



July 2011

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What is this?



The Watercooler

The Index

We all know that July is hot...but there are other things about July that you may not know...like more hot dogs are eaten on July 4th than any other day of the year. Or that July is National Blueberry Month. And National Single Working Women Week is always celebrated in July.

So for this month's "Index" FRANCES has put together some fascinating information about the Wage and Hour Division's efforts to protect workers during the blueberry harvest, as well as some facts about our nation's single working women.

Blueberry Field Enforcement Index

During the 2009 blueberry harvest season, the Wage and Hour Division investigators found a number of blueberry growers and farm labor contractors in violation of the minimum wage and child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The investigators also cited the employers for violations of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act and the field sanitation standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In early 2010, well before the blueberry harvest began, WHD staff began working to ensure that the farmers and farm labor contractors were in compliance with WHD administered laws, particularly those laws that provide protections to young workers. As a result of these actions, WHD found no children illegally employed on the blueberry farms in the states where significant violations were found in 2009. WHD investigators are continuing their efforts this year with some violations being found in states where previous WHD activities in this industry were more limited.

- During the 2009 harvest season
 - children as young as eight years of age were found working in the fields
 - over \$53,000 in back wages were found due for workers
 - more than \$112,000 in civil money penalties were imposed
- Steps taken prior to 2010 harvest season
 - WHD issued press releases announcing their initiatives and advising the agricultural community of the law's requirements
 - WHD staff provided education and outreach to the blueberry industry
- During the 2010 harvest season, WHD conducted a vigorous and visible enforcement program
 - WHD investigators were in the fields when children were likely to be working (early morning, evening and weekends)
 - Offices shared information and bilingual staff as blueberry crews moved from one state to the next
 - The agency's efforts garnered national and local media coverage

Five Facts about Single Working Women

Did you know that:

- Unmarried women are now the minority in the workforce -- 30 million versus 36 million married women.
- This is a big change from the times when women were forced to resign their job when they married. Today's single women in the workforce tend to be young women, and they have older women they can turn to for advice about

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their career throughout their lifetime.

- Unmarried working women tend to be younger than married women.

- For example, about 24 percent of unmarried working women were under the age of 25, compared with about 3 percent of married working women.

- Among unmarried women, white women are slightly more likely to be employed than their black, Asian or Hispanic counterparts.

- In 2010, 50.4 percent of unmarried white women were employed, compared with 48.9 percent each for Asian and Hispanic women and 47.9 percent for Black women.

- Unmarried women have higher unemployment rates than married women.

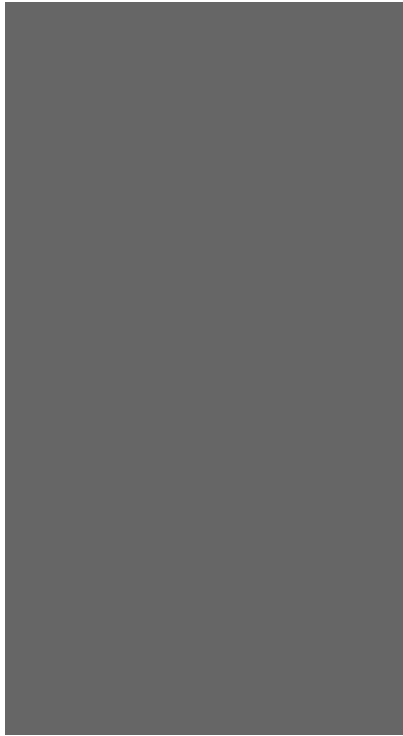
- In 2010, the unemployment rate for unmarried women was 11.5 percent, compared with 5.9 percent for married women. This is partially due to the younger age of unmarried women, as younger people tend to have higher unemployment rates.

- Among full-time wage and salary workers, the median usual weekly earnings of unmarried women are lower than that of married women.

- The median weekly earnings of unmarried women was \$614 in 2010, compared with \$727 for married women.

And FYI: we define “unmarried” or “single” as: never married, divorced, widowed or separated.

- [View The Index Archive](#)



FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

Random Question

How's That Internship?

Summer is upon us... which means that school is out, and the interns have flocked to DOL in great numbers! We asked our fellow DOL Interns to describe their internships so far, and we got some great responses! Here are some quotes compiled from DOL interns from across the country, and who work for a variety of DOL's agencies and regions!

Compiled by Christopher Hamrick and Brittany-Rae Gregory, OPA Interns



Kyle Stephan is a sophomore at Villanova University in Pennsylvania and works for the Office of Public Affairs in the Philadelphia Region.

"The practical implications of my experience this summer in receiving three college credits are not the only academic gains I am making. I am learning more communication skills as I make press calls, and pitching Labor projects to the media, which is unfamiliar territory for me. After taking calls in OPA and working on various projects, I know now that the Labor Department really cares for workers. In meeting with some top officials, and even during my

day-to-day operations, it is clear to me now that a Federal Government job is fast-paced and much is expected. Since we impact workers lives every day, there is a need to perform, and to perform well."

Elena Fast is a third-year evening student at New York Law School and interns in the Employee Benefits Security Administration in New York.



"What surprised me most about the internship is how much I actually get to do here and how much I am learning. Through this experience, I've been able to gain an increased knowledge of benefit issues and better communication skills. In one instance, I was able to help a lady locate her pension, and she could not stop crying when she was thanking me. It is truly wonderful to help people. In school, it's a lot of learning how to research, how to find the right answers, and how to write concisely. My internship allows me to practice those skills and learn outside the classroom."



Jazamek Price is a sophomore at Johnson C. Smith University in NC (also attended by our fellow OPA Intern, Jack Crutchfield.), and an intern for the Mine Safety and Health Administration in Arlington, VA.

"One of the biggest surprises of my internship is how busy everyone working in MSHA really is. Working with MSHA, we do a lot to make sure that we enforce the safety of miners. But one of the biggest skills I've picked up in this opportunity is professionalism. I have learned how to dress professional, speak professional, and carry myself in a professional manner in and out of the workplace, as a representative for the Department."

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Maria Prebble is a rising senior at Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA (also native to our OPA intern Brittany-Rae Gregory), and works for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management in Washington, DC.



"I've gained a new perspective in Environmental Studies from this internship. I have been working with the DOL on a Sustainability Plan, which all Federal Agencies are required to design in accordance with President Obama's Executive Order 13514: "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance". Specifically, I've been looking at how this plan applies to the DOL's 124 Job Corps Centers around the United States. Being at the DOL has given me invaluable experience and helped me to determine what I want to do in my future."

Pamela Yamzon is a junior at the University of California in Berkley and works for the Office of Public Affairs in San Francisco, CA.



"Overall, gaining hands-on experience in communications and journalism are the key technical skills I will gain after I leave my internship. Aside from that, meeting hardworking people is definitely the highlight of my experience because their perseverance and patience when dealing with endless assignments and difficult people inspires me to take on their attitude and put my best efforts in as well."

I was a bit taken aback on how friendly the work environment is. It encouraged me to take initiative and seek more learning opportunities. I feel that I have become more enlightened and knowledgeable about current events in regards to labor and the workforce. Many of my previous classes that involved writing & research at UC Berkeley and during high school have prepared me for such tasks. Through my internship, I am learning the proper communication techniques and the appropriate ways to target certain audiences, especially when I am writing specific articles or issuing news releases. In a sense, it is just like marketing."

Jason Aroz is a third year law student at Emory University's works for the Office of the Solicitor in Atlanta, GA.



"I was attracted to the DOL because during spring semester of my 2nd year (of law school), I had the opportunity to work at the EPA and enjoyed both the work I was doing and the culture I was a part of. As a result, I really have been focusing on trying to intern and work for the federal government. DOL's culture has turned out to be largely the same: very friendly, professional, and a really great environment to work in. This internship has opened my eyes to the possibility of litigation as a possible career path and it has been a real learning experience and has helped me understand all the processes that occur during the course of litigation."

Cindy Huynh is a junior at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. She works in the Office of the Secretary in Washington, DC.



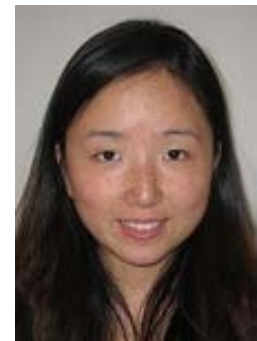
"I've been involved with a number of projects over the course of the summer. Right now, I am working on the Job Clubs project with Ben Seigel, the Deputy Director for the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. I am interviewing different job clubs around the nation and doing write-ups on their models and relationships with one-stop centers. Additionally, I am helping Sophia Chitlik, who prepares the briefing book for the Secretary, organize

a number of brown bag lunches and panels for interns. These lunches cover a number of different topics, such as careers in law and young professionals in public service."

Natasha Francisco is a senior at the University of California, Irvine. She works in the Office of the Secretary in Washington, DC.



"I was attracted to the Labor Department because Secretary Solis is from California and represented the 31st and 32nd congressional districts, which is about an hour from where I live. I have always been dead set on becoming a lawyer, and working for the Department of Labor has introduced me to the option of practicing (law) within the federal government. After I leave in August, I will take away the friendships I have made with the other interns and the valuable experience of working in a federal agency."



Yiye Wu is a second year graduate student at Villanova University in Philadelphia, PA. She works in the Public Affairs office in Philadelphia.

"I was attracted to the DOL, because as an international student from China, I would get in contact with DOL whenever I dealt with work-related issues in America. It's a fascinating experience to look into DOL and understand how it functions. What I like most about the Department is how supervisors propose projects that cater (to) our interests and advantages. For example, Joanna Hawkins set me up on a project with Women's Bureau on their

partnership with Asian American Women's Coalition."

Michael Dible received his master's degree from Texas Women's University (co-ed) and works for OASAM in Dallas. Michael was hired as a SCEP while completing his Masters Degree. In June 2011, he was converted to a permanent position as a Contract Specialist, GS-9, with OASAM.



"While at the DOL, I have been involved in projects such as creating flowcharts for the Space Acquisition process and Human Resources process and E-Property inventory. I have worked with IT and Safety and Health. What has surprised me most about the Department is the sense of collaboration and the Department of Labor employees who treat me like family."

[View Random Question Archive](#)

FRANCES MAG

The Vault

Take a look back at the sometimes inspiring, sometimes odd and always entertaining Media Vault of the U.S. Department of Labor. We'll be adding the our archives as we unearth videos, posters and other entertaining stories from the Department's history.

Found another historic artifact from days past? E-mail it to us at Frances@dol.gov and we'll post it here in the Vault.

	<p>Poetry in His Heart Many wouldn't know it, but our first Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, was a poet. On his departure from DOL he gave signed copies of his "little book" to all employees as a token of his esteem. Over the next few months we will share with you some of these poems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Read his letter and poem "A Letter Home"
	<p>The Beal Murals Learn more about the man, his team of assistants (artists turned researchers), and friends -- who helped to capture the American worker from the era of colonialism to the 20th century via large-scale paintings for the Department's Frances Perkins building in Washington, DC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ View the murals and learn more
	<p>Happy 100 Years! June marked the 100th anniversary of apprenticeship in the United States. Today apprenticeships can be found in numerous fields such as carpentry, nursing, pharmacy, construction and more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ View the Photo
	<p>International Labour Organization (ILO) World Day Against Child Labor — June 12 Doctor David Parker catalogued these children working dangerous jobs under intolerable conditions in his book Before Their Time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ View Child Labor Photos
	<p>A Visit by the President When President Richard Nixon paid a visit to the Department of Labor in 1969, DOL created a special brochure to mark the occasion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Read the Brochure (PDF)
	<p>After Hours: Frisbee Edition Long before FRANCES and our After Hours section made it to LaborNet, DOL was reporting on the interesting outside activities of our colleagues. Take a trip back to 1970 when Gary, Indiana Wage-Hour compliance officer George Anderson helped lead his Frisbee team to a second world championship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■

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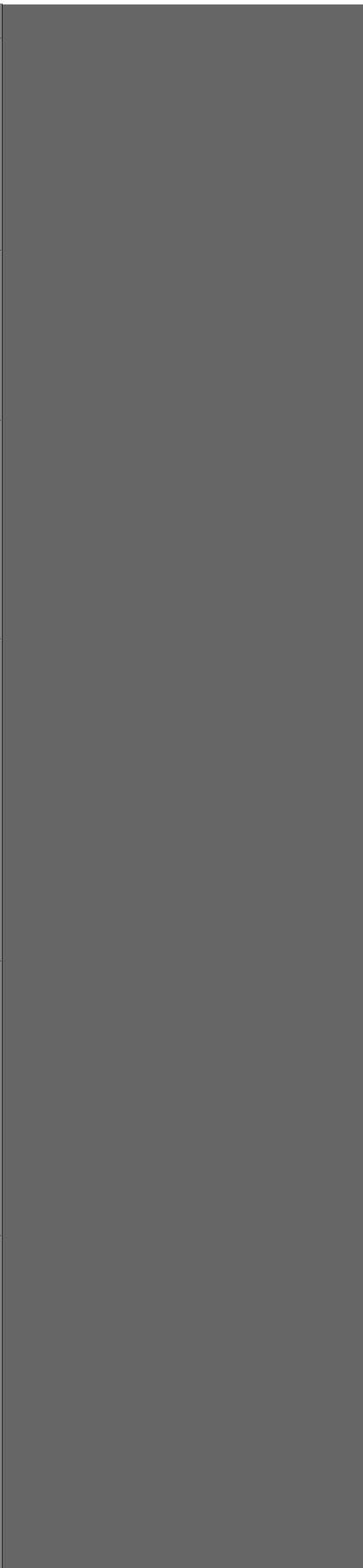
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	<p>Read the Newsletter Article (PDF)</p>
	<p>History-Changing Phone Call This year the Secretary created the Willard Wirtz Legacy Award to showcase the promising future leaders of the department. Listen as President Kennedy invites the person who was the award's inspiration to be his Secretary of Labor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to the Phone Call
	<p>Historical Video on the Dangers of Silicosis Former Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins comments on a study regarding the effects of Silicosis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View the Silicosis Video ▪ View all Vault Videos
	<p>Wage and Hour Division Public Service Announcement It was the 60s, equal pay was a hot topic, and Batgirl needed to teach Batman and the American public a lesson!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View the Equal Pay PSA Video ▪ View more videos in the archive
	<p>Long before the elevator campaign, LaborNet, or minimum wage posters, the Department of Labor produced posters that promoted issues important to previous generations of Americans. View our collection of vintage posters that include ones used during World War II.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View more posters in the archive
	<p>Take a look back at all the covers we featured with each issue of FRANCES. You can see Frances Perkins running in the New York marathon, riding a motorcycle, waterskiing, or joining a colleague for a tandem skydiving jump.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View more covers in the archive
	<p>In recognition of President Ronald Reagan's 100th birthday, the National Archives is featuring a selection of documents that showcase President Reagan's relationship with each of the federal agency departments that served him. In 1988, President Reagan issued a proclamation celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Department of Labor. Take look at this document and more in our history archive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View this document and more in the archive










FRANCES MAG

The Vault: Videos

Take a look back at the sometimes inspiring, sometimes odd and always entertaining Video Vault of the US. Department of Labor. We'll be adding to the Video Vault as we unearth videos from the Department's history. *Note: the Job Corps phone number in the videos is not accurate. The correct number is 1-800-733-5627.*

Found a DOL video from days past? E-mail it to us at Frances@dol.gov and we'll post it here in the Video Vault.

	<p>Historical Video on the Dangers of Silicosis Former Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, comments on a study regarding the effects of Silicosis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Silicosis Video
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	<p>Job Corps Public Service Announcement Rosey Grier says you need the training and conditioning to succeed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Rosey Grier Training and Conditioning Video
	<p>Job Corps Public Service Announcement Rosey Grier uses needlepoint to make a point about Job Corps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Rosey Grier Needlepoint Video
	<p>Job Corps Public Service Announcement A Job Corps graduate discusses how Job Corps helped her become independent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Job Corps Gaining Independence Video
	<p>Job Corps Public Service Announcement Franco Harris answers his own questions about preparation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Job Corps Franco Harris Video
	<p>Job Corps Public Service Announcement Job Corps graduates are working on the railroad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View the Job Corps Railroad Video

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Job Corps Public Service Announcement

A Job Corps graduate tells how Job Corps guided her in the right direction.

- [View the Job Corps Right Direction Video](#)



Job Corps Public Service Announcement

Job Corps graduates in the welding trade discuss how Job Corps gave them the skills they needed.

- [View the Job Corps Welders Video](#)

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The Vault: Photos

[ILO's World Day Against Child Labor - June 12](#)

Hundreds of millions of girls and boys throughout the world are engaged in work that deprives them of adequate education, health, leisure and basic freedoms, violating their rights. Of these children, more than half are exposed to the worst forms of child labor such as work in hazardous environments, slavery, or other forms of forced labor and illicit activities.

Look through photographer [David Parker's collection](#) of children working in dangerous jobs from a young girl making firecrackers to those making bricks with their bare hands.



Young brick worker in Nepal



Two young brick workers in Nepal



Boy electroplating items in India



Girl making fireworks in Guatemala

July 2011

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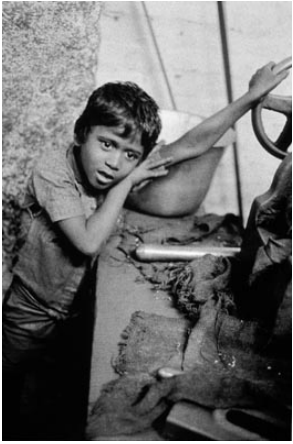
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Boy serving as a lathe operator in India



Boy working a platform in Indonesia



Girl scavenging cardboard in Turkey



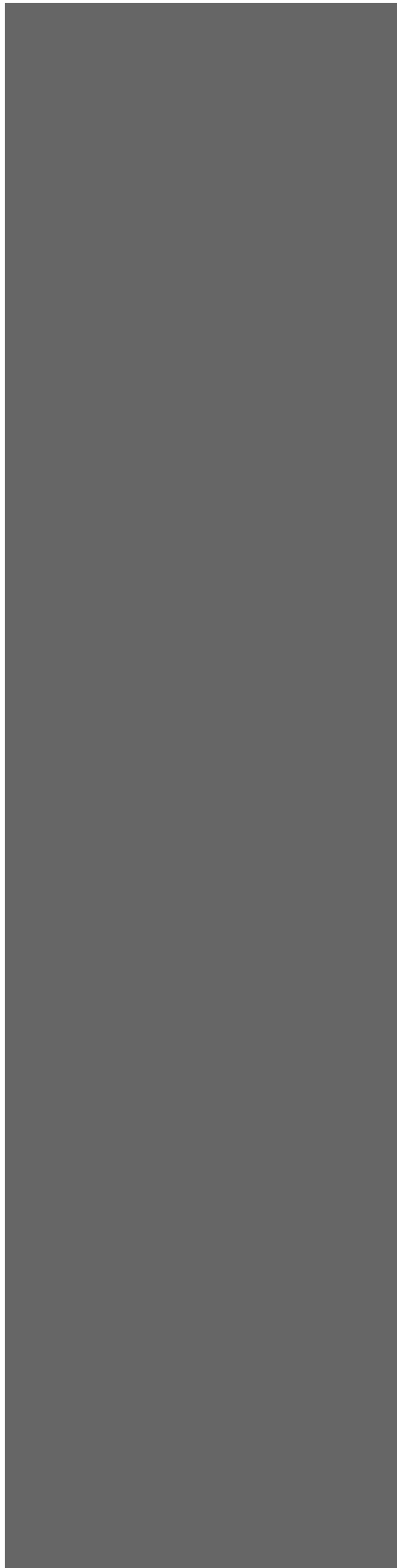
Girl breaking rocks in quarry in India



Boy mining tin in Bolivia



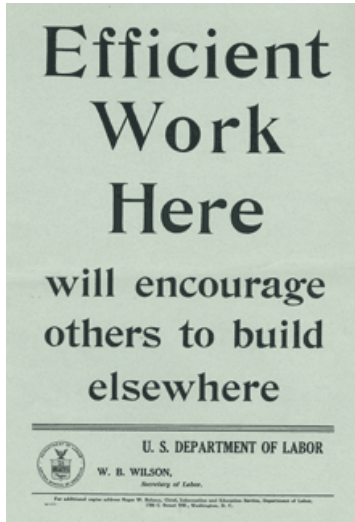
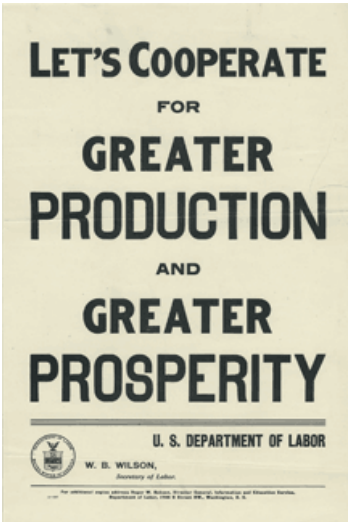
Boy working a torch to weld in India



FRANCES MAG

The Vault: Posters

Long before the elevator campaign or minimum wage posters, the Department of Labor produced posters that promoted issues important to previous generations of Americans.



