

# DEP fills meth lab cleanup needs

By Colleen O'Neill

**W**ith the ever-present threat of meth labs, the state Department of Environmental Protection has closed the gap left by a deficit of federal funds.

Between Feb. 22 and Aug. 12, the DEP's Homeland Security and Emergency Response Unit responded to 172 calls, 100 of them being methamphetamine labs equipped with acids, bases, solvents and other dangerous materials, including needles.

When the meth epidemic first reached West Virginia about 10 years ago, the DEP unit frequently helped in the remediation efforts of meth cleanups but there were far fewer



Filling a gap left in federal funding, the DEP's Homeland Security and Emergency Response Unit is spending more time around West Virginia cleaning up the dangerous remnants of illegal methamphetamine labs.

at that time. Then came federal assistance.

"During the 2006-2011 period when there was federal funding, we only took care of dumps with no outside funding support," said Rusty Joins, HSER Unit manager.

Until February 2011, the federal government took care of removing the hazardous materials left over from meth labs through the Community Oriented Policing Services grant. When a lab was seized, the feds would be notified and then hire a contractor skilled at removing

such threats. Now, the funds are used up, so the DEP's HSER Unit is left taking care of the mess, as well as handling its daily workload.

"One thing we did initially was to divide the unit into teams and schedule the teams for three-day 24-hour rotations, specifically for meth lab response," Joins said. "There have been times when we have been short on staff because of multiple issues in a day, but the group has been able to address the issues, as they arise."

See LAB, Page 3

# Open dumps are for the dogs ... cats

By Tom Aluise

Sometimes there's life among the trash.

No one knows that better than Greg Rote and his staff who make up the Department of Environmental Protection's Pollution Prevention and Open Dump program.

Almost every year, Rote said, his crews discover animals, often puppies and kittens, inhabiting the unsightly and unsanitary public dumps the DEP is tasked with cleaning up.

Earlier this summer, the DEP's Chris Cartwright, happened upon two mixed-breed puppies living in an open dump in South Charleston.

"There were about 60 TVs dumped over

See DOGS, Page 2

REAP's Chris Cartwright and puppies. Both dogs were later adopted from a no-kill shelter.



# 'I'm going to have a life'

► DEP employee talks candidly about her battle with cancer and the road ahead

By Tom Aluise

Janice Palmer is 50 years old, but she might as well be 21 again.

She is contagiously upbeat and has a youthful sparkle to her eyes. It's hard to imagine just five months ago Palmer was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer, leaving her family crushed and uncertain whether Palmer would even live long enough to attend her only daughter's wedding in June.

As it turned out, the disease had not progressed as much as doctors originally thought.

Yes, Palmer had ovarian cancer. But



By discussing her ordeal with ovarian cancer, Janice Palmer, who works for Environmental Enforcement out of Fairmont, hopes she'll enlighten other women about the disease.

instead of the more deadly stages III or IV, Palmer's cancer was classified as stage I, caught early and significantly more curable.

On Aug. 30, Palmer received her last chemotherapy treatment and doctors told her there is no longer

evidence of the disease. Surgery has been scheduled to remove the ports implanted in Palmer's body which delivered six rounds of chemo and she hopes to be back in her job fulltime with the DEP's Environmental Enforcement unit out of Fairmont by Oct. 1.

It all adds up to a happy ending to Palmer's story, right? Well, sort of. The "happy" part is true. It's just that Palmer isn't anywhere ready to end the story. She believes she was given a mulligan in life — a second

See LIFE, Page 10

## DOGS

Continued from Page 1

a hillside," Rote said.

Cartwright was investigating the dump when he noticed the two puppies. He alerted Rote and the two went back the following day to rescue the animals.

"He called them and they ran up the hill," Rote said. "They came right up and made it easier on all of us. They were sure glad to see him. I think they would have been glad to see anybody."

Rote said stray or neglected animals often take refuge in a dump because it can provide shelter and food.

All animals PPOD rescues are dropped off at no-kill facilities such as the New Hope Animal Rescue in Putnam County.

"You hate to see it," Rote said. "People just stop and dump animals like they're dumping garbage."



Stray animals, such as this kitten Chris Cartwright rescued, often take refuge in the open dumps PPOD staff members encounter.

