

Chief of communications holds the keys to the castle



One of his favorite places
 Mark McCracken's job has taken him to 67 countries. One of his favorite places is Yemen. He is pictured holding a miniature of a typical house in Yemen. Some of the other souvenirs he showed Carroll students were an African wedding mask, a box of frankincense and myrrh from Jerusalem, and a thumb organ from Mozambique. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

By Jennifer Archibald
 Staff writer

Speaking to Carroll eighth grade social studies students last week, Mark McCracken identified himself as the "chief commo guy" at the Crisis Communications Center in Washington, D.C.

He and his department are responsible for communication support for top federal officials and agencies, making sure their line of communication is not broken or breached.

"We provide a secure path for the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, National Security Agency, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Homeland Security, CIA, FBI, etc." McCracken said.

He said the commo slogan is "You can talk about us, but you can't talk without us."

"We have four huge flat screen TVs, and monitor eight communication satellites around the world," he explained.

He said an example of a communication crisis would be if an American embassy was blown up. Other communication emergencies could be caused by a riot or a flood, he said.

McCracken works for the federal government, under the Department of State. He has had his current job since 2000, but has been in the field of secure communications support for 20 years. Prior to 2000, he worked in foreign countries, providing communication for American embassies. His title

in the field was Chief Communications Officer.

McCracken said his job has taken him to 67 countries, where he has spent anywhere from a week to three years.

He and his family were in Yemen for three years (1993-1996), followed by three years in Tel Aviv, Israel.

McCracken said while they were in Yemen, civil war broke out and his family and other Americans had to evacuate.



Snake oil
 Emma Packard looks at a snake curled up in a bottle of cure-all tonic (actually wine). Speaker Mark McCracken brought the souvenir to CJSHS. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

Indiana's First Lady to speak in county Monday

Indiana's First Lady Cheri Daniels will address the Carroll County Republican Women at their annual membership meeting Monday at Gracie's Restaurant in Flora.

A lifelong Hoosier, Mrs. Daniels was born and raised in New Albany. She studied journalism at Indiana University.

The First Lady focuses much of her attention on Women's Heart Health, creating awareness and supporting heart screenings. She advocates physical fitness for all Hoosiers and supports the "I love to read program" and other efforts to encourage education.

She and her husband Mitch have four daughters, Meagan, Melissa, Meredith and Margaret.

Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., with the program following. Reservations are required at \$12 each and are due by March 15 by contacting Tammy Dyer 765-566-3917 or

Beth Myers 574-686-2635.

All Carroll County Republican Women are encouraged to attend and bring a guest.

Annual dues are \$20 and may be paid at the membership meeting. Those submitting dues prior to the meeting will receive their membership cards on the 19th.

ADOPT-A-PET



Featured this week is a one year-old domestic short hair cat. This black beauty is litter-trained, loveable and friendly. Also available is a black and white barn cat. For more info, call the Delphi Vet. Clinic at (765) 564-2606.

sponsored this week by
DELPHI VET. CLINIC
 Lawrence W. Stauffer, DVM
 765-564-2606

ple in the field report to.

McCracken, his wife and two daughters live in Ashburn, Va. He said his family went with him to most of the countries he was sent to.

One of the Carroll students, Jessica Yoder, asked McCracken which country is his favorite.

"The United States, hands down," McCracken said. When the student clarified that she meant which foreign country, McCracken rattled off several - England, Jordan, Yemen, Colombia, South Africa, and Vietnam.

Another student asked if he had been to China. He said he hasn't. He added that he might possibly be going to Beijing in 2008 to help set up communications at the Olympics.

McCracken was asked if he had any close calls when he was overseas.

He said he's been in places where Americans are not targets, but there is still conflict and danger. He mentioned such dangers as Scud missiles, suicide bombers, and RPGs.

"You wouldn't want to stand around at a bus stop," he said.

He also explained that in some countries the only way to walk safely on the streets is if you blend in.

"I don't blend in," McCracken said. "I'm as American as you get. I'm a big old white guy - a country boy from Indiana. But sometimes

it works the other way. Since I'm big, they say, 'I don't want to mess with him.'"

In a conversation after the student assembly, McCracken related a "small-world" story. He was in Liberia and was talking with an American who said he went to school at Frontier and had a teacher named Jerry McCracken.

"That's my uncle!" McCracken told the man.

McCracken's parents are Jim and Virginia McCracken of Bringham. McCracken went to Carroll Jr.-Sr. High

School. Like the students he was speaking to, he was in Glen Dillman's eighth grade social studies class.

He told the students that Carroll County is a great place to grow up and go to school.

McCracken graduated from Carroll in 1978. After working on a hog farm for awhile, he joined the U.S. Navy, serving from 1980 to 1984.

He said he never thought when he was growing up in Bringham that he would someday see the world and have the position he has today.

Freezer Beef

\$2¹⁰ lb. / 1/2

\$2⁰⁴ lb. / Front 1/4

\$2⁷⁰ lb. / Hind 1/4

Hogs 1/2 or Whole \$1⁵⁹ lb.

Order must be received by May 12, 2007 and picked up by June 1, 2007

Good Meat is not Cheap and Cheap Meat is not Good
 All purchases Guaranteed - or your money back.

603 S. Railroad St., Flora
Monday - Friday 8 to 5
PARRETT'S
MEAT PROCESSING

Family Fun Event!

Friday, March 16th

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Jubilee Fellowship, Flora
 1/2 mile past the Park on 50 North

Saddle up for a rootin'-tootin' western adventure as the VeggieTales gang presents the story of Moses and teaches a lesson in following directions!

- Premiere of the newest VeggieTales video
- Activities, food, games, and door prizes
- Fun for the whole family and it's FREE!

Our home equity line of credit is your key to success.

5.99% APR* | adjusts to
 intro rate | **7.75%** APR*

Unlock the power of success with a low-rate home equity line of credit. Start building that new addition. Consolidate credit card debt. Plan a dream vacation. You can even get a free piece of 24" luggage. Ask one of our associates for details and go farther with First Financial Bank.

FIRST

first financial bank

Another step on the path to success

Flora • (574) 967-4151
 Rossville • (765) 379-2416
 Delphi • (765) 564-2696

*Upon credit approval. When opened, the introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) will be fixed for 6 months for loan-to-value (LTV) up to 100%. For lines greater than \$50,000, the rate will be 5.99%. For lines less than \$50,000, the rate will be 6.99%. As of 02/15/07, the variable APRs range from 7.75% to 10.75% based on LTV and other factors. After the introductory period, all variable rates are subject to change monthly and are indexed to the Prime Rate as published in The Wall Street Journal. Maximum APR is 18%. Closing costs includes fees for appraisal, title search, flood determination and recording are waived at account opening. Homeowners insurance is required. No other discounts apply. Introductory rate offer valid for a limited time and subject to change. Annual fee waived for one year. Consult your tax advisor about tax deductibility. Introductory rate available on new Home Equity Lines of Credit only.

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS

Meet at 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday at Delphi United Methodist Church

(765) 564-6350
 (574) 967-3332