

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

October 2003



MOLLY BURRIS — TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Whether tracking a line item in a budget or a wild turkey in the woods, Molly Burris enjoys what she's doing.

Starting as an intern 12 years ago, today she's an essential member of the Office of Budget and Finance team that keeps the department running. Wearing the title of fiscal officer/payment card administrator, Molly wears many hats.

One is providing budgetary assistance by acting as fiscal officer for the Director's Office as well as the offices of Budget, Communications, and Human Resources.

Molly said, "As fiscal officer, I provide all the biennial budget planning, tracking, and analysis for these offices."

According to Budget chief Peter King, a fiscal officer is really an all-around business officer. "Of special benefit to chiefs and program managers is the fiscal officer's ability to wade through all the bureaucratic red tape involved in government, providing the financial structure to make a natural resources program efficient and effective."

In this role, Molly also oversees major purchases, such as furniture and computers for the offices she serves. "At a chief's request, I determine whether funds are available or not, then prepare the purchase order and authorize payment." She also handles accounts receivable, payable and financial reporting.

But there's more. Molly is the



administrator of three very important financial programs for the department.

The Payment Card program came on-line in 1995. Molly explained, "I developed the policies and procedures for the use of the department's Visa. We have 1,200 credit cards issued to employees across the state. I issue the cards and then make sure the cardholders know how to use them by conducting training sessions for new cardholders every other month."

Molly said, "We have the second-most credit cards used by state employees — only the Department of Transportation has more. We have so many because we're decentralized; each field office maintains its own budgets and pays its own bills."

Another department-wide operation under Molly's control is the Voyager program — the credit card that comes

with a state vehicle for gassing up. ODNR has 3,000 state vehicles with a gas card assigned to each one. "Assigning a card to the vehicle instead of a person means everyone can use it," she said. "The purchase or salvage of vehicles requires a lot of maintenance."

The third area of concern for Molly is the EDI (electronic data interchange) program; it makes bill payment timely and convenient. "Agreements have been signed with various companies, primarily utilities, so we can pay invoices electronically. This method greatly shortens the length of time it takes to pay bills, and saves us money," she added.

Molly likes her job. "I work with a great group of people — they're hard working, intelligent, and nice! Everyday I learn something new — it's never the same."

A graduate of Muskingum College, she has a bachelor's degree in business. Molly and husband, Kevin, have two kids, Pierce and Gabrielle, and live in Baltimore (Fairfield County), where Molly grew up. She keeps busy with her kids' activities, and plays basketball whenever she can. This activity is a carry over from her college days when she played varsity basketball for four years. Molly especially looks forward to turkey hunting with her father, Richard Pierce, the former chief of the Division of Wildlife. "I've hunted turkeys with him since I was 13," she smiled.

THE ODNR HEALTH & FITNESS FAIR

To show us that good nutrition and exercise need not be dreary, the ODNR Health and Fitness Fair was held Wednesday, September 10, at Fountain Square. As you know, the **Employee Wellness Plan** was established to promote the benefits of healthy lifestyles for ODNR employees, and is a direct outgrowth of Governor Taft's Healthy Ohioans Initiative. (For more information, see the web site ohiodnr.com/hr/wellness.)

Deputy Director Lori Houpe said, "Studies have shown that the long-term benefits of a healthier workforce include reduced healthcare costs, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, improved morale, heightened well-being, and employee retention."



Physical activities included walking and skipping relays as well as a foul-shot competition. Winners of these fun events were: **Bob Baker and Lori Houpe** (tie) for the walking challenge; **Bill Bopp, Kara Kramer, and Meg Leatherman** for the skipping relay; and **Mindy Bankey, Jim Lynch, and Josiah Wade** for the hoop-shooting event.

Health screenings were performed for blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. The Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation gave a presentation about ergonomics; Weight Watchers answered questions, as did representatives from local health spas; and skipping guru Helen Fink shared her enthusiasm. Employees enjoyed mini-massages compliments of a local therapy provider. The fair also featured exercise-equipment demonstrations and informational literature.



- Subway and Pepsi
- donated sandwiches and
- soft drinks for the noon-
- time festivities.



Sybil Bell served as coordinator of the health fair, securing voluntary vendor participation, and donations for the event. Other Wellness Team members making huge contributions included **Andrea Gintert, Phyllis Greggs, Tammie Heller, Lori Houpe, Gary James, Dianne King, Meloni Miller, Phil Miller, Beth Pratt, Joyce Schramm, Cindi Solomon, and Jon Weiser.**



- **What's next?**
- A ladies bowling league will be held on Thursday evenings beginning in
- November. Contact Patti Barnett (Parks 614-265-6508) before
- October 23 to sign up.

OCTOBER IS RECYCLE, OHIO! MONTH



A time to reflect on what you use ... and what you throw away.

