



Corps builds for Nation's security

By Daniel J. Calderón

WELLTON, Ariz. — The Customs and Border Protection Agency cut the ribbon to officially open the new border patrol station here during a ceremony March 22.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District broke ground on the facility in March 2010. Oakland Construction was the contractor for the project. More than 100 people attended the ground breaking and the CBP hosted an equivalent crowd for the ceremony signaling the beginning of the new facility's fully operational life.

"I think this is the nicest station and facility in the Border Patrol right now," said Justin Bristow, Acting Deputy Chief Patrol Agent for Yuma Sector.

The new station will support up to 375 Customs and Border Protection Agents. The facility includes several buildings on the site. The primary station building contains office space; a muster, quiet room and training area; a detention area and an exercise and locker room. The second building is a maintenance facility for vehicles and electronic gear. Other buildings on site are essentially canopies for vehicle refueling operations and a vehicle wash area.

Rick Polanco, E.I.T., was the on-site engineer who processed modifications for the project. Among his tasks were creating the initial change request to estimating, negotiating, and ensuring the Arizona-Nevada Area Office received change packages. Polanco began



Justin Bristow, Acting Deputy Chief Patrol Agent for Yuma Sector (left), and Wayne Preston, Assistant Patrol Agent in Charge for Wellton Station, cut the ribbon at the new Border Patrol Station in Wellton, Ariz., March 22. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District broke ground on the facility in March 2010 and team members were on hand for the ceremony. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

working during the construction phase. He praised Troy Olsen, the resident engineer for the Arizona-Nevada Area office, and said the District team, who worked well together and were ready to face any challenges.

"I could tell from the moment I stepped foot on the site we had a great group of USACE personnel, from Ray Salas and John Mallin – our chief construction representatives – and Rob Crist – our project engineer – to our Lisa Robinson – our admin support staff,"

Polanco explained. "We knew the task at hand was not going to be easy, but it could be handled if we worked together and broke up the big issues into more manageable problems and tasks to tackle."

CBP agents in attendance had high praise for the facility. The Yuma Sector, of which the Wellton station is a part, patrols 126 miles of border with Mexico, between the Yuma-Pima County line in Arizona and the Imperial Sand Dunes in California.



South Pacific Division commander promoted. Page 4



March Air Reserve Base opens 26,000 square foot facility. Page 5



District honors Kevin Inada through his favorite pastime. Page 14

TEMPLE SENDS

Suspicious Activity Reporting

USACE Teammates,

We are fortunate to live in a democratic society where we are guaranteed unalienable rights, including Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Unfortunately, there will always be those who seek to threaten or harm our way of life.

Because of these threats, it is important to increase our awareness and vigilance in order to protect our critical resources – including our most critical resource, our people – from acts of terrorism. A key element of preventing terrorism is understanding current and emerging threats.

Army leaders have designated Suspicious Activity Reporting as the antiterrorism theme for the quarter. As such, I encourage every member of the USACE workforce to be situationally aware of their surroundings and recognize and report indicators of suspicious activity.

Listed below are several categories of potentially suspicious activities that warrant reporting:

- Unjustified attempts to acquire expertise/information that could cause a threat to DoD personnel.
- Breach or attempted intrusion in restricted and controlled areas.
- Suspicious questioning of personnel concerning DoD structures, personnel or procedures.
- Expressed or implied threats.
- Suspicious flyover of or landing near DoD facilities.
- Acquisition of unusual quantities of precursor materials.
- Misrepresentation using false documents, insignia, etc.
- Recruiting efforts for illegal or questionable activities.
- Sabotage, tampering, or vandalism.
- Unwarranted tests of personnel and systems to reveal physical, personnel, or cyber capabilities/vulnerabilities.
- Theft, loss or diversion of DoD property.
- Discovery of illegally owned or found weapons/explosives.

Together, we must be capable of detecting and reporting a full range of threats, including terrorist attacks. I urge you to report suspicious activities to your security managers, supervisors, and local law enforcement personnel. You should also extend this vigilance in off-duty activities. By integrating increased awareness with reporting, we will positively contribute to the safety and security of our valued workforce while ensuring mission success for the Nation.

Essayons!

Temple

Maj. Gen. Merdith “Bo” Temple

SPL True Story:

I was contacted by an old Army friend of mine who is an insurance underwriter for a large insurance company. A large health group had asked them to insure an agricultural crop of castor beans. Apparently these beans are very high in nutrition and they were studying them for use as animal food.

If you are not familiar with castor beans, a by-product is Ricin, a deadly poison. Even in very small amounts, inhaled or if it comes in contact with your skin, it can kill you.

Allegedly, the Mexican drug cartels have placed this substance on top of drug shipments as a deterrent to rival gangs and for retaliation against law enforcement should they intercept the shipments.

Needless to say, this was reported to the appropriate authorities and the issue resolved!

Bottom line: If you see something that doesn't look right, report it! Simply get it to me, be willing to stand by your story and we will take care of it!

Jeffrey E. Koontz
Chief, Security & Law Enforcement



**Contact Security
at 213-452-3969
to report any
suspicious activity,
behavior or objects.**

**See Something
Say Something**

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

Although one cannot tell from the weather, it is Spring Time in the Los Angeles District! The Southern California weather has been colder than usual and after just returning from a quick trip to Phoenix and Tucson; the summer Arizona weather has not yet hit its stride! But despite the fact that the weather is on the cooler side, we've "sprung forward" on our clocks and we are definitely out of the winter gloom (although does that really exist in the Southwest?). Regardless, with Spring's arrival, it's time for Spring Break! For many of us with children, Spring Break means that our kids will be home from school; I hope that many of you are taking advantage of this fact. But even if you don't have school-age kids, I hope that you can take advantage of a Spring Break. Therefore, this month's Commander's Message is all about "Maintaining Balance in Your Life."

After almost two years as your Commander, I've come to realize that, with the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas, there never is a good time when the work stops or slows down so that we can take a vacation. In recent years, with Continuing Resolutions leading to the late arrival of our budgets, the sprint to the end of the fiscal year and the full execution of our budget makes it almost impossible to take time off. But we have to take time off, if not completely for ourselves, but for continuing the investment of time in our family and friends.

"Maintaining Balance in Your Life" is something that I learned early on in my Army career. In fact, the best bosses

I've had were not workaholics, but divided and devoted themselves in a responsible manner between work and family. I've tried to follow a similar work/family ethic, especially during the times when I was in a position of leadership. Even now, as your Commander, I make it a point to depart work at a decent hour so that I can have a dinner with my wife May and my children Brandon and Kayla. For me, having dinner with my entire family is always the best part of my day. I love hearing each of my family member's stories, especially the ones that make all of us laugh. This year, my kids' Spring Break is from April 9th to the 13th. So, I'm taking that week off for some good "family time." I've wanted to take my kids to Universal Studios since we've been back in California; Spring Break is the perfect time!

I urge all of you to strike a similar balance between work and family/friends so that you are maintaining balance in your own life. Working hard daily with "reasonable" hours; and planning periodic vacations to recharge throughout the year will ensure that you are efficient and effective district employees. And that's a good thing as we continue Building Strong and Taking Care of People!