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What is this?

KEEP TIMES GOOD
—BY—
BUILDING
WHATEVER IS NEEDED
NOW

Whether a Road, a Sewer,
a Bridge, or a Public
or Private Building



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W. B. WILSON,
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EFFICIENCY
—IN—
PRODUCTION
DETERMINES
—THE—
COST OF
LIVING



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WISELY
BUT
BUY
NOW



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BUILD NOW
THE
NATIONAL
STATE
AND COUNTY
ROADS
That Are Needed



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THE REASON WAGES

in the United States are
higher than anywhere
else in the world is be-
cause our workmen are
more efficient and

PRODUCE MORE

The Greater the Pro-
duction the Higher the
Wages



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of Work in
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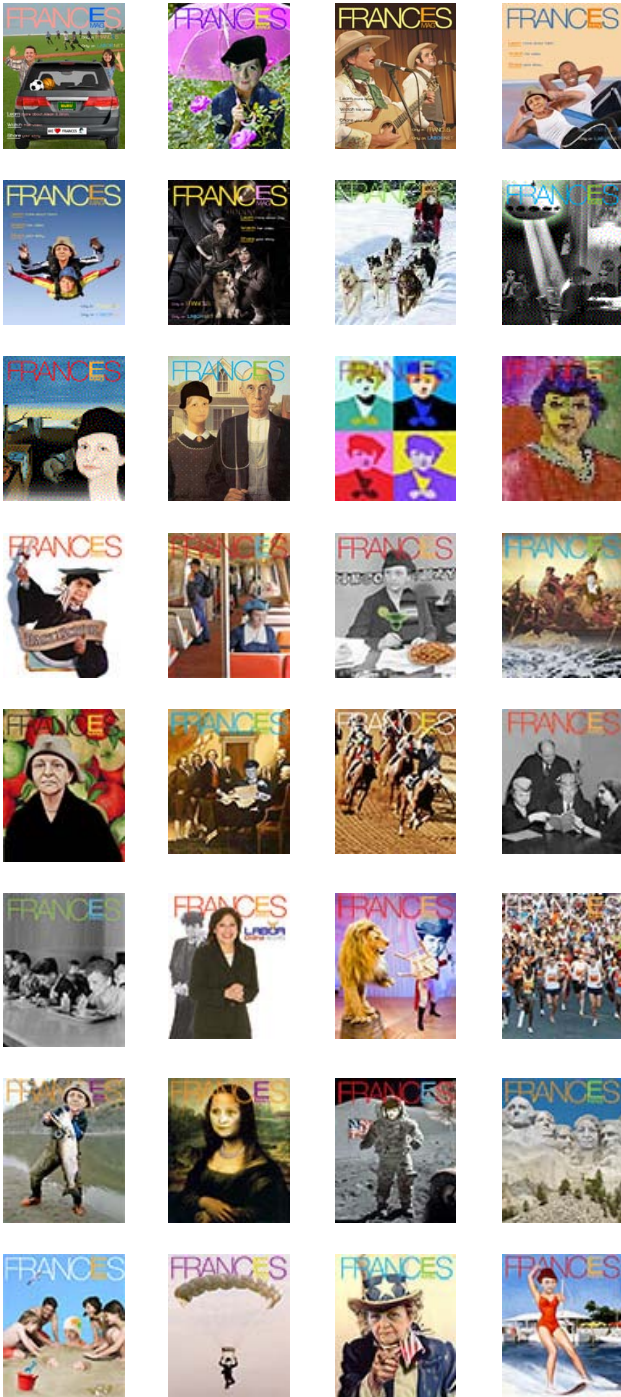
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FRANCES MAG

The Vault: Frances E-mag Covers



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The Vault: History

When you get close to being 100 years old, like the Department of Labor, you start to accumulate some history along the way. Here you'll find some of the documents from the DOL attic.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release October 11, 1983
October 11, 1983
MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES
SUBJECT: FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
The rising number of injury and illness claims from Federal employees has meant increased human suffering, a loss of valuable services from injured employees, and increased costs for compensation payments, which are rapidly approaching a billion dollars each year.

On October 11, 1983, the Ronald Reagan White House issued a memorandum from the President to all department and agency heads concerning the ongoing issue of injuries and illness among federal employees.

View the Reagan Memorandum (PDF)



President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation in 1988 in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of the Department of Labor.

View the Proclamation (PDF)

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What is this?



Dear Frances

This is the section of FRANCES where we'll post your comments about our articles.

Opinions About Frances

I would like to send CONGRATULATIONS to Ms. Rendon and Ms. Coogle of the OFCCP Louisville Office. I personally know each of these employees and can attest to their hard work and efforts in promoting the rights of federal contractor employees within the Louisville area.

I would also like to thank FRANCES for considering this story and for also recognizing the accomplishments of the federal worker. I would recommend forwarding stories of this nature to the local media outlets so that they can be available and viewed by the actual people directly impacted by our field office staff. This type of recognition would surely help promote the efforts of our federal employees and the Secretary's mandate of "Good Jobs for Everyone!"

Again, I applaud this story and the daily efforts of the most important resource of the federal government: the career federal worker.

John Lawrence II, OFCCP

I enjoyed the article about the reunion at the spring training baseball game. Thanks.

Bill Parks, BLS

The information disclosed in the News Circular concerning the different types of "clearances" was very thorough and informative. Thank you very much! I completed the E-QIP several months ago and I noticed that some other folks have been cleared and have taken new ID photos. I wanted to address my concern for the delay in processing mine, but was apprehensive, because I was not certain who I should address such concerns with, but now I know (the servicing HRO). Thank you.

Kay Comeaux, ETA

As soon as I opened this email, I was so pleasantly surprised! I love the photo of "Frances" with the umbrella—she looks like a sleuth—and the articles are great! Kudos to the idea for the e-mag and the name! I look forward to reading it!

Carmen E. Rendon, OFCCP Louisville

As a new employee, reading Frances has helped me learn more about the agency and its mission. It has been a fun way to familiarize myself with Department of Labor.

Mary Dougherty-vanDam, OASAM

I really think Frances, an online magazine is a great idea. I enjoyed learning about the Department in such a fun and informative way. I also found the historical posters interesting and enjoyable.

Allison Padams-Lavigne, EBSA

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What is this?

This is a really great agency e-magazine! Congratulations. Looking forward to more.

Francine - OASAM

I am quite impressed with your first online-edition! You included a variety of features that should appeal to the entire DOI community. I learned a lot about the work of my colleagues, especially the preparation for the G20 summit meeting in April. I look forward to future editions.

*Brenda J. Stovall
Office of the Solicitor*

Send your story ideas, suggestions and reactions (we'll take your book reviews, photos and even cover art, too!) to frances@dol.gov. We look forward to hearing from you.



FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

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The Vault: William B. Wilson's Gift to DOL Employees

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

March 2, 1921.

To the Employees of the Department of Labor
in the District of Columbia:

I am handing you herewith a copy of my little book "Memories", which I would be pleased to have you accept, with my compliments and best wishes, as a memento of our service together in the Department of Labor during the greatest crisis that has ever confronted civilization.

Cordially yours,



Secretary of Labor.

The letter to employees that accompanied William B. Wilson's "little book" of poetry which he shared with all employees on his retirement

Read his poems:

- [A Letter Home](#)

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What is this?

FRANCES MAG

The Vault: DOL Frances Perkins Building Beal Murals

The General Services Administration in 1974 commissioned the artist Jack Beal to produce these four large-scale paintings for the lobby of the "New" Department of Labor building, later renamed the Frances Perkins Building.

- Read the [original March 1977 "Forum" newsletter column](#) about the murals
- Read the [booklet from the 1977 unveiling](#)
- Read the [artist's own thoughts](#) on the mural



July 2011

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Dear Frances

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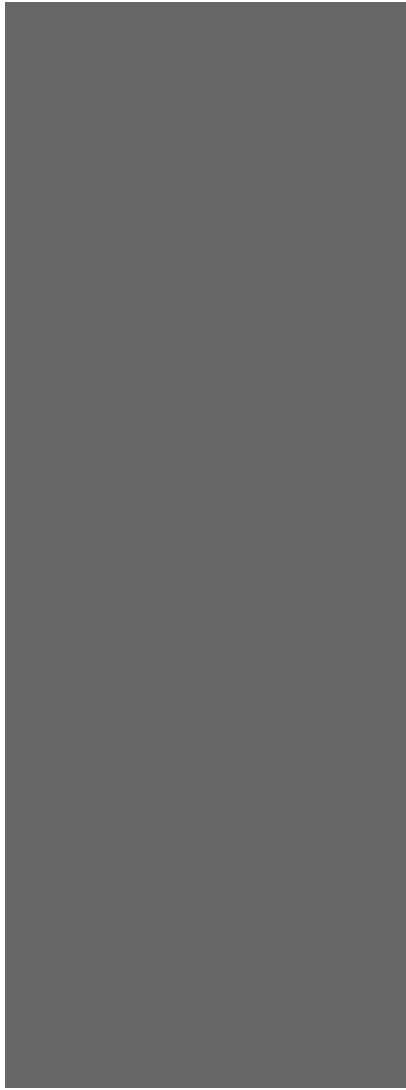
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FRANCES MAG

The Vault: Apprenticeship Photo



The letter to employees that accompanied William B. Wilson's "little book" of poetry which he shared with all employees on his retirement.

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The Vault: Photos

[ILO's World Day Against Child Labor - June 12](#)

Hundreds of millions of girls and boys throughout the world are engaged in work that deprives them of adequate education, health, leisure and basic freedoms, violating their rights. Of these children, more than half are exposed to the worst forms of child labor such as work in hazardous environments, slavery, or other forms of forced labor and illicit activities.

Look through photographer [David Parker's collection](#) of children working in dangerous jobs from a young girl making firecrackers to those making bricks with their bare hands.



Young brick worker in Nepal



Two young brick workers in Nepal



Boy electroplating items in India



Girl making fireworks in Guatemala

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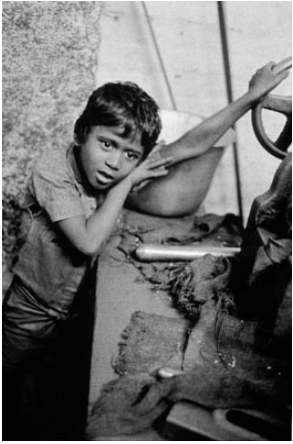
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Boy serving as a lathe operator in India



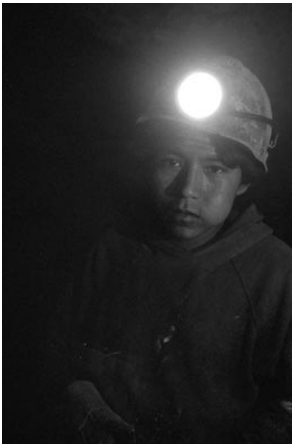
Boy working a platform in Indonesia



Girl scavenging cardboard in Turkey



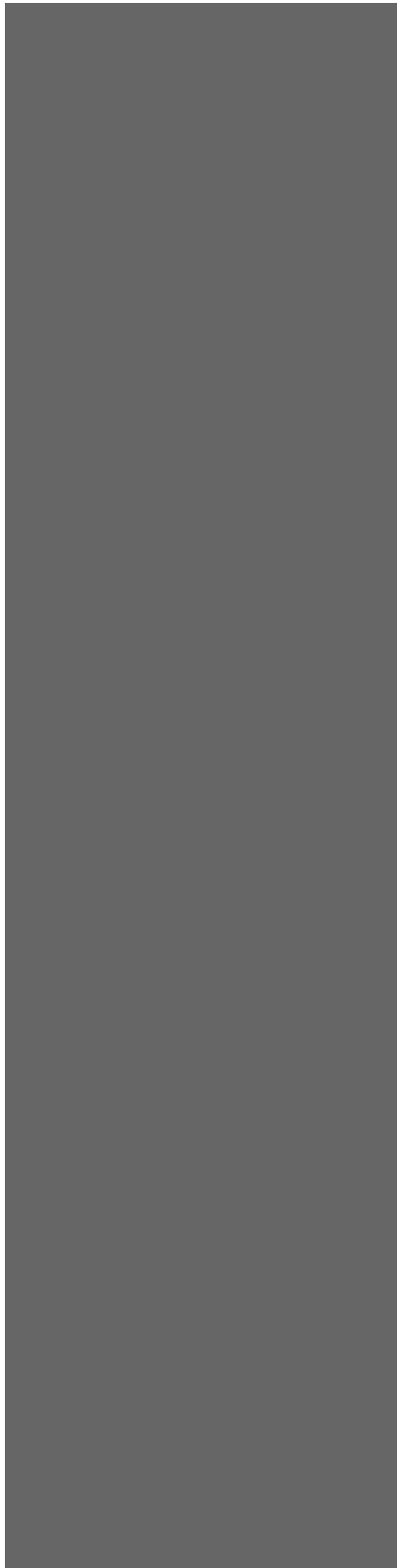
Girl breaking rocks in quarry in India



Boy mining tin in Bolivia



Boy working a torch to weld in India





**A VISIT
BY THE
PRESIDENT**

ROLL #3 13

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



ROLL # G-14.

Richard Nixon, the 37th President of the United States, paid a visit to the U.S. Department of Labor on February 4, 1969.

In his first visit to the agency as President, Mr. Nixon spoke of a "strengthened Labor Department" with "new responsibilities" to deal with newly emerging problems.

During his visit, the President individually greeted and talked with many of the Department's officials. He was welcomed by Secretary of Labor George P. Shultz.



ROLL 9
17A

ROLL 9
17A

The President's Speech: A Summons to New Responsibilities

Mr. Secretary, ladies and gentlemen:

I am very privileged and honored to meet with you today-- the top officials of the Labor Department.

As I was saying to the Secretary when I came into the building, I think that during the years when I was Vice President, except for, of course, the White House, this Department of Government was one that I visited more often than any other.

I was involved at times in various matters involving labor disputes in which I worked with Secretary Jim Mitchell.

As some of you will remember, and particularly, George, you will remember -- George Weaver here -- that I was Chairman of the President's Committee on Government Contracts and a duty that the Vice President had. The meetings were held right here. So I was quite familiar with this building and was privileged to know many of the fine career people who work in the Labor Department.

I have, incidentally, something in common with the Department. I did a little background before hand as to the Labor Department -- when it began and all of that.

I found that the Labor Department was founded in the

year 1913. That was the year I was born. And I think I could probably say we both have our best years ahead of us.

I want to begin, as I have in the other Departments, by saying a word about your Secretary. He is one of the men that I selected for the Cabinet, having in mind the responsibilities that he would have to meet and the background that I felt qualified him for those responsibilities.

I think, too, that in selecting him that we have brought to this Department a man who will be able to carry out the new responsibilities that are going to be given to this Department -- and I will mention them briefly later -- but also who will continue in the high tradition of the Secretaries over the years.

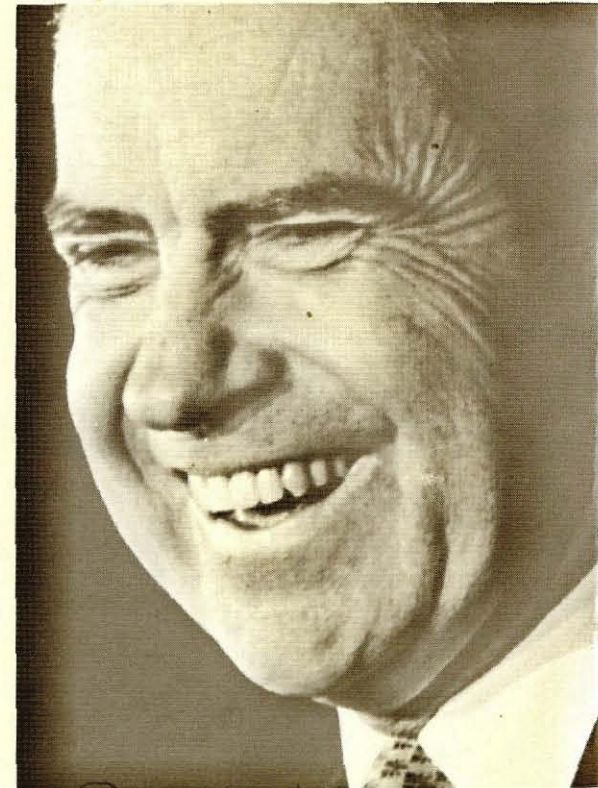
Of course, the man that I knew the best was Jim Mitchell, who brought such a high degree of professional competence in the manpower field to the Department. And I believe that your new Secretary has that same ability.

I think, too, I should mention the fact that he has shown that he is a man of very great talents in getting along with people. I checked his background a bit before coming over here. I found that he had worked in the Eisenhower Administration; he was a consultant to the Kennedy Administration; and he worked on a task force in the Johnson Administration.

Anybody who can stay employed
in those three Administrations can
keep down unemployment in the
United States of America.

I know, too, there has been
some concern in the Department
about the desire, naturally, to see
that we have a broad
regional representation
as far as the
people who are in the top
echelons of
Government.

I remember I attended,
on one occasion,
the swearing-in
of one of the
Under Secretaries of Labor
during the
Mitchell regime. The
Under Secretary was
Jock O'Connell,
who came from



ROL 5 # 18 A.

New Jersey. He was sworn in by Justice Brennan, who came from New Jersey, and the Secretary of Labor was Jim Mitchell, who came from New Jersey. Now we thought that was simply keeping too many of the jobs in one place.

I am glad to see that the new Secretary of Labor has appointed one new Secretary from South Chicago, another from West Chicago, and another one from the Chicago suburbs. If I don't watch him, I will have Mayor Daly in here next.

Of course, we do want to say some words that have to do with the mission of this Department. On that score, I know that the new Secretary has talked to his top officials indicating to you the interest I have strongly emphasized to him in having a strengthened Labor Department, strengthened in terms of not only its capability of handling its current assignments but strengthened also in terms of some new assignments in the manpower area, which I think properly belong to this Department.

Now, just a word to indicate where we began. When you look back to the year 1913 -- I checked some of the statistics then and found that there were 21 million wage earners in the United States, employees. Today there are 77 million. Then the average wage was 21 cents an hour; today it is \$3.10 an hour.

*"...we are going to give this Department
some more responsibilities."*



"...the Labor Department was founded...the year I was born...we both have our best years ahead of us."

