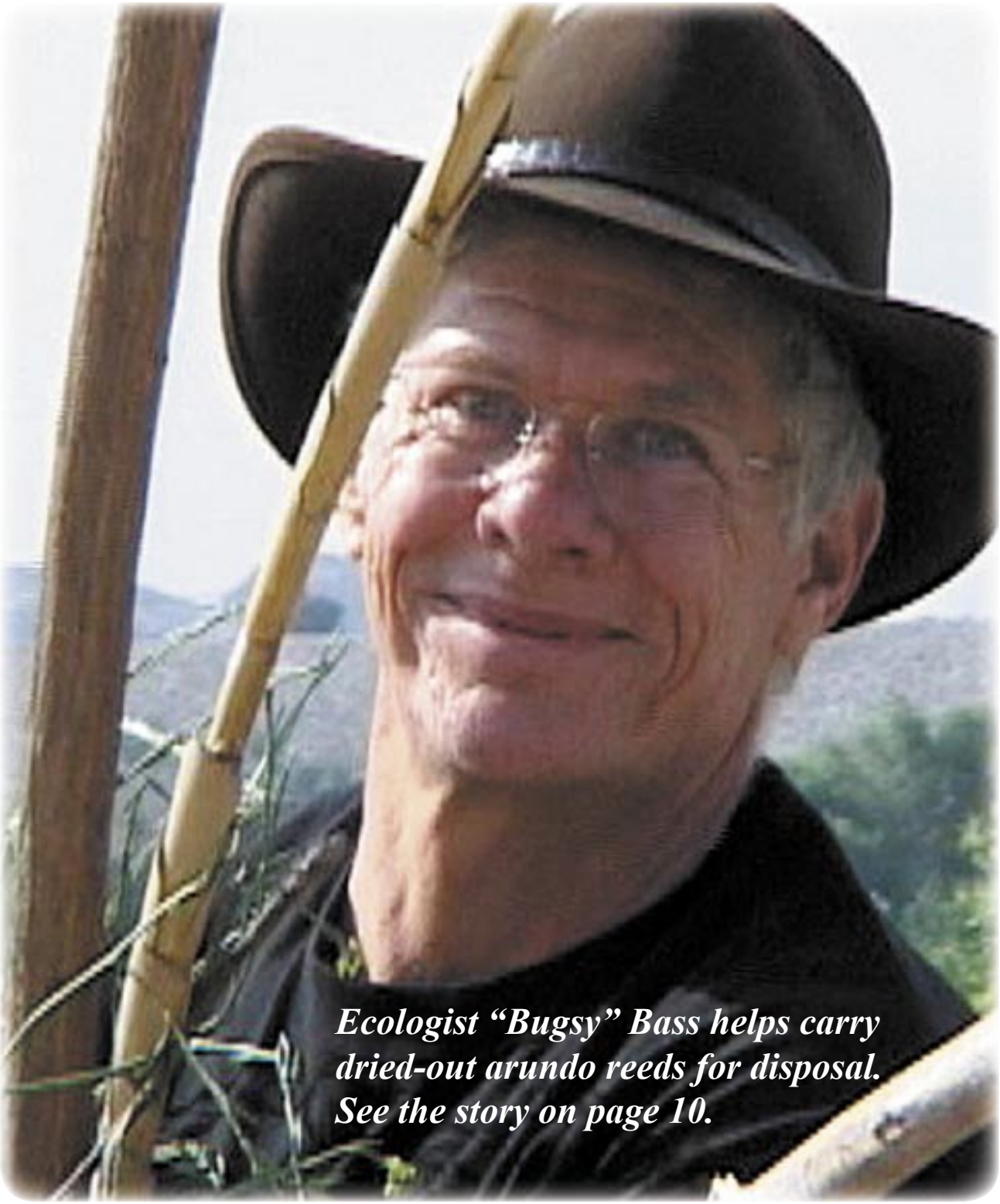
The Newscastle

Vol. 34 No. 6 June/July 2004

U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Los Angeles District



Ecologist "Bugsy" Bass helps carry dried-out arundo reeds for disposal. *See the story on page 10.*

MAJ Robert Poole receives the Legion of Merit medal from COL Ken Morris.

Essayons and More

It is with the highest respect and honor that I say goodbye to you all.

It has been my honor and pleasure to have served with professional men and women dedicated to service to our great Nation. The day to day demonstration of your selfless service is an inspiration to the lives of those you touch both within the district and in your personal lives.

When I arrived at the district, one day before 9-11 2001, I was greeted with the warmest, professional welcome that I had ever received throughout numerous PCS moves in my Army career - a true reflection of the character of the LA District family.

None of us could have predicted how our lives would change after that terrible day in September, and I am grateful to have been surrounded by a professional organization that bought new meaning to caring. I will always look back at my time spent in the Contracting Division and with the LA District fondly. For the first time in my career I was able to get trained in a new profession (Acquisition and Contracting) and actually put those skills to work in a contingency contracting environment in support of the Global War on Terrorism. My time spent deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom was career validating, and I want to thank all those in the district that helped keep my spirits high and that of those serving with me, and for sending all those care packages to me and the children of Afghanistan.

To the members of the Contracting Division - Thank you for embracing me and working with me as I learned a new profession. No military officer can bring to the table the depth of contracting knowledge that you have and display on a daily basis, thank you for accepting my shortfalls of FAR knowledge, and for allowing me to help manage and lead along side the Chief of Contracting.

It is truly an honor to serve with you all. Thank you.

