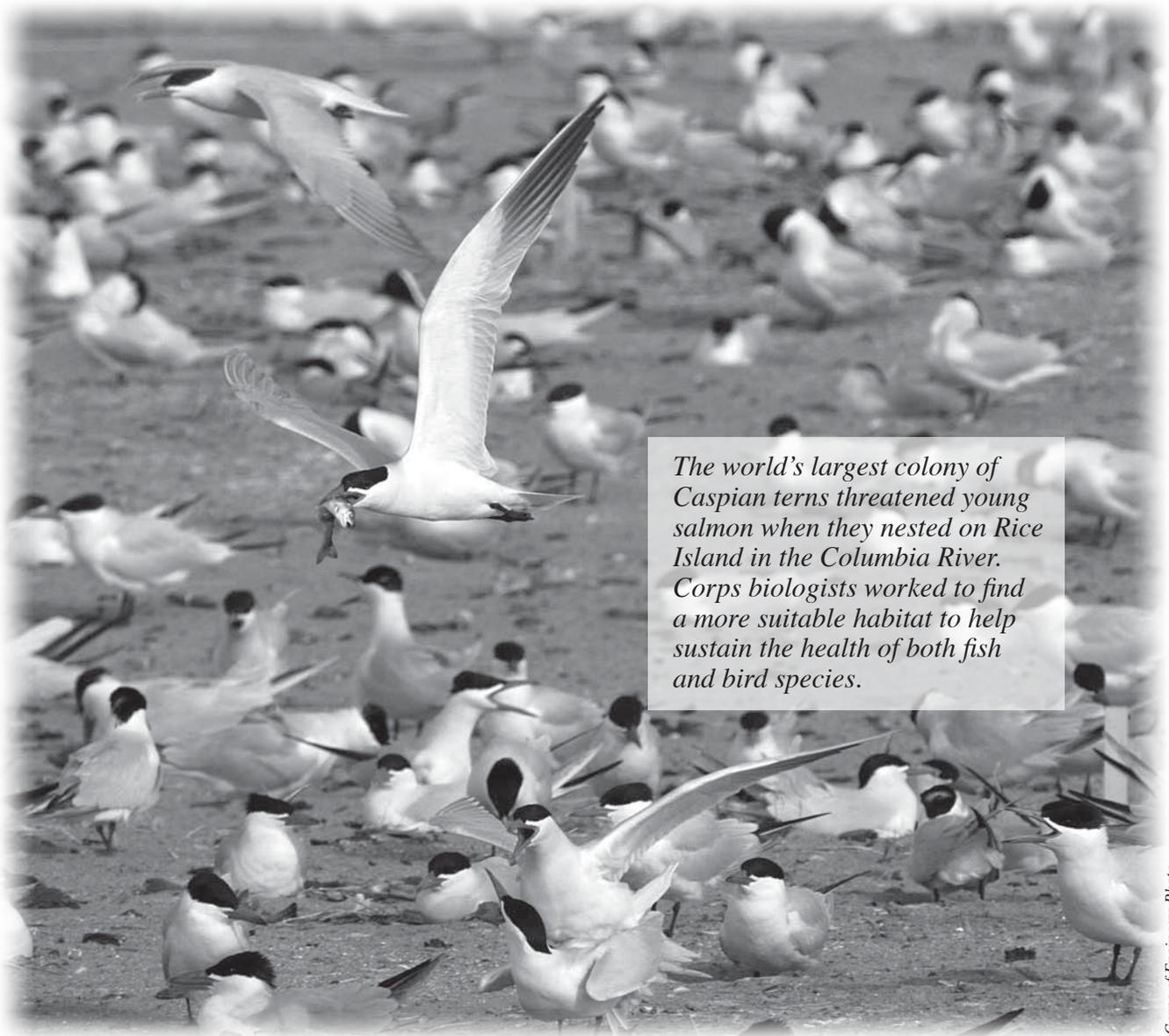




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The world's largest colony of Caspian terns threatened young salmon when they nested on Rice Island in the Columbia River. Corps biologists worked to find a more suitable habitat to help sustain the health of both fish and bird species.

