



Crosscurrents

US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Vol. 14 No. 1, January 1991

The suspense is over; thirty-year old Lake Superior barrels offer up no surprisesPage Four



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Bits and Pieces

Awards Awards Awards
Franklin Star (PD-ES) was presented the *Founders' Award for Meritorious Service* by the National Society for Park Resources (NSPR) on October 13, 1990, at the National Parks and Recreation Association's (NRPA) National Congress in Phoenix Arizona. The award was for "sustained outstanding leadership and service to the National Society for Park Resources." Frank's contributions include the development of a membership database which allows for selected mailing label printing and printing of a national leadership directory, and the development of a telecommunication service for NRPA members. Frank has served on various committees and panels concerned with telecommunications for many years.

Barb La Pierre and **Rich Scheuneman**, park rangers at Lake Ashtabula, received *Take Pride in America* awards from the governor of North Dakota at a public ceremony on December 17th. Barb and Rich were honored for their work in the installation of a predator control fence in a wildlife management area at Lake Ashtabula.

Mark Rodney (ED-GH) is serving during the current school year as president of the Twin Cities Chapter of the American Meteorological Society. Members of this organization are meteorologists and climatologists, plus others in related disciplines such as hydrology, physics, geography and soil science and folks who are just interested in weather!

If you are interested in attending one of their monthly meetings, which usually feature a guest speaker, call Mark at x627. Earlier this year, they had weatherman Paul Douglas from KARE-11 and appeared in the "back yard" portion of the ten o'clock news!

Lock and Dam 10 personnel **Marvin Althoff** and **De Lene Moser** have again donated their time and blood during the Red Cross blood drive in Guttenberg, Iowa.

Barb La Pierre of Lake Ashtabula initiated another fine event in the area with the 1990 Lake Ashtabula Photography Contest. Three categories of photographs - visitors, flora/fauna and scenic - all taken around the Lake Ashtabula Project brought in 47 entries. Barb solicited prizes and coordinated the event. Besides filling the photography coffers at the lake, some of the winning photos will be used in Barnes County promotional materials, published by the Valley City Chamber of Commerce, a co-sponsor of the contest.

Newly Retired

Many people thought the time was right for them to retire on November 30. They are **Armin Arms** (Winona), **Lavern Horstman** (LD #8), **Duane Jambols** (LD #8), **Bill McDonald** (LD #7), **Wallace Farrand** (LD #5A), **Walt Hermerding** (Cross Lake), **Mary Rivett** (Resource Management), **Helen Taylor**

(Grand Rapids), **Vern Gunderson** (dredge), **Edward Sing** (dredge), **Paul Benson** (LD #8) and **Bill Goetz** (Construction-Operations).

Staff Changes

Bruce Helde has now moved permanently into a position in the LCPM office, where he had been "acting" for a month. Formerly the chief of the Public Use Section in Planning, Bruce is now a life cycle project manager. It wasn't long after that that **Russ Snyder**, who was named acting chief in Bruce's absence, was selected for a project manager position in Engineering Management Branch, Engineering Division. This leaves two vacancies in the Public Use Section and on the 12th floor!

Nancy Sanchez, formerly the "travel voucher processor" in Resource Management, has moved to a position with the Immigration Service at Fort Snelling.

Lois Hawkinson, chief of Contracts Branch, is on a three-month assignment in Charleston District, South Carolina, where she will undoubtedly have a milder winter than the rest of us.

Kevin Berg was selected for the park manager position in the LaCrescent, Wisconsin, office.

January 1 Law restricts outside activities

Payment to federal employees for such non-work activities as writing articles or giving presentations may be impacted by a law which went into

effect on January 1.

The new law, The Ethics Reform Act (Public Law 101-194), prohibits federal employees from accepting payment for writing articles, making guest appearance or giving speeches. The law covers certain articles, speeches and appearances whether or not the subject is related to the federal employee's job or position.

The law does make a provision for federal employees to receive "reasonable" compensation for travel expenses incurred while making speeches or guest appearances not related to official business.

Lieutenant Colonel **Mike Mahoney**, in discussing the new law at a Brown Bag Luncheon meeting with employees in December, said that the law also has a provision for agencies at the local (district) level to grant a waiver for outside activities not related to the employees' official position.