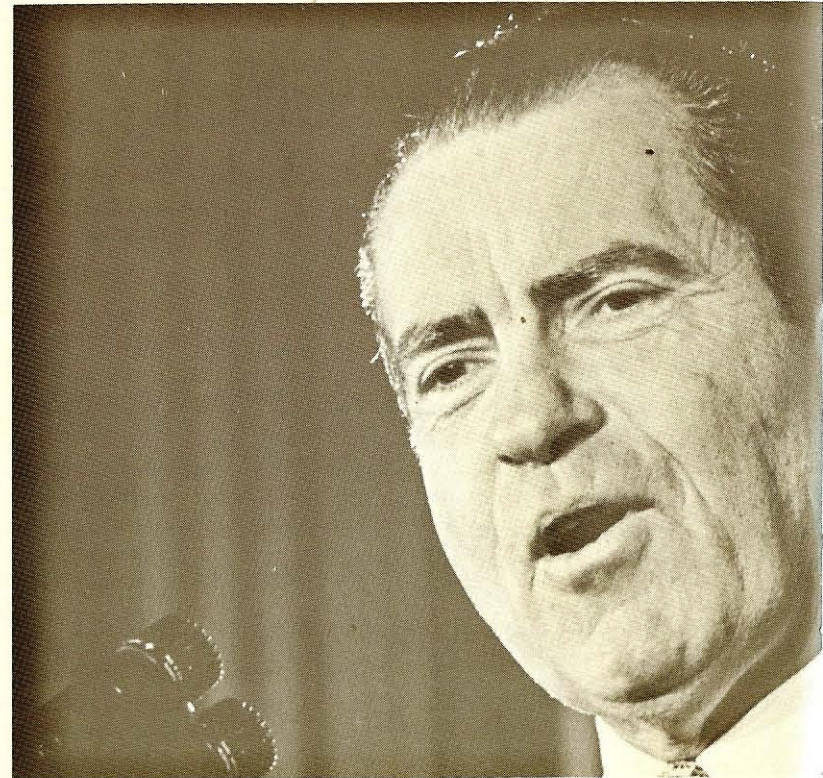
Those are some indications of how things have changed. But beyond that, the mission of this Department has changed. The unsophisticated observer thinks of the Department of Labor as being one that is almost completely absorbed in the problems of labor-management relations and avoiding controversies. As a matter of fact, I am expecting the Secretary of Labor to tell us how the dock strike is to be settled before the day is over.

But you know and I know that the Department's mission goes far beyond that; that the Department's mission relates to the problems of the disabled, to the problems of employment for minority groups, also to the whole general area of manpower which is becoming increasingly a part of our concern in this Nation.

I refer to the fact that as we look over the next 30 years and look back over the last 55 years of the Department, so much more will happen in terms of the manpower force and the labor needs in this country than has happened over that period.

Much did happen in those dramatic figures that I just quoted.

We know that the practices of automation, the new devices that are going to not bring unemployment, but change the



Roll 8 12.



character of needs for labor in this country, that that is something we must plan for.

It means forward thinking with regard to America's youth, what we train them for, what kind of education they will have. As the Secretary will tell you in a meeting that we had of our Urban Affairs Council this week a couple of days ago, I emphasized the necessity for all of our departments to be thinking ahead as to how we can meet the new problems that are going to arise.

And I would say that there is perhaps no department in government, more than the Department of Labor, that has this responsibility, because those who work in the great productive complexes of the United States, whether in factories or on the farm or wherever they may be, ten years from now, 15 years from now, may not have that same kind of job opportunity.

We must train them for the new responsibilities for the new skills that are going to be needed.

Consequently, I am particularly glad to note to this group that you have in your Secretary a man who thinks that way; a man who is not thinking simply in the limited terms of labor-management relations, as vitally important as that is, but is thinking in terms of the vision that we all need to have of the future and the kind of America we want this to be, not only in jobs for America, but the kind of jobs and the environment that we want people in our working force to have.

All of these are certainly concerns that every man and woman in this room -- you who are the leaders of this Department -- will have in your minds in the years ahead as you provide advice and counsel to the new Administration.

In terms of new responsibilities, as far as manpower is concerned, it seems to me that the primary responsibility for manpower, for manpower training, job training, really belongs here. That is why, in terms of the reorganization plans that we are considering -- and we have already discussed this with the Secretary -- we are going to give this Department some more responsibilities.



"There is nothing more important than this whole manpower area. . .as we. . .diffuse the crises in our cities and the crises that may also exist in rural America. . ."



We are doing so for two reasons: One, because it belongs here; but, two, because I know that in this Department is the competence, the technical competence and the expertise to handle the problem.

We are going to give you the challenge and we are sure that you will meet that challenge and meet it effectively.

There is nothing more important than this whole manpower area, more important as we, for example, diffuse the crises that we have in our cities and the crises that also may exist in rural America as well.

With all of these things in mind, I simply want to leave you with the thought that this Department, as old as it is -- it is as old as I am, 55 or 56 years of age -- that old as it is, it has problems that are new, it is going to have new responsibilities. It is a very exciting place to be, an exciting place to be in this Department, to be working in it.

One final thought I wish to leave with you, which I perhaps need to say less here than in any of the departments I have visited to date or will be visiting for the balance of the week, is with regard to those that I am not meeting today as I will meet you.

I know that there are thousands of people here in Washington assigned to this Department, working under the people in this room, and others throughout this Nation that I, as the President of the United States, will never have the opportunity to meet.

I would hope that you would convey to them that I recognize how very important their contribution is to the success of an Administration.

Now, the only people that I personally will appoint to positions in this Department can probably be put in two or three rows in this room. I recognize that right in this room the great majority are people who have given their lives to the career service in Government. It is rather fashionable to knock that career service, wherever it may be.

But I have been in Government much of my adult life. And I know how many dedicated and very competent people there are; people who have come into Government not because of the remuneration that they could get, but they have come here because of a sense of purpose and a sense of vision that they had and they came here because they thought more important than how much compensation they received was that they could make a contribution to their Nation. We are grateful for that.

I also know that as far as the Secretary of Labor is concerned and the Assistant Secretaries and all of the people that we may have appointed, that their leadership will make a great deal of difference insofar as seeing that this Department has the kind of a record that will be outstanding. But I know that without the support of the career public servants in this room and the thousands of others attached to the Department, no matter how good these men are and these women who are appointed to these top jobs, they will not be able to succeed without that support.

What I am really trying to say is this: We need you. We need all of the career people, particularly. We need your help. We need your dedication. We need your enthusiasm.

I only can assure you, we will try to be worthy of the people who have given so much of their time, so much of their lives to public service. We hope to provide the leadership along with you that will make the American people look at the record of this Department at the conclusion of this Administration and say, "This was the best period in the life of the Labor Department."

Thank you.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT

President Nixon poses with a group of Labor Department officials (from left): Commissioner of Labor Statistics -designee Geoffrey H. Moore, Assistant Secretary for Manpower Arnold R. Weber, Under Secretary James D. Hodgson, Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Services W. J. Usery, Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary George L-P Weaver, (President Nixon), Secretary George P. Shultz, Women's Bureau Director Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, Assistant Secretary for Administration Leo R. Werts, Special Assistant to the Secretary for Communications Joseph A. Loftus and Executive Assistant to the Secretary David P. Taylor.



ROLL # 1 30.



"We hope to provide the leadership along with you that will make the American people look at the record of this Department at the conclusion of this Administration and say, 'This was the best period in the life of the Labor Department.'"

*-- President Richard Nixon
February 4, 1969*



W.S.

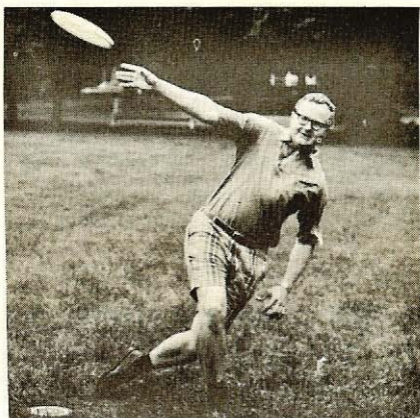


FORUM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

September 23, 1970

Vol. 2 No. 19



Anderson sends a frisbee sailing.

Labor Man Shares Frisbee Title

GARY, IND.—The Foul Five, captained by Wage-Hour Compliance Officer George Anderson of Gary, has won its second world frisbee championship in 4 years. They did it at the 14th Annual International Frisbee Tournament in Calumet, Mich.

The Foul Five had to come from behind to win the title against the Highland Avenue Aces of Wilmette, Ill., before 2,500 spectators. The Aces won the first game but the Foul Five veterans settled down and won the next 2. The team had to win 4 more times before entering the finals in the 1-day tournament.

In describing the victory, *Sports Illustrated* said the Foul Five players teamed up "to give a lesson in guts frisbee that Calumet will long remember."

Anderson has been captain of the Foul Five since it began competing in the international tournament in 1966, and piloted the team to its first world championship in 1967. His specialty is the overhand reverse wrist flip which opponents find difficult to catch.

Anderson notes that the game has evolved from a mere fad in the 1950's to a highly competitive sport which boasts 28,000 members of the International Frisbee Association.

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Watch their video.

Share your story.

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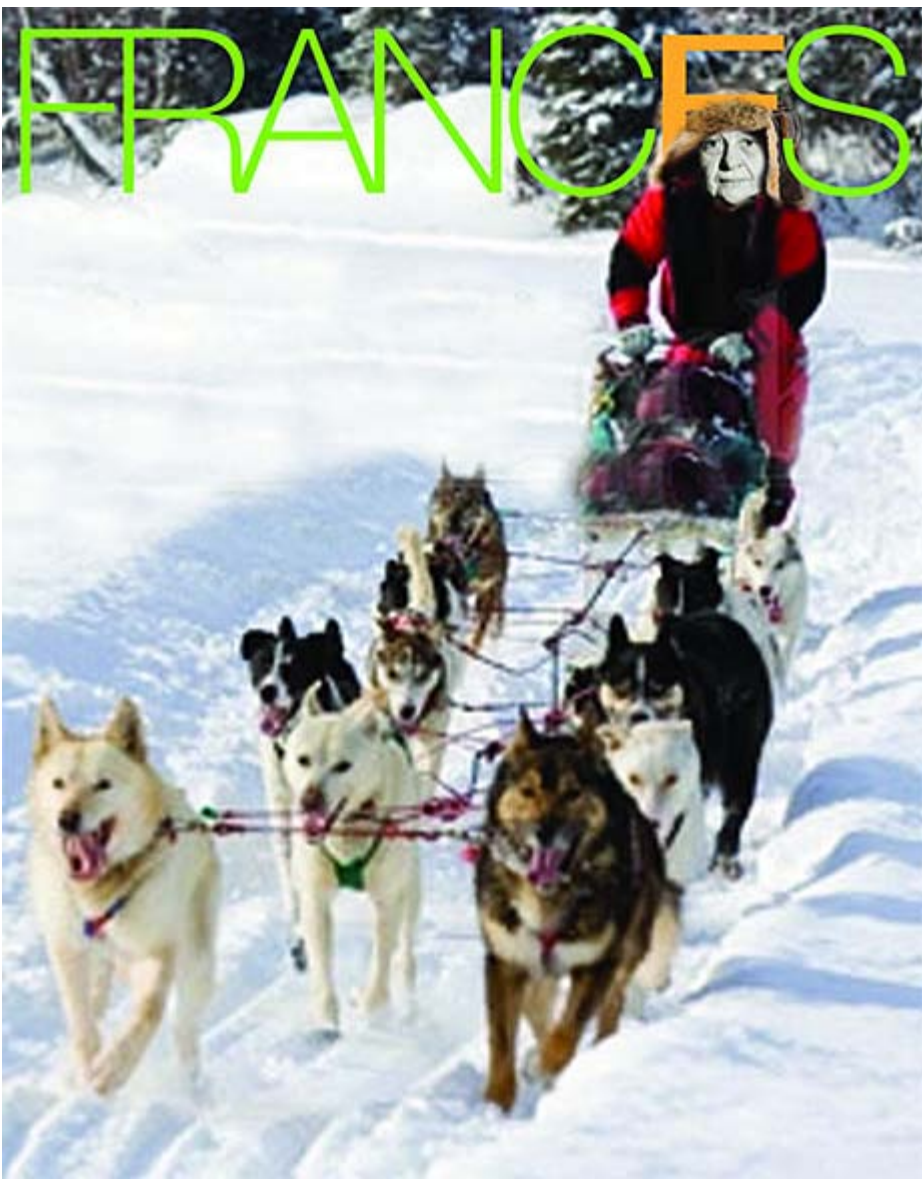
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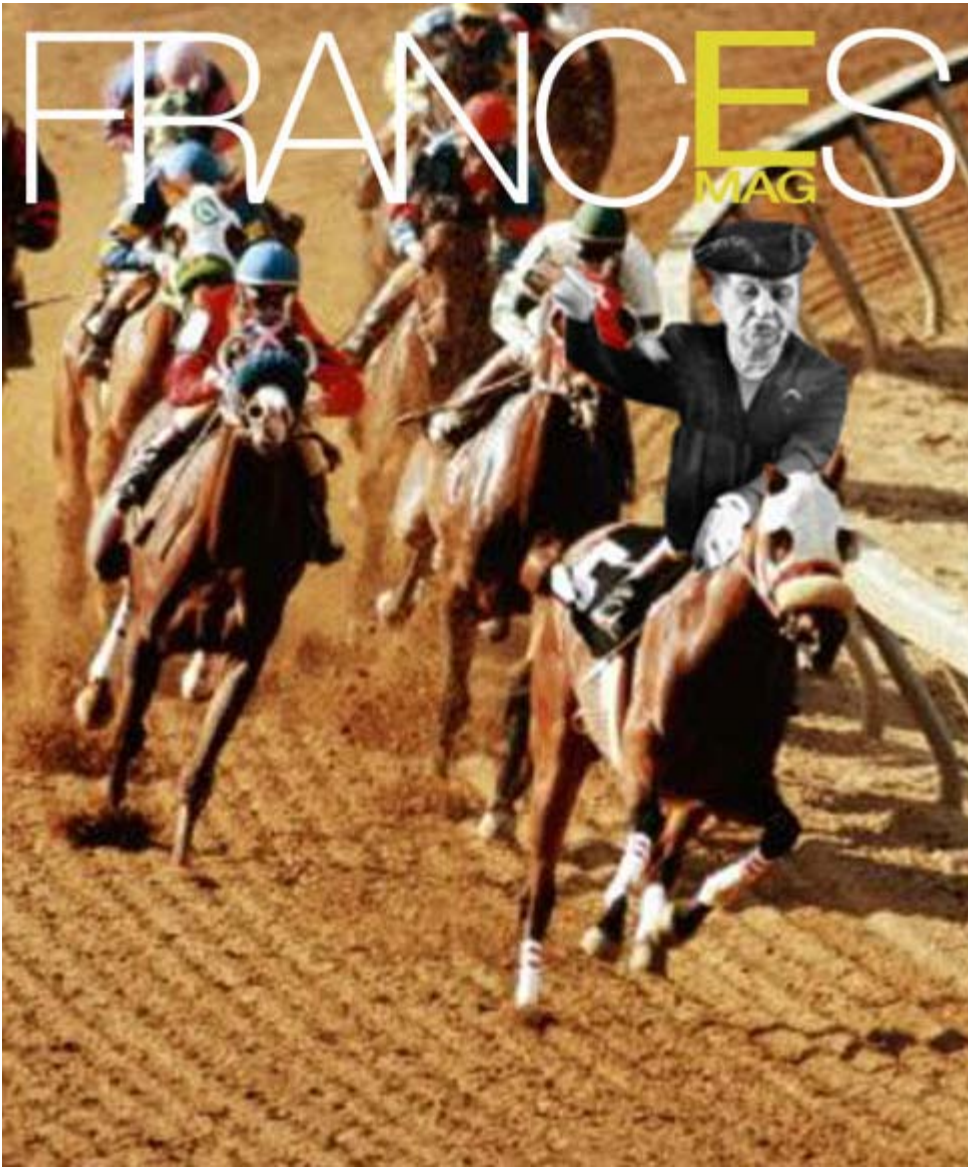


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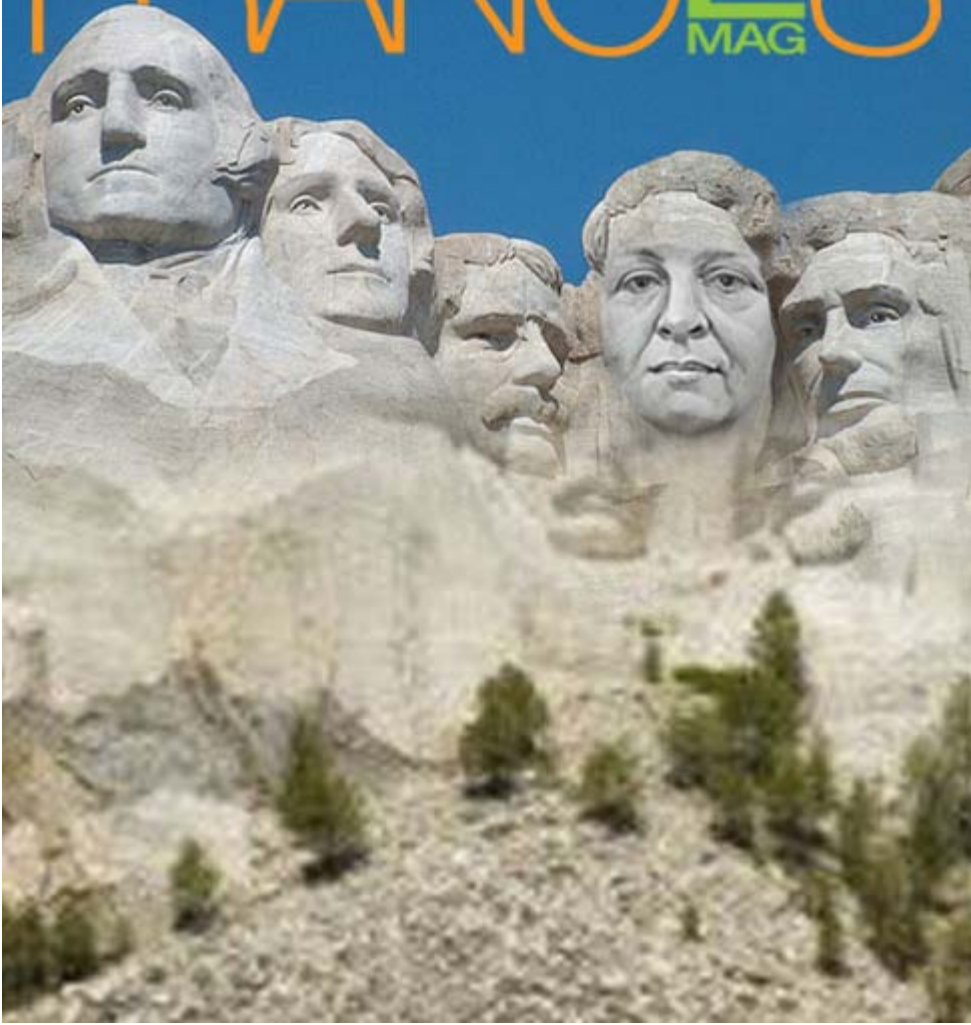
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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 11, 1983

October 11, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The rising number of injury and illness claims from Federal employees has meant increased human suffering, a loss of valuable services from injured employees, and increased costs for compensation payments, which are rapidly approaching a billion dollars each year.

We must make the Federal government an example in occupational safety and health. We cannot allow conditions to exist in our own workplaces which would be unacceptable in the private sector.

