



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

Vol. 18, No. 12

December 1995

## Navigation study team gathers public comment

by Samantha Bluhm  
Planning and Evaluation Section

**U**pper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) System Navigation Study team members recently held five open houses along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to give the public the opportunity for comment on alternative measures to improve the navigational efficiency of the system.

Two of those open houses were held in the St. Paul District: one in Bloomington, Minn. on Nov. 30, and the other in Prairie du Chien, Wis. on Dec. 4.

This set of open houses differs from the public meetings held in November 1994. Now, the Corps is at the point in the feasibility study where the small- and large-scale measures to reduce navigation traffic delays have been identified. The open houses are designed to gather public input on those measures. The open houses were the third public involvement activity where Corps of Engineers representatives have met directly with the public to discuss the navigation study. Team members, supported by a variety of displays, presented the latest measures to the public for discussion and comment.

The Public Involvement Work Group designed the open houses to:

- facilitate one-on-one discussion with representatives from the environmental, economic, engineering, and plan formulation interests;
- solicit feedback; and
- provide additional information on the measures that were eliminated and those to be considered.

In addition to the displays, the Public Involvement Work Group had an introductory computerized slide show available for viewing.

The team used latest computer technology to give the public an idea of the open house format. The show used



Photo by Ken Gardner

**Kevin Bluhm, coordinator for the navigation study Public Involvement Work Group, watches the screen of his laptop computer as a video projector displays the image on a screen behind him. Bluhm created the six-minute multi-media presentation for use at the most recent navigation study meetings. The computer graphics application allowed sound, video, slides and animation to be combined in a single presentation.**

an animated walking Corps castle to instruct the audience on the background of the navigation study and provided booth location information and a brief history of the activities of other work groups.

St. Paul District Technical Manager Kevin Bluhm led the Public Involvement Work Group.

## District accomplishes great work despite road blocks

by COL J.M. Wonsik  
St. Paul District Commander

It's absolutely great to be back after four weeks of commanders' training in Huntsville and Washington, D.C. The district has continued its solid accomplishments through the federal

government's budgetary trials and tribulations. You didn't miss a beat.

Among the accomplishments this month are the release of the Devils Lake draft Contingency Plan and the Public Involvement Open Houses for the Navigation Study.

The St. Paul District is taking the

lead in releasing, on time I might add, a draft Contingency Plan for Devils Lake. This extensive effort was a short-fused requirement of approximately 45 days. The plan identifies emergency management measures for flooding at Devils Lake, North Dakota. The flooding there has been a critical issue throughout the year and has involved the state's congressional delegation, state agencies and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The plan outlines a number of contingencies, depending on the severity of flooding in the foreseeable future. Tom Raster and his team have done some great work to get this out for public comment and review.

Another of the district's recent significant accomplishments are the open houses for the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. Two of five open houses this December were in the St. Paul District. The study seeks public input on alternatives for improving navigation on the Mississippi River. Kevin Bluhm has led the public involvement activity for the study. He's used everything from high technology to personal meetings to seek public input and inform and educate the public about the plan.

Congratulations, on jobs well done by capable teams. As I said, you didn't miss a beat. Great job in an uncertain environment. Thanks.

Finally, with the holiday season in full swing this month, Curtiss and I want to offer all of you our best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

### Value engineering means project savings

by Peter Verstegen  
Public Affairs specialist

**T**he St. Paul District is leading the nation in savings as determined by value engineering (VE) studies.

"For Fiscal Year (FY) 95, the St. Paul District got credit for more than \$10.3 million in savings," said Value Engineer Officer Tom Heyerman. "This was greater than 22 percent of the total Corps savings goal in civil works. Our goal for FY 95 was a bit more than \$2.3 million."

The program goal of VE studies is to reduce the civil works construction and operations/maintenance costs throughout the Corps, without reducing the required quality of the completed facility.

