

THE COUNTY CONNECTION

A newsletter written by and for employees of St. Louis County Government
Charlie A. Dooley, County Executive

Winter 2003

GIS Day

Event promotes GIS technology

GIS (Geographical Information Systems) is a vital technology that supports many critical functions of County Government. Whenever the Police Department handles a 911 call, when the Revenue Department sends out tax bills, when citizens look up their Election information on the County web, GIS technology has been used to make these services possible.

GIS Day is a nationwide grassroots event in which geographic information systems (GIS) users and vendors open their doors to schools, businesses, and the general public to showcase real-world applications of this important technology.

St. Louis County provided a showcase of GIS activities in two sessions on Tuesday evening the 18th of November and mid day on Wednesday the 19th. Visitors were treated to an extensive map gallery, global positioning systems demonstrations by the Parks Department and hands on GIS demonstrations by the

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Xerxes King of Darts

by Sharon Jones



Xerxes King has been with St. Louis County since February 2, 1994. He works in mail services of the Division of Procurement and Administrative Services, General Services. Many of us are used to seeing Xerxes each morning as he brings the County's mail to each department. He is always helpful, friendly and willing to debate any sports issue. In

one department, he has even acquired the nickname of "Sunshine." However, since Xerxes rarely talks about himself, few people know of his life as an "ace" soft dart player.

Xerxes King is one of the top Soft Dart Players in St. Louis and in Illinois. In 2001, he was ranked nineteenth in the Country having a 27.536 point per dart average and qualifying to go to the national tournament, sponsored by the American Dart Association, that takes place each year in late July or early August in Las Vegas, Nevada. For the last two consecutive years he was awarded the High Score Trophy with total points of 1,105 and 1,111 for a 10 round (thirty throw) contest. Xerxes stated that he has more trophies, patches, pins and certificates than he can count. These make for nice memories, but the monetary awards are also very nice.



Xerxes King with his trophies.

Xerxes King started playing darts in September of 1993. I was pretty amazed that he could readily give me the exact date of when his interest in darts began, but then his interest in darts took him totally by surprise. It all started at Mother's Restaurant while waiting to be seated for dinner. He picked up one of the soft darts and began to throw at the target – pretty much just passing the time. In just a few minutes, he was involved in a dart game with a few other men at the

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YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

This issue's feature takes a look at the Department of Public Works

By Laura Estes

As often happens within government offices, the Department of Public Works frequently receives a variety of requests for assistance. While we don't do everything, our three divisions have a wide range of responsibilities.

The Code Enforcement Division staff makes sure that construction projects within unincorporated St. Louis



Jim Hannon reviews plans.

County comply with zoning requirements and all the appropriate codes - Building, Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical - in all phases of the building process. In addition, these same permitting and plan review services are also provided, on a contractual basis, to almost all of the 91 municipalities within St. Louis County. Are you

thinking about building a new home or remodeling your existing home? Are you going to build a retaining wall or install a swimming pool? Public Works oversees all those projects. We have plan reviewers who look over the drawings for the project to make sure they are complete and correct before a permit can be issued. Our permitting staff process the applications for permits and issue the permits to the homeowner or contractor. The inspection staff go out to the construction site and make sure the project is being built in accordance with the plans and the codes. They also investigate possible code or zoning violations for existing buildings or homes.



Permit Processing Staff work with the public.



Steve Martin inspects a fireplace.

The Operations Division is divided into the Design & Construction section, and the Facilities Management section. Design & Construction oversees construction projects on County-owned property; for instance, the Justice Center and Memorial Park. The new

Shaw Park Garage (including a bus station and direct

connection to the MetroLink station) is the biggest project we currently have in process. We also have a new health clinic for North County Residents nearing completion.



Shaw Park Garage and Transit Center

Facilities Management handles the day-to-day operations of County property. They handle all our leases; both property that we own and lease out, and property that we lease from others. They also take care of all the maintenance of buildings. Do you have a light out? Is there a faucet leaking? Do you need to have



Randy Jackson (left) and John Kemper (right) moving furniture.

furniture moved? Public Works has crews to handle those requests and many more. There is a person designated as the floor coordinator for each floor of every building. That person then contacts the Job Request line to report any maintenance needs. To find out who the floor coordinator is for your floor, you may contact Marita Hurley.