On December 9, 1982, I asked you to review your safety program, take every step possible to reduce injuries, and make sure that you and your staff are committed to safety.

In the interest of protecting Federal employees, I am now setting a government-wide goal of three percent per year for the reduction of workplace injuries. The goal will be in effect for five years, starting with Fiscal Year 1984, and will cover both injury and occupational health claims.

Establishing this goal gives us a standard against which to measure progress. Specific goals for agencies will be worked out with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the Department of Labor.

I look forward to recognizing your safety and health accomplishments at a Presidential Awards Program next year.

RONALD REAGAN

#



Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year of the Department of Labor

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

March 4, 1988, will be the seventy-fifth anniversary of President William Howard Taft's signing into law an act establishing the United States Department of Labor. In celebrating this milestone, we honor both the mandate of this ninth Executive department and the men and women who have made that mandate a reality through the years.

Recognition of the need for a Department of Labor began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) urged the creation of a Federal department to deal with matters affecting working people. A Bureau of Labor was established in the Department of the Interior in 1884. This Bureau was made an independent, but not Executive-rank, Department of Labor in 1888. When the Department of Commerce and Labor was created in 1903, the Department of Labor returned to bureau status within it. The famed labor leader Samuel Gompers and others then campaigned for a Cabinet-level Department of Labor.

That campaign bore fruit with President Taft's bill-signing in 1913. The mandate of the Department of Labor was "to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment." That immense task has inspired the Department ever since.

The Department has fulfilled its duties during war and peace, during depression and prosperity. Through the years, the Department of Labor has improved the lives of working people and benefited all Americans through its contributions to the success of our economy.

Among other tasks, the Department helps workers find and train for jobs; monitors changes in employment, prices, and other economic measures; oversees the broad range of working conditions and safeguards working people's rights; assures and strengthens collective bargaining; and ensures freedom from discrimination. Seeking to help business and industry achieve economic growth and stability, the Department also promotes cooperative relationships between labor and management and encourages collaborative efforts with trade unions and employer organizations.

The Department has played a significant international role as well, cultivating understanding among labor organizations throughout the world and fostering free unions and efficient governmental labor institutions in other nations.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the year 1988 as United States Department of Labor Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this Anniversary Year with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. In order to enhance participation in this important observance, I call upon the Secretary of Labor to establish an Honorary Committee for the Department of Labor Seventy-fifth Anniversary Year, and to invite all living former Secretaries of Labor and the Presidents of the AFL-CIO and the Chamber of Commerce to act as Co-Chairs of the Committee. I also call upon the Secretary to invite other distinguished persons to serve as Committee members, including representatives of the Congress, labor, management, and academia.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan



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LGBT Pride Month

June marks the celebration of LGBT Pride month. This month, first declared by President Clinton in 2000, and again recognized by President Obama in 2009, stresses the importance of tolerance for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community.

- The Williams Institute released an estimate in April that 9 million Americans are LGBT, which accounts for approximately 3.8 percent of the U.S. population.
- The Stonewall riots, which took place in June of 1969 as a result of violent police raids at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, are considered the start of the modern gay rights movement.
- The rainbow flag, a well-known symbol for LGBT pride and designed by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker, was originally created with eight stripes. The flag was changed to six stripes, first due to a lack of fabric and later to be symmetrical.
- An upsetting statement put out by the Center for American Progress states that between 15 percent to 43 percent of gay people have experienced some form of discrimination and harassment at the workplace.
- The "It Gets Better" video project was started by Dan Savage in response to gay teenagers who committed suicide after being victimized for their sexual orientation. Since the first video, more than 10,000 videos have followed it, totaling more than 35 million views. Watch the Labor Department's English and Spanish language "It Gets Better" videos here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW8rRHmDx3Q>
- According to the Williams Institute, 85,000 same-sex couples have entered civil unions or domestic partnerships in Vermont, California, New Jersey, Oregon, New Hampshire, Washington and Nevada.
- The American labor movement has often led the way for LGBT individuals in high ranking positions, including Bob Chase (former NEA President), Stuart Applebaum (Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union President), Mary Kay Henry (SEIU President) and Randi Weingarten (AFT President).
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June is National Candy Month!

In honor of National Candy Month, here are some interesting facts and statistics about candy and the people who make it.

- The Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union of America was organized in 1886. The union merged with various others to today become the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers' International Union.
- Over the past 10 years, four fatalities have occurred in the candy manufacturing industry. In this same time period, OSHA has conducted 400 inspections and issued citations for 1,000 violations at candy making facilities.
- Milton S. Hershey, the founder of the Hershey Foods Corporation, served for four years as an apprentice to a candy maker in Lancaster, PA, before starting his first candy shop when he was 19 in Philadelphia, PA. Hershey was inducted into the Department of Labor's Hall of Fame in 2003.
- In September 2010, the Department provided a \$10 million grant to help children working in the cocoa industry in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.
- The William Wrigley Jr. Company began selling household products in 1891, and as a sales technique added a stick of gum to each product they sold. The company would grow to become one of the largest candy companies in the world, selling sweets in more than 180 countries. It's still based in Chicago, IL.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 66,000 sugar and confectionary workers in America in more than 1,900 establishments. Also according to BLS, there are 87,700 dentists who can help with those nasty cavities!
- Three of the five most popular candy bars sold in the United States (Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, Kit Kat and Butterfinger) are union made.
- In their Denver, Colorado home, Russell and Clara Stover began their first candy business in 1923. Almost 90 years later, the "Russell Stover" brand continues to be a staple in the American candy industry. Now based in Kansas City, Mo., the company employs more than 2,453 employees in 11 manufacturing plants and distribution centers across the United States.
- The average American chews about 14,560 sticks of gum in his/her entire lifetime.
- Whitman's Candies began in Philadelphia in 1842. During World War I, Whitman's sent chocolates to soldiers serving for the United States, along with hand-written notes from the women working the candy lines. Though Russell Stover purchased Whitman's in 1993, for every war since World War I, Whitman's has continued to provide quality chocolates to our service members and Whitman's candies also are passed out to guests at the White House and aboard Air Force One.
- For the chocolate river scene in the 1971 movie "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," adapted from the classic tale by Roald Dahl, chocolate ice cream mix was added to more than 150,000 gallons of water. And though the Bureau of Labor Statistics could not confirm this, it is believed that more than 2,500 Oompa-Loompas were employed in the Wonka factory.
- Former President Ronald Reagan kept a jar of jelly beans on his desk, and inspired a blueberry flavor so he could serve red, white and blue jelly beans at parties. When Reagan left office, President George Bush changed the candy to M&Ms, which have been in the White House ever since.

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Five Best Practices for Disability Hiring

1. **New On-line Return-to-Work Toolkit.** ODEP created the on-line Return-to-Work Toolkit to help employers and employees understand the return-to-work process and to assist employees in getting back to the job quickly.
2. **Entrepreneurship.** ODEP has created tools to promote entrepreneurship for people with disabilities. For more information, go to <http://www.start-up-usa.biz/>.
3. **Youth Transition.** ODEP has published *Guideposts for Success*, which promotes transition for all youth, including those with disabilities. The guide contains six effective practices: education, employment, connecting activities, family involvement, youth development, and leadership.
4. **Customized Employment/Flexible Work Arrangements.** The customized employment process is designed to increase employment options for job seekers with complex needs through voluntary negotiation of the employment relationship with an employer. For more information, visit <http://www.dol.gov/odep/CE-FWA/>.
5. **Supporting the Workplace Success of Wounded and Injured Service Members.** The U.S. Department of Labor has launched two employment-related outreach programs for returning service members and their employers — REALifelines and America's Heroes at Work. For more information, visit www.dol.gov/vets/programs/REALife/main.htm and www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov.

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Facts About Older and Disabled Workers

1. Among people age 65 and older, 18.1 million people, or 51.8 percent, had a disability. About 12.9 million people 65 years and older, or 36.9 percent, had a significant disability. [1]
2. People with disabilities have a higher rate of self-employment and small-business experience compared with people without disabilities — 12.2 percent versus 7.8 percent (1990 National Census).
3. Disability rates increase with age. Approximately 30 percent of the population over age 55 has a disability.
4. By the year 2020, researchers predict that 50 percent of the U.S. population will have at least one chronic condition and 25 percent will live with multiple chronic conditions.
5. People with disabilities operate 40 percent of home-based businesses (Disabled Businessman's Association).

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Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Fact: The ADA prohibits discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities, whether disabilities are pre-existing, perceived or acquired during employment. The ADA employment provisions apply to private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies, labor organizations, and joint labor-management committees.

Fact: Title I of the ADA prohibits discrimination in employment against a qualified individual with a disability, and includes specific requirements related to the full range of hiring practices, reasonable accommodation, terms and conditions of employment, and other labor-management issues.

Fact: Title II of the ADA states that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by a department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a state or a local government.

Fact: Inexpensive, easy steps that can be taken to make a workplace or other facility accessible for people with disabilities include ramping one step, installing a bathroom grab bar, lowering a paper towel dispenser, rearranging furniture, installing offset hinges to widen a doorway, or painting new lines to create an accessible parking space.

Fact: The ADA is based on common sense. The law recognizes that altering existing structures is more costly than making new construction accessible. The law only requires that public accommodations (e.g., stores, banks, hotels, and restaurants) remove architectural barriers in existing facilities when it is "readily achievable" (i.e., it can be done "without much difficulty or expense").

Facts About Workers with Disabilities

Fact: Recruiting and hiring young people with disabilities makes good business sense. Youth bring fresh new perspectives on strategies for meeting business challenges and achieving success. Hiring young people with disabilities is also a valuable way to reach out to an important market base. **According to the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS), there are approximately 1.2 million young people with disabilities ages 16-20 in the United States.**

Fact: Most workers with disabilities do not need a workplace accommodation or that the typical cost would likely be below \$600. However, most employers realized that they actually accommodate workers with and without disabilities every day to build a loyal, dedicated and productive workforce.

Fact: In 2008, 18,312,900 of the 175,368,200 individuals ages 21 to 64 in the US with the ability to work reported one or more disabilities. Employing people with disabilities means gaining access to a vibrant consumer base in addition to retaining a reliable and skilled employee.

Fact: Disability is part of the natural diversity of human life. It touches all of us, whether through our own individual experience or that of a family member, neighbor, friend or colleague. As such, we all have a role in — and benefit to gain from — advancing equality for people with disabilities in all sectors of society, including the workplace.

Fact: Today and every day, people with disabilities add significant value to America's workplaces and economy. Their skills and talents benefit businesses of all sizes and in all industries. They are entrepreneurs, innovators, and community leaders.

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Note: The information in this Index was obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and their website at www.dol.gov/odep.



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MSHA by the Numbers 2000-2009

- The total amount of Citations and Orders issued by MSHA to both Coal and MNM mines increased 46 percent from 120,053 in CY 2000 to 175,079 in CY 2009.
- The total amount of Citations and Orders issued by MSHA to both Coal and MNM mines increased 25 percent from 140,235 in CY 2006 to 175,079 in CY 2009.
- The total amount of Elevated Enforcement Actions taken by MSHA for both Coal and MNM mines increased 89 percent from 3,222 in CY 2000 to 6,077 in CY 2009.
- The total amount of Elevated Enforcement Actions taken by MSHA for both Coal and MNM mines increased 23 percent from 4,952 in CY 2006 to 6,077 in CY 2009.
- Violations per Inspection Hour for both Coal and MNM mines increased 24 percent from 0.17 in CY 2000 to 0.21 in CY 2009.
- Violations per Inspection Hour for both Coal and MNM mines decreased 9 percent from 0.23 in CY 2006 to 0.21 in CY 2009.
- The total dollar amount assessed by MSHA to both Coal and M/NM mines increased 463 percent from \$25.1 million in CY 2000 to \$141.2 million in CY 2009.
- The total dollar amount assessed by MSHA to both Coal and M/NM mines increased 302 percent from \$35.1 million in CY 2006 to \$141.2 million in CY 2009.
- The percent of "S&S" citations and orders for both Coal and MNM mines increased 3 percent from 32 percent in CY 2006 to 33 percent in CY 2009.
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DOL "Census"

In honor of the 2010 Census, which is a count of the U.S. population, FRANCES is pleased to provide our own DOL "census" results:

- Total DOL employees: 15,999
- Total DOL employees in the Frances Perkins Building: 3,091
- Total number of employees for our largest agency: 2,500 (at the Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The state with largest number of DOL employees: DC has 4,704; next up is Pennsylvania with 1,014

- Number of occupational titles at DOL: 334
- Number of permanent SES: 149
- Number of political appointees: 95
- Number of contractors: 2318
- Number of employees in ILAB: 87
- Number of male employees: 8,105
- Number of female employees: 7,894
- Number of employees at the GS-11 level: 1,319

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Working Women Facts and Firsts

March is National Women's History Month, and for the inaugural issue of FRANCES, we're dedicating *The Index* (interesting facts and figures related to the Labor Department's mission and work) to working women.

So... did you know...

- Today, women hold nearly half (49.9 percent) of non-farm jobs (We'll update this item for Index readers on March 5, when the new data is released).
- In 1979, women working full time earned 62 percent of what men did. Today, it's 82 percent.
- Among women aged 25 to 64 who are in the labor force, the proportion with a college degree roughly tripled from 1970 to today.
- Fifty years ago, more than 70 percent of working woman held clerical, blue-collar, or service jobs. Only 12 percent had professional white-collar jobs, and 5 percent held management positions. Today, over 40 percent of women have professional, business, or management jobs.
- Mothers with older children (6 to 17 years of age) are more likely to work outside the home than those with younger children (under 6 years of age), and unmarried mothers have higher participation rates than married mothers. Today, 76 percent of unmarried mothers are in the labor force, compared with 70 percent of married mothers
- An American woman's life expectancy today is 80 years old, five years more than it was in 1970... and five years more than today's average life expectancy for an American man.

And here is a brief listing of notable "first" women:

- First woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize: Emily Green Balch
- First woman to receive a college bachelor's degree: Catherine Brewer Benson (Wesleyan College)
- First African American woman judge in the US: Jane Matilda Bolin
- First woman announcer for a major league baseball team: Sherry Davis
- First woman to dunk in a college basketball game: Georgeann Wells
- First woman to manage a presidential campaign: Susan Estrich
- First Hispanic woman named president of a comprehensive state college: Elsa Gomez
- First woman and first African American to be named director of the U.S. Bureau of Mines: Rhea Graham.
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Wage & Hour's Newest Crop of Investigators



On February 11, 107 members of the Wage & Hour staff completed their Basic I Investigator Training. Wage & Hour Deputy Administrator Nancy Leppink was on hand to congratulate the division's largest and most diverse class of new investigators ever. The graduates completed an

intensive three-week training on the investigative process and application of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Here are some fun facts about February's new graduates:

- The 107 graduates are Wage & Hour Division's largest class of new field investigators in its 72-year history.
- Despite its name, "Basic I" is not exactly for beginners — prerequisites to the course include completion of a comprehensive, 12-week pre-training, and a minimum of three months of on-the-job training.
- Graduates came to San Antonio for the training from every corner of the country — one graduate came from as far as Saipan!
- Two-thirds of the new field investigators speak at least two languages, including Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese and Hindi.
- Members of the class range from fresh college grads, to experienced workers starting a second or even third career.
- For the new college graduates, being a Wage & Hour field investigator will be their first job! Others hail from diverse professional backgrounds, including our armed forces, attorneys, police officers, former Wage & Hour technicians and OLMS employees.
- The Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force are all represented in the graduating class.
- The graduating class also includes Peace Corps volunteers who served in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Paraguay, and Uganda.
- Finally, the creative and musically inclined graduating class was so inspired by Basic I Training that some trainees penned a song to summarize their experience:

(to the theme of Green Acres)

Wage and Hour is the place to be.
Our division is one family.
Labor standards, our priority.
Give us our badges, we'll add to the legacy.

We have come from almost every state.
San Antonio has filled our plate.
Hospitality and food galore,
We'll be happy to come back here for more.

Basic training gets an A plus, plus.
This years first class is dear to us.
FLSA we hope it's clear.

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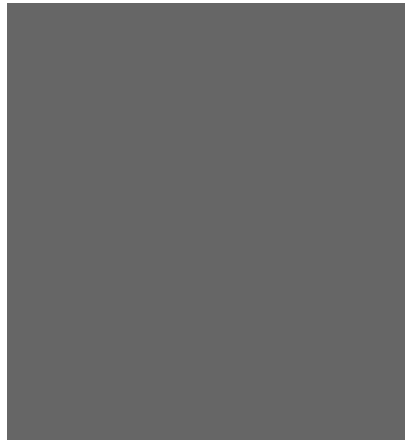
We'll be back for basic 2 next year.

We have credentials – Beware!
Get out your pencils – We're fair.

Our class is best.
We pass every test.
W-H we are here!

The Wage & Hour Division, fulfilling Secretary Solis' commitment to hire 250 new field investigators, began training a second large class of approximately 100 new field investigators on February 22, 2010. Stay tuned for some fun facts about the next class!

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Length of Service Recognition

At DOL, we have 12 employees that have been with us for over 45 years! We asked a few of them to share their earliest memories of DOL and reflect on the biggest changes they've seen since joining DOL.



Eva Fitzgerald, SOL

One of my earliest memories was of Secretary Wirtz who would frequently be on the same elevator. He acknowledged your presence with a friendly greeting!

There have been enormous changes. I began working at the DOL when I was 18-years old. The building we work in now is quite different than the old one, which was located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue. It has a lot to offer employees like a bigger and better cafeteria, parking, a work out center, the metro, and most of all daycare for the many working parents. Technology has changed drastically. In the old days we used electric typewriters and adding machines and now we have wonderful computers with calculators and the like which make our jobs much easier. More information is made available to employees and town meetings are held by the Secretary of Labor.



Connie Sorrentino, BLS

My fondest early memory is that I was borrowed from BLS by the OECD in 1974 to consult on comparing unemployment rates across countries. I was thrilled to work in Paris for 6 weeks for Angus Maddison, a well known author of comparative economic growth studies. The following year OECD invited me back to present the report to the Working Party for Employment and Unemployment Statistics, chaired by our Commissioner Janet Norwood. These were great opportunities for a young BLS economist to work internationally and to make long-lasting contacts for the BLS international comparisons program which I now head.

Technology is the most noticeable change. When I started at BLS, we only had mainframe computers and there were many statistical clerks who did manual data entry and checking. Spreadsheets were handwritten on accounting paper. I used a mechanical calculator for tabulations and secretaries typed our reports. The technological changes began in the 1980s, and by the 1990s everyone had a PC on their desk, typed their own reports and filled in electronic spreadsheets, and computers automatically performed much of the former manual data verification.



Jane Walstedt, WB

I don't remember my first day. I think the Job Corps may have remained—at least for a while—in the building on 18th Street between L and M Streets that we were in at the time of the transfer. I think perhaps I moved to the Labor Department building at 14th and Constitution when I went to work for the Women's Bureau. Of course the old building was a majestic old building. I know that the Frances Perkins Building was built to be an open space building, but gradually was cut up by private offices being built, particularly against the windows.

And here is a listing of all the employees that have been with us for over 45 years. We've also posted a [list](#) of all DOL employees with over 35 years of service. We thank them for their decades of serving America's workers.

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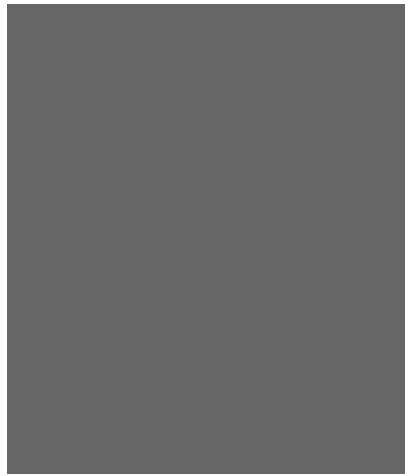
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75th Anniversary of the Passage of the National Labor Relations Act

July 5th marked the 75th Anniversary of the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (the "Wagner Act"). In honor of this momentous date in labor history, we've included some other union/labor facts and figures.