# indepth

**Earl Ray Tomblin**  
Governor

**Randy Huffman**  
Cabinet Secretary

**Kathy Cosco**  
Communications  
Director

**Tom Aluise**  
Editor

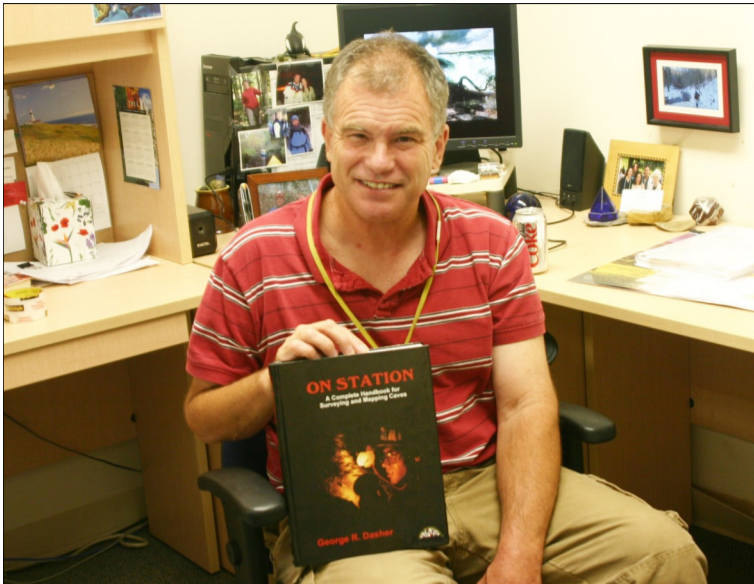
Public Information Office  
601 57th St. S.E.

Charleston, WV 25304

**Email:** Kathy.Cosco@wv.gov;  
or

Thomas.J.Aluise@wv.gov

*InDEPth is published monthly  
by the Department of  
Environmental Protection, an  
affirmative action, equal  
opportunity employer.*



Department of Environmental Protection geologist George Dasher holds up the second edition of his book about surveying and mapping caves.

## Author Dasher adds another book to list

By Tom Aluise

George Dasher won't call his newest book on cave surveying the be-all and end-all for cavers, although he will admit, "Right now, it's The Book.

"Who knows what will come out tomorrow?"

Of course, if anything does come out tomorrow on exploring caves, chances are Dasher's name will be associated with it.

A geologist with the Department of Environmental Protection's Groundwater Program, Dasher is a prolific writer of everything caves. This spring, the National Speleological Society (NSS) released its second edition of "On Station," a handbook for surveying and mapping caves.

Dasher not only authored this edition of "On Station" but penned the original book in 1994.

"I did this one because they asked me," Dasher said. "I've never been good at making money."

The latest Dasher production is a 264-page hard-cover smorgasbord of text, pictures, figures, technical drawings, maps and mathematical equations dealing with exploring and mapping caves.

He started the book in 2007, finished it in 2009 and then was asked by editors to rework a portion of the book. It was finally released in April 2011.

"There was a lot of fine-

See **BOOK**, Page 10

## AML project honored with Appalachian Regional award

Click for video story

<http://www.vimeo.com/28474999>

The federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has awarded an Appalachian Regional Award to the DEP's Abandoned Mine Lands program.

AML's Kempton Refuse and Acid Mine Drainage Project in Tucker County is being recognized as "an



Coberly

exemplary reclamation project that emphasizes the elimination of dangerous health, safety and environmental problems resulting from abandoned mine lands," said OSM Director Joe Pizarchik in a letter to AML Chief Eric Coberly.

The project was completed in 2009 at a cost of \$2.3 million and involved backfilling, regrading and vegetating dangerous highwall; installing wetseals on two partially collapsed portals; and removing two surface impoundments.

Environmental issues also were addressed by reseeding and reforestation; adding limestone to tributaries and implementing natural stream channel design techniques; and installing a passive water treatment system.

The Kempton Project will be officially honored during the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Program Awards banquet on Oct. 10 in Olympic Valley, Calif.

### LAB

Continued from Page 1

Making this sacrifice to keep West Virginia safe has the HSER Unit driving all over the state, using up its budget on overtime and gas.

"In approximately five months, the unit has completed a full year's worth of work," Joins said. "The entire unit stepped up to the challenge of the additional work and keeping up with our

normal day-to-day work."

They will continue this effort, as funds are now available for them to use.

During the recent Special Session of the Legislature, a supplemental allocation of \$227,000 was provided to the agency specifically to help pay for meth lab cleanups. The governor signed the bill on Aug. 11 and the group is now working with Administration to

work out the accounting details.

The HSER Unit may be small, but is very capable.

There's Maureen Clemons, the office assistant. When you call, she's the voice on the other end. She provides the office and clerical support for the unit.

All team members are environmental resource specialists, skilled at handling and disposing of hazardous waste and

chemicals.

Team members are Matthew Smith; Lou Spatafore; Dave Wheatcraft; and Rebecca Wiseman. Joins and Mike Dorsey, chief, are part of the team, participating in the cleanups and also are skilled at handling chemicals and disposing of hazardous waste and chemicals.

However, they have the added responsibility of acting in a supervisory role.



Division of Mining and Reclamation interns Anna Hubbard, left, and Beth Belcher were among a group from DEP that toured an underground coal mine.