Stated savings are based on approved VE studies. The objective of a VE study is to engineer or design projects with low overall costs in mind — termed life cycle cost. "Life cycle cost," said Heyerman, "is the cost of ownership, maintenance and operations. For instance, one light bulb might cost a bit more to buy than another, but be less expensive when operating

over a long period."

Total reported civil works savings throughout the Corps were \$59.6 million — or 128 percent of the annual program goal. Savings cannot be credited until the construction projects that were the subject of the VE study are awarded.

"In FY 94, the district got credit for more than \$6.1 million in savings," Heyerman said. "This is almost 10 percent of the total Corps savings in civil works. Our goal for FY 94 was \$3.2 million."

The Baldhill Dam safety and major rehabilitation project, the Chaska flood control project and the Mississippi River locks and dams have had VE studies that have produced savings and tangible benefits.

Other benefits of approved VE proposals in projects include construction that is less disruptive, safer for recreational trail users, more aesthetically pleasing and projects capable of handling larger flood flows. VE has also lowered project annual operating costs.

The cost for a VE study is included in the engineering and design cost of a project.

## Supporting victims of domestic abuse

The Violence Against Women Act (part of the National Crime Bill) became law in 1994. As a result, the president has directed executive departments and agencies to increase employee awareness of domestic violence and the resources that are available for victims.

For the past four years, Denise McCarthy of Contracting Division has volunteered as a victim's advocate for the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Hennepin County. She has also served on the Hennepin County Criminal Justice



Photo by Peter Versteegen

**Denise McCarthy (center), Contracting Division, gave a presentation on her experience as a victim's advocate in cases of domestic abuse to a packed conference room for the Federal Women's Program on Nov. 15.**

Coordinating Committee, which conducted a feasibility study for a Domestic Abuse Victims' Service Center. The center opened in September 1994.

The following interview is based

on McCarthy's presentation to the Federal Women's Program this November. The EEO Office and the Domestic Abuse Project of Minneapolis also contributed information to the interview.

## Federal Women's Program stresses domestic abuse

### What is your role as a victim's advocate?

*Denise McCarthy:* I am the first person to interact with the victim after the police leave. A battered victim in crisis is incapable of using his or her coping skills and problem-solving abilities. We give them options—not advice. Mainly I let them tell their story. Battered victims tend to minimize what happened to them. They are full of shame and believe that no one has faced what they are facing.

### What is abusive behavior?

It is the threat and use of physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse. Hurting pets and destroying property is also included. The goals of these behaviors include forcing the other to obey and doing things one may not want to do.

### What underlies battering?

Battering is about power and control. Battering is used by people to stay in control of their relationships. It's not about their inability to deal with anger. If it were, why doesn't the batterer hit their boss?

### What group is susceptible?

Domestic abuse is a problem that cuts across all economic lines and knows no boundaries of race, religion, occupation or age.

### Describe a typical abuser.

Typically, an abuser, usually male, and seems charming and charismatic to a non-family member. Most women think they have found 'a dream come true.' The first sign I look for is extreme jealousy. Other signs are alcohol, drug use, a history of family violence, or a fist fight or macho-type personality.

### When does this abuse begin?

Generally, abuse doesn't begin until the relationship becomes difficult to break up and there is a commitment. The victim falls in love with the abuser, they marry, or she becomes pregnant. The abuse begins gradually and may start out as verbal abuse. The victim is told she is stupid. Every victim I have been in contact with has been called a whore or slut on a regular basis. The first battering incident is usually relatively minor, sometimes called the 'ice breaker.' The batterer may receive the message that violence is okay, since the victim is still in the relationship.

### Why does the victim stay?

That question is asked often. The question angers me. The question should be, "Why does he do it?" But there are three reasons a victim stays: money, shame and love.

*Abuse, cont. on page 4*

## “Lighten up...”

by Peter Verstegen  
Public Affairs specialist

**I**RS agents do have a sense of humor.

A member of the Heritage Toastmasters Club, Karen Nyquist, has shown her aplomb with both the tax code and humor.