- Prior to the National Labor Relations Act (the "Wagner Act"), which gave private sector workers the right to choose whether they wish to be represented by a union, unions could be prosecuted as illegal combinations.
 - 12.4% of the workforce, or about 16.1 million people belong to a union
 - People aged 55 – 64 are the population group with the highest rate of union membership. 16.6%
 - The first national labor federation, The National Labor Union (NLU), was founded in 1866.
 - Women working under sweat shop conditions organized the first union in the early 1800s. According to the book *American Labor*, in 1834-1836 women worked 16 – 17 hours a day to earn \$1.25 to \$2.00 a week. A girl weaver in a non-union mill would receive \$4.20 a week versus \$12.00 for the same work in a union mill.
 - The first effective labor organization that was more than regional in membership and influence was the Knights of Labor, organized in 1869. The Knights believed in the unity of the interests of all producing groups and sought to enlist in their ranks not only all laborers but everyone who could be truly classified as a producer
 - Peter J. McGuire of the Carpenters Union, is credited with pushing for a national Labor Day holiday on the first Monday in September
 - The AFL (American Federation of Labor) and CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) merged in 1955.
 - **5 September 1882**
On September 5th, 1882, thirty thousand workers marched in the first Labor Day parade in New York City.
 - **15 March 1917**
The Supreme Court approved the Eight-Hour Act
 - **25 June 1938**
The Wages and Hours (later Fair Labor Standards) Act is passed, banning child labor and setting the 40-hour work week. The Act went into effect in October 1940, and was upheld in the Supreme Court on 3 February 1941.
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Random Question

More DOL employees share with us some of their most unusual questions they've had to ask — or been asked — on the job. If you'd like to share a funny story or anecdote, please send FRANCES an e-mail with your submission.

Keeping Alligators at Bay



It was a muggy summer day in the bayous of Louisiana, and as the sun crossed the sky and settled into the horizon, wisps of steam could be seen rising from the crawfish ponds. I decided to squeeze in one last employee interview as my partner finished the housing inspection. The workers on the farm, who hailed from southern Mexico, had recently arrived under the H-2A temporary labor program. The interviewee expressed his surprise at the many predators that feed on the mudbugs and described the techniques that workers use to keep them at bay as part of their daily job duties. He began to catalog a bevy of pests that plague

the little crustaceans: turtles, beavers, pelicans. Then his eyes grew wide, "...and the alligators, the alligators are the worst, because they come for people, too."

Skeptical of this claim and eager to return to the substance of the interview, I ignored the comment, but the employee continued on, giving a blow-by-blow account of his and other workers' gator sightings — around the ponds, behind the shed, underneath the trailer. All of a sudden, my mind clicked into gear. Could this actually be some kind of housing violation? I couldn't help but ask the question, however strange the premise seemed to be:

"Since that time, has your employer taken any measures to keep the alligators away from the housing?"

Back in the office, I scratched my head for a while over this one, trying to figure out where man-eating reptiles might fall under 29 CFR 1910.142. It wasn't quite "inactive water within 200 feet of camp and untreated for mosquito control - 29 CFR 1942(a)(1)." Nor did it fit exactly under "infestation by, and harborage of insects and/or pests - 29 CFR 1910.142(j)." In the end, we didn't cite any housing violations in this case, as the employer remediated all of the potential violations before the conclusion of the investigation. The employees, in any event, seemed more concerned about the wobbly steps up to the trailer than the creatures that might be lurking below them, and we think that the gators were content to gnaw on crawfish for the rest of the season.

Daniel Chapman
Investigator, WHD
New Orleans, LA

What the Heck is the FLSA?

These are some of the oddest exchanges I've had in interviews. These are separate questions asked of me by employers on different occasions.

In investigating a local welding business, the employer stated he had no timecards or time sheets. During the tour of the establishment, there was a time clock observed. The employer was then asked, if he had no timecards then what was the time clock used for? The employer replied, "for my own personal business!"

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What is this?



Another employer asked me, "Why are you investigating me, when everyone else is doing the same thing?"

I've gotten questions ranging from "Who are you and what the heck is the FLSA [Fair Labor Standards Act]?" to "Do I have to pay my family members if they are working for me?"

My favorite one is not a question, but a statement made by the chief executive officer when we started an investigation of his company. I introduced myself and he replied: "Glad you are here. I have not been paying my employees overtime, here are my pay records, let's get this solved as soon as possible!"

Terry G. Cole
Investigator, WHD Longview Field Office
Longview, Tx

And...How Tall is Your Boss?



I was young when I started at BLS and a respondent (in Clinton, IA) did not believe I worked for DOL so they were asking various questions. One was, "How tall is (then U.S. Labor Secretary) Robert Reich?" Luckily, I had a rough guess (less than 5 feet tall) and passed his test.

Christina Tindall
Sr. Economist, Bureau of Labor Statistics
St. Louis, MO

How Much do YOU Make?



I was interviewing someone for the BLS National Compensation Survey. We ask questions about how much the employees at companies are paid, and I had to ask him for his salary information.

He responded with the information I needed and then said, "Now that you know my salary, you tell me yours." After I told him, he asked if we had any openings.

Karen Litschgi, CBP, CCP
Senior Statistician, Bureau of Labor Statistics
St. Louis, MO

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FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

Random Question

Two DOL employees from the Wage & Hour Division share their most unusual experiences while conducting investigations.



Cheryl L. Masters, Lawton, OK

"I was conducting a Davis-Bacon and Related Acts investigation on a local construction company. The employer was very cooperative — he acknowledged mistakes, made copies of everything I asked for, and gave me his office to interview the employees.

"The owner got an urgent call from his brother explaining that his sister-in-law had had a terrible horseback riding accident and was on her way via helicopter to Oklahoma City. He asked me very politely if he was needed, I told him to go, but asked if I could continue to interview his employees in his absence. He

introduced me to his partner, with instructions to let me interview whomever I wanted. I interviewed employees in the owner's office. They were very typical and held little surprises. That is until the last one.

"This employee was fidgeting in the chair and the arm of the chair knocked a gun that was magnetically mounted under the table onto the floor. The gun was pointed at me. Time both sped up and slowed down. The employee picked it up — pointing it away from me — took the magazine out and informed me that there were no bullets in the chamber. I finished the interview quickly. When we exited the office the employee and I told the partner what had happened. He apologized and made a joke that he does not sit in the chair I was sitting in because that happens all of the time."



Christina Marwan, Albuquerque, NM

"This happened in a Grain Elevator initiative case in Clovis, NM. Upon completion of taking interview statements I usually will ask if they have any questions. The interviewee wanted to know if I had any location information about fighting clubs in Albuquerque, NM because he is a fighter. When I told him that I didn't have any information, he requested that I ask my husband and to give him a call."

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The Watercooler

CES, CPI, ECI, MLS, NCS — these are just a few of the hundreds, if not thousands, of statistics* that BLS collects, processes, analyzes and disseminates on unemployment, employment, prices, pay and benefits and productivity. Hundreds of thousands of data points are crunched to publish more than 900 news releases each year which amount to more than 7,200 pages of data. And that's only part of the story, there's a whole host of other publications BLS also publishes.

All this numerical data needs to be interpreted by skilled economists and statisticians. FRANCES asked three BLS employees from the Philadelphia region about their favorite.

Random Question: What is Your Favorite Statistic and Why?



Audrey Day, BLS Federal/State Division, Philadelphia Regional Office

"The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) are my favorite statistics because they can be used to analyze the local economy. LAUS unemployment data are available at a diverse level of geographies — state, metropolitan statistical area, county, city — and are available in a time series. I can look at an area's unemployment rate over the past couple decades and compare it to other areas, including the United States. I am a visual person and enjoy using graphs, charts, and maps to analyze LAUS data. I also like the fact that

LAUS data are used to help people by identifying areas of higher unemployment so that federal programs can focus their efforts on providing help where it is needed most."



Kerry Murphy, BLS Division of Prices, Branch of Industrial Prices, Philadelphia Regional Office

"My favorite BLS statistic is the Producer Price Index. I believe the Producer Price Index is uniquely valuable to public and private entities alike. The Producer Price Index sheds light on inflationary forces in the economy and provides business decision makers with valuable price information specific to their industry. One of the more rewarding aspects of my job with the BLS is the time I spend with our respondents. I enjoy promoting

the Producer Price Index and other BLS statistics while meeting with leaders from a diverse cross section of industries. Collecting data for the Producer Price Index is made easier by the fact that many respondents depend on the data while negotiating prices and developing contracts."

Jeff Shultz, BLS Division of Compensation Programs, Office of Field Operations, Philadelphia Regional Office

"My favorite survey/statistic is the Employment Cost Index. From a statistical standpoint, it is on par with the CPI and the PPI, but gets far less press, even though it is used to do everything from setting federal pay to adjusting contracts. What I especially like about this program is that it isn't just numbers. The repeated contacts with employers creates a

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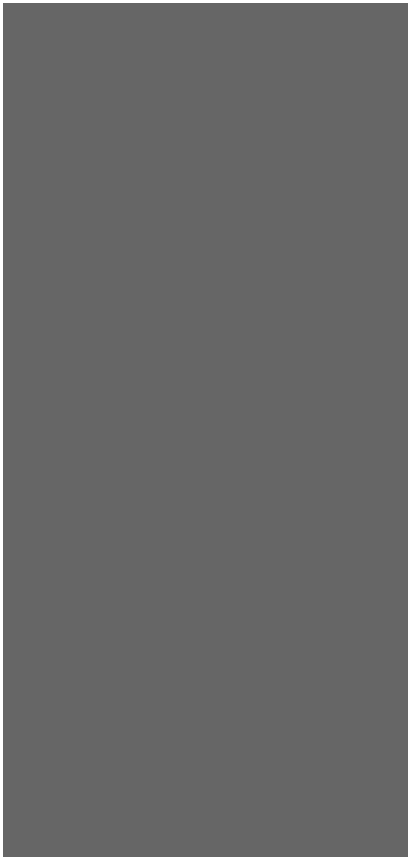


personal bond -- a reliable, constant voice on what may sometimes seem a faceless machine. Whether happy or unhappy, they trust us enough to say what they really feel."

Statistical Acronyms:

- CES - Current Employment Statistics
- CPI - Consumer Price Index
- ECI - Employment Cost Index
- EPR - Employment Population Ratio
- PPI - Producer Price Index
- LAUS - Local Area Unemployment Statistics
- LFPR - Labor Force Participant Rate
- MLS - Mass Layoff Statistics
- NCS - National Compensation Data
- UR - Unemployment Rate

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FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

Random Question: What was Your Favorite Halloween Costume?



Deanne Amaden, Office of Public Affairs, San Francisco, California

"My favorite Halloween costume was a lovely fairy princess dress my mother made for me when I was about six. It was cream-colored taffeta topped with netting, with tiny, round orange buttons sewn all over. I still wonder at the time it must have taken my Mom to sew on all of the buttons. I remember that it was a frosty October night in the Chicago suburbs that year, and I was so unhappy to have to wear my coat over the beautiful dress as we raced from house to house filling our sacks with treats."



Michael Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia

"I grew up in a Baltimore row house near the baseball stadium. One year, a group of Baltimore Orioles' baseball players rented the house across the street from me so they could live within walking distance of the stadium during the baseball season. That October, my friend Tom went over to their house and got one of the players, Jerry Adair, to loan him some of his "stuff," so that Halloween we went trick-or-treating as little Orioles ballplayers. Unfortunately, the photos that my

mother took are now lost, but living near the stadium and dressing as a professional ballplayer definitely ranks up there among my most memorable Halloweens."



Juan Rodriguez, Office of Public Affairs, Dallas, Texas

"Pajapita, San Marcos, Guatemala - In early 1978 my mother made the extremely difficult decision to sacrifice being without her children to pursue a better life in the United States. She labored long and tiring hours at a hotel as a housekeeper to make little wage. She kept what she needed to live and sent

the rest to my grandmother for us to have a better life. This was my first real costume, as we could not afford such luxuries before. I was very happy and eager to ham it with my costume as my aunt took this picture to send to my mom. It was the best costume—ever!"

Jeannine Lupton, Office of Public Affairs, Seattle, Washington

"Halloween was very different in the 1960s. No one had heard of tainted candy or razor blades in apples. The streets of Seattle were safe, and at about age eight, or younger if you had older siblings, children

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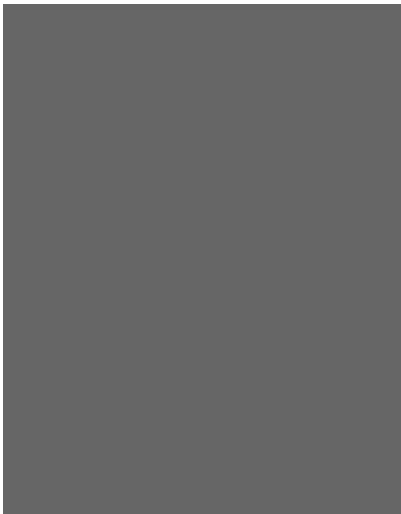
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were allowed to trick or treat without hovering parents with flashlights. Boundaries were set and pillowcases, not small plastic tubs, were used to haul the loot. The streets were full of children and tips on the good places to hit spread quickly. The fun really began after the collection as my sisters and I dumped everything on the

floor and began a complex trading process, complete with rules for candy values. If anyone scored a large five-cent candy bar it was strictly off limits in the trading pool.”

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FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

(Not-So) Random Question: ETA and Green Job SGA

DOL Goes Green as ETA Employees Complete Historic Grants Initiative

At the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), a team of managers and employees from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) worked to develop and administer six specific Solicitations for Grant Applications (SGAs) designed to encourage the development of Green Jobs and an economy that supports them. ETA sought proposals for job-training and labor-market information projects focused on green industries and jobs, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, and other high-growth fields. The team worked diligently and deftly during the spring of 2009 to craft the grant competitions, and the six SGAs resulted in grant awards totaling nearly \$750 million, with \$500 million focused on Green Jobs.

Because we were curious (and couldn't sleep), we called three members of the ETA team at 2 a.m. and asked them, "Hey, what was it like to work on the Green Job SGA?"



Amanda Ahlstrand, ETA

"It was interesting to work on something new and the Green Jobs grants have created opportunities for people with different skill levels and backgrounds to get training in new and exciting fields. We helped to design the Green Jobs grant competition to meet the needs of local communities--both in terms of the green sectors that were growing in their communities, as well as the people who they needed to reach. I'm truly proud of the team that worked on these grants — we got a ton done

to announce the competitions that would end up in 189 grants all at once! It has been an exciting, creative, and reinvigorating part of my career. I've really been proud to be a part of helping the Recovery Act work — people need jobs now and it's great to be a part of making that happen!"



Steven Rietzke, ETA

"Everyone agrees that as a nation, we need to improve energy usage and our environmental future. We hope that the work we have been doing for the past one-and-a half years will prepare the workforce for these jobs. Working on the grants has been interesting because we are trying to harness a lot of grass-roots energy and know-how to make a real impact. We are trying to make a strategic investment at a time of great economic hardship for some areas of the country; we are also trying to target people in need, including

unemployed individuals and those who are disadvantaged and living in high poverty areas.

"It is so difficult for people to climb out of poverty, and they need some help. I am proud to have worked on the Pathways Out of Poverty Solicitation for Grant Applications, which was designed to provide the training and other support necessary to allow people in poverty to take advantage of emerging Green-Job opportunities. Low-income workers or workers without jobs need help with transportation, child-care, and other support services, so they can focus on their training. We are encouraging partnerships with community and faith-based organizations that can provide such services. It all works together! Personally, I would like to see the grants really make a difference and help people in need in addition to creating a brighter energy future for our nation."

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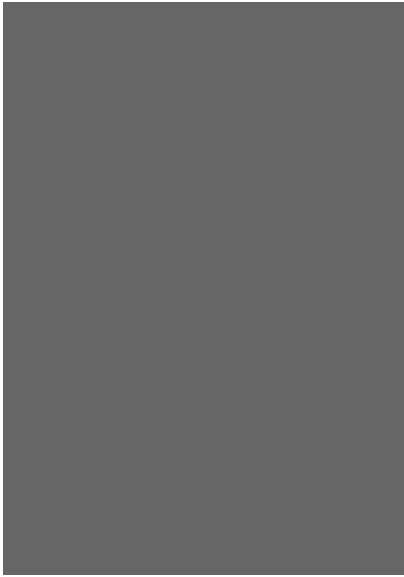
Janice Sheelor, ETA



"In March 2009, I began work with the Discretionary Grants Unit as a team leader. As a result, I had an opportunity to work on the Energy Training Partnership Grants authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Because I was new to this unit, this SGA was my first experience in managing a grant competition, and my colleagues played a critical role in assisting me through the process. This process included coordinating with the program office, providing technical guidance to potential applicants, and overseeing the entire grant-management process.

Personally, this SGA not only heightened my awareness of the Green Jobs Initiative, but it was truly rewarding to know that my role in this initiative will benefit so many families impacted by the economic downturn. The outcomes of this SGA are imperative to carrying out President Obama's vision and promoting economic growth by preparing workers for careers in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries."

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FRANCES MAG

The Vault: Poetry of William B. Wilson, First Secretary of Labor

A Letter Home

A LETTER HOME.



(Written while on a trip through the Anthracite region, looking for aid for the striking miners of Dubois, Pa.)



Dear Agnes: I'm up in the mountains,
 In the woods, with the sun peeping through
 As I sit down to write you this letter,
 About what I am trying to do.
 I know you'll be glad to receive it,
 Though written half prose and half rhyme,
 When I tell you 'tis helping me greatly
 To pass off this wearisome time.
 For I'm only engaged in the evening,
 With nothing to do through the day,
 And living so much among strangers
 Time seems to pass slowly away.
 I would like to see you and the babies,
 And hear Adam's bright boyish talk.
 (I was very near asking the question—
 Are the babies beginning to walk?)
 I can't tell exactly the reason,
 When you tell me how lovely they grow,
 Why, I scarce can believe that the babies
 Were born such a short time ago.
 We are still fighting on for the measures
 Our men started out to defend;
 But although we have justice to back us,
 God only knows where it will end.
 Still we pray to the God of our fathers
 To strengthen a cause that is just,
 And give us the power of a David
 To crush this Goliath to dust.
 And while we are praying to heaven
 To give what assistance it can,
 I am pleading the best I am able,
 To get some assistance from man.
 And I feel that the efforts I'm making
 Are being productive of good,
 For the men of the Anthracite region
 Are helping our men to get food.
 I did not intend when I started
 To write you so lengthy a song,
 So I hope you will not be angry
 If I've happened to make it too long.
 How long it will be ere I see you
 Is more than I'm able to tell,
 But I hope that this letter will find you,
 Adam, Agnes and Hughey all well.



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Forum

U.S. Department of Labor

March 15, 1977

Vol. 9, No. 5



Murals Unveiled at NDOL in Washington

Four large murals depicting the "History of Labor in America," unveiled March 4 at NDOL, "tell a meaningful story about the contributions of working people," Secretary Marshall said.

The murals by Jack Beal, a 45-year-old painter from Oneonta, N.Y., were com-

(see MURALS, p. 4)



Thomas R. Donahue, left, of the AFL-CIO, Secretary Marshall and Mrs. Joan Mondale view new murals at NDOL in Washington, D.C., as artist Jack Beal explains their themes.