With my deepest respect and sincerity,

Bob
Major Robert M. Poole
Deputy Chief, Contracting Division

Commander . . . . . COL Alex C. Dornstauder
PAO/Editor . , ... Dr. Fred-Otto Egeler
Asst. Editor . . . . . Kim Matthews
Chief Writer . . . . . Mike Tharp

Staff . . . . . Jennie A. Salas, Greg Fuderer, Jay Field, Beverly Patterson, Delsie Sharp, Richard Jung, Pam Wills, Mark Cohen

THE NEWSCASTLE is published quarterly 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. We publish material furnished by the American Forces Information Service and the Public Health Service. Address mail to the Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office, ATTN: Newscastle Editor, P.O. Box 532711, Los Angeles, CA 90053-2325. Tel: (213) 452-3921 or FAX: 4209. You can e-mail your information to the attention of the Public Affairs staff listed above. Publicaffairs-spl@spl01.usace.army.mil

In this issue…

Page 2—MAJ Poole farewell note
Page 3—Get AMPed
Page 5—COL T & P2
Page 6—Oceanside dredging
Page 8—Edwards AFB
Page 10—Arundo Roundup
Page 12—Peerless find
Page 14—Engineer Day 2004
Page 17—AZ picnic
Page 18—Around the District
Back cover—Corps HQ change of command

On the cover: LA District Ecologist Carvel Bass helps carry cut arundo reeds during the first annual Arundo Roundup at Hansen Dam. Full story is on page 10.

District regulators help plug in 'world's biggest extension cord' to clean up air around Port of L.A.

By Mike Tharp

Debbie Vasquez is a lifelong San Pedro resident. She and her 9-year-old son Jake live about a mile north of the Port of Los Angeles, in a quiet neighborhood where many of the homes date from the 1930s.

From their second floor, she and Jake can see the mantis-like cargo cranes and football-field-long ships docked at the port. And although they usually can't see it, Debbie and Jake are aware of another presence at the port—air pollution.

Jake suffers from asthma, which is one reason Debbie Vasquez was elated to hear about the port's new cleaner-air technology. Unveiled on summer's first day at Berth 100, a wharf leased by China Shipping Co., Alternative Marine Power (AMP) can be described as the world's largest extension cord. It allows moored ships to plug into electric power to run their engines, rather than the dirty diesel fuel they usually use. ""This unprecedented technology will make Los Angeles' environment healthier by eliminating tons of pollution each day," L.A. Mayor Jim Hahn said.

When she heard the news, Debbie Vasquez remembered a series of articles she had just read in a Long Beach newspaper about lung and other respiratory diseases possibly associated with bad air from the port. "I was shocked," she said. "You think near the water or ocean it's supposed to be clean air. I wondered if it had anything to do with Jake's condition. Don't we need to do something about it?"

Called "cold iron" because engines are shut off while in port, the new technology is soon likely to have global applications. "Other ports are watching the developments in southern California," the Journal of Commerce recently reported. "Once 'cold-ironing' becomes common in the nation's largest port complex, it will likely spread to other ports that are under pressure to reduce pollution."

The Los Angeles District has been closely involved with Berth 100 and China Shipping for years. As the lead federal agency responsible for work and discharges of fill in navigable waters of the U.S., the Corps Regulatory Branch was originally tasked with evaluating permit applications for the first construction phase of China Shipping's new terminal—Berth 100.

Because of a lawsuit by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and other plaintiffs, as well as community concerns over the scale and impact of the port's operations, the Regulatory Branch team had to consider the connection between issuing a permit and its impact on air quality and traffic around the port.

"We have been urging the port to investigate, develop and implement new technologies to balance environmental impacts with economic development," explained Josh Burnam, senior project manager for the Regulatory Branch's North Coast Section and the project manager responsible for permit actions at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. "Other communities and Corps Districts are starting to recognize the impact of air quality (around ports). It's the wave of the future."

After the Summer Solstice ceremony plugging in the AMP technology, Burnam took Acting Deputy Commander MAJ Kimberly Colloton and Acting Regulatory Branch Chief Doug Pomeroy to Knoll Hill, a San Pedro landmark. It overlooks the port's 7,500 acres and 43 miles of waterfront and gives a regulator's-eye view of the District's single biggest project responsibility.

By Greg Fuderer

Mayor of Los Angeles James Hahn stands with other officials representing the city, port, China Shipping and other government, environmental and civic groups as they connect load to source, establishing the world's first AMP'ed commercial container ship.

From a perch on Knoll Hill overlooking the Port of Los Angeles, project manager Josh Burnam (center) discusses ongoing and planned port projects with Acting Deputy District Engineer MAJ Kimberly Colloton and Acting Regulatory Branch Chief Doug Pomeroy.

Holding a map flat against the ocean breeze, Burnam pointed to sites at the port, explaining the Regulatory Branch's involvement with the District's flagship federal project, which would deepen the port's main channel. "COL (Richard) Thompson (recently departed District Engineer) told us that when there was an opportunity to do a coordinated environmental review, we would do it," Burnam said.

In many ways, the UCLA grad's Corps career has been focused on the port. He's an avid fisherman—offshore, deep sea, tuna—so he likes to work around ports and marinas.

So it was with no small measure of satisfaction that Burnam watched the plug-in ceremony at Berth 100. The Chinese container ship Xin Yang Zhou became the first vessel to "hotel" at the dock while using electrical power instead of its diesel engines. Port officials said the process would remove more than one ton of smog-forming nitrous oxide and 87 pounds of particulate matter each day the ship uses AMP.