Corps of Engineers Photo



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a proud history of service to the nation, dating back to the Revolutionary War. Our actions often have stretched the boundaries of science and technology, but sometimes we fell short of goals we set (or others set for us). One point of which I am very proud is that the Corps of Engineers is not afraid to look at why we might have failed in an attempt. I attribute that to one word: responsibility.



Col. Thomas O'Donovan

No person - or organization - can be 100 percent right, 100 percent of the time, but it is when we face our shortcomings that our character shows through. The Corps feels a responsibility to look a situation in the eye and determine what went right, what didn't, and why.

During a recent meeting about the District's planned cleanup of Bradford Island, a senior tribal leader asked me, "Why are you working so hard to get it cleaned up? It's been contaminated since the early 1970s, so why are you working at it so aggressively now?" His question took me by surprise. We put the PCBs in the river in the first place, so we have a responsibility to take them out, I told him. To me, it doesn't matter that we didn't know those decisions, made more than 40 years ago, would cause the problems we now face. We are responsible and now we must shoulder the consequences by cleaning it up.

That sense of responsibility flows from the Corps-wide and District-wide levels to the personal level. Employees at privately-held organizations have responsibilities to their customers, but their ultimate responsibility is to their stockholders. For federal employees, that responsibility is to the public - to our neighbors. If we fail in our responsibilities, it's not just one person's investment that's at risk; if we fail it's the nation's investment and a sense of trust placed in us that is in danger. If we fail it's not just the mission that's hurt; we hurt ourselves, too. We accept that trust when we begin our federal service by taking an oath of office.

The District- and Corps-wide responsibilities can only be met if each of us upholds our

individual responsibilities. One of the most important is to seriously consider just what we are responsible for. Each of us holds a piece of that responsibility, just like a puzzle; only when each piece supports the others around it can we succeed in our mission. Do you know what piece of the puzzle you are responsible for? I challenge you to look at how your actions support our District and Corps missions and to always strive to provide your best efforts.

In mid-July a draft report was submitted to the Corps of

Engineers outlining the decision-making chronology of hurricane protection measures that were developed for New Orleans and what part those decisions had on levee failures during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The report is nearly 300 pages long, but Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp's comments and the executive summary are interesting and informative. Whatever conclusions you draw from Hurricane Katrina and how the Corps came to be responsible for the loss of an American city and American lives depends on many things: how much you know, what you think the key contributors were, and so on. What you should understand is that in that disaster, we failed in our responsibilities. But more importantly, what makes the Corps such a great organization is that we accepted that responsibility and are moving forward. 

Essays!

CORPS'PENDENT



US Army Corps of Engineers - Portland District

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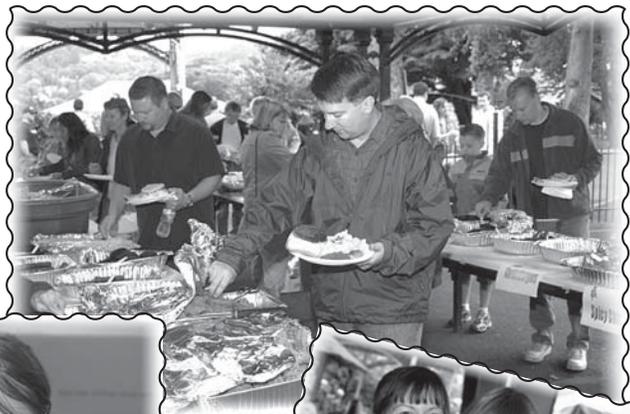
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Corps of Engineers Photos



Picnic Time...



Fun for all !!





Corps biologists step in

Dredged materials, birds and fish all meet on a Columbia River island

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

It all started innocently enough.

In 1983, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deposited some dredged material from the Chinook Channel on East Sand Island, about 5 miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River. The salt in this material discouraged the growth of vegetation, leaving the disposal site bare.