# Getting a closer look

## DEP interns, staffers broaden knowledge with deep mine tour

By Colleen O'Neill

In hopes of further educating not only its summer interns, but some of its employees as well, the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Mining and Reclamation arranged for several groups to tour an underground coal mine.

"We thought it would broaden their outlook on the mining industry and their understanding of the data they work with," said Yvonne Anderson, DMR's coordinator for the college interns.

During the first week of August, four DEP attorneys, 18 college interns and four DMR employees toured Patriot Coal's Panther Mine in Kanawha County. The tours were scheduled for different days to accommodate the large number of people.

Phil Mooney, an environmental inspector with DMR's Inspection and

Enforcement Unit, helped set up the tours.

"It was humbling," said Nathan Carte, one of DMR's college interns.

Carte is 19 and a mining engineer major with a geology minor at West Virginia University. His father, Keith, is an environmental inspector with DMR's Office of Explosives and Blasting.

Nathan Carte explained how seeing an active mine is different than seeing an exhibition mine. For one thing, miners are busy mining coal.

"They use the continuous miner, which is a machine that takes the coal out of the wall, crushes it, and puts it on the conveyor," he said. "It replaced the old time miner with a pick."

But this tour did more than just open the eyes of a young engineering student. It also deepened the understanding of DEP attorney Joe Jenkins, who

See LOOK, Page 5

# Float trips help bring to light river pollution

By Jennifer Garlesky

Community leaders, concerned citizens, and elected officials of the New River region learned firsthand about the issues affecting the lower New River watershed during an educational float trip earlier this summer.

A newly released report targets the tributaries of the lower New River for testing high with impairments, including fecal coliform bacteria and metals associated with mining.

At high water the New River receives the most pollution from its tributaries. Since 2006, the state has designated the entire length of the lower New River from Bluestone Dam to Gauley Bridge to be impaired with fecal coliform.

The raised levels of fecal coliform bacteria can be attributed to a number of sources such as wastewater treatment systems, failing septic systems, and household sewage straight-piped into the streams without being treated, the report states.

The report, conducted by Downstream Strategies of Morgantown, targets Piney Creek in Beckley, Arbutle Creek in Oak Hill and Wolf Creek in Fayetteville as the priority watershed areas for reducing pollutions into the river.

"First, we need to encourage more community support for addressing pollution issues in the lower New River, and second, we need to focus on infrastructure grants involving existing systems — fixing leaky sewer plants and leaky sewer pipes. Our biggest pollution issues involve heavy rains in areas served by central sewers," Heather Lukacs, Clean Water Facilitator of the National Parks Conservation Association told the Charleston Gazette.

A series of educational float trips occurred in June, July and August to educate state and local officials about the issues stated in the report and to gain support to clean up the river.

John Tingley, who works for the Department of Environmental Protection's Revolving Loan Fund Program, participated in the July trip.

See TRIPS, Page 6

# Y camp branches out to DEP

► *Charleston YMCA offers Environmental Week for summer camp*

By Colleen O'Neill

Environmental education is something that everyone, no matter the age, can benefit from.

Earlier this summer, the Department of Environmental Protection opened its doors to share its environmental know-how with 23 area youth and four adults.

The YMCA of Kanawha Valley brought its summer TOGA camp to the DEP, allowing middle and high school students to get first-hand experience on measures they can take to help heal our planet.

“Drew Pack with the Y called and told me they were doing Environmental Week the first week of August and asked if there was anything we could do,” said Annette Hoskins, of the DEP’s Public Information Office, explaining how the agency became involved with the YMCA’s summer program.

“I volunteered to take the task on when I received the call. I emailed a contact from every group in the agency and asked who could do it on that particular day.”

The Youth Environmental Program, the Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan and the divisions of Air Quality and Water and Waste Management answered the call.

YEP provided the age group with a recycling presentation that stressed its importance.



David Roberts, from the DEP’s Youth Environmental Program, talks to YMCA summer campers about recycling during their visit to DEP headquarters this summer. The group visited the DEP as part of the camp’s Environmental Week.

One of the young people in attendance was Grace Peyton, a ninth-grader at Capital High School.

Peyton said her family recycles plastic bags, newspapers, and magazines at home.

“Today, I learned about some new places we can take recycling to,” she said.

The DWWM gave a presentation that shed some light on septic tanks. Peyton found this interesting because she has friends who have homes equipped with septic systems.

“I learned that if you have a septic tank you have to get it cleaned out every three years,” she said.

The Division of Air Quality gave its presentation in the Dolly Sods Room, where it used its dollhouse display to show how solar energy worked, and

its tire display to communicate the importance of properly maintaining tire pressure to reduce the use of gasoline in your car.

“I’m thinking about getting my learner’s permit, so that helped,” Peyton said.