The Administration Division is responsible for providing many of the support resources Public Works employees need to operate and to deliver front line services. The Division of Administration supports the Director's office, Fiscal, Information Technology, Public Information, and Disaster Recovery Sections.

The Water Service Line Repair Program and the Sewer Lateral Repair Program are also part of the Administration Division. The Water Program covers the entire county, while the Sewer Program covers the unincorporated areas of the County, and the cities of Oakland and Greendale. Several other municipalities operate their own sewer program, but these are separate from the County program. These two programs provide insurance coverage for the repair of the sewer lateral and water service lines between the house and the main, which was previously the responsibility of the homeowner. If you or someone you know need to apply for a repair, our staff are ready, willing, and able to provide the information and assistance you need.

XERXES

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Xerxes with a dart.

restaurant. He actually out scored two of the other men throwing darts but didn't at the time realize that he was playing with some very creditable dart throwers who were impressed with this natural ability for the game. They encouraged him to put some time and effort into playing soft darts and put him in touch with many leagues that were interested in getting Xerxes to play on their team.

Xerxes has played with many leagues including Blue Berry Hill, St. Charles and St. Peters. Some of the leagues are sponsored by the location at which they play, but some individual players also have sponsors. All team members are provided with shirts, caps, jackets, etc. Some other leagues include the Missouri Valley League, Masters League and Bud Light Busch League. The meets feature different dart games but one of the most popular is 301. The competitors each start out with 301 points and then reduce the score by the points they get while throwing the darts. Sometimes handicaps are assigned to players and Xerxes' competitor may be assigned a 140 or 141 handicap. That means that his competitor would start with only 140 points and have to work down to zero, while Xerxes must start with the 301 figure. If Xerxes is playing someone with no handicap, the players cork (throw at the bull's eye) to see who goes first.

To be a soft darts ace, Xerxes stresses the importance of concentration and confidence. A good dart player needs strategy, a "good eye" and excellent balance to consistently execute good shots. Like any other sport or game, practice is a necessity. Xerxes says a couple of hours every other day helps keep his game sharp and improves his shots.

Although Xerxes has not played much lately, he is still called by many leagues to come and shoot for their team. He would still like to take his game to Las Vegas

someday. The timing just was not right in 2001 when he qualified; he was extremely busy planning his upcoming wedding and his league sponsor did not want Xerxes to compete without the whole team going. Xerxes wisely decided not to try and combine the tournament with his honeymoon. Oh well, someday maybe. Xerxes also tells me there is a tournament in London each year in which the players vie for \$1,000,000. This tournament is played with steel darts and the players are responsible for keeping accurate score cards much the same as professional golf players. With soft darts, the scoring is electronic, but other dart game principles remain the same. Xerxes is still an "A" ranked player. "A" players have a 25.000 or higher points per dart rating, "B" players average 20.0 - 24.9 points per dart and "C" players average 19.0 or less points per dart. As you can see, with 27.536 points per dart average, Xerxes is still a very sharp dart player.



A soft dart

GIS

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Department of Planning staff.

Visitors included the County Executive, members of the County Council, county employees, students and citizens. Refreshments were provided by Krispy Kreme



Chandra Gines (P&R) presenting to the public.

Donuts. Our first GIS Day was a great success! Next year, we plan on a bigger event with more County Department participation, inviting more school groups and municipalities. The GIS Day program will soon be available to community groups.



Gary White (left) receiving his award from Joe Passanise (right).

GARY WHITE, Revenue, recently received third place in the Area 19 Toastmaster Table Topics Contest. He is seen here with County retiree from Highways and Traffic, **JOE PASSANISE**, who is a District Governor in the Gateway Division of Toastmasters.

