

US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 25, No. 6

June 2002

District initiates flood response

By Peter Verstegen

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, initiated emergency flood response operations June 10 in northwestern Minnesota at the request of the state of Minnesota. Overland flooding soaked Roseau from all four sides by June 11.

The Corps dispatched reconnaissance engineers to the towns of Ada, Borup, Roseau and Warroad, Minn., to provide technical and direct assistance to the area's local and state governments and emergency managers.

The district hired three contractors to assist in flood operations and help build emergency levees in Roseau June 11 after record flooding overwhelmed existing emergency work. This would be the first of \$186,000 in Corps contract awards for the flood fight.

The initial reports were bleak.

"There's reported flooding in around 75 percent of the Roseau," said Dave Christenson, emergency operations chief. "We worked to try and keep the damage down."



Michael Hlady (left), a construction representative out of Grand Forks, N.D., discusses access to a cell phone tower in Roseau, Minn. He was directing arrangements for access to the tower for backup cell phone service. At right, behind an AT&T worker, is Eric Wittine from engineering division. Wittine graduated from college in December and started with the Corps in January. Photo by Jeff Kleinert.

To mitigate the damages, the district shipped the first of what would be nearly 480,000 sandbags to Roseau, Warroad and Marshall County, as well as loaned the communities several emergency pumps.

The Corps worked with the National Guard to install temporary dikes throughout Roseau. The city encouraged the evacuation of the

hospital and nursing homes and urged citizens to voluntarily leave.

But record flooding continued on the Roseau River at Roseau. The river rose to 23.12 feet June 13, nearly two feet above the flood of record set in 1996. The flood stage at Roseau is 16 feet.

A combined effort to build dikes, pump water and sandbag vital

Flood, continued on Page 7

Commute to work online

By Col Robert L. Ball
District Engineer

You've probably heard the Corps of Engineers is going to be offering telework opportunities to selected



individuals by the end of the fiscal year. I want to let you know about this opportunity in advance; so when decisions

need to be made, you can make informed ones. If, by the end of this article, you are conversant about what telework is and have a basic idea of the direction the district is going, I will have been successful.

Telework is a term used to refer

to working from somewhere other than your normal, assigned place of duty.

At first glance, it is simple in concept.

If I am an employee who commutes two hours a day to get to my traditional place of work, it might make sense that if I could work closer to my home or even in

'...there are situations where telework is a good fit...'

my home I might be a happier and more productive employee. If I saved that two-hour commute, I would have two more hours to spend with my family, volunteering in the community, sleeping – whatever I wanted to do with it. I might even be able to work a few years beyond my scheduled retirement date because I have reduced job stress so much by not having to drive down I-94 everyday in rush hour. Plus, there would be one less car on the road and that much less pollution from exhaust. Sounds good, right?

Challenges to the idea of telework come in many forms.

For example, not all jobs are conducive to teleworking, not all people are a right fit for teleworking and the initial setup for this will cost us some dollars that must come out of our own budget.

If you think about it, you can quickly come up with some jobs that just wouldn't fit with telework. Being a park ranger would be hard to do if you weren't at the park to interact with the visitors. Being a leverman would be mighty tough to do if you weren't on the dredge. Similarly, some people need to be in

the office environment in order to be able to work. Others just do not have a place at home that would be a suitable place to work.

But if your job fits the parameters of the telework program, you have a place to work and you think you can work effectively at that place, you might want to pursue telework. We will work the resource problems out together.

But there are situations where telework is a good fit and there are some things about it you should know.

First, telework comes in two flavors – “regular and recurring” and “ad hoc.”

Regular and recurring is exactly what you would guess from the title – it involves an approved work schedule that has an employee working at an alternate worksite at least one day per pay period. It could be for two days a week, every day, one day every two weeks, etc.

Ad hoc telework is approved work done at an alternate worksite on an occasional, one-time or irregular basis. A good example of this would be an employee with a big report due who has all of the data needed and gets permission to complete the writing of the report at their home because they can work uninterrupted there.