The day wrapped up with a pizza lunch.

REAP supplied gift bags for those in attendance.

The kids visited the DEP because it was Environment Week at camp.

TOGA camp normally offers different themes each week for the summer. Examples are Arts Week, Sports Week, and Water Week.

One of the TOGA camp counselors, Orleta Holmes, said they had planned a trip to the recycling center, as well, for Environmental Week this summer.

## LOOK

Continued from Page 4

relished the opportunity to see a longwall mining machine at work.

“I have always had a fascination with how things work and it is a rare experience to witness the longwall miner in action,” Jenkins said.

An attorney in the DEP’s Office of Legal Services, Jenkins represents the agency when a mining-related suit or action is filed with the Surface Mine Board or the circuit courts.

“It is good to understand how mining works, so you have more familiarity with the industry the DEP regulates,” he said.

The recent mine visit was a big hit with the interns, according to Anderson

“Some work with surface mines, water, and others deal with data,” she said.

## Environmental Conference for youth set for Twin Falls

By Colleen O'Neill

The Department of Environmental Protection’s annual Youth Environmental Conference is scheduled from Sept. 30 through Oct. 2 at Twin Falls State Park in Wyoming County. The Youth Environmental Program sponsors the event for the state’s young adults.

The conference has workshops on environmental topics that are relevant to life, such as a recycling workshop and a water workshop.

Saturday is filled with tours of area

See YOUTH, Page 6

**TRIPS**

Continued from Page 4

“There are a lot of needs in this state that are still unmet,” Tingley told the Beckley Register-Herald.

“There are a lot of things that will only be solved by community involvement programs like this.

“The biggest problem we have in this state is that people don’t think there is a problem, and there is one.”

The report also recommends addressing the pollution through a holistic strategy that builds a cohesive regional voice and a community-based plan to monitor the water quality in the Lower New River, supports funding for the repair of leaky sewer pipes, and provides alternatives for clean water solutions such as investing in green infrastructure and decentralizing wastewater, according to a press release by the National Park Conservation Association.

The report was released by the New River Clean Water Alliance.



**Public officials, community leaders and other citizens took part in a float trip this summer to learn more about issues affecting water quality in the lower New River Watershed. A newly released report targets the lower New for impairments.**

The group is comprised of watershed organizations, the National Park Conservation Association, the DEP, the National Park Service, and West Virginia Professional River

Outfitters.

For more information about the report and the New River Clean Water Alliance, visit the Web site: [www.npca.org/newrivercleanwater](http://www.npca.org/newrivercleanwater).

# Great Kanawha River Cleanup Sept. 10

By Colleen O'Neill

Your chance to help make West Virginia shine is fast approaching.

The annual Great Kanawha River Cleanup is set for Sept. 10 from 8 a.m. until noon. Volunteers will clean up along the banks of the river at the beach at Winfield Locks; Roadside Park in St. Albans; Magic Island in Charleston; and Kanawha Falls, near Glen Ferris.

“We always get a great response from our volunteers for this event,” said Travis Cooper, Make It Shine coordinator for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. “The number of people who come out to help really shows how much people value this natural

resource. Last year, more than 130 people joined in. I’m excited to see how many volunteers we have this year. I’m sure it’ll be a lot.”

Anyone wishing to volunteer needs to register with the DEP to ensure that enough supplies will be obtained for each cleanup location. The DEP’s Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan program will supply the needed bags and gloves for volunteers and each volunteer will receive a free T-shirt. REAP will also arrange for trash to be hauled away.

Last year, volunteers collected 7.75 tons of litter and debris, and 152 tires.

For more information or to register to volunteer, contact Travis Cooper at 304-926-0499 ext. 1117, or e-mail: [Travis.L.Cooper@wv.gov](mailto:Travis.L.Cooper@wv.gov).

**YOUTH**

Continued from Page 5

environmental facilities.

This year, the youth will be touring the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority Landfill and Recycling Center, and the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and Coal Camp.

“The temperature in the mine is 58 degrees year round so you’ll want to wear a jacket,” said Diana Haid,

director for DEP’s Youth Environmental Program. The conference will also feature guest speakers. One speaker is expert storyteller David “Bugs” Stover of Mullens who will entertain with his verbal cues.

But the conference is more than just tours, guest speakers and workshops.

There’s a dance that allows the young adults to be social. There’s a

centerpiece competition, where the youth get to be creative and environmental by using recyclable material.

Attendees also have the opportunity to learn from others through reports written about what camp activities taught them.

The conference wraps up with the youth groups sharing their community environmental projects.

To attend the

conference, a club must be enrolled in the Youth Environmental Program. Reservation forms are available on the Youth Environmental Program Facebook page, or on the YEP Web page at: <http://www.dep.wv.gov/PIO/Pages/yep.aspx>.