Gary is a member of the County Communicators Toastmaster Club, often called one of county government's best-kept secrets. The club is a place to learn how to lead, delegate, motivate, and overcome the fear of public speaking, all during two lunch hours a month! Meetings are also fun and foster wonderful interdepartmental relationships. All county employees are welcome to visit the meetings held on the 10th floor of the World Trade Center Building at 121 S. Meramec on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at 12noon to 1:00 pm. If you have questions, please contact club president **MARY PATTERSON** (Health) at 615-6878.



Department Notes



BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Spreading the joy of the Holiday Season was what it was all about for Election Board employees who participated in the Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child program, which sends donated shoe boxes filled with children's gifts to war-torn and famine-ravaged Third World countries. Heading up the project was **SHARON TOLBERT**.



BOE Staff Members with their boxes

MICHELLE ALEXANDER was recently promoted to an Election Judge Procurement Officer.

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

Competing in a field of more than 100 heavy equipment operators from Saint Louis County, Chesterfield and Hazelwood, Highways and Traffic's **RICH MCGHAY** (Backhoe), **KEITH BAKER** (Front-end Loader) and **DOUG BREWER** (Snowplow) each claimed first-place trophies in the Department's Fourth Annual Snow and Equipment 'Rodeo' in September. A brain child of Director **MIKE DOOLEY**, the 'Rodeo' enhances training dexterity and safety awareness among the Department's heavy equipment operators. In addition to maneuvering their machines through tough obstacle courses, all competitors are required to take written tests for their respective events. In recognition for their first-place showing, McGray, Baker and Brewer traveled in early October to Gardner, Kansas, where all four heavy equipment experts competed in the Mid-America Snow Rodeo. Each man snared Top 10 finishes in either the Backhoe, Front-end Loader or Snowplow Driving events, with McGray taking third place in the loader competition. **JEFF HEINE**, **LARRY NAGLE** and **MARY C. MARTIN** coordinated the Department's 'Rodeo', which was held in the County's Queeny Park.

VINCE OGAR, **RON LIVINGSTON**, **TOM BUESCHER**, **DAVN AHLVERS** and **DAN BALDENWECK** raised \$3,500 by cycling 150 miles this past September in the 19th Annual MS 150 Bike Tour. The Highways & Traffic employees were joined by numerous family members and friends in their two-day jaunt through central Missouri. Most of the money raised came from co-workers. Proceeds from the 'Tour' will be dedicated to research designed to find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis, and to provide support for those afflicted by the disease. All told, \$1.4 million was raised by the cause. Good work, fellas.

LARRY BOLLINGER, survey office manager with the Division of Construction, recently gave out-state surveyors insight into the science of modern surveying techniques. Bollinger, a surveyor for 34 years, gave his presentation at a gathering of "Missouri Mappers," a professional organization whose members work closely with County assessors and deed recorders.

HUMAN SERVICES

Three employees of Veterans Services received awards recently. **LARRY HELMS**, South County Case Manager, and **KATHY STURGEON**, Secretary, received Significant Contribution Awards from the St. Louis Area Stand Down Committee. Stand Down is a program for homeless veterans that promotes independent living by providing services and referrals. **JOHN ECKHOFF**, OVA Manager, received an award from The American Legion for his efforts as chairman of the National Convention Parade Committee.

The Governor's Award for Performance Excellence in Recognition of Achieving Workforce Investment Act Performance for Program Year 2001 was presented to Saint Louis County's Workforce Investment Board. The plaque was presented to the Board at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Workforce Development held October 9, 2003.

LISA SNYDER transferred to a Part Time Youth Services Worker / Project/Case Manager.

DELORES LACEY achieved her Masters Social Work from St. Louis University and **CHRISSEY MITCHELL-NASH** achieved her Masters of Social Work from Lindenwood University.

Hooray to newly promoted **FAY ELLATIF**, Supervisor, FSIS, **WILLIAM ROGERS**, Supervisor, Workforce Development, **LISA BEATTY**, Trainer/Case Manager and **DELORES LACEY**, Supervisor, Social Services Programs.