Second, the two most frequent locations that telework will be done are at the employee's home (called “work-at-home”) and at a telecenter, such as the one we have established at the Electronic Service Center at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn.

Either way, the goal is to have a functional work area that allows the teleworker to get their job done just as efficiently as if they were in their traditional place of work.

Telework, continued Page 8

US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

<p>District Engineer Public Affairs Chief Media Specialist Editor Phone: Email:</p>	<p>Col. Robert L. Ball Mark Davidson Shannon Bauer Peter Versteegen 651-290-5202 cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil</p>
---	--

District adds teaching to missions

By Mark Davidson

The St. Paul District added teaching to its missions when five personnel taught students at a St. Paul, Minn., junior high school about zebra mussels, hydrology and bridges this spring.

The five may now add the title “teacher” to the resume. Steve Clark, Bob Dempsey, Stu Dobberpuhl, Michelle Schneider and Jim Ulrick taught classes this spring at Washington Junior High School. Their participation is a result of the Adopt-A-School program agreement that the district set up with the St. Paul School District in December 2001. However, it took the Corps and the school district nearly two years to get Corps people in the classroom.

Williams works to set up program

Russell Williams of project management initiated the contact with the school district in the spring of 2000. “I researched several schools in the school district, from elementary schools to middle schools to senior high schools,” said Williams. “I visited the schools in person, talked to teachers and administrators on the telephone, emailed school officials and read about them on the school district’s internet site.”

After taking the district’s community relations program and recruiting committee’s requirements into consideration and matching them up against all of the schools, Williams narrowed the search to three schools.

After district officials selected

Washington JHS, Williams worked to get an agreement signed by the Corps and the school district. This took several more months and went through two district commanders. Col. Robert Ball signed the specific agreement in December 2001 with Washington JHS principal Patricia McHugh.

Meetings between the teachers and Corps’ officials, such as Williams and Al Geisen of engineering division took place in January. “We had to sit down with the teachers and work out the details of what subjects Corps’ people would help teach,” said Geisen. “What the Corps people would teach would actually be a way to provide real-world examples of what the teachers are teaching the students and reinforce their teaching.”

After finding out what the teachers wanted, Geisen and the public affairs office solicited volunteers from the district office to teach three to four classes before



Steven Clark

‘I taught two seventh-grade classes about native mussels and their relationship with zebra mussels...’

—Steven Clark

the end of the school year. “I already had some volunteers from engineering, but I knew we had lots of other capable people in the district who liked working with students,” said Geisen.

Geisen lined up two teams from engineering and project management.

Dempsey and Ulrick of design branch were the first teaching team. They taught the students how structures and design engineering applies to bridges.

“Bob Dempsey and I made a presentation to three groups of seventh graders about different kinds of bridges, such as truss, arch, beam, suspension and cable stayed,” said Ulrick. “This fit in with one of

Teach, continued Page 4



Photos by Daniel Yang

Bob Dempsey



Jim Ulrich

‘Bob Dempsey and I made a presentation to three groups of seventh graders about different kinds of bridges...’

—Jim Ulrich

District readies to update its history

By Matthew Pearcy

The informal name is “The big blue book.”

The formal name, *Creativity, Conflict, & Controversy* tells the story of district from its origins in 1866 through 1979, a period of more than a hundred years. Historian Raymond Merritt, a Corps



Raymond Merritt, Ph.D., at his home in Rice, Minn.

contractor, spent six years on the book, and even did the layout, design, photos and captions and printing. More than 20 years later, the

district has begun work on an update to cover the years 1976 to 2001, overlapping by several years Merritt’s original history of the district.

Historical Research Associates Inc. of Missoula, Mont., has contracted to do that update, and two of their top historians, Ted Catton and Matt Godfrey, will handle the bulk of the work. Both were recently in the district and, with considerable help from Leonard Lohmann in information management, spent a week going through the district archives, including almost 400 boxes retrieved from the off-site storage facility.