"With every AMP ship that is plugged in, we remove as much pollution from our air as is generated by 16,000 truck trips," said LA City Councilwoman Janice Hahn. Echoed China Shipping Group President Li Kelin: "Air quality is an issue not only for the people of Los Angeles, but for all people. We are proud that China Shipping was the first shipping line to embrace the AMP technology."

Port officials estimate that the cost of retrofitting container vessels for AMP will range from $200,000 to $500,000 per ship. They're currently negotiating with other shipping companies to partner in the technology.

So far, six other firms have signed a memorandum of understanding with the port for future use of AMP while their container vessels are berthed: Evergreen America, Mitsui OSK, Nippon Yusen Kaisha, Orient Overseas Container Line, P&O Nedlloyd and the Yang Ming Line.

The greening of the port is part of a $50 million settlement it agreed to with community and environmental groups. "The China Shipping terminal demonstrates that ports don't have to pose a threat to public health," said Gail Ruderman Feuer, a senior NRDC attorney. "This is the first time I've smelled clean air at a container terminal, and I hope it's the way of the future."

Todd Campbell, policy director at the Coalition for Clean Air, another plaintiff in the lawsuit, noted the port's crucial role as a gateway to trade with Asia. "However, growth cannot come at the expense of our environment and public health," he said. "Today we're unveiling a tool that will help us keep pollution in check without stifling economic expansion."

John Greenwood, president of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council, said the people who work in and around San Pedro, such as longshore workers and crane operators, would benefit from the technology. "We will all breathe easier because of what you're doing here today," he added.

Which is just fine for Debbie and Jake Vasquez. Jake plays soccer and baseball and walks their dog around the neighborhood, so he's a typically active boy. With San Pedro's air destined to get cleaner, says Debbie, "this new technology will be awesome."

You could say she was amped.

Josh Burnam stands near the "world's largest extension cord." Providing 6.6 kilovolts to Chinese container ship Xin Yan Zhou, Alternative Maritime Power eliminates the need for berthed ships to run diesel engines and will significantly reduce air pollution at the port.

R2-D2 to P2: COL Thompson's grad school project for legendary filmmaker foreshadowed Corps' technology tool

By Mike Tharp

What do George Lucas's fabled Skywalker Ranch and P2 have in common?

COL Richard Thompson.

In 1986 he was performing six hours of independent study for his master's degree at the University of California/Berkeley. Across the Golden Gate Bridge, Lucas, the legendary director of the Star Wars sagas and other blockbusters, was building his own anti-Hollywood enclave north of San Francisco.

One of the project's subcontractors asked the military grad student to help improve delivery time and production efficiency at the ranch. The project manager, recalls COL Thompson, until recently the Los Angeles District Chief Engineer, was using a Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet to calculate inventories and other processes. "The spreadsheet became so huge it would cover a whole wall," COL Thompson says. "I realized what they were doing there would be better served in a database environment than in Lotus. So I created the same effect as their spreadsheet."

Entering such items as workers' productivity rates, quantity of materials and number of work hours into a program, he was able to simplify and speed up projections for building the filmmaker's creative hideaway.

At his next duty assignment, in Chicago, the young Army officer remembered that template. The Chicago district was still using stand-alone personal computers that required dialing into a modem, then carrying a floppy disk from PC to PC. "We started planning together a project management system integrated with a database," he says.

And that, in a compact disk, is P2.

Oh, it would take another 16 years or so, and the efforts of hundreds within the Corps and many outside it. But the conceptual groundwork for what is touted to become the Corps' most important technological tool was at least partly laid among the redwoods and the undulating brown hills of Skywalker Ranch.

Did the young captain ever meet George Lucas himself? "He was passing through the facility once," he remembers, "with Linda Ronstadt."

Stripped of jargon, P2 gets everybody involved in the project management system. "There will be a much greater sense that all the projects we do are team efforts," COL Thompson says. "We now have opportunities to do more things and do things differently because in the past we were constrained by our tools. The new system gives us much better flexibility."

It consists of several commercial off-the-shelf software packages that complement existing Corps software systems. One big advantage is that P2 brings those systems together in one location so that information need be entered only once. That's crucial, because in fiscal 05, all Corps business processes will be used to input all labor, travel and projects into P2. Projects not inputted in P2 won't be funded.

It's clear that a single database for all information on a project will save time and money for the Corps, its customers and stakeholders. Some of its advantages:

- Identifies the right people for a job;
- Shares data across districts and regions;
- Increases real-time information;
- Tracks a project's budget, resources and schedule.

Retired Chief Engineer LTG Bob Flowers has been a strong P2 backer. "P2 is not just a business process system, although that's its primary function, and it will do that extremely well," he told a Town Hall meeting last year. "P2 is also a knowledge management system. Its reporting functions will allow us to capture the lessons we learn and preserve them."

Given COL Thompson's early involvement with P2's incubation, it's no surprise he's also on the bandwagon: "We need to test the limits…to make it even better for the project, for the customer and for ourselves, to allow us to be more efficient and effective."

Or, as Yoda said in Star Wars: "Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned."

Time and tide wait for no dredge

Story and photos by Greg Fuderer

Going to the "ocean side" was a popular weekend retreat for rancho (Santa Margarita) families living in the warmer inland areas. The two words were eventually merged into "Oceanside." When (J. Chauncey) Hayes petitioned for a post office, he submitted the name Oceanside and put the small community officially on the map. – City of Oceanside Web site, describing the 1880s.