It was about this same time that Caspian tern habitat was lost to development at Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay, Wash., forcing the birds to look elsewhere.

With plenty of bare sand at East Sand Island and an abundance of fish easily plucked from the river, about 2,000 Caspian terns began calling it home. They didn't stay very long though, as vegetation overtook the site by 1986. This forced the terns again to look elsewhere in the Columbia River estuary for their preferred bare sand habitat.

Upstream lay just what they were looking for: Rice Island, a 230-acre sand island located 21 miles from the mouth of the river and constructed from dredged material from the Columbia River navigation channel.

"The Corps unintentionally created an island paradise," said Geoff Dorsey, Environmental Resources Branch. "The population of nesting pairs of terns at Rice Island exploded from 1,000 to more than 9,000 pairs." The island hosted the largest Caspian tern colony in the world, he said. "They appeared happy and well settled for the long term."

Juvenile salmonids migrated past Rice Island on their way to the sea and quickly became a key part of the terns' diet. "Wildlife biologists estimate that the terns on Rice Island consumed upwards

of 13.8 million smolts in 1999 alone," Dorsey said. "Salmon made up 90 percent of the birds' diet."

More than 100 million juvenile salmon, or smolts, migrate down the Columbia to the ocean each year. These fish were also important to federal agencies that were spending millions of dollars trying to protect them, many of which are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The terns' growing reliance on salmonid smolts as a primary food source meant the Portland District had to do something to limit the predation.



The loss of traditional habitat forces thousands of Caspian terns to seek nesting sites in more coastal locations in Oregon and Washington. The new sites meant migrating juvenile salmon were an easy favorite food.

In the late 1990s, federal agencies relocated the entire Caspian tern colony, about 20,000 birds, back to East Sand Island. Researchers from Oregon State University and the U.S. Geological Survey hypothesized that at their new home the birds would



to a complicated world



diversify their diet by consuming other types of fish that were more abundant closer to the ocean.

Before the start of nesting season in 1999, the Corps removed logs, stumps and all other vegetation from a portion of East Sand Island, creating about 6.5 acres of bare sand, just what nesting terns were looking for.

Researchers and wildlife biologists placed tern decoys and set up sound systems to play tern colony sounds to advertise the new neighborhood. Crews completed these initial efforts in time to lure about 1,400 migrating pairs of terns to the island. Meanwhile, on Rice Island, crews discouraged the return of the birds with silt fencing and other measures.

The East Sand Island colony increased to more than 9,000 nesting pairs by 2001 and the colony has remained there ever since. Rice Island hosted its last tern nesting season in 2000.

“Fortunately, now that they are closer to the ocean, the birds eat more herring, sardines and anchovies,” Dorsey said. “Annually, this leaves about 6 or 7 million more young salmon to complete their trip to the ocean.” Greater numbers improve the smolts’ chances of returning to complete their lifecycle rather than being eaten, which likely would have happened had the birds remained at Rice Island, Dorsey said.

This also means the Corps must keep East Sand Island in shape with yearly habitat management to keep the sand bare and more to the terns’ liking. A team of researchers collects data and tracks fish consumption by the terns.

Long-term management of the Caspian terns includes alternatives that develop habitat elsewhere around the western region, continued management of East Sand Island and possibly moving the tern population.

“It is certain that Caspian terns will remain a component of the Columbia River estuary fauna,” said Dorsey. “Ideally for endangered fish, however, we’d like to see redistribution of at least 50 percent of the tern population to somewhere else, perhaps as far as California’s [San Francisco] Bay Area.”

Meanwhile, research on East Sand Island recently expanded to track the growing population of double-crested cormorants. From only a few nesting pairs on the island a few years ago, the colony of cormorants has grown into the world’s largest, with over 13,700 pairs.

Initial studies indicate the cormorants came for the same reason the terns did: loss of traditional coastal habitat, a compatible island environment and the guaranteed supply of fish from the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. “All combined, these avian predators could still have an impact on the juvenile salmon population,” Dorsey said. “At this time we don’t know if any action is warranted.”