Nyquist, a revenue officer with the Collection Division of the IRS in St. Paul, won recognition for her seven minutes of humor titled, “Lighten up... You’re not getting out of this alive, anyway.” The honor came at a Toastmasters International district speech contest in Duluth this November.

No, it’s not about an audit. It’s more like *Life’s Little Instruction Book*.

Nyquist joined Heritage Toastmasters, composed mainly of employees from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for its closeness to her office and for professional

development. The club meets weekly at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Centre in downtown St. Paul.

She is developing her presentation skills as part of her Individual Development Plan (IDP) with the IRS. The toastmasters’ mission supports her IDP by promoting creative thinking, listening and speaking.

“I’ve taken ‘Lighten up...’ as my motto,” Nyquist said. “It really appeals to me. I tend to take things too seriously. We’re all going to die anyway,” she said. “Why not find the fun and humor in almost every situation while we’re here?”

Jokes about death and taxes aside, her speech ties together humorous moments about an encounter with a stranger in San Francisco; her labor and the birth of her son; camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, where everything went wrong; two work-related items; and a “kid story.”

To create the speech, “I brainstormed on all the silly things

that happened to me,” Nyquist said. “I wrote the speech the night before I was scheduled to give it, stealing the title from a speaker last year at a Federal Women’s Program. I first practiced it during break the next morning. ‘Lighten up...’ was the result.”

Four rounds of speech competition gave her opportunities to lighten up. Her wit and wisdom won over her club members at the Corps of Engineers, who twice critiqued her speech. She also impressed judges in the east metro area and the eastern division. She won first place at each level, before winning first runner up at the district contest. The district covers 240 clubs over most of Minnesota and part of Ontario.

Nyquist grew up with humor. She was on her high school speech team in her home town of Duluth, where “I stayed with humor for all three years,” she said. But she confesses, “I don’t have the same confidence with serious speeches. Perhaps I should ‘Lighten up...’.”

### *Abuse, cont. from page 3*

Financially, have you ever had three kids under five and no job? What if you didn’t have a car? What if you didn’t have a key to your own house? This is a true story: I worked on a case where the woman lived with her abuser for eight years, had three children under five and her husband would not give her a key to their house.

Shame is a big reason. Most people still believe that divorce is a sign of failure or a character defect. Victims are worried about what their family will think. Remember, the abuser is very often described as charming by non-family members. Also, love keeps a victim in the relationship. The victim

loves the abuser. After each incident, the abuser is extremely remorseful and promises never to do it again. They usually weep. A honeymoon period begins. The abuser is perfect, loving, attentive, a gift-buying partner, an exceptional parent. This honeymoon keeps the victim from leaving. Slowly, the tension builds until there is another incidence of violence. The cycle starts again and almost always escalates.

#### **What can a victim do to stop abuse?**

Really, nothing. It’s out of the victim’s hands. For abuse to stop, the batterer must face consequences such as loss of job, loss of family, or jail

time. In the long run, I believe part of the solution will be education. Start teaching kids in elementary school that violent behavior is unacceptable.

#### **When abuse happens, what can a victim do?**

Plan ahead. How will you leave next time when an abuse incident occurs? Where will you go? Prepare an emergency escape kit with important legal and financial documents, money, clothes and critical phone numbers. Hide the kit in a place where you can easily assess it when leaving the house. Seek professional help. The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women can be reached at 646-6177.