Congratulations to **DEBRA DOELLER-HENKE** and **PRISCILLAH MUGO-PEOLING** who recently married.

ROSEMARY TERRANOVA, Director of Family and Community Services, was recently honored as a Woman of Worth by the St. Louis Chapter of the Older Women's League (OWL). Each year OWL invites nominations for women who have made significant contributions to our community, and particularly have advanced the cause of mid-life and older women. OWL selects the ten

- Daniel E. Abbott (H&T)
- Larry K. Baker (H&T)
- Theodore L. Dashley (H&T)
- Brandon D. Eichhorn (H&T)
- Kevin H. Eichhorn (H&T)
- Tony L. Geraci (H&T)
- James C. Green (H&T)
- Judy E. Hahn (H&T)
- Eugene C. Helle (H&T)
- Jeannette Hering (BOE)
- Hanieh Houshmandi (H&T)
- Ursula King (HS)
- John A. Knoll (H&T)
- Carol Kouris (BOE)
- Jeffrey S. Lipp (H&T)
- Sally McGowan (Rev)

WELCOME!

- Michael G. Moehlenkamp (H&T)
- Susan Moody (Rev)
- Gregory M. Rebman (H&T)
- Jean P. Rodrigue (H&T)
- Salvatore Salamone (Rev)
- Douglas W. Wagganer (H&T)
- Stephan P. Wiedemann (H&T)

women deemed most noteworthy. Rosemary was nominated by four of her supervisory staff: **ELLEN SHERMAN, MARG BRAZIE, LISA SNYDER,** and **NANCY ULMAN.** Awards were presented at a dinner ceremony at the Frontenac Hilton on October 22.

In both 2002 and 2003, the Volunteer Plus Program, a program that supports adults with developmental disabilities, was chosen by Direct Impact, Inc., a community based marketing firm that annually holds the 24-hour create-a-thon to create materials for local agencies, to be the recipient of a professionally designed brochure. Direct Impact not only created a 5-color brochure for Volunteer Plus pro bono, but they also printed brochure copies with matching letterhead.

MARG BRAZIE, Supervisor of County Older Resident Programs' (CORP) volunteer recruitment, has joined forces with Wealth Protection Advisors LLC and AARP, as well as a number of local churches, to bring a driving safety refresher course to St. Louis County senior residents. The first one-day session, held in November, was a huge success with early sign ups filling the class, while others called about registering as walk-ins. Marg reports that all 404 county churches contacted regarding the program expressed interest in the program. Future classes are being planned.

A Job Fair for youth was held on June 23, 2003, at the World Trade Center. Sponsored by the Office of Family and Community Services' County Youth Programs (CYP), the fair was designed to introduce youth to employment opportunities and assist them in securing employment. Sixty youth attended from CYP's Doors To Success Program, the Family Court's Youth Opportunities Unlimited program, Lakeside Center, and various organizations in the community. This project was planned by a committee of employees



Youths listening to a job opportunity.

in County Youth Programs and Parkway Adult Education and Literacy, including: **DELORES LACEY, KIM FORMAN, HEIDI STUBITS, CHRISSY NASH, ANDRE YOUNG,** and **ROSEMARY WILSON.** A variety of industries were present, ranging from customer service to health care. Employers provided participants with information about their companies and conducted on-site interviews. As a result of the fair, many youth received second interviews and several youth obtained employment.

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Congratulations to the Sheriff's Office employees who lost a total of 334 pounds on the Atkins diet.

2003 Connection Cake Cookbook



Over 30 of your coworkers' favorite cake recipes have been compiled in this year's cookbook. A great stocking stuffer for just \$3! All proceeds generated from the cookbook sales are donated to the County's Adopt-A-Family Project.

Did you miss last year's Cookie Cookbook? A limited supply is available for \$3 each. Stop by the Division of Personnel or call Kathy Eller (615-5430) for your copy. Happy Holidays!