They will also turn to the district’s developing oral history collection that

includes interviews with every district engineer since 1980 and a growing number of interviews with senior district staff.

The new history update will be organized topically, with chapters on civil works projects, disaster relief, recreation, and the district’s regulatory function. An additional chapter will discuss changes in the way the St. Paul District does business since 1976, including technologically driven change and the implementation of project management.

If you have anecdotal information or important materials related to the district history since 1976, contact Matt Pearcy.

Teach, continued from Page 3

their class projects, which was to construct balsa wood truss bridges.”

Asking the students what they would like to be someday is the way Dempsey tried to get the students thinking about future career choices. “After we discussed various disciplines of engineering, we got a few hands that said they would be interested in engineering as a career,” he said.

“I taught two seventh-grade classes about native mussels and their relationship with zebra mussels,” said project management’s Clark. “Most of the students seemed interested and asked some good questions.”

The last class session taught by Dobberpuhl and Schneider was actually fun despite its long title, according to Washington JHS teacher David Gundale. The title was “Demonstration of a hydraulic




‘We taught two classes of students – one from the seventh and one from the eighth grade. The students showed great enthusiasm and interest.’

–Stu Dobberpuhl

Dobberpuhl **Schneider**

model for a meandering stream and a braided stream and the procedures for making velocity and discharge measurements.”

“We taught two classes of students – one from the seventh and one from the eighth grade,” said Dobberpuhl. “The students showed great enthusiasm and interest.”

The students also learned what kinds of jobs and careers the Corps

can offer, she said. “And they enjoyed getting their hands wet and dirty with the model we brought with us,” said Schneider.

“The Corps employees taught our students good structural engineering information, gave us some career information, and took the students through a problem-solving activity that they will remember,” said Gundale.

Students earn and learn at the Corps

By Daniel Yang

Student employees say they gain quality experience and lasting friendships from their participation in career programs at the St. Paul District.

The district currently employs a mix of 63 high school, college and graduate students. The Temporary and Student Career Experience Program enables them to pursue their education, earn some money and obtain valuable work experience.

Brian Aarseth is one example. He is a 24 year-old senior in the civil engineering program at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.D. Aarseth was introduced to the Corps as a summer hire through the cooperative education program at the university. He has worked more than a year out of the western area office in Grand Forks, N.D. He is currently working on the Phase 1 Levee project in Grand Forks. Aarseth's daily duties include contractor quality control, resolving problems that may arise during construction and verifying discrepancies or interpretations of the drawings during construction.

"I like the people I have the opportunity to work with and all the different types of construction I get to experience," Aarseth said. "I also like seeing how a project develops from the planning to actual construction." Aarseth graduates from UND in December 2002 and hopes to continue working for the Corps after graduation.

Heidi Kern, 18, was a high school senior diligently searching for a job that met all the requirements for her school's work-study program.

"When I thought all my luck had run out, my high school secretary told me that the Fountain City [Wis.] USACE was looking for somebody. I came in for an interview and was very excited about it," said Kern.

Kern was hired soon after her

'I always wanted a job in which I could feel like I was doing something for the government, especially after 9/11.'

—Heidi Kern

interview and began working for the Corps this past February at the project office in Fountain City. There, she creates spreadsheets to help organize information, keeps track of training and does time keeping.

"I always wanted a job in which I could feel like I was doing something for the government, especially after 9/11. I love working for the government. The atmosphere is great. I like knowing that I make a difference," said Kern.

When Kern is not working with the Corps, she works a second job as a waitress. Her outside activities include gardening, roller blading and walking. She also loves to dance, and she hopes to return this winter to her former high school to volunteer as a dance coach. Kern is enrolled at Winona State University for this fall and has a goal to obtain a degree in special education.