Reservations are taken on a first-come basis. For more information contact Haid at 304-926-0499 ext. 1114, or email: [diana.k.haid@wv.gov](mailto:diana.k.haid@wv.gov).

# Putting pieces together can save lives

Do you realize how vital a role you could potentially play in saving the life of a co-worker or a visitor in the event of sudden illness?

You may have not volunteered to be on the Response Team or didn't take CPR or First Aid but you still might be the individual who comes in first contact with a victim and your actions could be the deciding factor in their chances of survival.

Calling or initiating your site's procedure for a "CODE BLUE" quickly could make a big difference in their recovery.

Emergencies are often signaled by something unusual that catches your attention, such as:

**Unusual noise** — Screaming, sudden silence, items falling, etc.

**Unusual odors** — Smoke, an unrecognizable smell, etc.

**Unusual sights** — Blood, smoke or fire, broken items, etc.

These are easy to

recognize unusual appearances or behaviors:

■ A person who is noticeably uncomfortable.

■ A person who is clutching his or her chest or throat.

■ A person who appears to be confused or drowsy for unknown reasons.

■ A person who has trouble breathing.

It may be hard to recognize an emergency or sudden illness in some cases. The signals are not always easy to see or identify. If you think something is wrong, check the person. Ask questions.

Questions may help you find out what is wrong. A person may

deny anything is seriously wrong.

Are you wondering what a sudden illness is? There are several types of sudden illnesses. Some of these include:

- Fainting
- Seizure
- Stroke
- Diabetic emergency
- Allergic reactions
- Poisonings

Some illnesses develop over time, while others can strike without a moment's notice.

The most important thing you can do is pay attention to details and notice changes in people's behaviors and appearance.

That means when

you're speeding down the hall to that meeting pay attention to the individual who is standing there possibly in your way — sweating, making no sense at all or acting confused — speak to them and ask them questions and listen not only to their response but pay close attention to their appearance and behavior, they might be having a medical emergency and need your assistance.

They might not actually ask you for help at this time because they might not realize they need it.

It only takes seconds for some of these conditions to go from bad to worse. The clock is ticking in these types of emergencies. Take a moment to notice what's going on with the individual, because the tables could be turned at any time and you might be counting on your co-workers to take that moment and action.

— *DEP Safety Committee*



## New Additions

### Recent DEP hires

- ▶ Kenneth Bryant, DMR
- ▶ Charles Carl, OA
- ▶ Tim Hodge, DWWM
- ▶ Michael Huff, PIO
- ▶ Laura McGee, DWWM
- ▶ Ryan McGlothen, DWWM
- ▶ Glenda Offenber, DWWM
- ▶ Tonya Omblor, DWWM
- ▶ Daniel Stowers, DMR
- ▶ Bret Stutler, DMR
- ▶ Roberta Vanness, DMR

## Human Resources corner



### PLANS Team finishing up JCQ review

The Division of Personnel PLANS Team is finishing its review of the over 17,000 individual and group JCQs submitted.

They will soon move to the Evaluate Job Content phase, in which information from the JCQs will be analyzed using the Hay Point Factor System. This is a method of analyzing jobs based on know-how, problem solving and accountability.

In preparation for this phase, 27 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from various agencies met on June 9-10, 2011 for training by The Hay Group on job analysis and evaluation. The SMEs will meet again in the upcoming months to review and evaluate job content from the JCQs.

Those with questions can contact Sandy Kee at extension 1554 or Debbie Hughes at 1442.

Information also is available by email: [DOP.PLANS@wv.gov](mailto:DOP.PLANS@wv.gov).

# Rain doesn't dampen AAH picnic

By Colleen O'Neill

Despite inclement weather, volunteers came out to celebrate their stewardship at the state Adopt-A-Highway Program's annual volunteer appreciation picnic.

More than 300 volunteers and their families converged on North Bend State Park in early August. AAH has been enabling West Virginia citizens to clean up their roadways for 23 years.

This past year alone, 67 new groups joined the AAH program.

"Unfortunately, Mother Nature decided not to cooperate," AAH Coordinator Sherry Thaxton said about the picnic. "It rained until around 2 p.m., only leaving an hour to play the outside games and by then it was too late to get everything set up.

"The rain didn't stop some of the kids though. They were playing out in it. The shelter had puddles inside from the runoff and some of the little kids kept running through it, splashing and laughing."

Most of the activities were under canopies, like bingo and basket weaving. Sand art for the children was inside the nature center.

"We had a live bluegrass band which was a first for the AAH picnic, and the banjo player even played the music for the cake walk," Thaxton said. "We had 15 people go home with baked goods.

"We wanted people to really enjoy themselves and know that we really appreciate them. We gave really nice prizes this year."