Murals

(continued from p. 1)

missioned for the building by the General Services Administration with the aid of the National Endowment for the Arts.

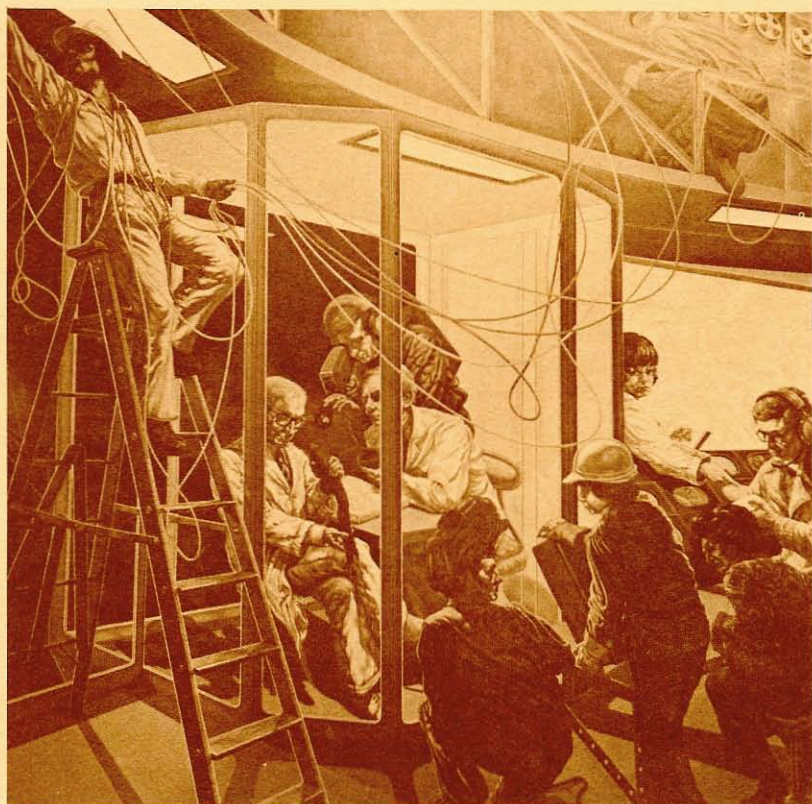
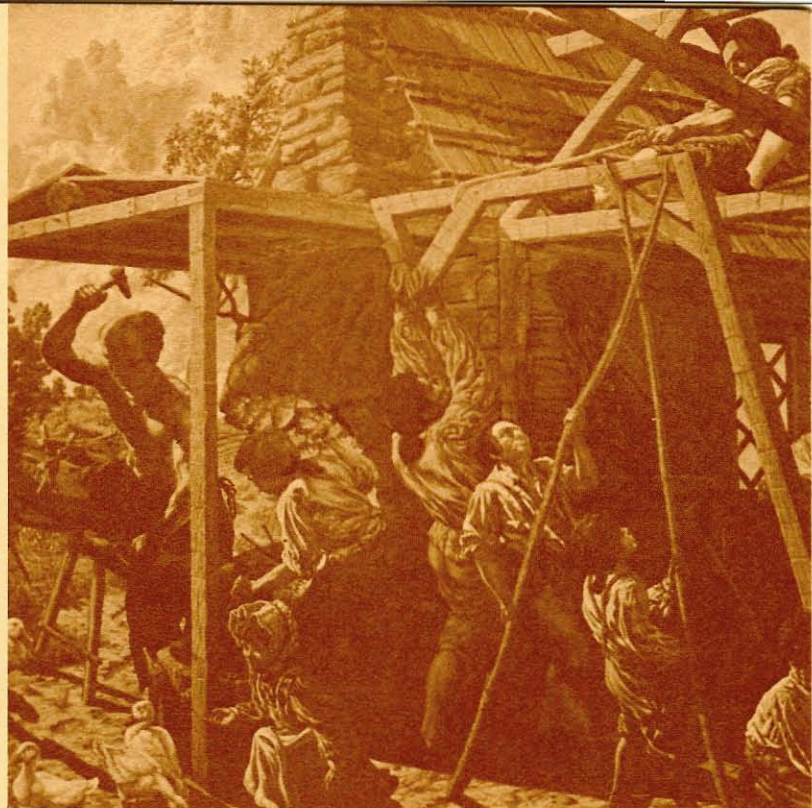
The installation of the four 12-foot-square paintings is part of GSA's art-in-architecture program.

When DOL staff conceived the mural project, a realistic portrayal of workers' struggles and achievements in U.S. history was sought.

The paintings individually portray central themes of the 4 centuries since the U.S. was colonized, beginning in the 16th Century. They are: "Colonization," "Settlement," "Industry" and "Technology."

Joining Secretary Marshall in the unveiling ceremonies were: Mrs. Joan Mondale, wife of the Vice President and an artist; GSA Acting Administrator Robert T. Griffin; Thomas R. Donahue representing the AFL-CIO, Michael Straight, deputy chairman of the National Endowment; artist Beal, and the Right Rev. George G. Higgins, who delivered the invocation.

Beal and a crew of 4 artists, including his wife, painter Sondra Freckelton Beal, worked 2 years on the paintings. He estimates that they spent 25,000 hours on the project in a temporary studio they built to accommodate the oversized paintings.

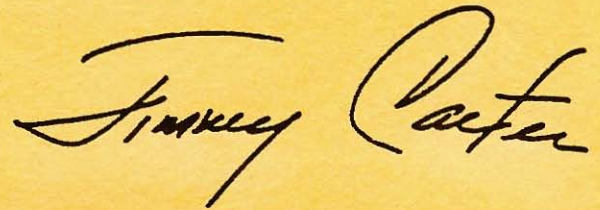


BEAL

THE HISTORY OF LABOR IN AMERICA

The murals on display in the U.S. Labor Department Building in our Nation's Capital speak to us both as genuine works of art and as a vivid pictorial history of the challenges overcome and the progress achieved by American workers.

The arts are a cherished part of the American experience and an important medium of communication. In public buildings such as this they can be effectively used to depict the vitality of our cultural heritage as well as the continuing ability, resourcefulness and imagination of our people coping with problems of everyday life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "C" at the end.

President of the United States

Title: The History of Labor in America
Medium: Oil on canvas
Brief Description: Four murals depicting workers and working conditions in different centuries in America are titled "Colonization," "Settlement," "Industry" and "Technology."
Location: Main Lobby
U.S. Department of Labor Building
Third Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Mr. Beal has approached this daunting assignment in a spirit of epic adventure . . .

Simply as a painting experience, the murals abound in visual incident, dramatic shifts of space and light, and an unflagging energy. Each of the many figures — all painted from living models — is vividly realized, and the handling of so broad a range of detail, from the light of the campfire and the setting sun in "Colonization" to the multi-colored wires and the contour map and television screens in "Technology," is often breathtaking. Everyone will have his or her favorite passages, of course — high on my own list is the rendering of ducks in the lower corner of the "Settlement" painting — and this is, by its very nature, the kind of painting in which one is bound to discover new things with each visit.

. . . Mr. Beal has been unashamed in celebrating some very old-fashioned pieties in these paintings. In the universe of these murals, a spirit of democratic optimism prevails. A devotion to nature, to country, to modern times and to the beauty and dignity of work is openly affirmed, and no worry is spent on whether the message might be considered corny. Above all, no worry is wasted about whether a painting should convey this sort of message. Mr. Beal clearly brought great conviction to this work.

Hilton Kramer
The New York Times
January 7, 1977

Down through the years the artist has brought insight, dignity and purpose to man's often noble, sometimes bumbling journey upward toward a civil, rational existence. Jack Beal, as artist . . . and worker . . ., has done precisely this in his inspired set of murals depicting the American worker during four tumultuous centuries of existence.

In his masterful paintings, Jack Beal has chosen not to glorify the American worker, but to emphasize the daily travail and mounting problems which are the lot of all who labor. The struggle against the wilderness, the taming of the mighty continent, coping with the factory system and the mixed blessings of technological change — all this is inherent in Jack Beal's murals. And there is hope, too — hope that all of us, as working men and women, will not only survive but prevail in a balanced existence wherein neither humanity, technology nor environment need be sacrificed to the exigencies of the other.

The United States Department of Labor is the proper repository for this visual legend and statement of hope so beautifully expressed by Jack Beal.



Secretary of Labor

History often judges a society by its achievements in the arts. In our society, the federal government has been an important patron of the arts. The U.S. General Services Administration's art-in-architecture program follows in that tradition. Its purpose is to enrich new federal buildings with artworks that will complement the architecture and interest of the public.

The importance of art — painting, sculpture, literature and music — is that it creates something that didn't exist before; it adds to our experience. Public art gives a human dimension to today's streamlined, cost-efficient buildings. It gives them warmth. Public art is also a good investment for the economy. Large-scale projects take the work of many hands.

The four murals painted by Jack Beal, who acted as historian as well as artist to create them, are a reflection of America at work. "The History of Labor in America" reaffirms both the dignity of work and the worker. It portrays the advantages of industry and technology while realistically depicting the price we have had to pay. Despite awareness of the blemishes of modern industrial society, the murals set an optimistic tone.

We are pleased that GSA has been part of this project which looks both to the past and to the future.



Acting Administrator
General Services Administration

The GSA Art-in-Architecture Program

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to have commissioned Jack Beal, one of America's foremost painters of figurative art, to create four murals honoring the history of labor in America. In both the conception and execution of the paintings, Beal has not only made a significant contribution to our national cultural heritage but has highlighted GSA's efforts to include a broad variety of artworks as an integral part of federal architecture.

The origin of the current art-in-architecture program supervised by GSA can be traced to a 1962 report issued by the President's Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space, entitled *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*. The committee recommended that "where appropriate, fine art should be incorporated in the designs of new federal buildings with emphasis on the work by living American artists."

As the federal agency responsible for design and construction of most government buildings, GSA implemented the committee's recommendations in January 1963. An allowance was established to pay for the incorporation of fine arts. In addition, local donations, which will give citizens an opportunity to help finance artworks, are encouraged.

The art-in-architecture program continues a long-standing tradition of government-sponsored efforts to enrich public buildings with artworks. Under the New Deal programs of the 1930s, hundreds of artists were commissioned to

create murals, paintings and sculptures for federal buildings, post offices and courthouses. Earlier, U.S. customs houses and other federal buildings used murals and statuary as essential elements in architecture.

Under GSA's program, the project architect is aware that he may incorporate art into his design concept. If he feels fine arts would enhance and complement the architecture of the building, he is encouraged to develop a proposal indicating the location and nature of the artwork to be commissioned.

Following award of the construction contract, GSA requests the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to appoint a panel of qualified art experts—when possible from the local community. These experts, as well as representatives from local civic and art-oriented organizations, form a panel to meet with the project architect. Panel members are responsible for nominating artists they believe most qualified for commissions. Local artists, as well as those with regional and national reputations, are given full consideration.

The NEA panelists, which differ for each project, meet at the building site to familiarize themselves with the immediate environment. After reviewing slides and other visual materials, the panel nominates from three to five artists for each proposed commission. Artist nominations made by the panel are reviewed by the art-in-architecture design review panel, which makes recommendations to the GSA administrator, who makes the final selection. GSA then enters into a negotiated, fixed-price contract for the design, execution and installation of the artwork.

Artworks commissioned by GSA for new federal buildings are diverse in style and media. They include tapestries, fiber works, murals and sculptures. But most important, they are today's creative expressions. Just as the art of previous times reveals to us our forebears' thoughts and emotions, contemporary art will assist future generations in evaluating our society.

Because of this responsibility and challenge, choosing public art is an exhilarating adventure for GSA and for the participating artists and civic leaders.

The paintings are populated with persons who are related by blood, by friendship or by sharing a common belief in constructive hard work. Mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, brothers, sisters, and friends working together to make a better life — facing the problems of their times and building a finer world. I am thankful for my friends and neighbors, both for serving as models for the pictures as well as models for my life. I am grateful also to the government — the General Services Administration and the Department of Labor — for giving me the opportunity to make these public paintings as affirmations of my beliefs. And I am most especially grateful for the assistance and encouragement of those who worked on the paintings with me — my wife Sondra Freckelton Beal, Dana Van Horn, Bob Treloar, and William Eckert. The activity in the studio was a mirror of the activity in the paintings — hard workers striving together to do good work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "J. H. Jack Beal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "J" and "B".

Jack Beal

U.S. Department of Labor

Third Street and Constitution Avenue, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20210



General Services Administration

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THE LABOR MURALS: A HISTORY

I cannot remember just how I first got the news that I had been chosen to do the murals for the new Department of Labor building in Washington, DC, but I think that my old friend and supporter John Arthur told me about it.

John was at the time serving as consultant to the Department of the Interior for their BiCentennial project (for which I was one of the Artists) and, as he tells it, the coordinator for the labor Department BiCentennial project, a wonderful man named Dick Conn had been giving the consultants at the National Foundation for the Arts all kinds of trouble as far as selecting an Artist for the Labor Building.

These consultants were Brian O'Doherty and Richard Koshalek (neither of whom I ever met) and they had suggested James Rosenquist and Roy Lichtenstein for the commission. Dick Conn, a man who spent his lunch hours wandering through the National Gallery of Art and had a strong feeling for the Florentine Humanists said that Rosenquist and Lichtenstein would make light of the Labor Movement, and asked for "someone like Andrew Wyeth".

O'Doherty and Koshalek were at a loss, and it happened that John Arthur was seeing them about the Interior project and he was carrying with him a number of slide portfolios of the work of various Artists. He loaned the portfolios of Philip Pearlstein, Alfred Leslie and Jack Beal to the consultants who turned them over to Dick Conn. Out of that threesome Dick Conn chose me.

I was next contacted by Don Thalacker at the General Services Administration who told me that I had been chosen and that I should come to Washington to consult. I began a series of trips on the MetroLiner which seemed endless at the time. When I got to the site I was told that I would have one wall to decorate. That wall was rough concrete on the outside of the building and was more-or-less square. I immediately protested, saying that since the sun shone directly on the wall that colors would fade and change. I was questioned about the sun, so I stayed in a nearby hotel for the night and came over to the site early the next morning and took pictures of the sunlight streaming across the wall. Made my point.

Next I began investigating other directions: I chose mosaics as a possibility. I went to

the new AFL/CIO building where a major mosaic was being made. There I met Costante Crovatto a master mosaicist from Italy and his assistant Giovanni Trivisanutto (two gentlemen with whom I would later make mosaics for the NY City Subway System). Very quickly I decided that the cost of mosaics was too much for the project, so I abandoned that idea.

By that time I had come to realize that the history of Labor in America could not be portrayed in one work: that it would take at least four works to properly show the transitions. So I made a suggestion that I make four paintings – one for each of the four centuries involved. That agreement decided, I returned to my studio and began making maquettes for the series.

I began by studying various sources of the history of labor, and started making vignettes of people at work. After a while the vignettes began to coalesce into pattern and so I started the maquettes (which were later installed in the office of the Secretary of Labor but which may now be elsewhere). When I finished the maquettes I submitted them to Dick Conn with whom I had struck up a lifelong friendship. The submission of the maquettes brought a mighty response from the Labor Department. I received a long letter filled with critiques and criticisms. I began responding to these, most of which were frivolous, having been addressed in the murals already. I had already responded to the letter, answering most of the remarks which had been made: To the critique about “no woman in a position of power” I stated that the only person in the 20th Century painting was a woman standing above and pointing down at a man wearing a brown jacket; to the remark that no one is to stand backward on a ladder I replied that since the worker was a black man, his backward stance was symbolic of the fact that black men occupied the most treacherous position in our economy. I had thought these things out beforehand. I did agree to one change – since no electrician should hold more than three wires in his hands, I had him release one of the four wires he had been holding. Finally I made yet another trip to Washington where I met with John Dunlop, then the Secretary of Labor.

The meeting was more formal and officious than I had expected – it was held in a small auditorium-like room with several onlookers (perhaps bodyguards) and the Secretary in a small glass booth at the foot of the tiers of seats. After I had expressed myself regarding the comments, I stood up and walked over to Mr. Dunlop. I said something like, “Mr. Secretary, you know that any statement in public will attract any number of critics. And you’re big enough to weather such and so am I. Right?” and he said, “Right!” And that was that.

Sometime thereafter I was called to Washington once again, this time to discuss the future. I told Don Thalacker that I was ready to talk but not to negotiate a price for the commission. I hadn’t discussed such matters with my Art Dealer, Allan Frumkin, so I was unprepared for such considerations. Mr. Thalacker assured me that any discussion would be preliminary. He got up and left the room, and I stood up and walked around his desk and began looking through the large book there. I checked out the budget for the Labor Building and discovered that it was estimated at \$60 Million. I quickly calculated that meant that the Art budget for the building was \$300 Thousand and decided that I wanted at least half of that amount. The other Artist chosen for the Building was Tony Smith and I knew that he would submit a little

model and get some factory to construct it for him. So we went down the hall to a conference room where four dour men sat staring at me. I explained quickly that I was not prepared to negotiate and was assured that these were preliminary discussions. I said “OK” and we continued. The lead negotiator then said “We’re prepared to offer you the commission for \$90,000.” I said “I can’t possibly do the job for that little”. “How much do you need?” he asked. I replied “\$150,000. “OK” he said. And that was that.

Having gotten the go-ahead, I returned to our country place to begin the work. We had just bought an old mill rising out of the Ouleout Creek in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. The house had been stripped of everything but its posts and beams, and we had begun the process of remodeling it. There was also a large barn, and there was enough room to house the murals but the building was in bad shape and was not fit for winter-time work.

We had discussed the prospect of winterizing the barn with our friend Don Schriver, a once dairy farmer who had become a carpenter. Don was negative about the job and one afternoon he announced that the lumber truck would be coming the next day. I asked, “What for?” Don said. “They’re delivering the lumber for the new building/” So we got busy and built a building (now known as the Labor Studio) in one month. The building was just large enough for four twelve by twelve foot paintings with four Artists working.

Building made, we began by building work stretchers and stretching the special-ordered canvas on them. We mounted the canvases on the walls and began working. First I had to transfer the images from the maquettes to the full-size canvases. While I was engaged in that process. Sondra and my two assistants built a small building on the property. When the transfers were completed, we began painting.

The next two-and-a-half years comprise an ordeal of work, work and more work. Four of us lived in the same house and worked in the same studio day after day. Each evening one of us would take off early and cook a gourmet meal for the gang. Each morning we would assemble at the breakfast table and peel off to go to work in good spirits. We lived that way for the entire period without ever having so much as an argument. Corny as it may seem. I think that we were all driven by a commitment to the moral purpose of the project. Five of us worked directly on the paintings: Bill Eckert, Sondra Freckelton, Bob Treloar, Dana VanHorn and myself. Each had a specialty: Bill and Bob, both abstract painters, got to do all the hard-edge sections, Dana did all the landscapes, and Sondra did the still-life parts. I did all the figures, mixed all the paint, oversaw everything that was being done, and at the end, I took over and “Bealized” it all.

I made portrait drawings of each of the persons who posed for the murals – Dana VanHorn, Jessica Alexander, Jean Frumkin, Xavier deCallatay, Joseph Leslie,

Tom Doyle, and Bob Treloar in the 17th Century painting. Fred Croton, Emily Alexander, Robert Frumkin, Bob Treloar (again), Peter Frumkin, Joseph Leslie (again), and (again), Don Schriver, Pauline Rankin in the 18th Century. Mark Shepard, Kevan Croton, Harry Graves, Emily Alexander (again), Carolyn Alexander, Christopher Croton, son of Roberta Schillmoeller, Dick Conn in the 19th Century work. Greg Drayton, Allan Frumkin, Bill Eckert, Jack Beal, Don Schriver (again), Sondra Freckelton, Vivian (Dick Conn's Secretary), Carole Nunamaker deCallatay Tinkelpaugh, Brooke Alexander and John Arthur in the 20th Century painting. These drawings still exist in my possession.