Kalue Her, 18, and recent high school graduate, has worked at the

district office since last summer as an administrative assistant for planning, programs and project management. Her worked part-time during the past school year through the school's On-the-Job Training program but will be working full time throughout the summer.

"What I enjoy most about working with the Corps is the diversity of the tasks and people I am able to work with," said Her. "The variety keeps it interesting. It has also taught me the importance of communication between workers, employers and customers."

Her said one of her fondest moments with the Corps was her birthday this past January. She became ill and the school nurse sent her home. She called in sick to work and when she came in the next day, there was a cake on her desk.

"It was really sweet and unexpected. It will remain one of my many favorite memories with the Corps. I have gained great experiences with the Corps and have gained even better friends," she said.

Her will leave the Corps this fall to attend the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn., where she will be studying to become a social worker.

Student employees must be enrolled or currently accepted for enrollment in high school, vocational/technical schools, colleges, and universities to be eligible for employment. They must also be in good academic standing and taking at least a halftime course load. Their education levels are reflected in their daily duties required of them on the job.

Web-based training supports career and family

By Suellen Buelow

No travel. No TDY. Home each day to be with family and friends.

These were among the benefits of a web-based training course for Bill Hurley and myself as contract specialists in contracting division. We recently accomplished a first for the St. Paul District, when we completed a 100 percent web-based course here during duty hours. The training was previously available only through an offsite, four-week program.

The opportunity to participate in the web-based course allowed us to fulfill family and work obligations, train for professional advancement and apply course lessons to our jobs each day.

The newly developed Defense Acquisition University offering is a web-based course designed to allow students to learn at their own pace. The course, Contracting 101, is a mandatory training class for contract specialists, among others, to attain a level-one certification. We, as students, were given 90 days to complete a course that mixes reading with interactive lessons (see graphic) and concludes each module with a comprehensive exam.

Class materials, which may be printed at our computer, followed the online course, allowing us to read either from the screen or from printed resources.

Additionally, we were able to spend part of each day on normal work duties and part on class assignments. This allowed us to keep pace with the ongoing needs of our jobs while meeting class assignments.

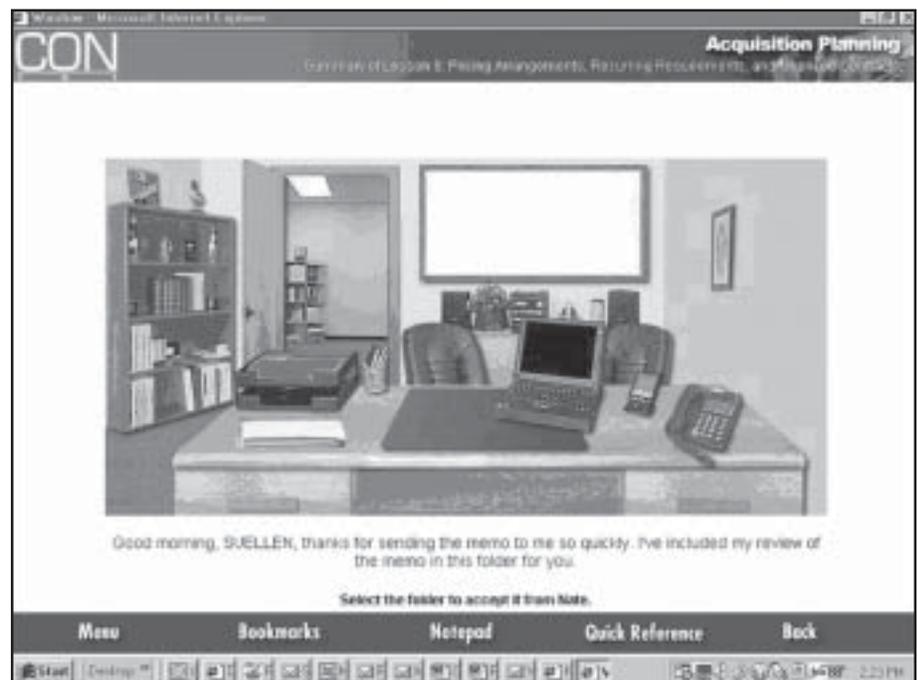
Traditionally, the training involved four intense weeks spent on temporary duty away from home and office, participating in a concentrated effort to absorb large amounts of information. Co-workers had to perform double duty to compensate for people away at school. Returning to work after a month away would leave prospective students and co-workers overwhelmed.