Today, the "small community" of Oceanside is a city of about 170,000 located between Los Angeles and San Diego, sitting just south of Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. It's a postcard-pretty California coastal town, complete with tourist shops, a pier, a coast lined with businesses and homes, a marina bobbing with pleasure craft and small commercial vessels, three and one-half miles of public beaches – and a long-standing navigation and shoreline problem.

In the 1920s, Oceanside built a steel pier. It didn't last; a 1943 storm severely damaged it. It was such a great tourist attraction, however, that the city decided to build a new, grander pier – at 1,900 feet, the longest on the West Coast. In the 1960s, the Corps of Engineers constructed a small craft harbor. The entrance channel leads to the 100-acre harbor with more than 800 boat slips for pleasure boats, sportfishing, jet skis and whale-watching.

What hasn't changed, though, is the effect of time and tide on the channel and the nearby shoreline.

Although not as devastating as the 1943 storm that wiped away Oceanside's pier, nature doggedly continues to take its toll on the city's harbor and coastline. Wave action deposits material into the entrance channel, reducing its depth, narrowing its width and making life more difficult for mariners. The same currents scour Oceanside's beach, turning a broad expanse for sun, fun and relaxation into a narrow strip of sand, frequently exposing the stones lying beneath and encroaching on the seawall that is the last line of defense for roads, homes and businesses.

That's where the Corps of Engineers' Randy Lee and current contractor, Manson Construction Co. of Seattle, Wash., come in. Their work, and that of many others behind the scenes, addresses these concerns.

The Corps conducts maintenance dredging at Oceanside Harbor on an annual basis. A recently completed dredging project is the first year of a three-year, $3.4 million contract. Initial estimates called for Manson to remove about 200,000 yards of sediment and sand from the channel and place the bulk of it on the beach.

From the pilothouse of the hydraulic dredge H.R. Morris, operators use pulleys attached to anchors to arc the bow back and forth across the channel, advancing in five-foot increments, 24 hours a day. Morris is a cutter-suction dredge. Like a giant pinwheel mounted on the bow, the 30-inch cutter lowers into the water and spins against the channel floor, breaking sediment into bite-sized pieces that are mixed in an 80/20 water-to-solids slurry that Morris vacuums up and sends on its trek toward the beach.

On its journey, the slurry travels through a section of floating pipe, is pumped onto the beach, then slushes its way through nearly 10,000 feet of 28-inch diameter pipe toward the project's southern end. While some may find the slurry's sound soothing, not everyone does. As a result, Manson buried some sections of the beach-bound pipe under sand to muffle the noise. Past waterfront campsites, restroom facilities, swimmers, bathers, bikers, walkers, tourists and families out for a late morning stroll, the slurry flows to the pipe's outlet where it exits with a whoosh, fans out and fills the temporary basins created to act as settling ponds.

Randy Lee, construction rep on the project, approaches dredge H.R. Morris to inspect the progress of the Oceanside channel dredging.

Randy Lee, construction rep on the project, contacts dredge H.R. Morris to inspect the progress of the Oceanside channel dredging.

As the project progressed southward, Manson added additional pipe as the beach grew at each of the latest end points. Some sections of the beach had offered only a few feet of protection between the road and the ocean. People could still lie on the beach, listen to the waves and tan; they just had to parallel park their towels to fit.

On the project's final days, no one was lying along the sand at is southern end. Wet, dark gray, with a clay-like appearance, the newly placed sand did not look especially inviting, except to the dozen or so seagulls in search of their next tasty morsel. A few days on the beach changes that. Warm temperatures and bright sun quickly dry out and bleach the sand.

As a result, the city has additional protection, mariners have safe passage and beachgoers have a wider, more inviting place to relax and recreate.

"The benefits received from the dredging are tremendous," said Oceanside's harbor master, Don Hadley. "It improves safety in the harbor and protects infrastructure on the land. It's really a win-win situation for everybody. Camp Pendleton wins; national defense wins. The whole infrastructure and entire economic base is protected in the big picture from everything that's done from it."

In the end, it all came down to the finished product.

"The end result is that it creates safe navigation for the small craft that use the harbor and for the Navy," Lee said. "It provides replenishment to the beach for the city of Oceanside and for tourists to use the beach and to enjoy the day next to the coast."

At the south end of the project, Manson Construction pumps material dredged from Oceanside's navigation channel into a retaining basin. The basin keeps the sand and releases the water, increasing the width and length of the beach.

Seven-in-one:
Edwards AFB opens new Consolidated Support Facility

Story and photos by Jay Field

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE—Army Corps of Engineers and Air Force officials cut the ribbon to officially open the new Consolidated Support Facility at Edwards Air Force Base June 15. Some 20 years in the making, the facility arose from suggestions by Edwards' personnel to consolidate several support functions scattered around the base.

Col. Wendy Masiello, 95th Air Base Wing commander, said the new office building helps members of the Edwards family arriving at and departing from the base by eliminating stops at seven separate facilities. "Our mission success is measured by customer-focused support," she said, "and by having this facility now available to us makes it a one-stop shop for our customers."

BG Joseph Schroedel (commander, South Pacific Division, USACE), Bryan Zatica (president, Macro-Z Technology), Maj. Gen. Doug Pearson (commander, Air Force Flight Test Center) and Col. Wendy Masiello (commander, 95th Air Base Wing) cut the ribbon to open the new Consolidated Support Facility at Edwards Air Force Base. (Photo by Senior Airman Jet Fabara, USAF)

The 49,000-square-foot structure was built with the Corps' design goals in mind to be sustainable, flexible and environmentally sensitive. Santa Ana-based construction contractor Macro-Z Technology teamed with design firm Ed Cast and Associates to create an award-winning facility.