“Both cormorants and terns are highly mobile. They can easily range over extensive areas in the West seeking their preferred habitat,” Dorsey said. “We may see them claim other islands in the Columbia River estuary some day. For now, we’ll keep monitoring and find the right balance in managing the birds and protecting the fish.”



A freighter cruises past Rice Island, where terns found empty sand beaches perfect for nesting.

Corps of Engineers Photos



Portland District bowlers look for new members among employees, families

By Jennifer Sowell, Public Affairs Office

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Bowling is an activity enjoyed on a wide range of levels, from the casual birthday party event to seriously competitive leagues. Corps employees who enjoy bowling across that spectrum can join Portland District's league.

The league meets at Cascade Lanes in Northeast Portland every Wednesday between September and April. While not overly competitive, teams of four bowl head-to-head for bragging rights each week and for prize money at the end of the season. The main goal, however, is to have fun. "It's a chance to let loose, have fun and meet new people," said Randy Lee, Engineering and Construction Division.

The Corps league is made up of 12 teams of at least four people each. Teams can have up to six players, but only four play each night. The others rotate the weeks they play, making it easier to participate in such a long season. Teams must have both genders represented but not necessarily equally.

Players pay weekly dues, a portion of which goes into the prize fund for the end-of-season awards. Prizes are awarded for team and individual achievements and with a little more than \$3,000 to divide, everybody can win something.

You don't have to be a good bowler to join the Corps league. A handicap

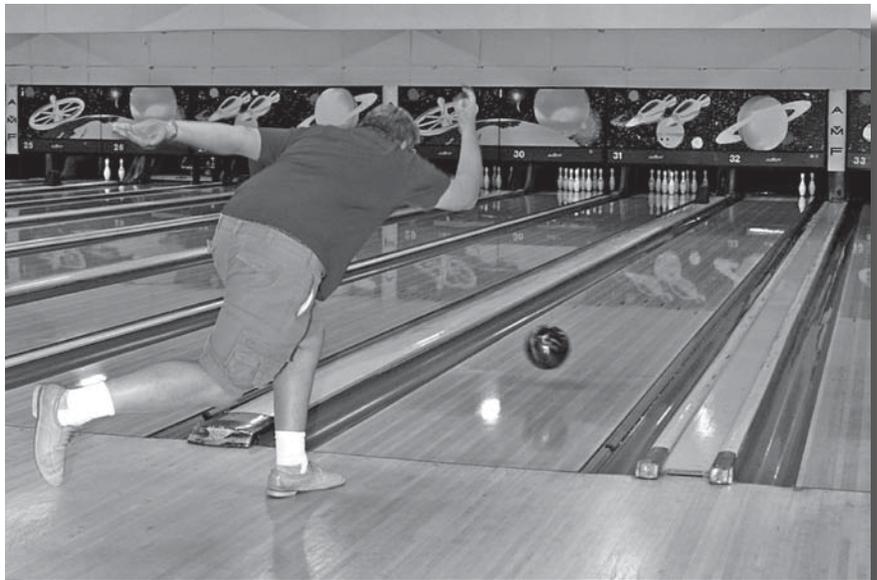
rule levels the playing lane for those whose averages tend to be in the gutter. Plus, playing three games per week for 33 weeks allows for plenty of practice.

"The more you bowl, the better you'll get," said Lee, who has been bowling in the league since the mid-1980s. "I never was a serious bowler, but as I improve I tend to get a little more competitive," he said.

"I like to bowl, it's a social game. In the time between your frames you can shoot the breeze with friends," said Alan Donner, Engineering and Construction.

Lee and Donner bowl together on the Alley Cats team.

"We try to do our best and have a good time doing it," said Lee.



Bowling team member Donner tries to pick up a spare.



At the end of the season players from the Corps league play in the tri-district tournament. The competition has traditionally been between players from Portland, Walla Walla and Seattle districts. However, in recent years Seattle District's participation has waned, leaving the two bordering districts to the bowling battle.