# HOLIDAY AWARDS CEREMONY

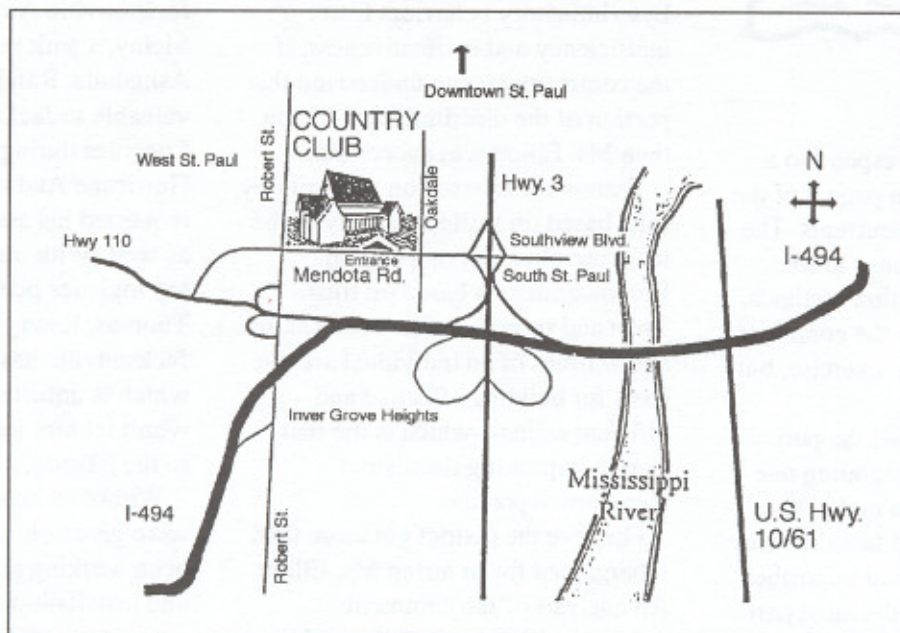
**December 21, 1995**

**11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Entertainment: 11 a.m. - noon

Luncheon: noon - 1:30 p.m.

Awards: 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



## Southview Country Club

**239 E. Mendota Road, West St. Paul, MN. 55118**

### Menu:

Beef tips over noodles, baked ham, roast turkey with gravy, whipped potatoes, vegetables, salads, fruits, rolls and dessert

### Price:

**\$11 with luncheon or \$2.50 without luncheon**

### Tickets on sale until Dec. 15. Contacts:

Retirees: Jan Graham, 290-5305

Field personnel: Jan Pream, 290-5312

4th floor: Theresa Thury, -5224; Jan Pream, -5312

5th floor: Jenny Yager, -5309; Joann Lewis, -5602;

6th floor: Joyce Johaneck, -5508; Jan Graham, -5305;

8th floor: Luann Bartuah, -5730; Mary Clarkson, -5235.

## Letters to the editor

### Diversity Week

November 17,  
1995

Dear  
Crosscurrents  
Editor:



I feel compelled to respond to a comment published on page 3 of the November 1995 Crosscurrents. The comment was in response to Ms. Jane Elliott's presentation methods. The person who made the comment missed the point of the exercise, but learned the lesson.

The author interpreted the purpose of the exercise as "denigrating one group (white males) to make other groups (minorities and females) feel better." The women and minorities in that room were for the most part adults. They have been dealing with discriminatory issues for a long time and have all well-developed coping measures to restore their self esteem. They don't need this kind of exercise to "feel better."

Ms. Elliott's objective was to make people who had not experienced discrimination feel like people feel when they have been discriminated against.

Her method of denigration was much more overt than the discriminatory behaviors exhibited in offices. It had to be. The speaker had to create that feeling in a very short period of time.

The target audience had not experienced the decades of conditioning that women and minorities have had that makes them

respond to the subtler behaviors.

Clearly, the individual felt angry. That was the intent of the lesson.

The feeling of anger the author experienced is what some women and minorities feel on a daily basis. The expenditure of the emotional energy in dealing with that anger detracts from work performance. Discriminatory behaviors foster inefficiency and ineffectiveness. If the commentator can understand this portion of the discrimination lesson, then Ms. Elliott was successful.

Teamwork is based on authority by role, based on skill and ability of the team member, not on position. Empowerment is based on trust. Trust and respect for the actual skills and abilities of an individual are the basis for building effective and efficient teams—which is the first step in improving the district's competitive posture.

I believe the district got more than it bargained for in hiring Ms. Elliott. An analysis of the comments received on her presentation, while not a representative sample, could provide insight into the differences in the value systems of employees that prevent us from working together as effectively as possible.