Warm Regards,

COL Toy

Col. R. Mark Toy



Hope you "Like" us on Facebook @ facebook.com/ladistrict



District Commander: Col. R. Mark Toy

Public Affairs Officer: Jay Field

Editor: Dave Palmer

Staff: Jennie Ayala, Daniel J. Calderón,
Greg Fuderer, Brooks O. Hubbard IV,
Richard Jung, Kim Matthews

Administrative Assistant: Beverly Patterson

The NewsCastle is published monthly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended Engineer Family of the Los Angeles District, USACE.

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the District or of the Department of Defense.

Address mail to the Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office, ATTN: NewsCastle Editor
P.O. Box 532711, Los Angeles, CA 90017-2325

Tel: (213) 452-3922 or Fax: (213) 452-4209.

E-mail the Public Affairs staff at: publicaffairs.SPL@usace.army.mil



Capt. Chris Herold (right) unfurls the one-star flag of Brig. Gen. Michael Wehr during a frocking ceremony March 15 at the San Francisco War Memorial Veterans Building. (USACE photo by Ryan McClymont)

South Pacific Division Commander Promoted to Brigadier General

By Torrie McAllister

SAN FRANCISCO — Acting Army Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Merdith “Bo” Temple promoted South Pacific Division Commander Col. Michael C. Wehr to the rank of brigadier general March 15 in a ceremony at the San Francisco War Memorial Veterans Building.

Wehr said his career as an engineer officer has been an incredible journey made possible by family, friends and faith. There have been numerous teachers and colleagues who coached him to deliver on his potential. This has motivated him to actively seek out the potential in others.

“We’ve all had opportunity to help one another deliver on potential,” Wehr said. “Life is full of opportunities where each of us takes up the torch, carries it well, and then passes it on to others to carry into the future. There is tremendous connection with our history along the journey. We are so much better together than alone.”

His wife Deborah and his father retired Army Lt. Col. Arthur Wehr pinned on his new rank amidst applause from family, friends and a full house of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers senior leaders and employees, including the commanders of the Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Albuquerque Districts. Special guests included members of American Legion District 8 who offered the hospitality of their historic hall in the War Memorial for the celebration. The hall is distinguished as the historic site of the United Nations Charter signing in 1945.

As division commander, Wehr is responsible for the Corps of Engineers’ \$1.2 billion military and civil works programs in California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and parts of five other western states. Key missions include engineering, construction, environmental restoration and emergency



Acting Army Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Merdith “Bo” Temple administers the officer's oath to newly promoted Brig. Gen. Michael Wehr, South Pacific Division commander, at a frocking ceremony March 15 at the San Francisco War Memorial Veterans Building. (USACE photo by Ryan McClymont)

response.

Wehr grew up in a military family and considers California home having graduated in the Jesuit High School Class of 1981 in Sacramento. He studied civil engineering and was commissioned a second lieutenant through ROTC at Santa Clara University in 1985. Additional education includes a Master's of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas, and assignment to the U.S. Army War College as a Military Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the Security Studies Program.

Recent assignments include service in Afghanistan as the engineer director for the NATO Training Mission, and command of the Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District. His overseas tours also included Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Japan Engineer District.

Indoor firing range serves community

By Brooks O. Hubbard IV

MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE, Calif. — The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District completed construction of a new indoor small-arms firing range. Rep. Ken Calvert, along with Corps, base and local community officials, celebrated the milestone during a ribbon cutting ceremony here March 10.

The \$8.5 million facility will provide a safe and secure 28,000-square foot range, complete with 28 firing lanes. Twenty-one of the lanes will be used for 9 mm and 5.56-caliber weapons, while the other seven lanes will be used for 7.62-caliber weapons. The facility will also have an administrative area with a control room, classroom, storage area, weapons cleaning room and offices.

March is the largest Air Reserve base in the United States, and one of the oldest airfields operated by the U.S. military. It is home to the 452nd Air Mobility Wing.

The previous base range was built in 1942; a remotely located outdoor range built six years before the establishment of the Air Force Reserve.

"I can't help but wonder about all the great military leaders that passed through our base and honed their marksmanship at our old range," said Col. Mary Aldrian, vice wing commander, 452nd Air Mobility Wing. "This new facility will be a demonstration of our commitment to provide the very best training to our military members to prepare them for combat anytime, anywhere."

The completion of the range continues to reflect that for more than 50 years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Officials toured the new indoor range facility at March Air Reserve Base. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District completed construction of the new indoor small-arms firing range. Rep. Ken Calvert, along with Corps, base and local community officials, celebrated the milestone during a ribbon cutting ceremony here March 10. (USACE photo by Brooks O. Hubbard IV)

has had a partnership with March Air Reserve Base, contributing to the national defense mission with projects that improve readiness and enhance the quality of life for Airmen and their families.

General contractor P&S Construction, Inc., of North Chelmsford, Mass., constructed the indoor range. With initial construction complete, the range must now go through a Department of Defense firing range and safety certification before the facility can begin operations.

"This facility is really an example of building strong and taking care of Airmen and Soldiers," said Col. Mark Toy, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District. "Not

only those Department of Defense military members will use the range, but also members of the local county and city communities can use it to do their indoor small arms qualifications."

Officials anticipate that the range will be a great asset for the base and other governmental agencies to use for training of their law enforcement personnel.

"It's important that our young Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Navy personnel can use this facility," said Calvert.

Calvert further remarked about construction projects that are occurring at the base, as well as a planned new \$30 million air traffic control tower project.

MARB BY THE NUMBERS

42 Year the last range was built here...

28 Firing lanes provided by the new facility...

50 Years USACE has been partnered with MARB...

30 Million dollars for the next project here...

7 Lanes for high powered 7.62-caliber weapons...

1 March is the largest Air Reserve base in US...

28 Thousand square foot facility...

20 March 1918 dedication of March Field ...

Earth Day 2012

By Greg Fuderer

LOS ANGELES — In 1969, an oil platform six miles off the coast of Santa Barbara experienced a blowout, releasing up to 100,000 barrels of oil into the ocean and affecting nearly 400 miles of California shoreline, from Pismo Beach to the Mexican border. The nation's largest oil spill at the time, it now ranks third behind the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and the Exxon Valdez grounding in Alaska in 1989.

Following the Santa Barbara spill, Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson announced the idea for a "national teach-in on the environment." That idea led to the nation's first Earth Day in 1970, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency later that same year, and the subsequent passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species acts.

There has been and still is a strong national debate about the necessity of environmental laws and their impacts on business, development and quality of life, and whether it's better to support development or protect the environment.

Dan Sulzer, assistant chief of Planning Division for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, doesn't see the situation as choice of either-or.

"It's not necessarily a question of 'do' or 'don't,' but rather 'how'" Sulzer said. "How do we accomplish these things in a sensible manner that is compliant with environmental law?"

The Los Angeles District comprises terrain unlike any other within the Corps. It covers nearly a quarter-million square miles, is home to the highest and lowest elevations in the contiguous United States, and features rivers, a coastline, mountains, deserts, open spaces and densely populated urban areas. Within those confines live 134 threatened or endangered species and their habitats. The region is also home to one-tenth of the nation's population, three of its 10 most populous cities, port facilities that conduct commerce world-wide bringing in the nation's largest volume of manufactured goods and transportation infrastructure that delivers those goods to the rest of the country.