Portland District hosted last season's tournament in April and won the trophy back from Walla Walla District.

"The trophy is a heavy, gold monstrosity," said Lee. "It puts the traditional blunt object award to shame."

Even so, it is a symbol of victory to the team that possesses it and something to brag about to the team that doesn't. It's all in good fun and friendly competition.

As the number of teams in the annual tournament have lessened, so too has participation in the District league. Out of the nearly 50 players in the league today, only a small percentage are current Corps employees. Many players are retirees or former Corps employees now working elsewhere. Participation that was once limited to strictly Corps employees and their relatives is now relaxed to allow just about anyone to join so that there are enough teams each season.

"The spirit of the league was to have membership limited to predominantly Corps employees," said Lee. "We like the people we play with, but definitely would love to have more Corps employee participation."

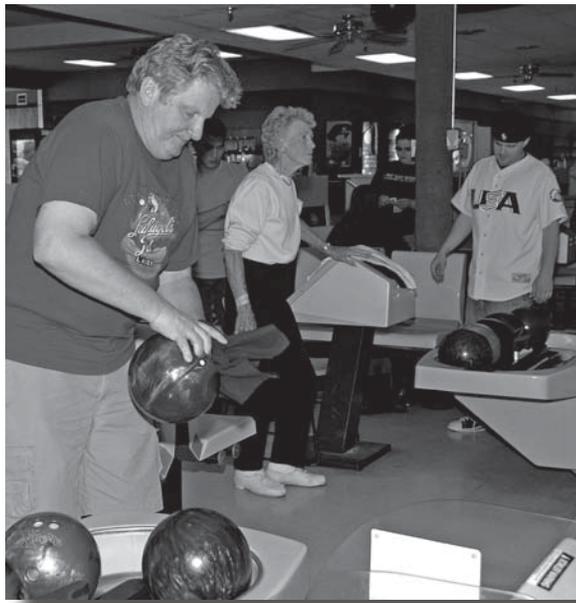
Lee thinks that one reason for the drop in Corps involvement over the years is the somewhat recent trend toward centralized offices across the organization.

"Offices that had close to 100 people working in them years ago now have less than 10 because those jobs moved to centralized offices," said Lee.

Whatever the reason for the dwindling participation, those few players from the Corps encourage more Corps employees, their relatives and retirees to join the league. Bowlers must be at least 18 years old to join.

"Bowling is perfect for socializing and a nice way to relax outside of work," said Lee.

"It would be great to get more Corps people involved in the league," Donner added.