Towards the end of the process of painting I became convinced that the paintings were going to be carried away in a flash flood. That autumn and winter were very rainy, and we kept getting flash flood warnings on the TV. So several times we would take the canvases off the wall, un stretch them, roll them up, put them in our Chevrolet van and drive the van up the hill where it would be safe. Next day we would repeat the process. Finally I became so concerned that I sublet Red Grooms's studio on Walker Street in New York.

In one day we unstretched the paintings, loaded them into the van, drove them and us to New York, moved in, re-stretched the paintings and were ready for work. By this point Bill had left and moved back to California, Bob took off for a while and Dana started to work on his own paintings as did Sondra, who completed several works based on subjects from Chinatown and had a successful exhibition of her own. We occupied Red's studio for six months and ate out in Chinatown almost every evening. Red's studio was perfect for our needs with 16-foot ceilings, and we finished the project in style. Then Allan Frumkin and I decided that the works had to be seen in New York while they were there. So Allan placed ads in the Times and other papers, and in 10 days of brutal winter weather we were visited by thousands of people, from older WPA artists to the youngest of the avant-garde. During this time we were visited by several art critics and writers, including Hilton Kramer who published an article titled "One-man mural revival" in the Times.

Then we hired Lebron Brothers to move the paintings to Washington and mount them on their permanent stretchers. They did a wonderful job, but then the troubles started: Jim (the Building Manager) refused to allow us to drill holes in his "Virgin Book-Matched Tennessee Marble" walls. Nearly thrown for a loop. I quickly recovered and went to the telephone and called the White House. I asked to speak to the wife of the Vice President - Mrs. Joan Mondale. I was connected to her Secretary and told her to cancel the ceremonies for the unveiling of the murals. When she asked why, I explained what was happening at the building. Shortly thereafter Jim was called away from the scene, he returned red-faced and sweating, he said "Go ahead, drill your #0%&

holes.

The paintings mounted, there was a Press Day, replete with a donut and coffee cart. One reporter showed up, a young woman from the Communist Party. This disappointment was quickly overcome by the unveiling ceremonies. This event was preceded by a meeting in the office of the Secretary of Labor, which was attended by Arthur Goldberg and Peter Brennan, both blue-haired and manicured former Secretaries of Labor, who sat like old pals discussing the past, while Ray Marshall the current holder of the office sat quietly at his desk. Suddenly a troupe of four persons (Secret Service?) burst into the room followed by their charge Joan Mondale. It was during the Jimmy Carter administration, and first Mr. Carter had been scheduled for the unveiling ceremony, when he had to decline Rosalynn Carter was chosen. She opted out, so Fritz Mondale was selected, but he had to drop out so Mrs. Mondale was chosen.

When we repaired to the site we were flabbergasted: there were the US Navy Band and the Navy's Sea Shanty Singers, a podium from which we were to speak, and arrayed in front an audience containing everyone imaginable – Sondra's Sisters and Brother, my Art Dealers, all of my assistants and Don Schriver was standing in a hallway. The paintings were covered with hangings and two of my models – Emily and Jessica Alexander were there to draw them into view. The Director of the AFL-CIO, the Archbishop of Washington, and Michael Straight, Deputy Director of the National Endowment for the Arts along with Joan Mondale and myself comprised the participants on the podium. Everyone had their say, and when it was my turn, I stood up and everybody applauded. I couldn't at first imagine why they were clapping.

After the ceremonies we repaired to our hotel. We had rented a suite in the Watergate because of its recent history, and we partied it up right fine. Later that evening we were guests of honor at another suite which had been borrowed by adherents of the Labor Movement. We went, and drank, and sang old-time Labor songs like "There was a Union Girl..." and "Oh you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the Union". We had a wonderful time, and the next day we returned to reality. Back to Red's studio we went, where we got involved with a silk-screen project.

Some time later, we were invited to Washington once again to witness the release of posters of the Labor Murals printed by the Government Printing Office. It was a grand event, and we were encircled by all sorts of functionaries of the Labor Department. One of these announced himself as the head of the Minimum Wage department, so I asked him if we hadn't been breaking the law. He asked, "How?" I replied (since I was the primary bookkeeper on the commission), "Because we (Sondra and I) had been working for 58 cents per hour. At this, he vanished. Actually disappeared. Gone.



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Job Fare

After Hours

Regional Recruitment Coordinator Uses Spare Time to Coach and Mentor His Son's Military Career

By Christine Adkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



Ret Army Sgt 1st Class Rafael Abreu

For Rafael Abreu, Philadelphia's regional recruitment coordinator in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, most of his spare time is spent coaching and mentoring his son's military career. Abreu's son, John Fravert, Jr., began his career with the U.S. Army on the day Abreu retired from 20 years of military service.

In July 2010, Abreu finished "final out-processing" paperwork in Jacksonville, FL. "As I was signing out, five minutes later I got a text message saying Fravert had just finished swearing in," said Abreu. "I didn't even know he was going there until the night before." John's official enlistment was just the first in a string of

similarities between Abreu's life and Fravert's future.

Abreu's military career began July 3, 1990. Graduating from high school at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Army instead of pursuing scholarship options at several colleges. "I didn't think I was mature enough for college," he said.

After his initial four-year tour expired, he kept renewing his contract. "I really enjoyed what I was doing," said Abreu. Eight years into his career, Abreu moved from active duty to become a recruiter, a job he held for the remainder of his time in the military. In September 2010, he joined the department as regional recruitment coordinator for OASAM, putting his military recruiting experience to work for the civilian side.



Abreu's son Pvt John Fravert, Jr

Abreu first learned about his son's military interest in 2009 when John was a high-school junior. "At the time I thought it was a passing thing," said Abreu, because his son had never before shown an interest in the military. "I wanted him to really think about it." Fravert did, and the desire to serve stayed with him. So Abreu played the supportive parent and helped his son as he met with his recruiter, a man Abreu, coincidentally, had worked with four years before.

Abreu, in his spare time, had kept abreast of Fravert's progress. He learned his son had done well on the military's recruitment Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and had decided to enlist in combat arms. Fravert had chosen to become a 19K M1A1 armor crew member, the same decision Abreu made when he joined a tank detachment in 1990.

It was then that the realization of his son's commitment to a military career set in. "I told him, whatever you decide to do I'll support you," Abreu said. Yet, he admits, "as a parent, I'm proud but nervous."

Abreu uses his spare time to provide advice to his son. Fravert is stationed in Germany, the same place where Abreu began his military career. He notes, "My son has now been in Germany about 6 months; he is getting used to the country, his daily routine and, slowly but surely, military service. One of the things I continue to harp on him about is getting out and doing some traveling. I was fortunate that, in the time I was stationed there, I was able to see places like Italy, Spain, France

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and England. Let's face it. This type of opportunity does not come around all the time. To be young and living in Europe is quite the adventure!"

Abreu also shares tips with his son that may help him should he decide to remain in the service past his first tour. "Things like going to school and getting some college under his belt are essential if he is considering advancement in the future. I share with him that even now as I continue to go to school in order to improve my current and future opportunities. Above all, I share with him my experiences and things he needs to consider in order to keep himself safe and out of harm's way."

"He did this on his own," said Abreu of his son. "I couldn't be anything but supportive of his decision, and that's why I try to help him in my spare time."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

You Do What?

Erin Nagy, TAA Investigator

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Erin Nagy has helped workers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., through her work with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program offered by DOL's Employment and Training Administration.

The TAA program certifies workers who have lost their jobs due to the impact of international trade. When this happens, these trade-eligible workers are entitled to a number of benefits: job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances, a tax credit to help pay the cost of health insurance, and a wage subsidy to workers age 50 and older.

TAA has always had a 50-state program, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, but its activities have traditionally focused on workers in manufacturing and textile production states like North Carolina and Virginia.

In 2009, however, the program expanded to include new categories of workers, including those in the service sector. Because of this, activity increased and moved to include states that previously had little or no TAA activity. This is how Nagy became involved.

Part of her job as an investigator requires Nagy to look into layoffs to determine if the job losses can be tied to international trade.

"When I first arrived there was a backlog of more than 1,000 cases," said Nagy, who joined DOL in 2009 as a temporary hire under the American Resource and Recovery Act and later became a permanent employee. "Now we're down to 160 petitions received under the 2009 trade program, so it's been a great success for TAA in the past several months. It took a real team effort to reduce the backlog and provide these workers with benefits."

The petitions that Nagy investigates come from company officials, union members, state labor offices, or employees who have been threatened by a potential layoff or laid off from a company because of foreign trade, a shift in production, a movement in services, or increased imports of items once produced in the U.S. To proceed, she contacts the company to research the allegation and find supporting data.

How does she know if domestic layoffs or threatened layoffs were caused by foreign trade? Often it's pretty straightforward. For instance, if a company shifts production of component auto parts to China, the company tells TAA it opened a facility in China and will close U.S. operations. If she doesn't have enough information from a source, Nagy sometimes surveys customers to see if they import goods rather than use a particular company, or looks for data to support such allegations. Investigations can be quite complex, especially those dealing with bankruptcies and plant closures. She must ensure that the right workers are covered under a particular petition.

Nagy, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Green Bay Packers' fan says, "Company employees are sometimes eligible for TAA based on a large aggregate increase in imports for whatever it is that the company produces. Take one example, paper. If U.S. imports of paper have increased and exports have decreased, contributing to sales declines, that can help the TAA case on behalf of the workers."

"In most instances, the company is cooperative in providing information. Officials

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understand that we're just trying to help their workers," says Nagy.

Deadlines to respond to petitions are tight. Nagy says her division does its best to keep investigations under 40 days from when ETA receives a petition. To close the case, Nagy drafts an investigative report and a determination document, presenting it to her supervisor, or certifying officer. If in agreement with her determination, he signs it and the final determination moves on to appear in the Federal Register. The state then handles benefits distribution and employee notification.

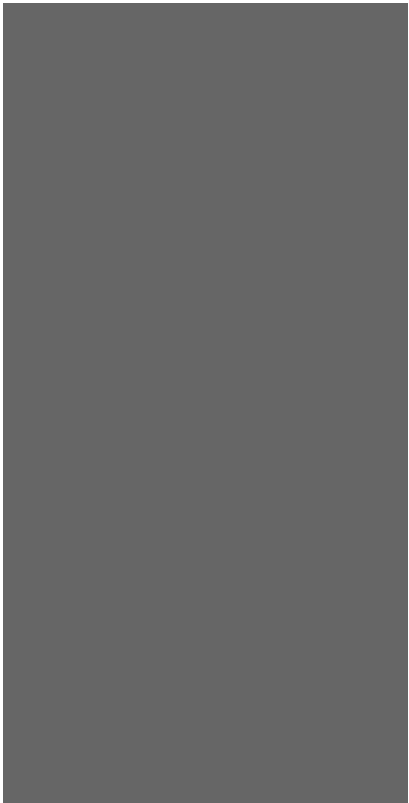
It is not uncommon for investigators to work on 30 to 40 petitions at a time. "It's often collaborative work. It's not a competitive atmosphere; it's one where everyone works to get the job accomplished for the sake of the workers," she says.

When talking to workers who have been trade-affected, Nagy says she finds it motivational because she hears their individual stories and feels like she's helping people if she can certify them as eligible to apply for TAA benefits.

Since coming to DOL she's worked on 300 to 400 cases with one that was particularly interesting for her. Though she lives in Madison, Wisconsin, she was born in Washington state and claims some Native American ancestry. A case came in that dealt with an Indian reservation in Washington near her birthplace. She dealt with the chief of the Coleville Indian reservation who just happened to also know her grandmother. It was after thorough investigation that she was able to obtain assistance for this reservation.

"TAA is a great program that has helped a lot of people, especially with the job situation the way it is now. Everyone talks about jobs and labor, and TAA is something that isn't mentioned but it's really important. A lot of people rely on it. We're doing what we can here to help as many people as possible."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

Making an Environmental Difference

By Jeannine Blue Lupton, Office of Public Affairs, Seattle Region



Rebecca Phelps, former practicing environmental attorney and now a whistle-blower investigator with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Regional Office in Seattle, lives what she believes.

An active member of the Sierra Club's Cascade Chapter in the Puget Sound area, Phelps revived the chapter's Water and Salmon Committee where she learned about the club's "Water Sentinels Program."

Rebecca Phelps and her dog Malkah She created a local Water Sentinels affiliate, and secured a \$5,000 grant to build and develop a rain garden at a Seattle public school. Her goal was to educate schoolchildren to understand how important it is to send back to Puget Sound clean storm water to protect the habitats of orcas and salmon.

Storm water becomes polluted when it runs over city streets and collects oil and fertilizer. Most Puget Sound cities direct polluted storm water to drains which are then diverted to Puget Sound. But rain gardens are a solution to this problem. When polluted storm water is directed to rain gardens, the native plant vegetation absorbs the pollutants, or "cleans" the water before it becomes ground water and finds its way to Puget Sound. The concept is to send storm water to the ground and not to storm drains, where the soil and native plant vegetation naturally bio-remediate the storm water, or remove collected pollutants.

The Rain Garden Project at Seattle's Montlake Elementary School, which Phelps spearheaded, is a partnership of the Washington Water Sentinels, the Seattle Public School District and the Community Day School Association.

Phelps developed the project using Washington State University professor Curtis Hingman's "Handbook on Rain Gardens" as her only guide. She arranged for removal of concrete at Montlake Elementary School's playground (where the rain garden is located), as well as installation of a soil-compost mixture into a concave area, financed by the grant and donated funds. "Our biggest expense was the concrete removal, otherwise the rain garden could be established for about \$500 — the cost to connect the downspouts to the rain garden and to purchase native plants and compost," said Phelps.

The vegetation at Montlake Rain Garden was planted by schoolchildren in a few hours using Phelps' clever cycle of 15-minute planting sessions, with supervision by parent volunteers. It gave more than 100 of the school's children a chance to participate. The Community Day School Association coordinates an after-school program to have the children maintain the rain garden. Its interpretative display features plants native to the Pacific Northwest, with their deeper roots, watered solely by rain water. Local nurseries provided reduced-price native plants for the project.

"Many hundreds of children and their families have now learned about storm water pollution and the value of rain gardens," Phelps said. "I hope to pass the same educational lesson on to the nearly 46,000 Seattle public school students, and the 32,000 Puget Sound area Sierra Club members."

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The Montlake Rain Garden has set off a domino effect, as Phelps receives numerous requests to help establish more of them. Local elected officials took notice of the project after being invited by the Montlake Elementary students to visit the rain garden and learn more about storm water runoff.

“The children enjoy their rain garden and lovingly maintain it as it grows,” said Phelps. “We hope this will be the start of many rain gardens around the country. This is a project that teaches children that anyone can make a difference to help our environment.”

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

After a Mine Emergency, Family Liaisons Get to Work

By Eric Kleiman, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



The MINER (Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response) Act became law five years ago and established a new requirement for the Mine Safety and Health Administration to create a liaison program to provide families with factual, accurate and timely information during mining rescue operations. MSHA currently has 58 trained staff members to serve as conduits to family members after a life-threatening incident at a mine.

These liaisons undergo intensive training in the technical and emotional aspects of working with

families after an explosion or accident. They provide briefings as often as every two hours as families undergo the excruciating wait to determine if there are survivors. They sit with the families and offer a direct pipeline to the command center where decisions are being made on rescue efforts.

Most MSHA family liaisons were once miners themselves. They volunteer for this duty in addition to their regular job responsibilities.

We recently caught up with Michael Dickerson, an MSHA family liaison in Mount Hope, WV, who was one of the first DOL employees on the scene following the tragic mine explosion at Upper Big Branch on April 5, 2010.

Frances: *How many families have you worked with as an MSHA family liaison?*

Dickerson: I had worked with 14 families in individual cases. Then we were called out to Upper Big Branch, which claimed 29 miners. That is 43 different mining families who have lost loved ones as a result of mining accidents.

Frances: *What do you think most people don't understand about miners?*

Dickerson: What offends miners the most is the portrayal that mining is the only thing they can do because of a tough economy. That's not the case. They are proud of what they do. Most of them choose the profession. It's not a pick-and-shovel profession anymore. They are running expensive, complicated equipment. A lot of miners are college graduates. They're there because they want to be.

Frances: *What is the first thing you do when you are brought in as a family liaison?*

Dickerson: My job is to keep the families updated. When it's a single fatality, I call the family immediately — before the funeral — and say, "When you're ready to talk, give me a call." Usually, within a day or two after the funeral, they do.

I go wherever the family member wants to meet — our office, their home, a restaurant. The accident investigation coordinator goes with me, and we give them all the details we can. I tell them there's going to be a thorough investigation. We explain there is going to be a rumor mill, and that they can contact me any time to clear up those rumors.

We stay with them from the beginning until the final report is issued. Some families prefer close contact and communicate with us frequently, and some prefer their space and communicate very little. We let them set the pace that they are comfortable with. We go through the report with the family first — before the company, before anyone else. We clarify anything they don't understand. We answer any technical questions.

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There can be a lot of mining terminology some families don't understand. I've even taken pictures of equipment identical to equipment involved in accidents. Most of the underground equipment and much of the larger surface-mining equipment is never seen by people who are not involved in the mining process. Families need to understand what happened. The mining company usually won't let them see the accident scene because their lawyers get involved. So we show them, using pictures, diagrams or anything else that's helpful.

Frances: *When you sit down with these families after the funeral, what do they want to know?*

Dickerson: A lot of families want to show you who their loved one was and what kind of person they were. I've looked at photo albums. I've heard so many stories. I want to hear them. I care about these miners. You start to realize what the family needs. They want someone to listen to them. They want someone to understand [the victim] wasn't a reckless person. Occasionally, the family will have information that is important to the investigation. We have obtained information about deficient training or equipment defects in these meetings that has sent investigations in a new direction.

Frances: *Your job sounds very emotional.*

Dickerson: It is. It gets very emotional. The investigators, the liaisons, the witnesses all put themselves in the place of the family of the miner. Sometimes there was obvious suffering, or a young family left behind. There is always a heartbreaking story with each fatality. There have been interviews when witnesses break down or even investigators break down and we have to call for a break. Recently, in the investigation of the death of a young miner, we had to call a recess for everyone to recover. We were all parents or grandparents and knew the distress this was causing.

Frances: *You were one of four MSHA family liaisons at the Upper Big Branch explosion. What did you find when you got there?*

Dickerson: I had dealt with a lot of single fatalities before UBB, but never anything like this. When I left the office with my district manager, all we knew was that there was possibly a belt fire. That's a serious situation. So we got in a Jeep and headed that way. When we got to Beckley, we got a call from Massey's regional safety person. She said it was bad and there were several people down. So we knew we had an explosion.

They reportedly had recovered nine miners, including two survivors. One of them had put on his self-rescuer, which creates oxygen from carbon monoxide. He reportedly held his breath and put it on when he heard the explosion, and by his quick action, he didn't breathe any contaminated air. I heard he had tried to put rescuers on all of his fellow miners.

Frances: *How long were you with the families?*

Dickerson: I stayed with them all week following the mine explosion. Four of us rotated shifts. We were there, two at a time, for at least 12-hour shifts. It was hard to leave, to tell you the truth. We were there round-the-clock.

A lot of the families and community members who were there, waiting for news, were religious. They were praying. Their ministers would come in. The community was pouring in food and supplies. There were blankets. There were extra phone lines. Businesses were coming in constantly bringing food and supplies. The Red Cross was there, including a retired doctor and a nurse. All the families' physical needs were taken care of. Anything they needed, the community made sure they had it.

They made a family center out of the safety department at the site. Every time we made an announcement and put a mine map up, the room was packed with more than 200 people. We provided updates every two hours, whether there was anything new to report or not.