That there are conflicts between

economic growth and environmental protection should not be surprising.

Prado Dam, located in Corona next to one of Southern California's most heavily-trafficked highways, is a primary component of the Santa Ana River Mainstem project. It is undergoing a major modification that will increase its storage capacity from 217,000 to 362,000 acre-feet and its release capacity from 10,000 to 30,000 cubic feet per second. Construction taking place includes construction and improvements to several levees within the basin to protect homes, factories, highways and public utilities, and fortifying the banks downstream from the dam to allow them to handle the increased discharge rates.

"What we're doing here is beefing up the protection so the channel can deal with those releases that are substantially larger," said Chris Jones, a Corps biologist who works on the Santa Ana River project. "Reach 9 (the downstream area) has a very healthy vireo population. So we're trying to recreate the habitat we've had to disturb in order to put in our flood risk management project. We want to leave the habitat as good as or better than we found it."

Jones pointed out one of the many measures the Corps routinely implements to minimize the impacts of project construction.

Fabric fencing along river reduces noise to adjacent riparian habitat that harbors nesting birds. The fence includes gaps that enable wildlife to access habitat in Chino Hills and the Santa Ana Mountains.

"It's important that we preserve the ability for wildlife to move between habitat areas and preserve those linkages in an otherwise urban environment," Jones said.

Sulzer said the Corps in decades past had developed a reputation an agency that built large structures, using a lot of concrete, with environmental concerns being less considered. Compliance with the enacted legislation led the Corps to become one of the nation's leaders in environmental protection and restoration.

"A significant change to the way the Corps does business took place in June 2008 with the implementation of the Mitigation Rule," said Michelle Mattson, a senior project manager at the Corps' Carlsbad Regulatory Office.

The Mitigation Rule provides guidance for where and how

compensatory mitigation is implemented and focuses on the application of the watershed approach and sustainability. Regulators consider the hydrologic and physical conditions, such as soil type and geologic characteristics, of a proposed compensatory mitigation site with emphasis on natural self-sustaining hydrologic sources and connectivity. They incorporate watershed features such as landscape scale, habitat diversity and connectivity and its compatibility with adjacent land uses, and include local and regional goals for restoration or protection of particular stream, floodplain or wetland resources. In order to meet the requirements of the Mitigation Rule, mitigation must be designed to suit the physical conditions of the site and should maximize connectivity with upstream, downstream and adjacent habitat areas.

"The rule requires the Corps to take a watershed approach when evaluating mitigation proposals for unavoidable impacts that result from a permit approval," she said. "The goal is for the Corps to be better at replacing impacted areas with naturally functioning wetlands to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act for no net loss of acreage, functions and services."

"We know development is going to occur. Our responsibility is to balance the need for economic growth with the requirement of the Clean Water Act to maximize avoidance and minimization of impacts to aquatic resources to the extent practicable," Mattson said.

When the impacts of development are unavoidable, the Corps works with applicants, their consultants, and other resource agencies, to develop mitigation pursuant to the Mitigation Rule. To facilitate this process the South Pacific Division, led by the Los Angeles District, has developed or is in the process of developing three tools to maximize compliance and success of mitigation sites. These include a Mitigation Ratio Checklist, which is a thought process to assess mitigation proposals relative to impact sites and determine appropriate mitigation. This tool is currently available to the public. In the near future, updated Mitigation and Monitoring Guidelines and Performance Standards will be available including a summary of the Mitigation Rule, site-selection and design guidance, and example performance

— See EARTH, page 16 —

HUMAN RESOURCES

Are Your Beneficiary Forms Current? **The Hatch Act Q&A**

The beginning of a new year is a good time to review and update your designation of beneficiary forms. Too often these forms are completed, filed and never thought of again! But life changes and the most recent designation may not reflect your current intentions or information such as addresses for named beneficiaries. You should make it a practice to periodically review these forms to ensure the designations reflect your intentions and the beneficiary information (name and address) is correct.

Designating a beneficiary is optional. If a valid designation is not filed, monies are paid according to the order of legal precedence:

1. Court order
2. Spouse
3. Children (equal shares)
4. Parents (equal shares)
5. Executor or administrator of the estate
6. Next of kin under applicable state law

To be a valid designation, the form(s) must be signed and witnessed (witness cannot be a named beneficiary), free of erasures or alterations and be received and certified by your Civilian Personnel Advisory Center or your Human Resources Office prior to your death.

Remember, a will has no effect on payment of Federal benefits and does not take precedence over a designation of beneficiary. It is also important to note that step-children and domestic or same-sex partners are not considered to be in the "order of precedence" and must be specified as designated beneficiaries to ensure benefits are received in the event of your death.

The following forms are for designating beneficiaries:

- SF 1152, Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employees
- SF 2823, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance
- SF 2808, Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)
- SF 3102, Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)
- TSP-3, Thrift Savings Plan

Forms must be completed and mailed as directed. The SF 2808 is maintained by the Office of Personnel Management and the TSP is maintained by the Thrift Savings Plan. All other beneficiary forms are maintained in the Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

Information on designation of beneficiary and links to the forms can be found on the ABC-C website.

Thrift Savings Plan Maximum Contribution Amount For 2012

Each year the Internal Revenue Service determines the maximum amount that can be contributed to a tax-deferred retirement savings plan such as the Thrift Savings Plan. The 2012 elective deferral limit for employees participating in TSP is \$17,000.

It's early in another Election cycle, Army Civilian Employees need to be mindful of restrictions in political activity, as defined in [The Hatch Act](#).

Q: Valerie is a new hire to the Navy. Before becoming a federal employee, Valerie had always been active in politics. She was recently selected to lead the fundraising efforts in her community for her party's presidential candidate. Can she do this?

A: No. The rules that govern the political activity of civilian employees are known as the Hatch Act. Under the Hatch Act, federal employees are not allowed to solicit and receive political contributions in a partisan election, but they may make them. Members of the military are not subject to the Hatch Act. However, restrictions regarding their political activity are governed by DOD Directive 1344.10. Like federal employees, members of the Armed Forces are not allowed to solicit and receive political contributions, but may make them.

Q: Eugene was recently promoted to an SES position from a GS-15. His neighbor, Joe, is running for re-election to Congress. Eugene did a wonderful job helping Joe get elected 2 years ago and Joe has asked Eugene to campaign for him this year. Can Eugene do this?

A: No. Members of the Senior Executive Service, as well as the military, are subjected to additional restrictions to which other civilian employees are not subjected. Some of these additional restrictions include:

- Campaigning for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- Distributing campaign material.
- Organizing or managing political rallies or meetings.
- Circulating nominating petitions.
- Working to register voters.
- Making campaign speeches for candidates.

Q: Sam, a GS-12 contract specialist, has just arrived to work after voting in his first presidential election. He is very excited about the race and wears his candidate's button at work. Is this permitted?