The CSF won a Concept Design Merit Award in the 2003 Air Force Materiel Command Design Awards Program, a contest recognizing features that address environmental quality. The facility has also earned a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System silver certification.

To achieve the Green Building rating, the contractor implemented energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive designs. The building's unique cooling system prepares for its daily demands by storing thermal energy generated overnight when rates are cheaper. Anything that could be constructed using recycled material was built, including a parking lot made from broken concrete, carpet made from recycled petroleum products, and beams made from recycled structural steel. The landscaping continues the "green" theme by using drought-resistant native plants.

Macro-Z president Bryan Zatica reflected on the process that ultimately led to the awards. "When we bid this project, there were no plans whatsoever," he said. "What you see today was through design charettes (intense, on-the-spot design efforts) with the Air Force, the Army, Ed Cast and Associates, the Macro-Z team and five days of a lot of meetings."

The $11.5 million design-build project was completed on time and within budget. Architecturally significant, the building features five curved roofs, which open it up

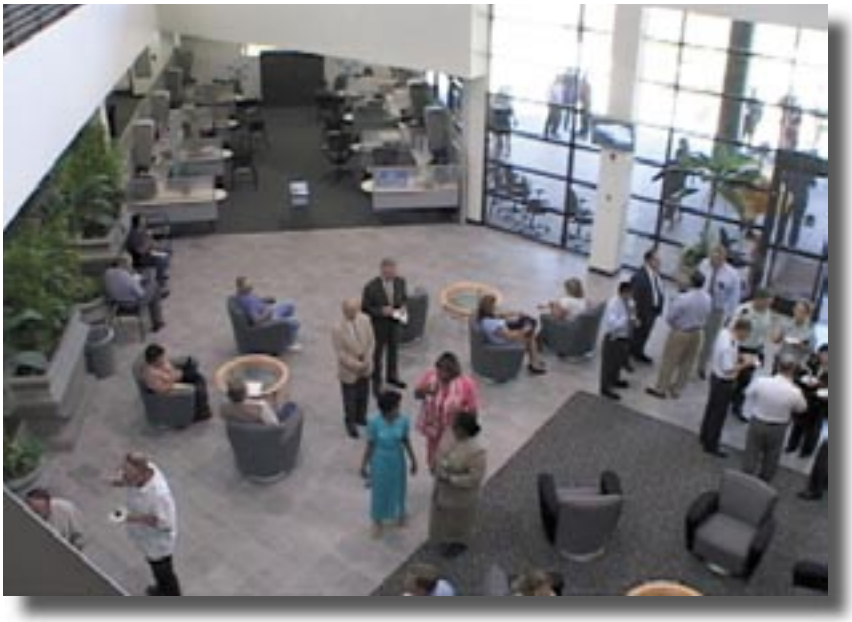
The new structure consolidates several support functions that were scattered around the base, making it a "one-stop shop" for airmen arriving at and departing Edwards Air Force Base.

Right: The Consolidated Support Facility's design and drought-resistant landscaping fit perfectly among the other structures at the Mojave Desert base.

Lower right: Guests gather in the atrium area of the Consolidated Support Facility, which serves as the customer waiting area.

to electricity-saving natural light, while large eaves provide shade for the windows, reducing energy needs for cooling.

After touring the facility, BG Joseph Schroedel, found that it met the design goal of keeping the well-being of employees and customers in mind: "I asked, 'What do the customers think about this?' 'What do the people of this community think about this facility?' And some of the folks who work here said, 'Well, when the people walk in, they kind of freeze, and they look around and say, "This is not a government facility. It can't be." And then they forget why they're here. And somebody has to help them remember who they have to go see.'"



Schroedel told the community members who gathered for the ribbon-cutting that he was proud of the work that everybody on the team did in producing a magnificent facility. He especially praised the efforts of the Corps team, which included employees from the Los Angeles District, the High Desert Area Office and the Edwards Resident Office.

Echoing Schroedel's comments, Maj. Gen. Doug Pearson, Air Force Flight Test Center commander, said it was a rare moment to be able to open a new structure at an Air Force Materiel Command base. "My compliments to the team," he said. "I thank you all for bringing it together. It is a superb example of teamwork and partnership at its finest. Small business in America and the leadership of the world's greatest air force have come together to make this happen."

Pearson had participated in the original survey suggesting the consolidation project. Now, some 20 years later, he's seen the idea turn into reality--one that will allow the base to better care for its people.

The facility's thermal energy storage unit features six large tanks for storing ice made from the chiller overnight when electricity is less expensive.

Bernard Rivera, Hansen Dam tender, cuts the 30-foot-long Arundo stalks in half so they'll fit into the dumpster.

Arundo Roundup

Story and photos by Jay Field

Volunteers at the first annual Arundo Roundup load the bamboo-like weeds into a dumpster to be hauled to a nearby landfill for disposal.

Ed Kohnman of the District Baseyard wrangles the pesky reeds into a container for disposal.

Jeff Adams hauls away Public Enemy Number One—that is, Arundo Donax, enemy to the plant world. The stalks are kept together—not by handcuffs, but with Bungee cord—as Adams carries the invasive cane to its holding cell. Adams and a dozen Corps employees, most from the Los Angeles District's Baseyard in El Monte, joined forces with Los Angeles city departments and local civic groups for Hansen Dam's first "Arundo Round-Up" May 22.

LA District Baseyard employee Jeff Adams hauls away Hansen Dam plant life's "Public Enemy Number One."