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Farewell to **COURTNEY GODDARD,** Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, with the Civil Division, **D. KIMBERLY WHITTLE** and **CAROLYN GRIESEMER.**

REVENUE

Congratulations to **TERRI CONNER** who celebrated her 70th birthday on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2003.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family, friends and co-workers of **MICHELLE DILLON.** Michelle died unexpectedly on October 21, 2003 from an aneurysm. She was only 42 years old. Michelle worked in the Recorder of Deeds Office as an Office Services Representative first at the information desk and then in the copy department. She was always helpful and constantly extended herself to customers.



Michelle Dillon

Her loving spirit and her friendly smile will remain in the hearts of all who knew her and loved her. Michelle was a member of Believers Temple Word Fellowship. She attended Lively Stone Church of God. She served as Sunday School Teacher, an Evangelist Leader over the Mid Western District Churches and a Praise Worship Leader.

SPIRIT AIRPORT

Spirit Airport is the new home of the St. Louis Blues Hockey team charter flight operations. The Blues report they are very happy with the convenience, efficiency, and customer oriented atmosphere provided at Spirit.

We Give Thanks - **JIM SMITHEY,** Maintenance Foreman at Spirit Airport, has a lot more to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Day. Jimmy was the eager recipient of a new kidney on September 2, 2003, and is doing very well. The generosity of a family in North Carolina gives all of us something to be thankful for this year. Jim will be writing the anonymous donor family a letter of thanks as well.



Jim Smitley

ANNIVERSARIES

30 Years

Claude E. Estes (H&T)
Clinton W. Ferguson, Jr. (H&T)
Erv Grimm (Rev)
Roy Mueller (Jus Svcs)
Gregory D. Myers (H&T)
Harry R. Watson (H&T)
Ted Zeilman (Rev)

25 Years

Jerry L. Allen (H&T)
Philip D. Buchanan (H&T)
Rita Casey (Rev)
Dori Covault (Plng)
Joseph T. Cronin (H&T)
Terry Faber (Rev)
Sarah Gray (Rev)
Janice Hammonds (Rev)
Patrick Hanses (Plng)
David W. Harmon (H&T)
Tom Hill (Rev)
Bertha Howard (Rev)
Janice Laycob (Jus Svcs)
Jeff Parks (Rev)

20 Years

Debbie Armstrong (Rev)
Connie Ciaramitaro (Rev)
Erik C. Dam (H&T)
James L. Gaines (H&T)
Volker Gruss (Rev)
Tina Hayes (Jus Svcs)
Charolet Lucas (Rev)
Cathy Pinkley (Rev)
Ronald Poole (Jus Svcs)
Gil Restrepo (Rev)
Peter A. Schwent (H&T)
Ellen Sherman (HS)
Diane M. Stevenson (H&T)
Bob Vogt (Admin)
Debra Voracek (Plng)

15 Years

Kara Arnd (HS)
Robert Berry (Rev)
Bonjiovonna Bonner (Jus Svcs)
Tyrone Brown (Jus Svcs)
Phyllis Eldridge (Rev)
Bruce Fenwick (Rev)
James Griggsby (HS)
Dan Harashe (Rev)
Patricia Hubecky (HS)
John Jost (HS)
Delores Kassebaum (HS)
John Kiene (Rev)
William Kupfer (Rev)
Karen Leahy (Rev)
Shirleen Linear (Rev)
Joyce Meeks (Rev)
Pauline Prince (HS)
Jo Rains (Admin)
Ann Randle (HS)
James Walker (Jus Svcs)
Sandy Youtzy (Rev)

10 Years

Barb Berra (Rev)
Harry Bracy (Jus Svcs)
Larry Davis (Rev)
James Dennis (HS)
Karen Elder (Rev)
Kymberly Graham (Jus Svcs)
Barry Hardin (Jus Svcs)
Donna Heard (rev)
Edward P. Henke (H&T)
Shanell Hill (Jus Svcs)
TeeJay Jeademann (HS)
Pervis Jones (Jus Svcs)
Ronald Lotts (Jus Svcs)
Cathy Meschede (Rev)
Dorothy Rayfield (Rev)
Steve Robertson (Rev)
Otha Robinson (Rev)
Deanne Siebels (Jus Svcs)
Rose Terranova (HS)
John T. Tschopp (H&T)
Jeraldine Wickham (Rev)
Melody Young (Rev)