For bingo, 25 people received either a stadium blanket, a folding chair, a golf umbrella, or a cooler, all bearing the logo for AAH.

But those weren't the only prizes given. If you attended the picnic and you were over the age

**AAH Volunteer of the Year**



**REAP Chief Danny Haught and AAH Volunteer of the Year Diane Hamilton, from the Sandy Pals 4-H Club in Preston County.**

**Adopt-A-Highway Award winners**

- ▶ **Volunteer of the Year** — Diane Hamilton, Sandy Pals 4-H club, Preston County.
- ▶ **Most litter collected (since May, 1989)** — Bufflick Good Neighbors Club (Kanawha County), 1,372 bags, 207 hours, 54 volunteers.
- ▶ **Most litter collected since 2010 picnic** — Brushy Fork Community Association (Barbour County), 68 bags, 26 tires.
- ▶ **Most active group since 2010 picnic** — Fat Tire Cycle, Upshur County, 38 hours, eight cleanups.

of 16, your ticket went into a door prize drawing, therefore giving everyone a chance to win.

"Not everyone plays bingo, so we thought door prizes for the adults and AAH backpacks filled with recycled goodies for the kids were an excellent way to show the volunteers that they are appreciated," Thaxton said.

"Although we only had six door prizes, they were little more expensive gifts than in the past and I tried to pick items that everyone would want." The door prizes were two global positioning

systems, two digital photo frames, and two digital cameras.

All adults present received a litter-getter.

"Those are always a big hit with our volunteers.

"Since this was my first AAH picnic and excluding the rain, all-in-all I think it went well and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

"Hopefully, next year at Pipestem, Mother Nature will cooperate."

The fall AAH Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 24.

## There's no place like out of the classroom

The DEP's Chris Gatens, right, takes students from Richmond Elementary on a nature hike through South Charleston's Little Creek Park during a recent DEP outdoor classroom session. About 120 third-, fourth- and fifth-graders from Richmond learned something new.

Click for video story

<http://www.vimeo.com/28516880>







The Governor's Reception Room at the state Capitol was filled for the annual Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Awards.

## Environmental Awards shifted back to Capitol

A standing-room-only crowd filled the Governor's Reception Room at the state Capitol this summer for the annual DEP Environmental Awards.

The awards ceremony had not been conducted at the Capitol for several years and this year's event drew a large turnout of award winners from around the state, as well as DEP staffers.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman recognized the environmental stewardship efforts of 19 Environmental Award recipients from throughout West Virginia in the 11th annual event. The awards recognize the accomplishments of state industries, municipalities, educators and



Both Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman and Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin addressed the gathering.

community leaders who strive to protect the environment, work to be good corporate neighbors, and educate the state's citizens.

A complete list of winners and photos can be found in the Spotlight Section on the DEP Web site.

## Emergency Rule filed, approved

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, as directed on July 12 by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin in Executive Order No. 4-11, filed an Emergency Rule on Aug. 22 with the Secretary of State's Office to increase the DEP's regulatory oversight of horizontal well development in the state.

The rule was approved by Secretary of State Natalie Tennant on Aug. 29.

The rule, which will remain in effect for 15 months, adds new permit application requirements for operators drilling horizontal gas wells, as well as new operational rules to protect the state's water quality and quantity.

The Emergency Rule is intended to help the DEP better regulate the state's growing natural gas industry, which is benefitting from improved horizontal drilling techniques that allow operators to more easily access deep shale gas, such as that found in the Marcellus Shale.

Those same drilling techniques involve significant surface area disturbances and large-volume hydraulic fracturing that uses millions of gallons of water per well.

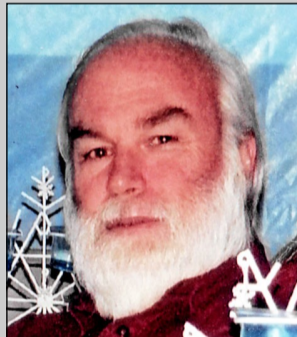
## In memory

David A. Smith, 58, died on Aug. 26. Smith worked for the DEP's Abandoned Mine Lands Program out of the Philippi office and had 25 years experience with the agency. He lived in Blueville, near Grafton.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Ann (West) Smith; and two daughters, Brandi Leann Campbell, of Morgantown, and Tonya Marie Smith, of Grafton.

Smith was a member of the Blueville United Methodist Church, where he was the Sunday School superintendent. He also served as president of the Grafton High Athletic Boosters from 2000-08.

Smith found and set grave stones for unmarked graves and was a member of the 18th North Carolina Company "A" Civil War Reenactment Group for eight years.