A: No. Federal employees (whether civilian or military) are not allowed to engage in partisan activity at work. This includes wearing political buttons on duty, or even displaying a campaign poster or bumper sticker in one's office. Federal employees would be allowed to wear political buttons off duty and off work premises. Military members cannot wear these buttons while in uniform.

Q: Louise is an employee at the Pentagon. She has never been interested in politics, but this year the presidential election has captured her interest. She has even gone so far as to put her candidate's bumper sticker on her car which she drives to work every day and parks in the garage. Must she remove the sticker?

A: No. The Hatch Act and DoD Instruction 1344.10 do not prohibit federal employees from displaying a bumper sticker on their private vehicle on Government spaces. However, the vehicle cannot be used to perform official functions.

Downloading the NewsCastle from home? Visit www.scribd.com/corpsladistrict

District commander meets partners, prospects

By Daniel J. Calderón

TUCSON, Ariz. — Col. Mark Toy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles district commander, was in Tucson March 28 to meet with a local partner and potential prospects.

His first stop was at the Tucson VA hospital. The District is currently working on more than \$8 million in projects. The work includes an energy project and site improvements to the hospital. Toy met with David Alvarez, the program manager for Veterans Integrated Service Network 18 in Tucson. Alvarez said each hospital is unique, like a military base, even though they all operate under the same guidelines. He said he appreciates the District for understanding the culture in the Tucson facility and values the District's ability to be a force multiplier for him.

"I just don't have enough contracting staff," Alvarez said. "I love having your help, from a staffing extension perspective. You have the ability to turn things around, to award contracts, on a dime."

"We're really proud of our team here," Toy said. "We're ready to surge to meet the needs of the VA now and in the future."

Toy and District team members from the Tucson Resident Office – Shari Brand, resident engineer; Brian Childers, project manager and Jessica Work, project engineer – toured the hospital grounds to see some of the work the District has done in the past. He was also able to take a look at areas the District might be working in the future.

Following his visit to the VA facility, Toy met with Maj. Ben Walters, commander of the Army ROTC detachment and with Dr. Jeff Goldberg, Dean of

Col. Mark Toy, district commander for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, listens to Brian Childers, a District project manager in Tucson, Ariz., at the VA Hospital discuss the District's work at the hospital facility during Toy's Mar. 28 trip to Tucson. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)



Jessica Work, a project engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District in Tucson, Ariz., talks with a group of University of Arizona engineering students Mar. 28 during a visit by Col. Mark Toy (right), district commander, to the university. Work was a Department of the Army intern when she joined the District two years ago and was on hand to discuss opportunities available in the District to the students. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)

Engineering, for the university. Among the items Goldberg discussed with Toy were a misperception among students and some faculty regarding employment with the Corps of Engineers.

"You have an identity problem here," Goldberg said. "People think you have to be in the Army if you want to be in the Corps of Engineers."

Goldberg and Toy discussed options to help counter those misapprehensions, including outreach from the District to faculty and students. Toy felt increased visibility among the Engineering department would help students understand the value of the opportunities in the Corps.

"The responsibilities they'd get in the Corps of Engineers are unlike anything

they'd get in the civilian sector," Toy said.

Toy also took time to speak with Army ROTC students about their career paths as Army officers and opportunities – both military and civilian – in the Corps of Engineers. Students learned about transitioning from command of military units in engineering battalions to using those skills as project managers or leaders in USACE districts around the world.

"What makes us unique in the Corps of Engineers is that we have the 'green suit' side," he said referring to the uniformed military personnel that make up a small percentage of the District's total workforce, "and we have the District side. At the end of the day, though, it's all about people and relationships. You have to take care of your people."

Toy gave a similar message to engineering students in a meeting later in the day. He discussed the mission of and opportunities with the Corps. Jessica Work was on hand to talk with students as well. She had come into the District through the Army Internship Program and remained onboard with the District. Students said she helped bridge the gap between what Toy was explaining and how they could apply it to their own careers following school.

Anyone interested in more information on employment opportunities can visit the District's website.

BUILDING WELLNESS

Debunking the exercise excuses



On St. Patrick Day, Saturday March 17 a few of our teammates participated in their first 5K, the LA Big 5K in Dodger stadium and scenic Elysian Park. With all the gloomy weather elements they faced, they were quickly humbled when they befriended Caesar. Caesar was a participant who on a daily basis practices "no excuses", not even the fact that both of his arms are amputated. Pictured are: Caesar (left), Carol, friendly guy, Jackie Jones, Al Moreno, Carmen and Ralph Lara.

By Cecy Ordenez

LOS ANGELES — Most of you know that exercise is imperative to long-term health, yet why is it that exercise is so easy for you to excuse from your daily life? The problem becomes when you give into your excuses because then you begin a cycle of inconsistent exercise and endless creative excuses to justify your actions. Next thing you realize is you are secretly disappointed in yourself. You become consistently reminded of this when you see someone jogging or walking their dog and you realize that you should be doing the same thing. Let's look at the most common excuses and debunk them once and for all.

"I don't have any time" – I don't doubt for a second that you have a busy schedule. Maybe it is working late hours, commuting, your child's extracurricular activities, being a

caregiver, being a mother etc. However, the last time I checked we all manage the same 24 hours in a day. The only difference is, some make exercise a priority and schedule it into their day.

"I am too tired" – Work, commute, and family obligations not only keeps you stressed all day long but extracts any energy you have left. Of course, after being tired and stressed, you don't feel like going to the gym and exerting energy you have left. However, consistent exercise will increase your energy and will help you lose weight, which may be the reason you are tired in the first place.

"I don't have a membership to a gym" – If you are using this one, you need to seriously contact me. Join the Fit to Win program and I can get you a club membership to a state-of-the-art facility. Some of you may be saying, "I don't have a fitness center close to me" – no problem. A gym membership is a

luxury that we don't need. Go back to when you would play outside as a kid – running, jumping, walking, etc. We have stopped moving our bodies like we once did, that is the problem. "I live in a bad neighborhood and can't exercise outside" – no problem. You can buy a fitness DVD, check out a DVD for free at the library or go walk at your nearby mall. For those of you located at Los Angeles headquarters, the District Wellness Center is on the 14th floor. Come and visit me, I promise I won't bite.

"I don't want to get sweaty at work" – this one has an easy solution. There are multiple showers conveniently located at the district wellness center.

"I feel intimidated when I am at the gym" – I understand how it you may feel out of place and uncomfortable, but the only thing you need to think about is everybody was once a newbie. You may also think that these fitness fanatics are looking at you but they are not. In fact, they are thinking the same thing you are - how can I better myself, am I eating the right foods, is the intensity of my workout where it needs to be, is my workout going to accomplish the goal that I want, etc.

Be that person who makes a **COMMITMENT** to their health and is running or walking on the sidewalk while others look at you wishing they too can prioritize their health. The sad fact is that young, old, fat, skinny and even those with disabilities can exercise; all you have to do is decide to. That may sound a bit simple, but it is the truest way to break through the excuses and justifications. Make a decision that your health is a top priority, and then take responsibility and action for your own health and well being.

ARMY FAMILY COVENANT: KEEPING THE PROMISE

ARMYOneSource.com

SAFETY

If it can happen to me, it can happen to you!