5 Years

Doris Baker (Jus Svcs)
Lenora Barks (H&T)
James A. Brown (H&T)
Brett Cleland (Jus Svcs)
Danielle Clinton (Rev)
Jonel Coleman (Jus Svcs)
Mary Couch (Jus Svcs)
Janice Davis (Jus Svcs)
Riki Dooley (Jus Svcs)
Elnora Douglas (Rev)
Warren Fischer (Rev)
Linda R. Goerke (H&T)
Myra Gooden (Jus Svcs)
Sheila Harris (Jus Svcs)
Stacy Harris (Rev)
Tammy Henderson (Jus Svcs)
Shombre Howard (Rev)
Tracy Jennings (Jus Svcs)
Kevin Johnson (Rev)
Gerald L. Kennedy (H&T)
Michael Kimzey (Rev)
Antoinette King (Rev)
Larry Landon (Jus Svcs)
Sam Lollie (Jus Svcs)
Angela Lowry (Rev)
Quintin McKinney (Jus Svcs)
Melisa McLean (Plng)
Robert H. Medler (H&T)
Laura Mueller (Jus Svcs)
Scott R. Norris (H&T)
Michael Peplinski (Rev)
Alan Pounds (Hum Svcs)
Barbara Riek (Rev)
Vernon Square (Hum Svcs)
Richard Swinger (Hum Svcs)
Michelle Taylor (Rev)
Carolyn Tindle (Rev)
Cherise Triggs (Hum Svcs)
Serice Vaughn (Jus Svcs)
Pamela Yates (Hum Svcs)

RETIREMENT



MARY BURNS, South Area supervisor with CORP, retired September 19, 2003. Mary was with the County for over 28 years. The last 18 years were with CORP promoting the interests of older adults in Saint Louis County. Mary has assumed the responsibilities of director of the Family Violence Council in the City of St. Louis. She has a deep commitment

and dedication to victims of domestic violence. This should serve her well in her new endeavors. We wish her all the best.

A Goodbye Melody - Best wishes on her upcoming retirement are extended to **MELODY STUFFLET**, who has worked for the County

Older Resident Programs (CORP) for 20 years. Ordinarily hired to assist with CORP's Jobs for Seniors program, since 1992 Melody has coordinated Teleconnection, a unique teleconference program providing monthly bingo and talk shows for homebound seniors. CORP staff and Teleconnection participants hope to still hear Melody's voice as a volunteer bingo caller after her retirement projects are completed!

Spirit Airport sends a fond farewell and best wishes to Sgt. **MICHAEL WURTH**, who will be retiring in December after serving more than thirty-five years with the St. Louis County Police. He has been the supervisor at Spirit Airport since the 9-11 attacks and at Lambert Airport. We welcome his replacement, Sgt. **ROBERT FROHNE**. Two other officers, **KURT RUDOLPH** and **LARRY HANEBRINK**, joined the Spirit team earlier this year.

Congratulations to **BOB KOFFMAN** (Rev) - 14 plus years, **RICH HAUBRICH** (Rev), 22½ years and **FRANK KRIESKY** (Rev) 24½ years.

EMPLOYEE VOICES

There's a lot of traveling going on at this time of year - and not all of it is pleasant!
What's your worst travel nightmare?

From Jon Lawrence, Park Ranger . . .

After graduating from Mizzou in December '77, I drove down to Florida to stay with an aunt and uncle while job hunting. The trip down and back made the movie "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" look like a jaunt in the park. I was driving an old VW 412 sedan of questionable mechanical virtue. The ride south was going well enough until I hit a stretch of compacted snow and ice. Although I had slowed down to about 50 mph, the tires suddenly grabbed a rut in the ice and spun the car into several 360-degree turns. Luckily no other cars were near me and I ended up in a snow bank in the median. With the help of some wonderful passersby, I was able to dig the car out and continue on. Does the story end here? Heh.