Dozens of volunteers cut down the bamboo-like stalks near the large lower lake in the Hansen Basin, and hauled the hardy weeds up the hill to containers that would be used to dump the Arundo in a landfill. Chain-saw crews had to cut the thick reeds just to get them to fit into the dumpsters, as Arundo can grow to 30 feet tall.

District Ecologist Carvel Bass said the Arundo grows too well in this environment. "There's no real predator here to eat it, so it just takes off, sucks up the water, and is actually a big problem in the waterways of southern California--in Riverside County, as well as LA County."

Bass said early settlers introduced Arundo to California, using it to build things, like fishing poles and thatched roofs, and as food for some livestock. He said Arundo has also been used for erosion control and bank stabilization.

But the problematic plant causes big trouble for California wetlands, choking out native plants, driving away native wildlife and sucking up water like a sponge.

That's why the Corps has been spraying the Arundo around the Hansen Lakes with herbicide for the last couple of years, expecting it to decompose over time.

Bass said, "Some of the local community members decided to remove what has been killed in place, rather than wait for it to rot out. They helped organize, with the city of LA and the Corps, a day such that we could actually cut it out and remove it."

The Tujunga Watershed Council organized the Arundo Roundup to clear away about an acre's worth of the plant. "It's just a great collaboration on removing a certain plant pest; just looking at one little spot, but making a big difference," said Bass.

Bass sees this first roundup as a model for other weekend cleanup activities, when volunteers can clear the Arundo from the waterfront in sort of a checkerboard fashion, one plot at a time. If not, the pesky reed will likely remain Hansen Dam plant life's Public Enemy Number One.

Surrounded by 30-foot tall Arundo, this LA City employee prepares to cut down the dried-out reeds for disposal.

Alex Watt's first view of the 1901 Peerless automobile in a Florida front yard.

Alex Watt finds a Peerless antique in Florida

By Mike Tharp

Milady's Choice
Peerless Chainless

Touring Cars -- $2,800 to $11,000
Built to stand all tests, each car is as
Luxurious as a Turkish divan, as reliable
As a chronometer, as perfect as human
Ingenuity can make it.
With the chainless gear
There's naught to fear!
--1904 newspaper ad

To anybody else, it looked like a junked soapbox derby entry, draped in Florida weeds.

But not to Alex Watt. The acting head of the Planning Branch's Regional Planning Section sees both the past and the future. "I saw a lot there," the native Scot recalls of his first glimpse of what he suspects is a 1901 Peerless, loaded with history, memories and a promise of what can be.

Watt had bought what was left of the vintage car on eBay from an estate in Florida. The car reportedly had run as recently as 20 years ago, but it had been parked on a front lawn for a long time. So over the Memorial Day weekend, Watt drove his pickup truck 4,700 round-trip miles over 4 ½ days to fetch the 4-foot-wide, 7-foot-long vehicle. It fit nicely in the bed.

Why such exertions for what amounted to little more than the ghost of a machine? Watt, who has forged almost a second career restoring old cars, recognized the historic value of the 103-year-old relic. Based in Columbus, Ohio, Peerless began in the 19th century as a bicycle maker. In 1900, according to an eponymous Web site, Peerless started importing De Dion engines and chassis from France, making its own

Packed and ready to go - the Peerless steering, gear shift, accelerator and brake controls are very different from today's cars.

bodies. "The first Peerless Motorette was displayed at the New York auto show in November 1900," the Web site relates. Less than a year later, Peerless displayed a 2-cylinder car and quickly expanded both horsepower and designs. In 1904 the legendary Barney Oldfield was hired as a racer.

The company continued to make and sell an ever-widening gyre of cars, including a V16 model, but eventually original management was replaced by men from Cadillac. By 1932, an automaker once mentioned in the same breath as Pierce-Arrow and Packard had been converted into a brewery. It couldn't even keep its own brand name, and Carlings of Canada began churning out Black Label beer at the plant.

The Peerless next to Alex Watt's 1920 Model T at the District picnic in June.

"You seldom see a Peerless car today," the Web site states. "They are very rare. They were a limited production luxury car and were one of the more expensive cars sold in the USA." Watt reckons fewer than 150 cars were made in 1901, and only a handful of photographs remain of them. "It's as if their early cars disappeared off the face of the earth," he says.

Except for the one in his garage.

From the time he unloaded it at his home, Watt has proceeded like an automotive Sherlock Holmes—searching libraries, asking car club members, plumbing online sites—trying to detect the elusive Peerless. Even when he first saw it on eBa7, there was no nameplate and he identified the marque only because of its unique tiller steering (no wheel) and chain drive from the transmission to the rear wheel. Within a year or two, that system had been replaced by the more conventional one described in the 1904 ad. (eBay is a very unusual way to acquire an early car, as most are located by word of mouth or through ads placed in automobile club newsletters.)

Now that his quarry is safely ensconced, Watt must doff the tweed Deerstalker and don his restorer's cap. "Right now I'm still taking pictures," he says, "making a list, checking it twice."

The car has to be totally disassembled, with each part photographed, checked and measured so he can use them as a pattern if he cannot use the originals. The 10-speed-bike wheels now on it have to be replaced by 18-inch wire wheels, as will the Kohler engine, which is currently installed. Since the De Dion company has gone the way of the passenger pigeon, he'll be searching all the booths at the Beaulieu automobile swap meet this fall during his annual automotive treasure hunt in the United Kingdom. There he hopes to try to track down the correct engine and transmission.