By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — If you read my monthly articles regularly you'll know that I like to inject real-life experiences. It helps to put a real face on an issue. If you read the Safety Chief's monthly Safety-Grams, you may recall that he just sent one out on the email that discussed slips and falls.

By know you should be realizing what's coming. Yep - Safety Steve had a workplace accident. Yep - it was a fall. Yep - it was a lost-time case and I spent some time in the local Urgent Care and several days in the "Arms of Morpheus." Morpheus was the Roman god of sleep and dreams. The pain killing compound Morphine is named after him. Hence, you get the picture. Three days on prescription pain killers that make you groggy and sleepy.

So here's what happened. I'm at one of my projects, inspecting the contractor's safety program and looking for hazards on the site. I found a number of them. One in particular I found the hard way. Walking down a stair, the last step was not, in point of fact, the last step. As I stepped down thinking my foot would be landing on the concrete floor my heel caught on that last step (the one that wasn't supposed to be there) and down I went. As you can see by the picture on the right, that last step was pretty difficult to detect. Hint - it's not the one with the orange electrical cord and battery charger.

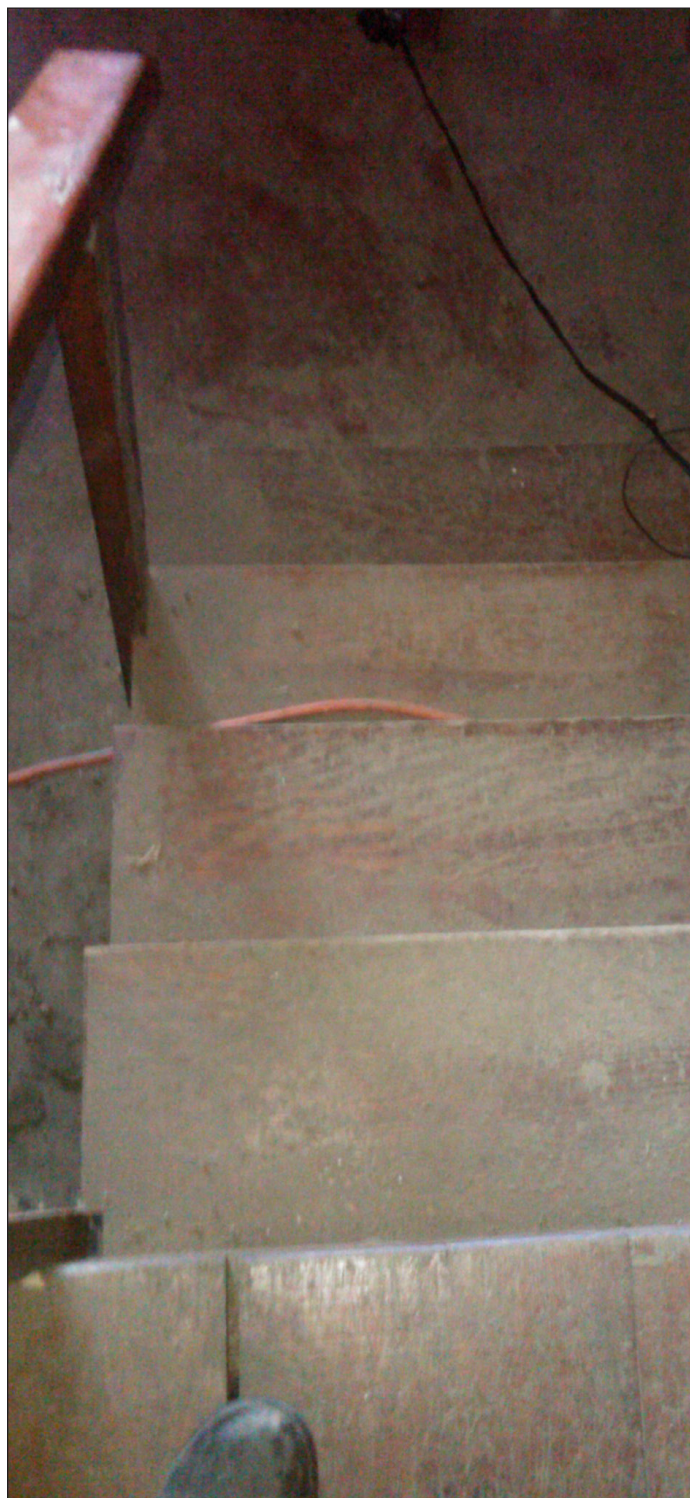
Now, I weigh in at just over 200 pounds. I landed solid on both knees on the concrete floor. That's like lying down on your back with your knees bent up and having someone drop a chunk of 150-plus pound concrete on your knees from about three feet up. Do you think that would hurt? I can assure you it does!

I will not get into the level of my injuries any further than to say that just one week later I am walking and relatively pain free. However, it cost me, and the District, three days of lost time. Then there's the entire worker's comp stuff. Now add the embarrassment of entering my own accident into ENGLink (Engineers Link Interactive), and the PowerPoint for the quarterly Executive Safety Council. That's going to be an interesting meeting.

I therefore publicly plead guilty to being a member of that small club of "Safety Bubbas Who Get Hurt at Work." I'd rather not be a member, but too late for that now. So watch yourselves out there - it's dangerous.

And, as always, drive safe, drive sober and buckle up!

Safety Steve



SAFETY BY THE NUMBERS

12 People die on construction sites every day in America....

3 Days Safety Steve lost due to his injuries....

49 Lost time claims in USACE for the FY12 period ending Feb. 29....

Corps' Arizona team members get back to nature

By Daniel J. Calderón

PHOENIX — Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District spent two sunny days participating in the annual Tres Rios Nature & Earth Festival held in Goodyear, Ariz. March 10 and 11.

The festival focuses on the biodiversity in the area and how the histories of Phoenix and surrounding communities have affected the ecosystem. Various organizations used displays to show attendees how they can positively interact with the local environment and have fun at the same time.

"I think we had a great turnout," said Ann Palaruan, a Regulatory team member with the Arizona-Nevada Area Office. "We had quite a few people at our booth. They were very interested in what we do and I was very happy to talk to them about our job."

The Los Angeles District is involved in the Tres Rios Ecosystem Restoration project. It started in the 1990s and continues to this day. The basic concept is taking treated water from the 91st Ave. Wastewater Treatment Facility and feeding it into a constructed wetlands. The wetlands "polish" the water and bring it to natural levels. The water and the wetlands together create a riparian ecosystem where native flora and fauna thrive. The District and its partners have more than 500 acres of wetlands in place.