After my stay in Florida, still footloose and job-free, I was heading back to St. Louis. While cruising through the lovely state of Georgia, I was startled to hear a loud thump and whine as my rusty (and less than trusty) VW lost all power. Smoke was issuing from the rear-mounted engine like a skywriter at an air show. It turned out that the engine had "swallowed a valve" and blown a piston. At wits end, I had the car towed to Tifton, Georgia where I sold it to a gold-chain-wearing used car dealer straight from Central Casting. You can imagine the great deal I got.

The final indignity was the ride home on a Greyhound bus. Or should I say busses? The first one actually broke down so I had to transfer to another one. And you really haven't experienced one of life's valleys until you pull into the St. Louis bus station on a freezing, slushy January day. Truly, this was a trip to remember!



second one blew and engineers spent about three hours trying to fix it in the dark before moving it to a siding. We wound up waiting outside of Jefferson City for about 4-1/2 hours and were not permitted to even pull far enough into Jefferson City to let passengers off. It was after 1:00 AM by the time we pulled in to Kansas City. My hotel reservation wasn't valid any longer, but luckily I found a room. About the only decent outcome was that I later got a voucher from Amtrak knocking \$30 off of my next trip.

From Deborah Bohnert, Park Ranger . . .

Last August, my mom and I started our 10-day vacation to Glacier National Park in Montana with a flight from Lambert to Chicago. Our flight was only supposed to pick up other passengers. But oh no, Mother Nature threw in a vast storm coming right out of the west which grounded the plane. At first, our pilot was quite pleasant, but as time wore on you could hear in his voice that things weren't going too well. Mind you, we are sitting in those great airline seats. You know the ones, where your knees are in your chest and the guy next to you (unless they are family) is constantly grabbing your hand to share that stick of an armrest. So now it's been not two hours, but it's going on four, the plane has barely moved and you can see a mile of jets stretching out forever on the tarmac. The pilot came over the intercom to tell us we can listen to the tower by tuning to channel 9. I did and, wow, there was not one happy voice. The remarks actually were hilarious and full of sarcasm. It was a good thing the poor air traffic controller was in the tower, because I know I saw smoke coming from our pilot's cabin (just a figure of speech).



Finally, we got into the air for the four-hour flight to Spokane and arrived at 2:30 AM. This place even rolls up its runways. There are no rental car places open except the most expensive and there are no cabs in site. We had been expecting to stay at my great aunt's home but I am not waking an 85-year-old at that time of the morning. We went to one of those phones for cabs - it didn't work. I found another one that rung off the wall (I guess all the cabbies had fallen asleep). Finally someone picked up and said "HELLO?" We asked for a cab and the guy said, "I will have someone right there." My mom and I went outside to wait, and wait we did. We waited and waited, but nobody showed. I looked at my mom and saw she was so exhausted she couldn't stand up and it was cold outside to boot. We went back inside and I called again. The voice at the other end said the driver couldn't find us. I wanted to reach into the phone and strangle this guy. This airport is so small - how could this guy not find us?! Finally another cab showed and we went to the closest motel. The trip started out terribly, but the rest of the vacation turned out fantastic - great scenic highway over to the Glacier National Park and well worth the drive - truly beautiful.

From Anne Agne, Park Administration . . .

I sometimes take Amtrak to Kansas City for shopping and visiting. It normally takes exactly the same amount of time as by car, and the Amtrak train station is only about one block north of Crown Center. One Thursday I was traveling by the evening train. About five minutes before the train was due to pull into Washington, MO, it came to a sudden stop. After half an hour, the conductors brought word that the three-engine coal train ahead of us had stopped, reason unknown. Forty minutes later, we went on, following the coal train before us without incident until we approached Jefferson City. While the conductors were pulling tabs and luggage for people due to get off there, the train came to a sudden halt again. This time we were stuck for over four hours! Our track was right along the Missouri River - to go out the doors on the right would be to go almost directly into it, and a train was sitting still on the single track to the left.