Governor Taft has declared October as Recycle, Ohio! Month, encouraging the habit of recycling and "closing the loop" by buying recycled-content products.

To find out where and what you can recycle in your community, call the Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention at 614-265-6333 or visit the web site at ohiodnr.com.



ODNR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for some FREE training to help you become a well-rounded employee?

Look no further! The Organizational Development section of the Office of Human Resources presents the following courses for October and November. For full class description, and to enroll, please see the web page at ohiodnr.com/hr/odtraining.htm.

October

- 22 Outlook Calendar
- 28 Manage Your Data
- 29 Labor Relations 101
- 30 Deferred Compensation

November

- 4-6 Seven Habits of Highly Effective People
- 6 Virtual Private Networking
- 6 Remote Access Servers
- 13 Manage Your Data
- 14 Windows XP
- 14 Self-Defense
- 17 CPR/First Aid
- 19 File Management
- 19 Supervising Unionized Employees
- 20 EAP - Understanding & Managing Stress

THE PRETTIEST YARDS

From Laura Roth,
Horticulturist



SASSAFRAS (Sassafras albidum)

Fall is a good time to plant trees. The milder weather is better for new transplants than the stressful heat of summer. In addition, soil temperatures and moisture levels are generally in ranges that encourage roots to develop rapidly.

For an attractive and interesting tree, Laura Roth recommends the sassafras, a member of the laurel family and an Ohio native. "If you're wanting to create some wildlife habitat on your land, the sassafras tree is a good choice," she said.

Sassafras is one of the few trees with more than one kind of leaf on

the same plant. The dark green leaves can be oval, have two-lobes (resembling mittens), or even three lobes. "The leaves give off a spicy aroma when crushed, and turn excellent color in the fall — often a blend of bright yellow, gold, orange, red, and red-purple," she said. The leaves are favored by the caterpillar of the spicebush swallowtail butterfly.

Male and female flowers usually bloom on separate trees. Spring flowers are yellow-green; the small green fruits turn dark blue and are eaten by at least 18 species of birds.

The tree is also noted for its bright green stems. Native Americans called it the "green stick tree." Pioneers used twigs frayed at the end as pleasant tasting toothbrushes.

Sassafras oil, distilled from roots and bark, had many uses in the old days: as a repellent for bedbugs, chicken lice, and fleas; as perfume in soaps; as flavoring for medicines and root beer; and as a popular tea and



spring tonic. As folk medicine, sassafras oil was used to treat kidney problems,

rheumatism, arthritis, high blood pressure, colds, flu, bronchitis, and toothaches.

Laura said, "Sassafras means 'stone breaker,' referring to its medicinal use against kidney stones. But these days, people mostly make tea out of the root bark, and file powder out of ground-up leaves to put in Creole and Cajun cooking."

If all this isn't reason enough to plant a sassafras tree, keep in mind that it dates back 100 million years, making it a contemporary of dinosaurs!

A sassafras can grow up to 50 feet high with a 30-foot spread. For best results, plant it in moist, well-drained, acidic soil. However, it can adapt to soils that are neutral and dry. It likes full to partial sun.

TIDBITS

DEAN MOVES UP: State watercraft officer **Dean Palmer** was promoted to area supervisor for state boating programs at Watercraft's Portsmouth district office. Previously, Dean was a former patrolman with the Coal Grove Police Department and a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He joined ODNR in 1990; he and his family live in Ironton.

FIRE CREW #3 returned from the Windmill Fire complex in Montana in late August. Forestry staff on the crew included **Rodney Neff**, New Philadelphia; **Gregg Maxfield**, Findlay; **Mark Hassel**, Blue Rock; **Brian Porter**, Zaleski; **Chris Kerr**, Zaleski; and **Jeffrey Clarke**, New Philadelphia.

FIRE CREW #4 returned in September from the Robert Fire in

Montana near Glacier National Park. Two Division of Forestry employees were on that crew: **Gary Vollrath**, a service forester in the Athens office, and **Nick Appleman**, forestry officer at Zaleski State Forest.

COURT ACTION: The department has two volleyball teams — the Slammers and the Cardinals — who play in a league on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Worthington Community Center. ODNR employees on the teams are: **Ken Alvey**, **Mindy Bankey**, **Susan Banks**, **Olan Hylton**, **Dianne King**, **Treva Knasel**, **Robert Lasley**, **Bill McGarity**, **Cindi Solomon**, **Patti Barnett**, **Mary Hughes**, **Becky Jenkins**, **Lori Marteney**, and **Emily King**. Remaining games will be held October 22, 29; November 5, 12, 19; and December 3. For more information, call **Patti Barnett** in Parks at 614-265-6508.

TOP GUN: **Jay Harnish**, state wildlife investigator for northwest Ohio, was named Ohio Wildlife



Officer of the Year by the Shikar-Safari Club International. A 20-year veteran with ODNR, he served as the Sandusky County wildlife officer prior to his promotion to state wildlife investigator in 2003. He's a native of Seneca County, and holds a degree in natural resources from Hocking College. The Shikar-Safari Club International is an international group of hunters interested in exchanging ideas about the sport, and supports various wildlife conservation projects.