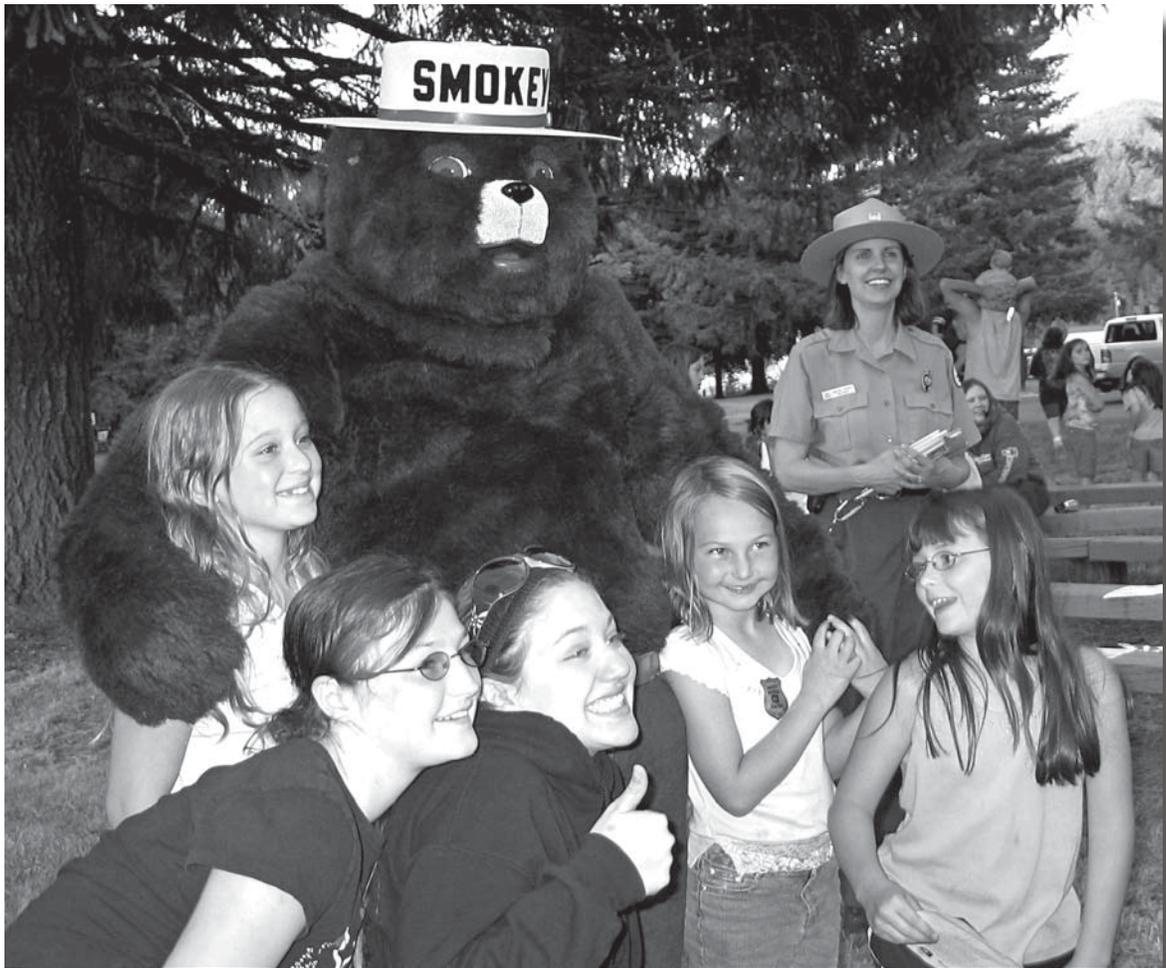
Donner, a District team member for 10 years, prepares to bowl yet another strike.



Donner completes the scoring form to record how the team did in three games. Most bowling centers have automated scoring, saving members from those calculations that caused confusion in many a bowler.

If you are interested in joining the Corps' bowling league, there is a pre-season meeting and free bowling on the last Wednesday in August. You can also sign up by contacting Shelley Paxton at (971) 219-0740 or s.a.paxton@att.net. 





Corps of Engineers Photo

A special visitor helped welcome campers at Pine Meadows Campground, Cottage Grove Lake June 30. Willamette Valley Project Park Ranger Christie Johnson helps educate campers about fire safety through interpretive programs each Saturday throughout the summer. Smokey the Bear, the mascot of the U.S. Forest Service, stopped by during Johnson's presentation to lend a paw.

In Memoriam

Orval McManman died June 22 at the Oregon Veterans Home in The Dalles. He was 84. McManman spent most of his adult life in Central Oregon, living in Bend, Prineville, Madras and The Dalles. One of the many jobs he held was as a maintenance worker for the Army Corps of Engineers at The Dalles and John Day hydroelectric projects, and as a maintenance worker for Fort Dalles Museum. He is survived by wife, Leona; a son, two daughters and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son Dan in 1995.

Glenn C. Decker died July 4 of cancer at age 76. Glenn Decker served his country for 35 years; 20 years in the Coast Guard and 15 years in the Army Corps of Engineers. He held a Master's license on the Corps' dredge, *Yaquina*. He enjoyed flying his own plane, boating, fishing and hunting. Decker is survived by his wife, Marianna, two daughters and two sons, 10 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. There will be no service. Donations may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society.