Sincerely,  
Jody Rooney

### Hurricane duty

Thought you'd be interested in an update of the fate of two St. Paul District employees here on assignment in the Virgin Islands.

Kurt Reppe and I arrived here on October 11 after a day and one half



layover in Jacksonville, FL. The sputtering Hurricane Pablo forced a change in our travel plans as we were originally scheduled to fly direct to Puerto Rico on Oct. 9.

Concern about Pablo determined that we fly to Jacksonville District until the storm passed. As fate would have it, we were greeted at the Jacksonville Airport by Randy Melby, a park ranger at Lake Ashtabula. Randy had proven so valuable to Jacksonville District's Logistics during his tour for Hurricane Andrew that they requested his assistance for Marilyn as well. With many of Jacksonville's top logistics people here on St. Thomas, Randy's help back in Jacksonville has been invaluable, which is unfortunate for Randy. They won't let him leave Florida to come to the islands.

Within an hour of arrival here we were given our assignments. Kurt has been working with the distribution and installation of emergency generators, some of which are as big as a semi truck. He has also been working on contracts for emergency public shelters.

I've been assigned to the temporary roofing effort. There are three prime contractors and innumerable sub-contractors scrambling to provide temporary plastic tarp roofs for people who have had their roof damaged or destroyed.

It's a good job as it allows you to get out and meet the people of St. Thomas. It also brings you face to face with the incredible destructive power of a hurricane. Many homes appear to have exploded apart. Debris is everywhere, although crews have been working diligently to clean things up.

The narrow two-lane roads have become one-lane roads where power lines lay on them. Power poles are also still lying on roads, inhibiting, but no longer prohibiting, traffic. Sheet metal from roofs, sheet rock, scraps of wood, nails, and metal scraps, are everywhere—especially along the roads. Almost every day, a Corps vehicle punctures a tire due to the debris.

To add to this driving hazard, in St. Thomas you must drive on the *left* side of the road! Like in England, St. Thomas' roads are all designed for left-side driving.

There are many poor people here for whom the hurricane has been devastating. Two days ago, we began putting temporary roofs on five of 12 low-income housing units. The seven that weren't roofed were beyond habitation. The five we did roof were hardly better. The floors of these units were concrete (four stories) but the exterior walls were a louvered metal. I've never seen construction like it before. They had been built for a hot climate where air circulation was paramount. Even in the habitable five buildings, numerous sections of the metal exterior walls were blown out.

From the roadway adjacent to one of the units, I watched two children playing in their bedroom. They had a bed and dresser and built-in closet with its door askew. But they had no exterior walls. They were two stories up, playing in their bed with no wall between them and the ground below.

Sincerely,  
Roland Hamborg, CO-TS  
Oct. 18, 1995

*Editors note: Bob LeMonds, CO-C, arrived for hurricane duty after Hamborg posted his letter.*

## Bits and Pieces

### District Personnel Changes

#### Hello

##### Contracting Division

Bonnie J. Tieso, office automation clerk

##### Engineering and Planning Division

Catherine E. Fasching, civil engineer

##### Information Management Office

Canissha L. Jackson, office automation clerk

##### Resource Management Office

Carla E. Phillips, office automation clerk

#### Good-bye

##### Construction-Operations Division

Scott M. Althoff, deckhand  
Thomas E. Birkle, administrative clerk

Richard A. Kann, deckhand  
Larry D. McClellan, laborer  
Neil D. Morarend, deckhand  
Allen M. Rosenberg, supervisory budget analyst  
Irene M. Stearns, park ranger

##### Contracting Division

Catherine G. Magnuson, purchasing agent

##### Engineering and Planning Division

Victor I. Cherny, student trainee (civil engineer)

Guy K. Paquette, surveying technician (retired)

##### Human Resources Division

Raegan E. Pederson, student trainee

##### Information Management Office

Tameko C. Mitchell, office automation clerk

##### Programs and Project Management Division

Marsha G. Risch, supervisory civil engineer

##### Resource Management

Wanda D. Brown, voucher examiner

### Obituary

LTC Walter L. Heme (ret.), former St. Paul District deputy commander, died at age 56 from a heart attack on October 13, 1995. Heme served in St. Paul from October 1976 to November 1979. His military service spanned 21 years. He retired in 1982 as deputy commander (civil works) at the Savannah District. Upon retirement, he attended the Ph.D. program at Texas A&M University. For the last nine years he was principal in Heme Consultants, Inc., an engineering consulting firm in Savannah, Ga. He is survived by his wife Sandy, of Savannah. Heme's mother and three sisters also survive him.