At the Tres Rios Festival, the District team members talked about their

Pictured at right, a bird walks through the Tres Rios Wetlands on dedication day May 10, 2010. The city's water services department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District reached an environmental-restoration milestone that not only established and restored an historical habitat along the banks of the Salt River, but integrated cost-effective water quality improvement, storm water management, water conservation and reuse. (USACE photo by Lee Roberts)



Vic Bartkus, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District team member, speaks with a family March 10 about the District's involvement in ecosystem restoration at the annual Tres Rios Nature & Earth Festival held in Goodyear, Ariz. The festival draws in government agencies and organizations from across Arizona interested in promoting awareness of the history and habitat in the Phoenix area. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

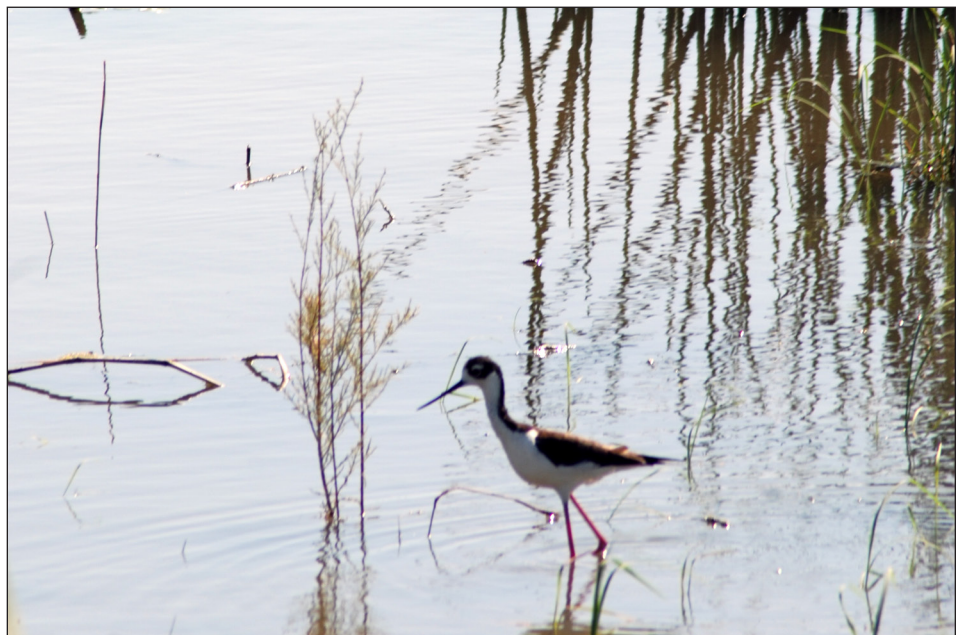
projects and interacted with members of the public who were curious about how the Corps of Engineers fit into the ecosystem picture.

"It was neat to see so many different groups coming out to talk about the environment," said Palaruan. "Some people think because we live in the desert, there's no real need to protect anything. After all, what could live in a desert environment like this? A lot of people are really surprised by the diversity of life out here and I'm glad we can be a part of that educational process."

At the festival, attendees learned

about the three rivers—the Salt, Agua Fria and Gila Rivers – making up the Tres Rios area. They also participated in assorted cultural events, a canoe ride on the river and even a "Recycled Fashion Show," where kids had the chance to strut their stuff in outfits made from recycled materials.

The final numbers for attendance are still being tallied; but, organizers estimate there were more than 4,000 people at the festival. Plans are underway for next year's event. The Los Angeles District is planning to participate in that one as well.





Officials (with scissors), including Los Alamitos Mayor Troy Edgar, Rep. Grace Napolitano, Corps Project Engineer Maj. Phillip Oster and Los Angeles District Commander Col. Mark Toy, cut the ribbon officially opening the Sunburst Youth Academy facilities at Los Alamitos March 16 as Corps Resident Engineer Mike Siu, Corps Quality Assurance Representative Jim Miller, Executive Officer Maj. Kenneth Shubert, Corps Project Manager Shawn Basu and Corps Project Engineer Greg Ripperger look on. (USACE photo by Capt. Lanh Duong)

Corps, CalGuard open youth facility

By Public Affairs Office

LOS ALAMITOS, Calif. — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District team members joined Rep. Grace Napolitano, Los Alamitos Mayor Troy Edgar and California National Guard officials to ceremonially open the newest, state-of-the-art facility for the Sunburst Youth Academy at the Joint Forces Training Base here March 16.

The Corps managed the \$1.6 million renovation project constructed by contractor Alpine Diversified, Inc., of Palmdale, Calif. Alpine performed the work within budget and nearly three months ahead of schedule. The contractor renovated nine classrooms and several offices, turning dilapidated buildings into world-class teaching facilities.

“You could see the impact that it had on everyone who was involved; that they put their hearts and souls into this,” said Maj. Kenneth Shubert, Southern California Area Office executive officer. “We gave them exactly what they wanted and now they can use it to make,

arguably, a really positive impact on the community.”

Shubert said many local business leaders and city officials participated in the ceremony that featured academy staff and cadets.

“The dedication of these state-of-the-art classroom facilities was made possible through the extraordinary efforts of the governor, the state legislature and our California federal delegation,” said Brig. Gen. James Gabrielli, commander of the California National Guard’s Youth and Community Programs Task Force. “The California National Guard values this opportunity to serve the youth of our state who demonstrate the greatest need, and we are committed to providing the best learning environment possible. Sunburst Youth Academy changes lives.”

According to its website, SYA, established in 2008, is a community high school run by the California National Guard, in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education, for 16- to 18-year olds who have either dropped out of high school or who are

considered at-risk.

The residential “military style” academy is structured to promote an academic environment where cadets earn 55 high school credits, develop leadership, cooperation and academic skills, while improving self esteem, pride and confidence.



AROUND THE DISTRICT

District website to migrate

By Public Affairs Office

LOS ANGELES — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers launched a refreshed public website on a new, cloud-based system in December 2011. The Los Angeles District website is expected to go live in early April.

“We are always seeking to improve the way we communicate with our stakeholders,” said Acting USACE Commander Maj. Gen. Merdith W.B. ‘Bo’ Temple. “Since our public website is our number one communication tool, we are overhauling our Web presence to increase transparency and deliver fast, accessible, relevant information to the American public.”

The system provides the Corps with a consistent website look and feel, streamlines content management making it easier to keep Web pages current, and delivers a richer end-user experience that makes use of audio, video and other Web elements.

The migration includes 58 Corps websites, with a plan to have all sites live by the end of 2012.

The South Pacific Division and all four of its Districts began the Web migration in March. Migration is not expected to have any adverse impact on posting fact sheets, public notices or other public information; however, it may result in changed Web addresses, which means that individual user bookmarks may no longer function.

“I’ve been a long-time proponent for consistency across all Corps websites,” said Jay Field, District public affairs chief. “Visitors to Corps pages will now know where to look for information, whether they are visiting our page or any other District’s website. That will provide predictability and enhance our corporate image.”

The Corps is using the American Forces Public Information Management System, a content management system run by the Defense Media Activity, which manages the website platforms for the DoD, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. AFPIMS is scalable to thousands of users and millions of content items, streamlines content management and offers increased security and fast

delivery of content to the end-user.

Among many other improvements, the migration goal is to provide site visitors with a visually appealing Web presence and disability access by compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.



Downloading the NewsCastle from home? Visit www.scribd.com/corpsladistrict

Golfers show for Inada tournament

By Jay Field

LOS ANGELES — More than 30 golfers played in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Engineer Day/Kevin Inada Golf Tournament held at the Wilson Municipal Golf Course in Griffith Park March 16.