According to a December 10 article in the *Federal Times*, one employees' union has filed suit to block enforcement of the law. However, no action took place before January 1. Violators are subject to civil penalties up to \$10,000 or the amount of compensation received, whichever is greater.

Anyone having questions about the restriction or the waiver should contact **Linda Davis**, Office of Counsel, at x499.

The birthday of **Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.** will be observed by federal agencies on Monday, January 21.

Job satisfaction



Over the course of the year, *Crosscurrents* gets many articles and pictures of the public events put on by our park rangers at the lake projects. While sifting through piles of unused material, I came across this picture of Clint Fishel and a visitor during one of the events held at Leech Lake last summer - a fishing contest. This bluegill looks like it could fit in Clint's pocket without bending a fin, but you couldn't contain the smile on that little angler's face in anything but the great outdoors. That smile is part of the reason park rangers are park rangers- that is real job satisfaction. So let this photo represent all the happy moments created at our projects by all the people in the field - at the Headwaters, Eau Galle, Laka Ashtabula, along the mighty Mississippi River and other rivers where our projects may be found. Thank you. This shot's for you.

Barrels opened after nearly thirty years

By Ken Gardner, Public Affairs Officer

After nearly 30 years on the bottom of one of the Great Lakes, two barrels containing once-classified munitions scrap have been opened by the Corps, adding perhaps the final chapter to the story of the "Lake Superior barrels." The two barrels contained tightly packed cardboard boxes marked "Confidential - Scrap Assemblies - For Destruction Only". Inside the boxes were silver dollar-sized metal plates with small gears and springs attached. The plates appear to be parts from some type of munitions-timing device.

The barrels were recovered November 6 by crews from North Central Division's St. Paul and Detroit districts. The barrels are believed to be two of the 1,437 barrels dumped in Lake Superior by the Army between 1959 and 1962. Records indicated that the barrels contained scrap material from classified munitions work done by a government contractor at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in the late 50s and early 60s. The contents of the two barrels supported the historical records which indicated that the barrels contained scrap from munitions production.

The opening took place on the dock of the Corps' vessel-yard in Duluth on November 27. In a dramatic setting with workers in protective suits, safety zones and a decontamination area, employees of OHM Corporation used carbon saws to remove the barrels' metal skin and a back-hoe to smash the concrete surrounding the contents of the two barrels. The barrel opening was accomplished by OHM Corporation, a national contractor experienced in handling hazardous materials.



Engineer Manager Bob Dempsey (center) made one dive in the submarine to assist in radiological monitoring.



St. Paul District diver Tom Hemstreet enters the waters of Lake Superior to put the overpack barrel around the Honeywell barrel while underwater.

After radiation and air monitoring equipment indicated that the contents were not radioactive, flammable or explosive, samples from the two barrels were collected in glass jars and shown to news media. The samples were later taken to a commercial lab for chemical analysis.

The project to locate and recover several barrels was part of the nation-wide Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP). Under the DERP program, Corps districts are charged with locating and inspecting sites formerly owned or used by the Department of Defense. The St. Paul District is responsible for locating and inspecting former DoD sites in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

According to Bob Dempsey, engineer manager coordinating the DERP project for the district, St. Paul District has located and surveyed close to 200 former defense sites in the two states during the past six years. These include former training facilities, old radar stations, Nike air defense missile sites, and the barrels in Lake Superior.

The opening of the two barrels is the latest action in a controversy which started in the mid-70s when a Lake Superior fisherman snagged one of the barrels in his fishing net. Amid rumors that the barrels might contain toxic, hazardous or even radioactive material, the Army Material Readiness Command conducted a study of the barrels in the mid-70s. As part of that study, they tried to locate the barrels using divers but were unable to find any of the 1,437 barrels. The Army study was completed in 1977. It concluded that there was no evidence to indicate that anything other than classified scrap from munitions was in the barrels.

In the mid-80s, the Defense Environmental Restoration Program was initiated. As a result, the St. Paul District started compiling a list of former defense sites in Minnesota and Wisconsin. One of those sites was the Lake Superior barrel disposal site.