*More Bits and Pieces on page 8*

## Lockmasters move to new jobs

Ken Tschida, lockmaster at Lock and Dam No. 2 in Hastings, Minn., is the new Upper Area Lockmaster. He replaces Arden Duval, who is retiring. On Dec. 10, Joe Dvorak became the lockmaster at Lock & Dam No. 2. Dvorak has been the lockmaster at Lock & Dam No. 1 in Minneapolis. And on November 27, the Upper Area Lockmaster's Office relocates from Mendota Heights to the Electronic Service Center, next to Lock & Dam No. 2.

## Bosse update

"The Bosse exhibit, which has been on display at the Landmark Center in St. Paul for the last three years, is down and is on its way to headquarters for its showing there," said John Anfinson, district historian. Henry P. Bosse was a draftsman with the Corps during the late 1800s. The Bosse photos are prized for their exceptional composition and capture how the Mississippi River looked just the Corps of Engineers began to transform the river.

Anfinson also said that the San

Francisco Museum of Modern Art has a permanent display of the great American photographers. "Along with the photographs of Timothy O'Sullivan, Ansel Adams, and Carleton Watkins is now hanging one of Bosse's prints. This is just another confirmation of his growing prestige," Anfinson said.

## Locks close for repairs

The St. Paul District scheduled the closing of three locks for maintenance and repairs on December 4, 1995. Lower St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis will be dewatered for major repairs. Lock operating machinery will be installed at Lock & Dam No. 1, also in Minneapolis and at Lock & Dam No. 9, between Lynxville and Prairie du Chien, Wis. The locks are expected to reopen March 4, 1996.

## FEEA scholarships

Two St. Paul District families received scholarships from the Federal Employees Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA). One is Nichole Lauer of Eau Galle, Wis. She is the daughter of Gary Lauer,

acting lockmaster at Lock & Dam No. 4. She attends Wartburg College in Decorah, Iowa. The other scholarship winner is Erin Rolbiecki of Trempealeau, Wis. She attends University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the daughter of Edmund Rolbiecki, a lock and dam operator at Lock & Dam No. 6.

## Grossell invents "Ratchet Boss"

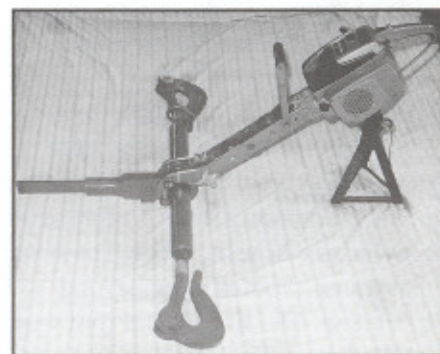


Photo courtesy of Jack Grossell

**Jack Grossell's Ratchet Boss prototype is designed to help deck hands tighten tow lines.**

Jack Grossell, maintenance foreman at the Fountain City Service Base, invented a light-weight, gasoline-powered ratchet that offers deck hands a safer and more efficient method of tightening tow lines. Deck hands have traditionally used heavy steel bars, called "toothpicks," to manually tie barges together. Grossell's "Ratchet Boss" replaces toothpicks and allows the ratchet user to stand at a safe distance to tighten steel cables. Grossell said that the tool is quicker than tightening cables manually. He is looking for development capital or investors and hopes to market the Ratchet Boss to the merchant marine, towing and construction industries.



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# Crosscurrents

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