## DEP retirements

**Clyde Bennett**

DLR

**Last day:** July 29, 2011

**Years of service:** 21

**Donald Jackson**

DWWM

**Last day:** Aug. 16, 2011

**Years of service:** 22

**Ronald Garrett**

DWWM

**Last day:** Aug. 31, 2011

**Years of service:** 25

**Louis Schmidt**

DWWM

**Last day:** Aug. 31, 2011

**Years of service:** 20

**LIFE**

Continued from Page 2

chance — and plans to use that opportunity to help educate women about ovarian cancer.

“The first 50 years of my life I was always somebody’s daughter, somebody’s wife, somebody’s mom,” Palmer said. “Not that I didn’t value those things, but I never did things just because I wanted to do them.

“Now, I’m thinking I’m getting my mulligan and the next 50 years I’m going to help people. I don’t know what I’m going to volunteer doing when this is over. I don’t know if I’m strong enough to work with other cancer patients, but I know how afraid I was and I don’t want other women to feel that.

“Everybody here will say you’re so strong. Look at all the things you’ve been through in your life. I was strong because I had to be. When I went through my divorce and lost my mom to breast cancer, I had to be strong. I had a little girl, 18-months-old. I had to be strong for her. This time, I’ve chosen to be strong and it’s a whole different feeling. Now I want to be strong. I’m not ready to throw in the towel.”

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and Palmer plans to take advantage of the platform. “If I help one



Janis and daughter Jenna on Jenna’s wedding day.

person, that’s one more person, because I really don’t wish this on anybody,” she said.

“I think as women we do tend to be nurturers,” Palmer said. “We say, ‘Are you feeling OK?’ to our husbands and our kids, but we don’t take care of ourselves. During the time when my dad’s health was beginning to fail, I was more concerned about him, even though I suspected something was wrong with me. I thought, ‘I’ll take care of me tomorrow.’

“I want women to be more proactive. I think as a woman, you know when something is not right in your body. Don’t

ignore it. And if your doctor looks at you like you’re crazy, fine, let him look at you like you’re crazy because you’re talking about your life here.”

Usually striking women in their 60s, ovarian cancer is the second most common gynecologic cancer but it is difficult to diagnose early because symptoms don’t often appear until late in the disease. Also, early warning signs, such as menstrual irregularity, could be due to many different conditions.

Later symptoms of the disease include abdominal swelling and bloating, loss of appetite,

constipation, urinary frequency and feeling full after eating little.

“Some of those things are the normal symptoms women feel every month and you just overlook them,” Palmer said. “You think, ‘it’s just that time.’

“Ovarian cancer is diagnosed way too late. It doesn’t get the notoriety that breast cancer does. So, I’m thinking, that’s what I’m supposed to do — start speaking to women’s clubs and things to make women more aware that you can beat this. You might have cancer, but it doesn’t have you and it’s never going to get me.

“My cancer could have very well moved into stage II or III before I did anything about it and I wouldn’t be able to say ‘I’m going to see my grandkids and I’m going to spoil them rotten.’

“It’s still hard for me to wrap my head around the fact that I had cancer. My mom passed away with breast cancer and my dad had colon cancer. I should have known, but I still never thought it was going to hit me.”

Palmer said she began having irregular bleeding and abdominal pain nearly two years ago. Visits to her doctor would provide sporadic relief but the problems continued until this spring, when they grew

See LIFE, Page 11

**BOOK**

Continued from Page 3

tuning that needed to be done,” Dasher said, comparing the second edition of the book to the first. “A lot of the text needed to be changed. The techniques are basically the same but a lot of the surveying equipment has changed.”

Dasher, a Maryland native and 20-year DEP veteran, has been caving in West Virginia since 1975. He moved to the state from Wyoming in

1978.

Caving, for Dasher, is a passion fueled by a love of both the outdoors and science.

“I just always wanted to go caving,” said Dasher, who was the 1993 recipient of the prestigious Carnegie Museum of Natural History Award for long-term contributions to caving and speleology and earned the NSS Arts and Letters Award in 2003.

“I got attracted to it early on. Caving is a fun adventure, but it’s the

science that has really held me in place.”

Oh, by the way, Dasher likes to write, too.

He has written and edited caving newsletters and magazines for over 30 years.

Some of his work includes West Virginia Speleological Survey publications “The Caves and Karst of Pendleton County,” and “The Caves and Karst of Grant County.” Dasher even wrote the Guidebook for the 2000 NSS convention, which took

place in Elkins.

He is currently working on another state Speleological Survey publication called “The Caves and Karst of West Virginia.”

“I enjoy writing. It’s therapeutic,” Dasher said. “And caving has given me an outlet.”

Dasher admitted, though, occasionally he’s glad to see the writing part of a project come to an end.

“Sometimes it’s just a relief — like the end of a bad camping trip,” he said.

**LIFE**

Continued from Page 10

considerably worse.