Detroit District employees Randy Lundgren, pilot of the vessel *David Boyd* (center), and Ken Cinker, deckhand (right), chat with Bob Dempsey at the Duluth vessel yard.



Ken Cinker, deckhand from the Duluth vessel yard, connects a cable to one of the sonar "fish" on the deck of the survey boat *David Boyd*. A variety of equipment including side-scan sonar and underwater television was used to locate the barrels on the bottom of Lake Superior.

In September, a contract was awarded to Hazard Control, Inc., a Minneapolis firm, to locate as many barrels as possible. Using a variety of equipment including side-scan sonar, underwater TV cameras and a small, two-person submarine, the company located one string of approximately 105 barrels located in 150-190 feet of water 10 miles up the north shore from Duluth. The wreck of an early 1900's ship, as well as numerous logs and trees were also located.

During one of the dives, the submarine operator reported that a Geiger counter, carried on board the sub as a safety measure, registered an increased radiation reading.

Later dives with two Geiger counters on board found no unusual radiation readings and the search team decided to continue the effort to recover one or two barrels. However, a later attempt to bring a barrel up was unsuccessful when a clamp attached to one barrel by the submarine apparently let loose, leaving the half-ton barrel on the bottom.

Bad weather and the end of the contract ended that phase of the operation on October 17.

Because of the unconfirmed Geiger counter incident and earlier rumors that the barrels might be radioactive, Dempsey arranged for specialists from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to take remote radiological readings of the barrels. Twenty-four barrels were scanned for radiation by EPA crews in late October. Preliminary results from EPA indicate that no radiation hazard was detected.

While the EPA crews were scanning the barrels, the contractor hired to locate the barrels tested a remotely-operated barrel clamp it had developed and successfully lifted two barrels off the bottom, moving them to shallow water near the shore.

On Tuesday, November 6, less than one month after the barrel search began, divers from St. Paul



St. Paul District diving crew on the deck of the cranebarge *Markus* after successfully recovering two barrels from Lake Superior. From left are Ed Strand, Tom Hemstreet, Ron Fetting and Bob Sikkilo.

Continued on page ten

Nature Travelogue

Camping, very seclusive. Swimming, clear and pristine waters. Picnicking, shade trees and gentle breezes. Fishing, as good as anywhere in the state. Information building, up-to-date info on area happenings. History, rich with native american burial mounds. Flora. Fauna. A place where only a short walk from your camping site provides emotional and spiritual uplifting because of the flowers, general plant life and wildlife that may be seen.

Sound too good to be true, like you would have to go to Canada or Alaska to experience all this at one location? Not so, this place exists right here in the St. Paul District. Right here at Gull Lake Dam.

The campground is well maintained like all Corps campgrounds; the sites are spacious and private. Like many Corps projects, firewood, showers, swimming, boat landings, picnic areas, playground and fishing are all available.

The unique part of Gull Lake is its 40 plus acres of woodland and the native american history that permeates the area. A trail system aids visitors viewing eagles, grouse, hawks and songbirds, beaver, deer,

woodchucks and numerous rodents, not to mention an occasional bear.

An improved trail system and forest management have improved these woodlands for wildlife as well as for visitor recreational experience. Installation of 33 wood-duck houses over the last four years, clear cuts, clover trails and numerous brush piles has enhanced wildlife habitat and

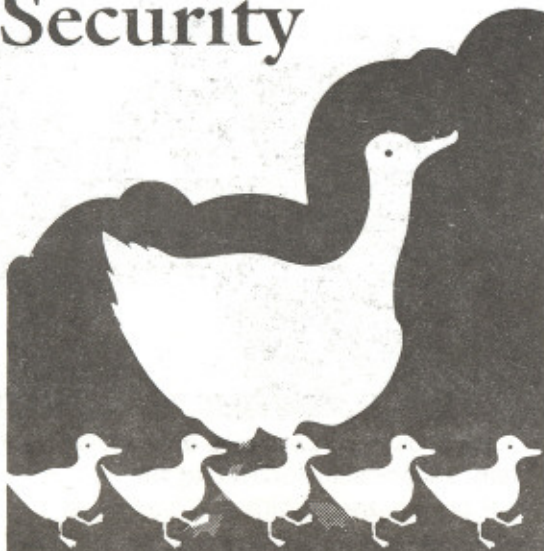
improved wildlife populations.