He'll be using similar methods as those used by the original Peerless blacksmiths who put the first cars together by hand, since there was no assembly line. "They'd try different things on different cars," Watt explains. "If it worked, it worked. If not, they'd change it the next time."

Compared to the 1936 Riley Lynx which he's still working on, or the 1922 Model T Ford or the 1961 Aston Martin DB4 that he's finished, the '01 Peerless "will be easier," he says.

Watt easily envisions the refinished Peerless product: "It's going to be exciting as hell driving that thing down the road since the top speed is only about 25 miles per hour. It will be really different driving."

Move over, Barney Oldfield.

One hundred years of progress.

Engineer Day 2004 Awards

1. Rick Liefield received his 30-year service award from COL David Turk.
2. Jack Ferguson received his 50-year service award.
3. Richard Cadena received his 25-year service award.
4. Ben Nakayama presented the Toastmaster of the Year award to COL Curt Hellenbrand.
5. Glynn Alsup received his 35-year service award.
6. Petra Castillo received her 30-year service award.
7. Alex Watt received his 30-year service award.

1. Veronica Perez and Betty Melendrez receive 15-year service awards.
2. Patricia Vasquez, Veronica Vasquez and Johnny Fong receive their 20-year service awards.
3. COL Curt Hellenbrand holds the IMO award.
4. Ricardo Gutierrez received an award for 25 years of service.
5. Lois Goodman received her 25-year service award.
6. Dale Bulick received his 40-year service award.
7. Danny Carrasco received his 25-year service award with his son Julian.

Length of Service Certificates

10 years
Gary Adkins
Jeffery Armentrout
Susan Barela
Robert Blasberg
Marceleen Bradford
Elmer Datuin
Kayla Eckert
Michael Hallisy
Carmen Lara
Cuong Ly
Lisa Mangione
Nemesio Panimdim
Deanna Marie Ruiz
Victor Savage
Gloria Signorelli
Kevin Thomas
Cam Le Vuong
Robert Walker
Lawrence Watkins

15 Years
Kathleen Stryker Anderson
Marjorie Blaine
Stephanie Bledsoe
Kirk Brus
Gary Burger
Satsuki Carrington
Jodi Lynn Clifford
Andrea Collins
Debra Flores
Ernest Garcia
Judith Greenbaum
Gladys Habdas
Bruce Henderson
Tracey Hernandez
James Hutchison
Dorota Kwiecinski
Peter Massey
Francine Nevarez
Cedric Pelt
Veronica Armida Perez
Rosa Ramirez
Louis Charles Reagan
Mario Sanchez
Daniel Sulzer
Christina Valdez
Antoinette Walker
Jacque Winfrey

20 years
Elizabeth Brooks
Christina Chavez
Eduardo Demesa
Johnny Fong
Joyce Fredholm
Imelda Garcia
Mike Haugh
Thomas Kirkpatrick
Robert Kwan
Ronald Lenhardt
Cynthia Lester
Lisa Lugar
Julie Martinez
Loni Miller
Deloris Nicholas
Wayne Schiemann
Cecelia Scovell
Annie Huie Tam
Christopher Tu
Patricia Vasquez
Veronica Vasquez
Ruby White
Karen Wright

25 Years
Hector Angeles
Carlo Bravo
Richard Cadena
Daniel Carrasco
Barbara Cover-Spear
Tina Frazier
Lois Goodman
Ricardo Gutierrez Jr.
Mariscela Jaramillo
Ronald Johnson
Kenneth Krob
Roslyn Mercer
James Mills
Carlos Pedroza
Kathaleen Rabet
Abbas Roodsari
Robert Smith Jr.
Douglas Tillman
Brian Tracy

30 Years
Liddie Bay
Petra Castillo
Galen Cline
John Crase
Patricia Delgado
Ruth Fowler
David Hamrick
Richard Leifield
Deborah Mitchell
Alexander Watt

35 Years
Glynn Alsup
Matthew Callan III
Neil Erwin
Crosby Gardner
Richard Hadsall
Terence King
Davis Lukesh
Daniel Moore
Lawrence Perry

40 Years
Dale Bulick

50 Years
John Ferguson Jr.

In Memoriam
Paul Rose
Lawrence John Lam
Bobbie Hulsey

High spirits fill Arizona's picnic despite grey skies, cold winds and heavy rain.

By Jennie Salas

1

2

3

4

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

1. Bobbie Molette takes refuge from the storm.
2. Cindy Lester of Regulatory receives her 20-year service award.
3. George Eversole came prepared.
4. Ruth Fowler celebrates a whopping 30 years of federal service.
5. Regulatory's Liz Brooks is recognized for her 20 years of service.
6. COL Richard G. Thompson hands Kayla Eckert a 10-year service award.
7. Shaun Frost and his little bundle, son Steven.
8. Lawrence Perry is recognized for 35 years of service.
9. Claudia Sickler, AZ Area Office Administrative Officer, presents one of several door prizes to Louis Uptmor of the Rio Salado office.
10. Loni Miller is recognized for 20 years of federal service.
11. Jazmyn Brooks holds up her picnic prize.
12. George Beams, Con-0ps Chief, and Julie Martinez, Tucson Resident Office Engineer, talk some shop with the Commander.
13. Jack Silcox, Anita DeMarco and Jeanine Divis enjoy the day's camaraderie.
14. Two of Yuma Proving Ground's newest team members, Jerry Greene and Raymond Salas.
15. Neil Erwin, Roadrunner Office Resident Engineer, accepts a 35-year service award.
16. Carmen Lara recognized for 10 years service.
17. Mike Hagh is recognized for 20 years of service.