"I would complain to the wellness person here that I was always full and I never had an appetite," Palmer said. "And I love to eat. I love to cook."

This past April, when the pain and bleeding intensified, Palmer scheduled another appointment with a doctor and an ultrasound was ordered.

"I knew when the girl was doing the ultrasound, something wasn't right," Palmer said. "She kept making small talk and I could tell she was kind of nervous."

The tumor measured 10 centimeters and Palmer was scheduled for surgery a week later at Mon General in Morgantown.

Her daughter, Jenna, was preparing not only to graduate from

Marshall University in a month, but planning a wedding that was only two months away.

After surgeons spent more than four hours removing her mother's tumor, Jenna had much bigger issues to deal with.

Based on the size and location of the mass, doctors believed Palmer had stage III or IV ovarian cancer.

They delivered the grim news to family members but held off telling Palmer the extent of the cancer, only that she had it.

"It blindsided my daughter," Palmer said. "She started calling family and friends. Now, they're thinking, 'How long can we prolong her?'"

"Jenna stayed with me in the hospital for two days. The surgeon was very upbeat and telling me to be positive. Everybody but me knew

it was stage III or IV."

When pathological reports revealed that no lymph nodes were affected, Palmer was reclassified to stage I. The great news was delivered in dramatic fashion to Palmer's hospital room.

"The doctor comes running into the room with all these papers in his hand and he's shaking them," Palmer said.

"He's got this huge smile on his face. He said, 'Janice, you're stage I, you're stage II' and I'm thinking, 'OK, I'm stage I, what does that mean?' Then he explained everything to me."

Only 5 percent of ovarian cancer patients are diagnosed in stage I.

Just weeks after surgery, Palmer watched Jenna walk across the stage to receive her college diploma, then walked her daughter

down the aisle on her wedding day.

"Watching my daughter get married and just seeing those two, I thought 'I'm going to have grandchildren, I'm going to have a life.' I joke with everyone here. I tell them when I retire, I'm going to Florida and I'm going to work at Disney.

"There are times I just can't stop smiling because I think how fortunate I am. And there are times when I go home and pop off my wig and look at myself and think, 'That's what a cancer patient looks like.'"

"I try not to stay on that pity train too long. There are a lot of people whose doctors are just trying to prolong their lives. That's when I think how blessed I am and I think, 'You're getting your mulligan. Do something with it this time.'"

## Policy helps employees return to school

By Colleen O'Neill

The Department of Environmental Protection's efforts don't cease with the environment.

The same guardianship applies to its employees.

The DEP Educational Expense Reimbursement Program encourages and assists permanent employees in the enhancement of their education and in the upgrading of their skills.

"Of course, it must pertain to the employee's classification, duties, and be related to the mission of this agency," said Nancy Frazier, coordinator of the program.

During the fiscal year 2010-11, nine employees participated in this program, earning a total of 76 hours of college credit.

The agency expended more than \$21,000 in educational expense reimbursement.

Since the beginning of the policy in September

1995, 60 employees have taken advantage of this opportunity.

The agency has spent more than \$172,000 since July 1997.

Six employees have earned degrees utilizing the program:

Jerry Norman, master's in business administration from Marshall; Jeanne Chandler, master's in arts and communications, Marshall; Sandy Rogers, bachelor's in organizational leadership and development, Wheeling Jesuit; Brad Swiger, master's in safety management, WVU; David Roddy, master's in agriculture, forestry and consumer sciences, WVU; and Patty Keys, associate's in general studies, WVU Tech.

Megan Murphy, of the Division of Air Quality's Planning/Emissions Inventory Unit, is pursuing a master's in environmental science. She attends Marshall's Graduate College in South Charleston.

"After I got married and had my son, I thought this would be a good time to go back to school," she said. "I really like learning and being in school.

"My classes really apply to what I'm doing at work."

This policy is a benefit available to full-time employees, who have been with the agency at least six months.

Tuition, registration fees, and limited expenses associated with enrollment in workshops, training programs, and other educational programs qualify for reimbursement.

Preference shall be given to those requesting enrollment at a state-supported institution of higher learning or accredited vocational/technical school.

Educational reimbursement cannot be used to enable an employee to become qualified for a different

position within his or her or another state agency, or to obtain employment in a field that is not connected to their current classification.

Reimbursement is decided by a committee made up of representatives from Human Resources.

They will recommend approval or rejection to the chief of the Office of Administration.

The total reimbursed depends upon the grade achieved, Frazier said.

For every one credit that was reimbursed, the employee owes the agency three month's employment.

"This policy enables employees, who may have a mortgage or kids or other expenses, to do something for them," Frazier said. "By bettering themselves, they're bettering their lives."

Questions may be directed to Frazier at 926-0499 ext. 1556, or Nancy.L.Frazier@wv.gov.