pass them in the halls, even have lunch together occasionally, but how well do you really know your co-workers? Each month, the Palmetto Castle will feature two anonymous employees who will answer questions that will allow us to get to know each other a little bit better. Can you guess the identities of the following employees? Check the intranet (under PAO) in a few days to find out who these intriguing, anonymous people are. (Last month's were: Mattie McLaurin and Shawn Boone)



What was your first job?

Eckerd drug store

Have you ever lived anywhere unusual?

A hotel in Moncks Corner

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Head in any direction away from the office.

What's the best part of working for the Charleston District?

Being near a certain little person.

What's one thing no one here knows about you?

It's taking way too much time to think about this question and I'm hungry, so, too bad.

What is the most important characteristic of a great organization and why?

Working together. The reason we are in the same office is to help each other out. We should always share knowledge to be better as a whole than we could be as a single person. We are in this together.

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

I'd say a Human because we are already the king of the jungle. I'd pick eagle second because I could fly, hit cats in the head, and be protected by various laws.

If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

Jesus, because he is Jesus. If that doesn't count I'd say Charles Darwin: I've got some questions for him too, and someone needs to let the guy know his pet turtle recently died. (That's amazing isn't it?)

What was your first job?

Waitress

Have you ever lived anywhere unusual?

No, but really wished I had.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Crafts, Cook, Kids.

What's the best part of working for the Charleston District?

The people

What's one thing no one here knows about you?

My very, very secret ambition.

What is the most important characteristic of a great organization and why?

Communication between everyone, especially your customer. Listen to them & help them through our processes they don't know or understand.

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

A seal. I love to watch them play & act when at the Zoo.

If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

My grandfathers. I never got to meet them but have been told stories about them.



HOLIDAY PARTY BRINGS
COWORKERS, GOOD
FOOD, SANTA TOGETHER
ON A FESTIVE FRIDAY
AFTERNOON

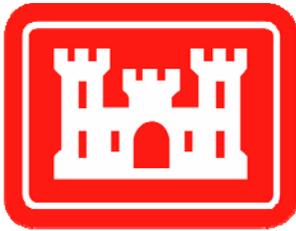


Congratulations to the Decorating Contest winners:
Peggy Garten won the individual category
Resource Management won the group category
Ted Hauser won the Charlie Brown Christmas Award.
Thanks to everyone who participated and to our judges.

**U.S. Army Corps of
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US Army Corps of Engineers® Charleston District



The Charleston District was overwhelmingly generous in supporting for Toys for Tots. The Marine Reservist who picked up the toys said, "I don't know how I'll fit in the truck, but I'll manage somehow. Thank you all very much for helping such a worthy cause." A special thanks to Bruce Seltzer for his help!

The Government's Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, and all 'cross the Web
Not a surfer was surfing, except for some feds.
The [FAA](#) cleared Santa for his annual flight,
As the [Weather Service](#) predicted a clear, starry night.
[FEMA](#) stood by in case of snow, ice or sleet,
As troops 'round the world maintained the peace.
When out on the Web there arose such a crowd
Of kids on their mice click, click, clicking around
'Til they landed their browsers on a special Web site
Where [NORAD](#) tracked Santa all through the night.
In English, in Spanish, in even Francais,
The radar tracked Nicholas around on his sleigh.
The radar bleep, bleeped as Santa drew close
Drawn by the heat off of Rudolph's red nose.
The satellites tingled, the warning bells jingled
When NORAD got sight of merry Kris Kringle.
Kids 'cross the land knew their friends had been wrong.
NORAD's site proved it: Santa lives on!
And as feds 'round the world kept the peace through the night,
Santa looked down, and called out with his might,
"Thank you, civil servants! You fight the good fight!
Happy days to you all, and to all a fine night!"