Contracting set up a training area to allow us to move from our normal workstations when taking the course – the “trip” was only a few cubes away. We pursued lessons at a pace that allowed maximum retention of our lessons.

We worked out a schedule in which Bill went to class each morning and I enrolled for the afternoon session. The schedule allowed us to back each other up while the other was studying. This arrangement meant our co-workers could concentrate on their own work.

The next step in our ongoing education is Contracting 104. This class is a combination of self-paced training on the web and one week away from home and family.

As a career professional and a family member, I am honored to work for an organization which puts a value on both aspects of life.



Above is a typical end-of-lesson computer desktop image of an interactive session. The student sits behind a virtual desk. Files are delivered, the phone rings, voice mails are answered and emails are sent back and forth throughout the session. The subject of all activities is based on the most recently completed lesson. Graphic courtesy of Suellen Buelow.

Flood, continued from Page 1
 structures and utilities progressed through midweek. The Minnesota Division of Emergency Management reported at least half the town had been evacuated.

The rivers levels began falling from there, but not before 95 percent of the structures in Roseau had some water damage. Minnesota emergency management reported approximately 100 homes had at least first floor damage.

The National Weather Service reported June 13 the flooding in Roseau had leveled at 23 feet.

By then the district completed an emergency levee for Roseau. The levee protected the western portions of the downtown and residential area from overland water flow. It had three reaches, or arms, to cut off water flows from the south and southwest.

Christenson said this levee should stop new flow into the town and allow time for the standing water to be pumped out of the city. "And although the levee is completed, the Corps will continue to have people there as long as the flood threat exists and our resources are needed," he said.

The NWS predicted a gradual drop to 21 or 22 feet by June 16, provided no heavy rain inundated the city again.

Christenson said the flooding threats at Ada and Borup had subsided by mid-month, but Corps engineers continued to monitor water levels.

The district also provided technical assistance to Roseau and Lake of the Woods counties and the Federal Emergency Management Agency opened a disaster field office in Moorhead, Minn., June 20.

Public Law 84-99 authorizes the

Corps to provide assistance, within its authorities, when natural disasters or other emergencies occur. Emergency preparedness and response is primarily a state and local responsibility.

When the nature of the disaster exceeds the capabilities of state and local interests, the Corps may provide help to save human life, prevent immediate human suffering or mitigate property damage.

Compiled from news releases by Shannon Bauer and state and Corps' situation reports.



Sandbags provided by the St. Paul District protected the community of Ada, Minn., (top photo) and public buildings in Roseau, Minn.



The St. Paul District shipped almost 480,000 sandbags to combat the flood in the river basin stretching from Roseau, Minn., on the east to Ada, Minn., on the west. The Polaris, Inc., parking lot was where employees and volunteers filled sandbags. Photos by Jeff Kleinert.

Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Dils tours locks and dams, meets operations personnel



Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Dils (left) met with Lockmaster Jim Greene inside the new Lock and Dam 8 control station June 5. "He met with lock operators and spent time with all the employees on duty," said Greene. Dils' visited nine operations facilities in the district June 5-6 The Chief of Engineers assigned Dils to champion wage-grade employees throughout the Corps of Engineers. Photo by Darrel Oldenburg.

Save time, save money with savings bonds

Accumulate a nest egg through payroll deduction of U.S. savings bonds.