It was an overcast Southern California day, with the threat of rain and temperatures in the mid-50s to low-60s, as golfers raised funds to benefit Engineer Day 2012.

"We had a great turnout," said Dan Sulzer, tournament organizer. "We had 33 players show up, so we raised \$330 (for Engineer Day). There were some pretty impressive scores."

Nathan Scott carded the best score on the par-72, 6,695-yard course, as he turned in a 7-over round of 79, four strokes better than the nearest competitor.

Bill Blackburn was closest to the pin on the par-3, 138-yard, 15th hole. Blackburn's tee shot landed about eight feet beyond the cup.

Two players, Sulzer and Oscar Siqueros, shot 11-over 83 and tied for second; Scott Terry and Ken Bautista tied for fourth with 13-over 85; and four players, Nick Erwin, George Beams, Glenn Arakaki and Rene Vermeeren, shot 17-over to tie for sixth place with a score of 89.

The annual tournament is one of the many fundraisers sponsored by the District each year to support the local Engineer Day activities in June. The tournament was named for Inada, a deputy chief of the District's Construction Division, who passed away suddenly in January. Inada was an avid golfer and member of the Los Angeles District Golf Club.

"This was a great tribute to our friend Kevin Inada," said Sulzer. "He would have been proud!"



The fourth team to tee off March 16 in the Inada tournament at Wilson Golf Course included Art Shak, Mike Evasovic, Renee Vermeeren and Jay Field. More than 30 golfers played in the Engineer Day/Kevin Inada Golf Tournament to raise funds for the District's picnic this year. (USACE photo by Dan Sulzer)



Waiting to tee off on the first hole at Wilson Golf Course March 16 is the team of Dan Sulzer, Juan Villalobos and Ken Bautista. More than 30 golfers played in the Engineer Day/Kevin Inada Golf Tournament to raise funds for the District's picnic this year. (USACE photo by Jay Field)

In Memoriam: Doreen Polequaptewa

LOS ANGELES — The District suffered a loss March 18 when Doreen Polequaptewa passed away from heart failure resulting from bilateral pneumonia. Doreen had been with the district for more than 25 years, starting in Los Angeles and then moving to the Arizona-Nevada Area Office in Phoenix.

Her friends and co-workers have many memories of her time with the Corps – both at work and off the job. Doreen, according to those who knew her well, was an avid sports fan. She had season tickets for Phoenix Suns games; but, on a visit to her house, she was apt to have on TV whatever sports game was on at the time. She was also a huge Bon Jovi fan and had a cardboard cutout of the singer's face at her desk.

"She was very loyal," said Carmen Lara, who works at the Phoenix office. "And, she was dedicated. She was dedicated to her job and she was dedicated to her family. She was very family oriented."

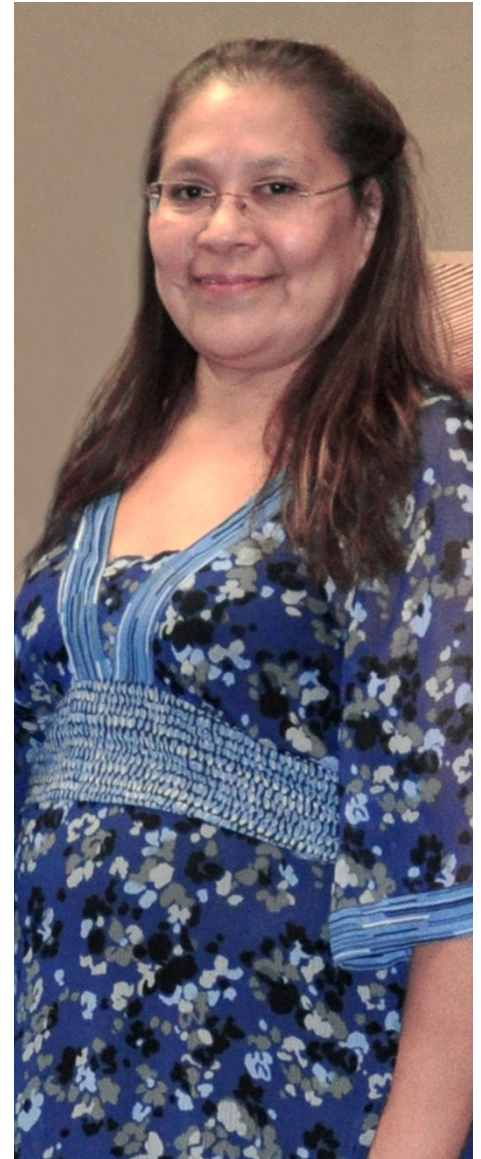
Lara is one among many who spoke of Polequaptewa's intense love for her daughters, Felicia and Victoria – who friends say she referred to as "Tori." Pictures of her girls adorned her

desk so that there isn't a way to turn in the cubicle without seeing them. The phrase "selfless love" came up often when talking of Polequaptewa's affection for her children.

"My most admired thing about Doreen was the love for her two girls and providing a better life for them," said Sandra Estrada.

Everyone who spoke about Polequaptewa reiterated her love for her children. They spoke of the time she spent with them and the effort she expended ensuring they had the kind of life she always wanted. She would spend time with Felicia in Las Vegas because, according to Lara, they wanted to be "fancy girls." They would spend time around the city and then sample the buffets. Polequaptewa was also dedicated to her co-workers.

"She also was very generous about donating her annual leave when dear co-workers were in need of donated leave," said Estrada. "I remember her asking me about these co-workers when the leave email would come out from HR for donations, and being very sincere about helping them with her leave."



To honor Doreen's memory and her significant contributions to the District, an account has been set up in the U.S. Engineers Federal Credit Union under the Executive Office Council Fund sub account "Doreen Polequaptewa Memorial Fund". Contributions received will be given to Doreen's daughters. Any contributions received will be greatly appreciated. Polequaptewa is survived by her daughters, her mother, father, sister and two older brothers.



Corps plants more STEM seeds

By Jennie Ayala

LOS ANGELES — Civil Engineer Chadi Wahby is in the seed planting business.

He began sowing interest and excitement about careers in science, technology, engineering and math, as the guest speaker during a Viva Technology program at Belvedere Middle School here Feb. 9.

"I remember how one career day influenced my decision to be an engineer," said Wahby, who serves in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District. "That's why I know how important these events are for students at this age."

Ninety students participated in the full-day Viva program that included hands-on competitive and educational exercises like the Dream Invention, Rocket Science and the Catapult Launcher, designed to help them understand the connections between their math and science studies and rewarding STEM careers.

Since 2009, the Corps and its contractor, Great Minds in STEM, have partnered to deliver educational



Civil Engineer Chadi Wahby of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District speaks to eight grade students at Belvedere Middle School Feb. 9 about what sparked his interest in engineering and about the type of work that still motivates him today. (USACE photo by Jennie Ayala)

programs like Viva Technology to 20 schools in Los Angeles through the

STEM Up Initiative, a DoD-funded program.

EARTH

from Page 6

criteria to monitor mitigation success.