In conclusion, remember that life is nothing more than a question of balance. The Corps at Gull Lake is trying to find that balance between recreational development and respect for the natural environment.

By Gregg Struss
Park Manager, Gull Lake



Lead Your Family To Security



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Upward Mobility - making it work on the river

Karen Bostrom came to Lock and Dam #3 as a clerk-typist in 1983, and having completed the Upward Mobility training for lock and dam operator, has been locking boats there since last May.

She attended vocational training school for secretarial work in Red Wing following high school, but says that had she gone on to college, her interest would have been in art or archaeology. "I never expected that I would be working at a lock and dam."

As her office job at Lock #3 had been seasonal, Karen had also worked as an order processor for the Josten company in Red Wing. "And I did get hired in a laborer position one summer, so I knew about what to expect when I began the training program. I knew the greasing jobs wouldn't bother me," she points out.

Just how her interest in things mechanical evolved, she isn't sure. "I grew up in a neighborhood with all boys, and I dated a person who had a backhoe and road-grader business. I learned how to operate those. I'd rather work outside any day."

Karen's interests aren't all mechanical; she also rides her Arabian horse and does counted cross-stitch!



Karen Bostrom perches next to the backup generator at Lock and Dam #3, a place where her duties have changed from office to operation.

This article on Karen was prepared by Rose Braatz, writer editor in Construction-Operations, as part of a series on successes in the Upward Mobility Program.

Advice from the Federal Women's Program

Speak up for yourself. Keep a record of your accomplishments. Don't rely on some nebulous form of cosmic justice to have all your good deeds rewarded here on earth. Managers can't fully appreciate every good thing you've done if they either don't remember it or didn't know about it in the first place. It may be bold to speak up for yourself, but if you don't, no one else will. Performance appraisals are the ideal forum for this.

Dress for success. When managers look at you, can they visualize you as a person in a higher graded position? Do your clothes say "My position here isn't particularly important" or "I'm a professional."

Be brave enough to take a chance on a new job. Sometimes you'll do everything right and still not get promoted because no openings come along in your office. Sometimes no matter how highly you are thought of, your manager can't promote you if your job is only rated for a certain GS level. Success may mean you have to apply elsewhere rather than waiting for the opportunity to come to you.

Prepare for the next opportunity. Anytime you are among the nonselectees for a job vacancy, ask yourself why. If you are honest with yourself, the answer will rarely be that it was someone else's fault -- the answer

almost always lies within you. Look at the people that were selected. Ask yourself what they brought to the screening process that you did not.

Patience

Not everyone realizes career goals in accordance with their career timetables. Remember the ultimate satisfaction is in knowing that you did the best that you could. However, if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there. Selecting a goal narrows your choices. With a specific goal in mind, you know to take this job and not that one. To study instead of watching television. To spend hours practicing to sharpen your skills, instead of going out with the gang.

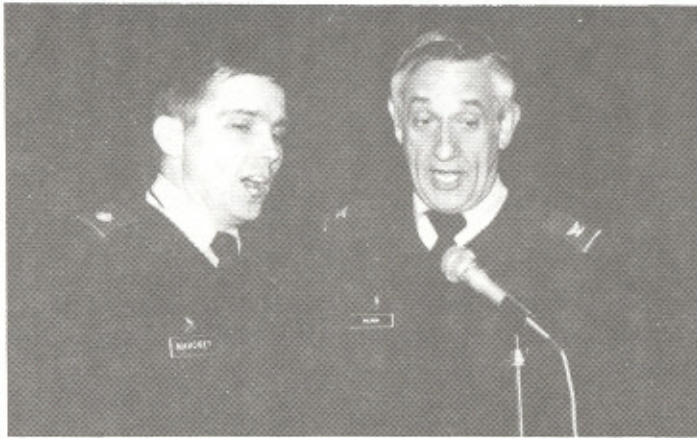
Holiday Party



Al Rosenberg, chief entertainer and organizer, croons a melody meant to pull at the ole' heart strings.