This June, the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District conducts its annual savings bond drive through payroll deduction. The Series EE and I Bonds will be available for payroll deduction. Those interested in participating in this savings opportunity will find information online at www.savingsbonds.gov.

The website containing the appropriate forms to fill out requesting payroll deduction, Form SB-2305, is the application for

Series I bonds and SB-2104 is the application for Series EE bonds.

These applications can be downloaded from your computer, filled out by you and forwarded to Jane Shafer in resource



management for her action as the payroll liaison.

Applications should be forwarded to Shafer by June 30, 2002. Forms are at this web site:

<http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/NC/FoRMSHome?FormType=SBF>

Questions? Contact Dupey at 651-290-5296.

Telework, continued from Page 2

Using the work-at-home will require some serious thought on your part to see if you really want to work and live at the same place. It would also require mature analysis of whether you can function efficiently at home. For example, are there other household members, pets and refrigerators that will provide too much distraction to you?

Fortunately for all of us, Terry Zien and his Special Emphasis Program Subcommittee have been working on the idea of telework for us. The district has been running a pilot program that has been very successful in showing that telework can be done in a manner that benefits the employee while still getting a high quality product for our customers.

We have a district telework guide that is being staffed now and will give employees and supervisors a process to go through to pursue a telework agreement. The process includes a self-assessment, a telework request and a guide for working with your supervisor to develop a telework agreement that will outline the details of how it will be accomplished.

We are looking for places other than Hastings to establish telework centers and would like to have them strategically located to meet our demographics. Examples (certainly not all inclusive) could be Fort Snelling, Minn., Hudson, Wis., and Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant, Arden Hills.

There are a number of information management-related hurdles to overcome, but the information management staff is taking an active approach to finding solutions to things such as computer security,

Telework, continued Page 9

Bits and Pieces

Welcome

Work-study student **Nicole Brown** will assist in the environmental branch at the St. Paul District office, where she will be working on mussel surveys this summer. She most recently worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a geographic information systems/biological science technician. She received her undergraduate degree in wildlife biology from the University of Minnesota and is currently pursuing a master's degree in GIS.

Work-study student **Kyle Zibung** will assist in environmental protection at the Stevens Point, Wis. field office. Last summer, he participated in an internship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, working with private landowners on water quality and wildlife habitat enhancement projects. He will be a senior this fall at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Welcome back

Arne Thompson will be returning to the district at the Fountain City, Wis., office as chief of maintenance and repair section of physical support branch after having spent three years working for the Corps' Europe District. He started his career with the St. Paul District in 1969, spending most of that time in construction branch. His tour to the Europe District was a pre-retirement tour of Europe. He currently resides in Stillwater, Minn., and will commute.

Litzell named April Employee of the Month

Darwin (Hap) Litzell, construction operations natural resources, Eau Galle Park, Wis., was selected as Employee of the Month for April.

Irene Stearns, construction-operations, nominated Litzell for his dedication to the park and his fellow employees.

Her nomination said: "Eau Galle Park recently lost a great friend and co-worker, Doug Blegen, to cancer. In as much as this was a tragic loss for all of us,

Hap lost a friend he had known all of his life. We are a close-knit group at Eau Galle Park

and although Hap was suffering more than any of us, he was the one that kept everyone informed as to Doug's illness and death. He did his best to keep the general

morale of the park personnel as high as possible. He kept the place together and still maintained an air of dignity, composure, and professionalism."



Col. Ball recognizes Darwin (Hap) Litzell. Photo by Marsha Mose

Farewell

Luke Smith with the construction-operations division, locks and dams branch, retired from the Corps' St. Paul District May 3 after 30 years of civil service.