Around the L.A. District...

By Jay Field

LTC (P) David Turk presents plaques of appreciation from the Environmental Protection Agency to George Beams (left photo) and Steve Dwyer (right photo) thanking them for supporting the collocation of EPA staff members in the Los Angeles District. Beams and Dwyer coordinated temporary office space for six EPA staffers while the agency acquired a new home at 600 Wilshire Blvd. The six-month collocation ended up lasting two years.

Logistics and Management Office spreads goodwill with computer donations

By Mike Tharp

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," said Sir Winston Churchill.

The District's Logistics and Management Office (LMO) is making a lot of lives happier by its giving--of computers and other high-tech gear to needy schools.

In recent weeks, LMO's Romano Caturegli has arranged donations of previously used electronic equipment to schools in southern California and Arizona. Sacred Heart of Jesus Elementary School in East Los Angeles received five computers, five monitors and two printers. Salesian High School in L.A. got five computers and five monitors, and Miramonte Elementary School, also in L.A., received 38 routers, five computers and five monitors. Sousa Elementary School in Mesa, Ariz., also received a large load of computers.

"We could not begin to purchase the number of computers you've generously given to us," wrrote Cristi Denler, Sousa's principal. "They will be used by the 700 students to further their learning of not only technology, but the basics as well."

Jason Woods, technology coordinator for Miramonte Elementary and other L.A. Unified Schools, said the equipment "will aid in the instruction of students in all subject areas of all grades and is appreciated by the students, staff and parents." Salesian's computer instructor, Luis Marquez, said one computer already was being used "by students in the computer lab," while others are awaiting installation of software before they're put to work.

Note: In the past several months, Sousa Elementary School in Mesa and First Baptist Christian Academy at Sierra Vista, Ariz., California's East Side Elementary School, Lancaster and Baker Valley Unified School District have also received computers.

Letter to the Newscastle

Just wanted to tell you guys that you have a GREAT, informative and exciting web site. I visit several district/division web sites every day and yours is one of the very best. Keep up the good work.

Martha Kiene
HQ USACE

...and beyond

Online Division news bulletin named by District team member

The result of the search for a proper name to our (regional) monthly electronic news bulletin is: "SPD E-News: Everybody's News." We derived the name from one of the suggestions from Steve Cuthbert (SPL). I must tell you that the name that got the most votes was "South Pacific Waves." But we decided that it was not inclusive enough, the same reason we also did not select "Desert News." Many thanks for all who participated.

ESSAYONS (Let us try!)
COL Leo Flor

Dessert in the desert

Steven Stockton, SES, Business Management Office GRD, and COL Richard G. Thompson enjoy a break from the Baghdad heat with an ice cream cone and a Coke after COL Thompson's recent arrival in Iraq.

COL Ken Morris receives his colonel rank from MG Robert B. Ostenberg.

Moving up

COL David Turk stands proud as his sons Kent and Byron and his wife Carolyn attatch his emblems of rank after his recent promotion.

National Public Lands Day volunteers to earn "fee-free" day

Volunteers who pitch in on National Public Lands Day, September 18, will be rewarded with a free entry day during the next year at any public land site managed by five federal agencies. For the first time, all National Public Lands Day volunteers who work at a site managed by any of five federal agencies will receive a coupon good for a "fee-free" day at any site managed by the agencies. Those agencies participating are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

The fee-free day was initiated by National Public Lands Day and co-sponsored by Take Pride in America, a national partnership that aims to seek, support and recognize volunteers who work to improve public parks, forests, grasslands, reservoirs and wildlife refuges. "The fee-free day has been something we've been working toward for several years," said Patti Pride, director of National Public Lands Day. "Our goal was to reward our volunteers with a free day at the public land site of their choice." For more information visit npld.com.

Strock takes command

USACE photo

MG Carl A. Strock, incoming Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; COL Charles Taylor, Commander of the Army's 3d United States Infantry (The Old Guard) and LTG Robert B. Flowers, outgoing Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, inspect the troops during the July 1 Change of Command ceremony held at Fort Myer, Va. (Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, F.T. Eyre)

Washington, D.C. – MG Carl A. Strock took command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a military ceremony on July 1 at Fort Myer, Va. GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, hosted the ceremony. Strock replaces LTG Robert B. Flowers who retired during the same ceremony after 35 years of Army service.

Flowers served as the Army's 50th Chief of Engineers from October 2000 until the ceremony.

"General Flowers is a leader and a warrior and we are thankful for his dedicated service," said Schoomaker.

"The last four years, I've commanded a unique organization, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There's nothing else like it," said Flowers. "Unique in all the world, great civil servants, taking care of the nation and its Armed Forces, and I'm enormously proud of all of them." He acknowledged the many officers, noncommissioned officers and fellow Soldiers who mentored him.

During the ceremony, Flowers and Strock passed the ceremonial flag, symbolizing the change of command.

Strock is the 51st Chief of Engineers. The U.S. Senate confirmed his nomination as Chief of Engineers on June 25, with promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General.

The promotion will not take place until later this summer.

"I am deeply honored and truly humbled to stand before you today," said Strock. "I am honored because there is no greater privilege than to be entrusted with command when your nation is at war."

Strock has served the Army 33 years. He was previously assigned as the Director of Civil Works and the Director of Military Programs at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington D.C. He also served as Deputy Director of Operations for the Coalition Provisional Authority, Operation Iraqi Freedom.

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, COE
PO BOX 532711
LOS ANGELES, CA 90053-2325

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U. S. Postage Paid
Los Angeles, CA
Permit #4474