Olivia Vavreck, Larry Hahn, Ed Bankston and Harold Taggatz sing their hearts out (kind of) in a favorite tune from the musical *Damn Yankees*. The whole "team" of office and division chiefs proved 'there's nothing to it but to do it.'



LTC Mike Mahoney and COL Roger Baldwin profess their mutual admiration in a tune with lines like "wherever he goes, I go." It's amazing that someone got them to the mike!



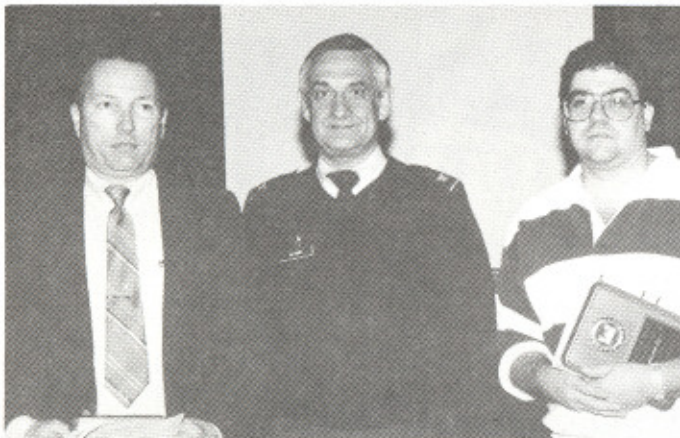
Mary Jane Trcka and Lois Pream (photo at left) and John Blackstone and Nan Bischoff (above) enjoyed the afternoon of entertainment, socializing, food and holiday cheer.



Winners of the Combined Federal Campaign award - those contributing at least 1% of their income to charity - include (from left) Carl Gray, John Roach, Charlie Malmer, Marilyn Kruchten, George Sigstad, Judy Desharnais and daughter Marie, Craig Evans, Bruce Tamte (with COL Baldwin behind) and Larry Hahn.



and Awards Celebration



1989 was the year that the Suggestion Program Awards really took off, with awards for:
 Suggestor of the Year - Stephen Harmon (not shown)
 Implementor of the Year - Dennis Erickson (left)
 Evaluator of the Year - Larry Hahn (right)
 District Engineer COL Baldwin presented the plaques.

On the Spot Awards were given to (from left) Paul Madison, Steve Brossant, Joanne Dufeck, Chuck Johnson, Tim Paulus, Edith Pang, Joel Face, Doug Hoy, Carol Fix and Bonnie Greenleaf.



BARRELS, from page five

District, supported by surface vessels and crews from Detroit District's Duluth Area Office, successfully brought the two barrels to the surface.

The two barrels were placed in plastic "over-pack" containers underwater and then lifted by crane onto the deck of the cranebarge *Markus*. They were then taken to the Corps vessel yard in Duluth where they stayed until they were opened on November 27.

Chemical analysis completed on January 3rd, 1991, showed no traces of hazardous substances in barrel contents.

The analysis of the contents of the two barrels, along with the results of the radiation scans, the earlier sonar search and data from the 1977 study will be used to determine if any additional barrels need to be recovered or if any other future action under DERP is necessary.

Photos at right: Top, in the foreground lies the Corps tugboat *Lake Superior* at anchor in the Duluth vessel yard. The cranebarge *Markus* is being moved to the tug for securing prior to moving to the search area, approximately 12 miles up lake from Duluth.

Bottom, Media interest was quite high before, during and after the actual search operation. Here, Ken Gardner is interviewed by a Duluth reporter. Three Duluth and three Twin Cities television stations, five print publications, four radio stations kept the story on the "front page" for several weeks... and are still calling.!



Suggestion Awards

In addition to the award presentations made at the Holiday Party (see Page Nine), commendation certificates were presented to all who had implemented suggestions during FY 90: Charles Crist, Dennis Cin, William Goetz, Richard Gorr, Lawrence Hahn, James Kursu, Thomas Oksness and Fred Vogele. Two additional evaluators, Wayne Scheffel and Daniel Krumholz, were recognized for their high quality and timely evaluations.

Congratulations to this year's winners and thanks to the committee for their time and efforts in working to make this first presentation successful.



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