Update

Lt. Col. O'Hara has deployed to Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan, in support of the XVIII Airborne Corps. His email address is:

thomas.ohara@us.army.mil

His postal address is:

Tom O'Hara

CFTF180

ATTN: Staff Engineer Section

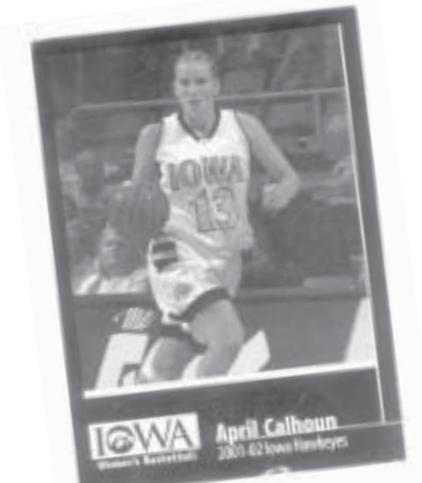
APO AE 09354

Telework, continued from Page 8

adequate bandwidth and availability of equipment. There are a myriad of other things that are being looked at as we move towards making this available to all who are eligible.

We don't have all of the answers but I can assure you we are moving out with an attitude of finding ways to make it work.

If your position is suitable for telework, you may have a chance to try it yourself.



University of Iowa graphic courtesy of Jack Calhoun. Reprinted with permission.

April Calhoun plays on foreign tour team

April Calhoun, daughter of Jack Calhoun of program management, represented the University of Iowa Hawkeyes on the Big 10 foreign tour team. University of Iowa Sports Information reported the squad is playing five games in Holland and Belgium June 14-24.

“This is a great opportunity and a chance to meet fellow Big 10 players and advance her athletic skills,” said her father. “It’s a nice experience.”

In her first season with the Hawkeyes, Calhoun played all 29 games at point guard, averaged 2.5 points per game and 1.4 assists per game.

The native of New Hope, Minn., helped Iowa advance to the second round of the NCAA tournament for the second consecutive year.

Incidentally

Sara Palesh, daughter of Gary Palesh in project management, was the winner of the Gold Award for the Girl Scouts in the Saint Croix Valley.

Thrift savings and long-term care hold open seasons

The **Thrift Savings Plan**, a retirement program, open season began May 15 and closes July 31. During open season, all Federal Employee Retirement System and Civil Service Retirement System employees may enroll in TSP, regardless of the dates on which they were hired. Employees who are already enrolled in TSP may also change the amount of pay they contribute to the plan.

FERS employees may contribute up to 12 percent of their annual salaries. CSRS employees may contribute up to 7 percent.

To enroll in TSP or change a contribution, access the Army Benefit Center website at www.abc.army.mil or phone 1-877-ARMYCTR (1-877-276-9287). For the latest information about TSP, visit the website at www.tsp.gov/curinfo/index.html.

Open season for the **Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program** runs from July 1-December 31, 2002. For more information, call 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337) (TDD 1-800-843-3557) or view <http://www.LTCFEDS.com>.

Wilcox goes to class

Dan Wilcox, project management, spoke about fish ecology and watershed management and the effects of human activities on aquatic habitat to 25 students, grades 11-12, at Baldwin-Woodville High School, Baldwin, Wis., May 24.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

FEB provides ‘write stuff’ at Diversity Day

Eleven participants from the St. Paul District experienced the “write stuff” when they attended Diversity Day 2002 at St. Thomas University in St. Paul June 5. Among the many handouts provided by Federal Executive Board were pens to serve as a reminder of lessons learned.

“Come Share the Richness of our Differences” included 12 break-out sessions to educate and inform attendees about diversity. District personnel received Consideration of Others credit for attending.

Kimberly Bahls, Lorraine Blake, Andrea Childress, Sara Crowson, Greg Dasovic, Kris Fairbanks, Carol Johnson, Mary Kay Linder, Jim Noren, Angie Peterson and **Peter Verstegen** were among the 433 employees who attended.

Norman W. Hildrum

Norman W. Hildrum, 57, died June 6 from cancer. He worked for the St. Paul District for many years in various positions, including chief, public use planning and chief, information management. He is survived by his wife, Sharon, and two sons.