One example of a large scale project that achieves this balance is the City of San Marcos Specific Plan, which redevelops out-of-date industrial and commercial use properties, provides flood risk reduction for existing residences and infrastructure, and integrates a watershed-based restoration project of 83 acres of riparian and alkali marsh habitats along San Marcos Creek.

The City of San Marcos Specific Plan was redesigned to reduce impacts from 22 acres to 10 acres through a joint agency effort with the City of San Marcos, the Corps, EPA, California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). In the end, the project is expected to improve water quality from its current condition and restore a high function creek corridor for the benefit of the public and wildlife. At the same time, the City of San Marcos will gain an improved park and trail system, roads and flood risk reduction, and achieve a 20 year goal of constructing a "downtown" in the heart of their city. Mattson also talked about large scale conservation and restoration planning taking place through partnerships with the EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CDFG, NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California

Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy for the development and authorization of the San Elijo Lagoon and Buena Vista Lagoon restoration projects and the San Dieguito Lagoon expansion project. The regulatory agencies are working to identify the goals and objectives of each lagoon system that maximize benefits to the region. These projects may be used to mitigate for impacts from future infrastructure projects such as the I-5 widening, or could be funded with other public money or grants if not needed to compensate for highway expansion.

"Environmental laws reflect public sentiment," Sulzer said. "We want to strike a balance between protecting the environment and supporting necessary development. In an area as environmentally sensitive as Southern California, that can be particularly challenging."

Why does the Corps take these measures that often increase project costs and extend their schedules?

"One, it's the law," Jones said. "Two, we're trying to be good stewards for the surrounding neighbors and for the wildlife. We do projects to protect people, but we also have to find the balance to preserve the remaining habitat."

FINAL WORD

Getting a clue is not always easy

By **Daniel J. Calderón**

Have you ever been stuck for an idea? There are a few different ways this can happen.

One is when you look into your mental pantry and find the mice have run away with the last pieces of bread and crackers you were saving for that proverbial rainy day. There's nothing on the shelves but ghosts of ideas gone past. You can see the outline where that one big idea you had used to sit before you trotted it out for the world to see. Disappointed, you leave the empty space and turn to the world in the hopes of filling yourself up once again.

Then, there is the bottleneck problem. This is when you've got so many ideas trying to get through the opening of your mental window, that none of them can get through. You can see the shapes and outlines struggling. There are big ideas and little ones all jammed in, but none of them can seem to break past the barrier because none of them will yield any space. So, nothing comes out.

One of the worst for me is the (how to say it delicately?)... half-formed problem. It's when you have these great-looking ideas that come to you and you start working based on what you see at the beginning. Then, somewhere along the way, you realize the idea wasn't really complete. You're left out there with the tail end of a partial idea and no clue where to go to finish because you began on faith that your idea would see you through.

Maybe some of you don't really know what I mean. Fair enough.

The trouble with ideas is that no one really knows where they come from, why they're there and why some people seem to have more of them than others. It's not really like working out to develop muscles, coordination or stamina. Maybe people can start reading more to try and stimulate wherever it is in the brain that generates ideas. I don't know how well that might work since that would seem to generate repetitions of ideas that have already gone before.

Then again, it's been said there are no real new ideas. There are simply variations on ideas that have come before. In that sense, everything we do and everything we have is just derivative. I can see that point. After all, Ancient Greeks did have ideas of celestial abodes and people flying. The airplane (and by extension, the starship) is a logical progression of that idea since it incorporates new understanding gained through the evolution of thought. Wow. That was heavy.

In pondering stories, I'll take vampires as an example. The idea of vampires is ancient. Egyptians had their bloodsuckers, as did Greeks. By the time Bram Stoker wrote "Dracula," the notion of the vampire was firmly in collective lore around the world. Stoker just dressed up the vampire and

Hollywood eventually put him in a fancy tuxedo.

Today, we have Stephen King's vampires from "Salem's Lot," Anne Rice's vampire Lestat and his ilk, the vampires of "Twilight" and, of course, Count Chocula. To be sure, there are many more, but I wanted to stick with vampires that have crossed over from print to broadcast (Count Chocula is just in the list because I really used to love that cereal) and are just a small sampling of that crowd. You might have to work a bit to get a lot of family resemblance; but, they are essentially drawn from the same soil of legends that have been around longer than the printed word has been easily accessible.

That doesn't mean that ideas and thinking are dead. Instead, it's a challenge to anyone who wants to think and come up with ideas. It's easy to look at the world as it is and believe there's nothing new to think about it. It's easy to accept what you hear, see and read since someone has already done the thinking and processing for you.

The challenge is taking in all the information at our fingertips and coming up with our own ideas about what it means. How does what we find on our daily trip through the world of information apply to us and how much of it has been altered? What do we make of it and what ideas can we come up with to make what we see better for the next generation of people who will travel these roads once we're done walking?

Being stuck for ideas is a temporary thing. No matter how intense and heavy the writer's block, I always know it will eventually break and what's behind will come surging through. It's not always the great ideas that come. It's not always the big ones that make it to the front before the rest. A lot of them are grand in scope (I do like thinking big), but many of them lack the details that will keep them going beyond the initial "gee-gosh" stage. But, I still like turning those ideas over in my head and seeing whether I can make a go of them.

What about you? What fun little ideas do you have hiding behind your eyes? I've decided to try and get as many of them out on paper as possible. Some will be dismissed as soon as they're out. After all, who really wants to try a tamale made from seasoned pork and chicken with some honey and syrup in for good measure? But your ideas might look less ambiguous in the light of day. You only get one chance at this little dust-em-up called life. When you think you're stuck for an idea about how to live it, learn from it or love it, just sit still for a minute. It'll come to you. When it does, take a chance if it looks like fun. Sometimes those ideas come along only once and if you don't seize on it, you may regret it. Just a thought...



FINAL LOOK

Engineering the path to success

By Kim Matthews

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch introduced Lisa Ruben of United Way at the National Women's History Month program at the district headquarters, March 27, by saying that today, women outnumber men in colleges and universities.

Ruben's talk focused on United Way's participation in education, especially in the Los Angeles Unified School District, stating that "education is the best pathway out of poverty." She emphasized that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is a major part of the way to economic growth.

She went on to describe various ways schools, families and communities play important parts in the success of children and in keeping them in school. Ruben also listed how United Way works toward this, including research, grants and partnering with school officials.

Ruben was followed by a musical program by Makoto Taiko, a Japanese drum ensemble, including District employee Jane Grandon, located in Pasadena. Some of the group members construct their own drums.

The Makoto Taiko website (<http://www.makototaiko.org/>) states, "Makoto is a fundamental character trait that includes such higher qualities as sincerity, truthfulness, altruism, reliability, and integrity. Makoto has a broad, yet profound, meaning that cannot be summarized in just one or two words because its meaning varies according to specific context. A person has makoto when his actions are in alignment with his words and ideals, and these words emulate the basic foundation of our drumming."

The Women's History Month program concluded with the second annual Women of the Los Angeles District Art Show. Displays included textiles, ceramic works and paintings by women and family members of the District team.



Makoto Taiko, a Japanese drum ensemble from Pasadena performed. (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)



The second annual Women of the Los Angeles District Art Show featured textiles, paintings and ceramics works. (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)