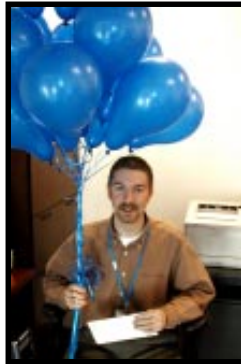
Apparently, all three stops were because of the same coal train. The first time, one of its three engines went down. The second stop, a

WANT TO HEAR MORE? Ask ...

Sue Hendricks (Spirit) about cold temperatures in the mountains or Rick Lee (HS) about Baltimore in the rain.

City Nicknames Puzzler Winner

Matt Stenberg, User Support Specialist with Justice Services, was pleasantly shocked to find he had won this issue's puzzler. He and coworker Ray Barnes worked the puzzler over their lunch period and sent in the entry on a whim. "This is typical team-playing for Matt," quipped Department IT Supervisor, Janice Biggs, Matt's supervisor, "he's that way on the job too."



Ray kept Matt busy while we worked our way through security to deliver his surprise and joked that Matt owes him half of his prize, a gift certificate to The Wine Merchant, Matt's favorite store. Matt declared his love of *The Connection* wouldn't allow him to share his prize since it meant so much to him. "The Fall Issue," he explained, "allowed me to connect with my coworker outside of my daily work routine." As everyone groaned, Matt smiled for his photo. Congratulations, Matt! Here are the answers from last time:

- Beantown = **Boston**
- Bluff City = **Memphis**
- Birthplace of Baseball = **Cooperstown**
- Big D = **Dallas**
- Chocolate Town, USA = **Hershey**
- City of Medicine = **Durham**
- Gateway City = **St. Louis**
- Kodak City = **Rochester**
- Mistake on the Lake = **Cleveland**
- Rubber City = **Akron**
- Rocket City = **Huntsville**
- The Icebox of the United States = **International Falls, MN**
- The Graveyard of the Atlantic = **Cape Hatteras**
- Valley of the Sun = **Phoenix**

NAME THAT CHRISTMAS CAROL

Read the descriptions below and write the name of the Christmas song or carol represented.

1. Apartment Of Two Psychiatrists

2. Quadruped With Vermillion Proboscis

3. Bleached Yule

4. Singular Yearning For The Twin Anterior Incisors

5. Righteous Darkness

6. Array The Corridor

7. Query Regarding Identity Of Descendant

8. Coetaneous-Colored Seed Vesicated In A Conflagration

9. Arrival Time: 2400 hrs – Weather: Cloudless

10. Monarchical Triad

Name: _____

Department: _____

Return by December 31st to the Division of Personnel.

DOs and DON'Ts For Workplace Holiday Small Talk

by Sarah Slaughter

- DO:** Discuss the many uses for fruitcake.
- DON'T:** Call someone a fruitcake.
- DO:** Comment on the frosty weather.
- DON'T:** Display your frostbitten toes.
- DO:** Talk about kittens, warm woolen mittens, snowflakes on your eyelashes, etc.
- DON'T:** Talk about politics, religion, lapses in judgment, family secrets, etc.
- DO:** Respect seasonal holidays and celebrations different from your own.
- DON'T:** Be disrespectful of seasonal holidays and celebrations different from your own.
- DO:** Ask how my holidays were.
- DON'T:** Comment on my weight gain.
- DO:** Ask if I have seen any holiday classics.
- DON'T:** Quote "It's a Wonderful Life" each time a bell rings.

Contributing Editors

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Dick Bauer | Mason Keller |
| TeeJay Jaedemann | Gail Ottolino |
| Cindy Davies | Sharon Remaklus |
| Johnita Grimm | Tricia Rodgers |
| Sue Hendricks | Ellen Waters |
| Diane Hirson | Bob Bence |
| Barbara Hughes | Kirk McCarley |
| Jennifer Tuckett | Paula Teabeau |
| Sue Kane | David Wrone |

Thanks to everyone for another great issue!
Kathy Eller