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Paulette Print, NRW, Parks/Cleveland Lakefront

Darrell Corbin, Jr., NRW, Parks/Lake Hope

Melissa Thomas, NRS, Parks/Lake Hope

Jeannie Davis, NRS, Parks/Lake Hope

Rick Gillilan, Officer, Parks/Lake Hope

Fred Knapke, Officer, Parks/Lake Hope

Gary James, Budget & Income Manager, Parks

Dustin Thompson, Technician, Wildlife/London

Matt Fisher, Investigator, Wildlife/Lake Erie

10 Years

Robert Eaken, Auto Mechanic, Parks/West Branch

Scott Burke, Audio/Visual Production Supervisor, Wildlife

Kathy Cochrane, Fiscal Specialist, Natural Areas

Kirk Hines, Conservation Engineering Admin., Soil & Water

Terry Mescher, Engineer, Soil & Water/Brookville

Jeff Heft, Officer, Parks/Lake Hope

Dave Sapienza, Naturalist, Parks/Lake Hope

Rose Thompson, NRW, Parks/Lake Hope

Robert Sowers, Maintenance Repair Worker, Parks/Lake Hope

Phil Hoffman, Computer Mgr., Parks

Jessica Helm, Administrative Assistant, Parks

Dick Ogden, Inventory, Parks

15 Years

Kim Marshall, Scenic River Coordinator, Natural Areas/North

John McFadden, District Preserve Manager, Natural Areas/North

Rosida Porter, Watershed Coordinator, Soil & Water

Steve Prebonick, Soil Specialist, Soil & Water/Cortland

Curt Partee, Conservation Coord., Parks/Lake Hope

Debbie Thrush, Custodial Worker, Parks/Lake Hope

Pam Walker, Custodial Worker, Parks/Lake Hope

20 Years

William King, Officer Supervisor, Wildlife #3

Blaine Gerdes, Environmental Educ. Admin., Soil & Water

David Frank, Assistant Park Manager, Parks/Cleveland Lakefront

Jon Stevenson, Payables/Debits, Parks

Darrell Rinker, Technician, Wildlife/Hebron

Martin Baer, Officer, Wildlife #2

Gary Manley, Investigator, Wildlife/Lake Erie

25 Years

Faye Houpe, Administrative Assistant, Recycling

Rhonda Long, IT Supervisor, Information Technology

Ron Demmy, Preserve Services Group Manager, Natural Areas

David Klarer, Researcher, Natural Areas/NERRS

Steve Hamilton, Soil Specialist, Soil & Water/Wilmington

Mike Nishimura, Watershed Mgmt. Admin., Soil & Water

Michael McElroy, Conservation Aide, Parks/Cleveland Lakefront

Christy Barney, Custodial Worker, Parks/Lake Hope

Michael Powers, Assistant Park Manager, Parks/Lake Hope

Dianna Snyder, Personnel Mgr., Parks

Lynn Boydelatour, Interpretive Services Mgr., Parks

Diana Cordi, Purchasing Agent, Parks

Julie Atha, Payroll, Parks

Jon Dobney, Assistant Chief, Parks

Lois Heinlen, Concessions Manager, Parks

Bob Dorinsky, LE Training, Parks

Dana Schmidt, Hatchery Superintendent, Wildlife/Kincaid

Jim Stafford, Hatchery Superintendent, Wildlife/Hebron

William Thomas, Area Technician, Wildlife #1

Mary Jo Mangas, Business Services Officer, Wildlife #2

30 Years

Kathy Smith, Executive Secretary, Natural Areas

35 Years

Tim Gerber, Soil Inventory Administrator, Soil & Water

MILESTONES

Promotions

R. Scott Hale, Fisheries Biology Supervisor, Wildlife/Inland Fisheries Research Unit

Lynne Stein, from Secretary/Wildlife to Grants Coordinator/REALM

Dean Palmer, Area Supervisor, Watercraft/Portsmouth

Transfers

Jared Abele, Officer, from At-Large/Dist.#5 to Erie County/Wildlife #2

William King, Officer Supervisor, from Unit A to Unit B, Wildlife #3

Terrie TerMeer, Deputy Chief, from CCC to Recycling

Ron Savage, Fiscal Officer, from CCC to Recycling

Lynn Stinson, Account Clerk, from CCC to Recycling

Retirements

Charles Mansfield, Officer District Supervisor, Wildlife Law Enforcement, 24 years

David Kennedy, Officer Supervisor, Wildlife #3, 29 years

Deaths

Rich (Guyle) Van Horn, Officer, Parks/Deer Creek

John Cooper, Maintenance Repair Worker, REALM

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