There were usually eight police cars outside and 10 to 12 ambulances. There were a lot of medical needs. People passed out during some of the more traumatic announcements. There were two pregnant women and some individuals on oxygen tanks.

The thing that sticks with me the most out of that entire week was the notification to a family that they had lost three family members. People were praying out loud. When they were notified, everyone in the room was crying with them. On another occasion, after some bad news had been delivered, a member of the [West

Virginia] governor's staff began singing "Amazing Grace" and everyone started joining in.

Frances: *Did the families stick together?*

Dickerson: Absolutely. It was a long wait. At one point, I remember that someone had set up canopies and picnic tables outside. Families were talking and the kids were playing outside. I remember I thought it looked like a church social. These families are so resilient and caring. It inspired you. They came up to me and said, "We haven't seen you eat. We haven't seen you sleep." During their emotional turmoil, they were concerned about me.

Most of the families didn't like the press. Reporters were always waiting for them outside. At one point, the governor had to send police over to run a reporter off a grandmother's front porch. But despite that, I remember the families sending food out to the press. That really said a lot to me.

Frances: *How did you prepare the families as prospects for survival grew dimmer?*

Dickerson: They would come around and ask us, "What do you think, could they be in a rescue chamber?" We never wanted to give anyone false hope. I said, "If they are in the rescue chamber, it would be a miracle, but I can't rule it out." By the time the announcement came, a lot of them already knew. Still, when they announced that there were no survivors, it was chaos. I was standing near the back of the room. People were moving around, shoving, very upset. I was in the back and afraid that one of the small children would get stepped on. So I found a back door and helped a couple of young mothers get their kids out.

Folks needed time to grieve. I remember seeing a large young man who appeared to be solid muscle. He was standing in the gravel parking lot just screaming. The police were out there. They placed themselves between him and the remainder of the people. They never attempted to stop him and just let him work it all out until he collapsed in exhaustion. I was very impressed with the state police.

Frances: *Why did you volunteer for such a difficult assignment as a family liaison?*

Dickerson: I knew it was something the families needed. I'm empathetic, but I'm not an overly emotional person. I thought I could handle it better than most. I have met some wonderful people in the process. I just wish we could have met under different circumstances.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: Atlanta, GA



By Paulette Lewis, regional administrator, Women's Bureau, Atlanta Region, as told to Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Atlanta is a wonderful southern city with a great history, beautiful foliage, and diversity in people, food and entertainment. Each year we have all kinds of festivals — Greek, Jewish, Latin American, you name it. We celebrate it all, including Scarlett O'Hara and "Gone With the Wind." In the greater metropolitan area, you can have almost any kind of lifestyle you want: urban, rural or suburban. Atlanta still has a southern charm and a pace that's manageable and fun for young adults, families and the elderly.



Paulette Lewis

Atlanta is also an education hub. There are about 30 colleges, universities and technical schools here, including the largest consortium of historically black colleges and universities in the world. The Carter Center is here, as well as the King Center and CNN — all foster and hold dialogues on national and international issues. Atlanta has the largest aquarium in the world and the largest airport in the world, making the city a major international transportation hub. We have a new Center for Civil and Human Rights, which I think is going to be very prominent in the years to come.

Because Atlanta is an education hub, this allows me to draw on the resources of the city to do my work. I've been at DOL now for 11 years: six years in ETA and the past 4 ½ in the Women's Bureau. As regional administrator, I'm responsible for implementing our programs and initiatives in eight Southeastern states and for promoting policies that lead to better jobs, better salaries, and better working conditions for working women.

Right now, the Women's Bureau has four major priorities: women veterans who are homeless, green or nontraditional jobs for women, equal pay and workplace flexibility. I work on these initiatives on a daily basis by disseminating our research documents and fact sheets related to these issues, developing programs or events that provide amplification of the issues, and promoting the adoption of related policies that benefit working women.

The Women's Bureau has implemented a few unique projects in Atlanta. In May of this year, I spearheaded the first STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Summit for Girls. More

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than 200 middle- and high-school girls from the Girl Scouts, Girls Inc., the YWCA and Cool Girls gathered at Georgia Tech to participate in hands-on workshops conducted by *Paulette Lewis opening the STEM Summit* women in STEM professions and businesses. There were 14 workshops in areas such as forensics; genetics; electricity; robotics; civil engineering; food science; and computer programming. Our goal is to create a pipeline of women and girls to go into these nontraditional STEM-related careers and businesses. They cannot become what they have not seen.

Last year, we collaborated with the Atlanta YWCA during Women's History Month to initiate the first "Our History is Our Strength: a Fireside Chat" with prominent history-making women in the community. Five women told the stories of their contributions, mentors, personal inspirations, challenges and successes. More than 110 women from the community and girls in YWCA programs participated the first year and more than 200 participated in 2011. The event has proven to be inspiring, enlightening, encouraging and motivational for the women and girls who participate.

We recently conducted a pilot project to train unemployed women in Atlanta in "green entrepreneurship." Twenty women were enrolled in the program and 17 finished the training. The women were exposed to a wide range of green training programs and potential business opportunities. They also received training in financial literacy, business accounting and human-resource management. At the end of the 10 months, all 17 had established businesses in areas such as mold and air quality inspections, green painting, green interior design and commercial green cleaning.

Last November we hosted a National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility in the Healthcare Industry at Emory University here in Atlanta, the second in a series of 10 sponsored by the Women's Bureau around the country. I will have another forum on workplace flexibility with the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) in Greenville, S.C., this month and another with SHRM in Savannah, Ga., in August.

The DOL family in Atlanta also does a lot of special things for the community, especially around the holidays. During the year we collect toiletries, toys and clothing items for migrant workers. That escalates during the Christmas season. We also do Toys for Tots and get toys and clothes for poor families identified by state officials. The Federal Women's Program has a clothing drive to contribute clothes and accessories to Dress for Success to help low-income and unemployed women prepare for jobs.

In response to a request from the Regional Executive Committee (REC), I have served as a "coach" for the Federal Women's Program since I came to the Women's Bureau. I currently serve as a member of the REC's Campus Executive Program Committee, along with the solicitor and the regional administrators of BLS and OLMS, doing outreach to students at Georgia State telling them about careers in the federal government, especially here at the Labor Department.

I've been an Atlanta resident for nearly 40 years. There is no city like it. First and foremost, it's the civil-rights capital of the country — maybe even the world. It is the home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and that sets the tone for the city. A number of civil-rights leaders live here or once resided here, among them: Coretta Scott King, Ambassador Andrew Young, Dr. Joseph Lowery, Rep. John Lewis, mayor Maynard Jackson, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, and Hank Aaron. I'm fortunate to say I've known most of them.

I invite my DOL colleagues to get to know Atlanta. Ya'll come visit soon!

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FRANCES MAG

Elevator Interview

OFCCP's Pat Shiu

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

For those unfamiliar with the department's elevator posters — they are displayed weekly in the national office elevators and provide useful and current information that articulates the goals of Secretary Solis and the department. The goal of the posters is to foster a culture of dialogue, openness and transparent communication.



In response to people defacing the posters displayed in the Frances Perkins Building elevators celebrating Gay Pride Month and the lesbian/gay/bisexual/and transgender (LGBT) community, Pat Shiu talked with her staff in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. The director asked her staff to see if they could develop a message that would promote respect for everyone, noting that diversity was part of DOL's strength, and OFCCP's mission.

Shiu tells FRANCES what happened.

Frances: What did you do after the meeting?

Shiu: When the LGBT Pride posters first appeared in DOL elevators, one of my staff members sent me a note and photo showing the vandalism. I was angry. The next day, during our Tuesday morning senior staff meeting, I felt something needed to be done. So I discussed the incident with my colleagues and suggested we ribbon the exterior facade of OFCCP's two hallways on the third floor with the Pride Month posters. If someone out there was going to tear them down, we'd put up even more.

I wanted to cover the exterior of OFCCP with Pride posters as a show of support for our LGBT colleagues here in the department. And I wanted to send a message to the individuals who had vandalized the elevator posters so they'd know that their bigotry and hate is so much smaller than our ability to respond.

After the senior staff meeting, my special assistant Parag Mehta corralled three of our summer interns — Sreen Thahir, Andrew Sugrue, and Ashwin Warrior — to build upon my original idea. Within a few hours, the interns



L-R: Ashwin Warrior, Andrew Sugrue, Pat Shiu, Parag Mehta

had designed a sign to attach above the Pride poster with the words, "OFCCP Celebrates" to complement what you see in the original poster. They also embellished the OFCCP logo with the rainbow colors of the Pride flag.

The interns took an additional step, researching and selecting a series of quotations by various civil-rights and labor leaders from history (President Obama, Secretary Solis, Harvey Milk, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Frances Perkins, César Chávez, Dr. Maya Aneglou, Dr. Dorothy Height, Robert Kennedy, President Lincoln, etc.). These quotes, highlighting messages of inclusion, equality and fairness were added to the posters along with photos of the leaders who said them.

We put one of these jazzed-up Pride posters on every exterior door of the agency and on the doors of every senior manager's office. I wanted my employees and

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What is this?

anyone who would pass through the common hallways on the third floor to know that at OFCCP we value all workers.

Frances: *Why did you do this?*

Shiu: We did it because it was the right thing to do. As a civil-rights agency, we celebrate diversity, we believe workplaces ought to reflect the country and we know that no one should suffer discrimination, particularly at work. Everyone should feel safe and valued when they come to the Department of Labor. For the past two years, my goal has been to make OFCCP one of the premier civil-rights agencies in the federal government. We start by living those values in our own agency.

Frances: *It must have made you feel good that your staff took the initiative to do these things.*

Shiu: My staff and our student interns did something that was tasteful, something that was powerful and something that turned a negative into a positive. Parag told me it's called "Angel Action." After the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student from Wyoming, there were people who protested at the trials of his murderers, carrying signs filled with hateful words about gay people. In response, Shepard's friends dressed up in angel costumes and stood in front of the protestors. When his family and the public arrived at the courthouse, they opened their large, beautiful angel wings to block out the protestors and shield the hate. It was dignified, respectful and a work of art. Angel Action was the inspiration for our effort.

The student interns ran with the idea and did a great job. When Secretary Solis sent out her beautifully written message to all staff about the vandalism, it occurred to me that when bigotry and prejudice are at play, it's important that all people of conscience – from a Cabinet secretary to a student intern – get in the game.

Frances: *What was the response from others in the building?*

Shiu: We weren't expecting it, but after our posters went up, I received emails from people thanking me for our expression of support. I think that when the posters were vandalized again this year, it was really heartbreaking for several of our colleagues. Imagine coming into the office everyday knowing that someone you work with has so much anger and bigotry that they're willing to break into a locked glass case to tear down a simple poster.

No one should feel like that. No one should have to work in that kind of environment.

So it felt really good when I started getting messages from colleagues from across the department, including from people I didn't know, telling me how much it lifted their spirits to walk down our hallway and see OFCCP showing our solidarity with them.

A lot of people came to the third floor to look at these posters; it was great seeing people stop at every door to read each of the unique quotes we had added to the posters. Several people have come by and thanked me, but the real credit goes to my entire office. This was a group effort that was beautifully executed. It made me proud to work for an agency that is committed to civil rights for all workers and to be among so many of our better angels.

■ [View Elevator Interview Archive](#)



In Labor

Ahead Hunting

How Do I Find a Mentor in the Federal Government?

By the U.S. Department of Labor Career Assistance Center staff, Washington, D.C.

A career mentor in the federal government is important because it allows you to have a more experienced and accomplished person advise and shape your career. Good career mentors alert you to advancement opportunities, introduce you to others, and help you navigate career choices.

Having a good mentor can make you successful, so you should look for someone who provides open communication and a person you can share personal information with and not feel judged or fearful of losing your job.

Regarding who can be a mentor, do not choose your boss but, instead, someone in your field. Using someone other than your boss allows you to be candid about your career path and goals, so that when you're ready to move from your current job, you can do so.

Here's how to find a mentor at the U.S. Department of Labor:

1. Consider your needs and what you want out of the mentoring experience. Be clear about who you are and what you want to help bring your ideal mentor into focus.
2. Make a list of people you would like to approach to be your mentor. Consider the reasons why you would ask someone to be your mentor. Then, narrow this list to one person you will approach first.
3. Decide how you will approach your potential mentor. Will you first approach the person through email, over the phone or in person?
4. When the time comes to ask someone to mentor you, it's a good idea to explain why you selected the person as a potential mentor and how you would like the person to help you.
5. Through the entire process of searching and asking, always be prepared for your prospective mentor to turn you down. If this happens, don't take it personally. The person likely has other responsibilities that would stand in the way of being a good mentor. If you are turned down, always remember to thank the person. Consider asking them to make recommendations for finding another mentor.
6. If the person agrees to mentor you, early in your relationship talk about and establish your objectives. Discuss when and where you will meet, how long you will meet, who will initiate the meetings, how you will honor confidentiality, and a "no-fault clause" that allows either party to conclude the relationship at any time.

Professional career counselors provide DOL employees free, confidential, and ongoing consultation in person, over the telephone, and through e-mail. For more information, please see the [DOL Career Assistance Center on LaborNet](#).

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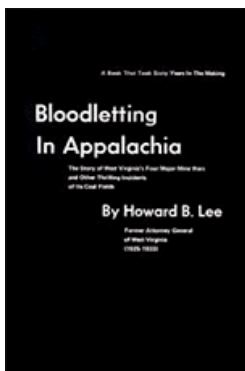
Book Review

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Bloodletting in Appalachia

by Howard B. Lee, McClain Printing Company, 1969

Reviewed by Frank Clubb, Adjudicatory Boards (ARB, BRB, ECAB), Washington, D.C.



The year was 1913. Howard Lee was on a train, returning from a visit to a West Virginia coal field just 10 miles east of the state capitol of Charleston. As he mentally assessed the state of affairs at that place on the Kanawha River, he kept asking himself, "Can this be America?" What made him contemplate such startling uncertainty is chronicled in his book Bloodletting in Appalachia.

Bloodletting in Appalachia is an account of four major labor confrontations between West Virginia coal miners and mine owners during the early 20th Century. These clashes of will were at times so bloody and violent that they were called "labor wars," and

although the engagements may not have been on the same scale as the battles of the American Civil War, to the people directly involved they were deadly and the outcomes meaningful.

Lee was the Attorney General of West Virginia during some of the darkest periods of this strife, and although his book was published in 1969, it is based on the manuscript that he wrote in 1936. So the author's recollection of the shocking events of that time are still fresh and not dulled or distorted by the passage of time.

Coal mining in the eastern United States began in earnest in the 1880s. West Virginia was then a sparsely populated state with few workers either willing or able to do the strenuous tasks inherent with mining. So the labor had to be imported. Mine companies did that using job recruiters selected for their "persuasive eloquence and conscienceless disregard of the truth" who aggressively sought out newly arrived European immigrants and jobless Americans with promises of free transportation, steady work, good wages and company housing. This hiring drive eventually signed on 125,000 miners who with their family members raised the population of West Virginia by 750,000.

When they reached the coal fields, these newly hired found an environment very different from what they were promised. The work camps were isolated, filthy, squalid sites filled with mine debris and coated in coal dust. The sanitation infrastructure was no more than open sewers clogged with garbage and human waste. The company housing was in such a state of disrepair that a Department of Interior report characterized the dilapidated conditions as "beyond the power of verbal description." On the camp perimeter were searchlights and watch towers manned by mine guards, many who had criminal records, armed with rifles, pistols, blackjacks, and knives.

It was from within these living conditions that legions of men descended into unsafe, unhealthy mines to extract coal for wages — wages where a large portion went to pay for exorbitant rents and utilities, and the inflated prices for goods at company-owned stores. "I owe my soul to the company store," in the song Sixteen Tons reflected a real situation for many miners. In addition to these hardships, miners were subjected to unfair labor practices like "cribbing" — the crediting of only a ton of coal for 3,000 pounds loaded.

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When eventually the miners peacefully protested these living and work conditions, and demanded enforcement of rights that were already guaranteed by state and federal statutes, the mine owners struck back viciously. Using a composite force of mine guards, county court appointed special deputy sheriffs, and volunteer police, the mine owners evicted all strikers from their camps. In southwest West Virginia alone, 50,000 men, women, and children were made homeless. Hungry and broke, this mass of humanity endured the strikes living in caves, tents, and improvised shelters. A dreadful number of these people, especially those weak and ill, died from exposure or starvation.

Following the evictions, the owners launched a ruthless campaign of intimidation and coercion. Using an elaborate and effective espionage system, mine owners collected intelligence on the strike leaders and their supporters. They then used this information to verbally threaten, black list, or beat-up those same people. When none of these methods cowed an especially troublesome opponent, the person was, as often as not, simply killed. Brutal thugs carried out this physical violence, but it was church going, well-educated, captains of industry that gave the orders. In this respect, these coal barons, although on the opposite end of the political spectrum, were no better than their counterparts in communist Russia when it came to looking out for their own interests to the exclusion of both morality and reason.

Supporting mine industry management were allies at local and state government level. By order of the Governor of West Virginia and shamefully sanctioned by the state supreme court, martial law was imposed on strike-prone counties. Towns were occupied by state militiamen and civil courts were replaced with "state military courts." Freedom of speech was curtailed, freedom of the press suspended, and people were arrested without warrants. One strike leader was arrested by state militiamen for reading "riot-inciting material." The material in question was the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Enacting such draconian measures was a grave mistake. The owners underestimated the physical prowess and courage of the mine workers and their family members. Plus, these punitive actions took from these people basically everything they had, and no adversary is more difficult to defeat than one that has nothing to lose.

When the strikers struck back they did so as ruthless and heartless as those opposing them. This give-no-quarter strategy was encouraged by, among others, "Mother" Mary Jones, a member of the U.S. Department of Labor Hall of Fame. Addressing a rally of strikers, Mother Jones, who Lee describes as "fiery, fearless, profane, and vulgar," said, "Arm yourselves, return home, and kill every goddamned mine guard on the creeks, blow up the mines, and drive the damned scabs out of the valleys." Using funds supplied by the union, strikers bought guns and ammunition and attempted to do just that.

At a mining camp on Paint Creek, 100,000 shots were exchanged between strikers and mine guards. At another place, an estimated 3,000 combatants fought for three days along an eight mile front. Places with extensive fighting got nicknames like "Slaughter Valley." Lee tells of one incident where strikers ambushed a group of mine guards, after which they danced around the bodies and spit tobacco juice in the dead men's eyes.

No place was safe from violence. People were killed in broad daylight on main thoroughfares and on courthouse steps. The railroads had to employ armored trains to ensure safe passage through strike zones.

This terrible situation was finally halted with the intervention of federal troops and more importantly the passage of the Wagner Act, which in 1935 expanded the rights of employees to unionize.

Early in his presidency, President Obama said in a speech before Congress that the greatness that is America is not the result of a preordained destiny. America is where it is because of sacrifices made by citizens before us. The miners in Lee's book are among those the President meant. They fought for their rights at that moment; however, the results of their struggle had a lasting impact that affects American workers today.

The level of rancor in that struggle was of such intensity that the reader will ask the same troubling question that Lee did on that train ride in 1913. Can this be America? As a result, the book reminds us that although we are right to criticize countries like China for human rights abuses, such wrongs are not unique to foreign shores.

Most importantly, the book reminds us that the principle of the rule of law is only as creditable as the people entrusted with enforcing the law in a proper, objective

manner. Otherwise, as we see now in the Middle East, those subjected to injustice will eventually reach a point where they have had enough. It is at that point that the bloodletting begins.

Frank Clubb is the Administrative Officer for the Adjudicatory Boards (ARB, BRB, ECAB).

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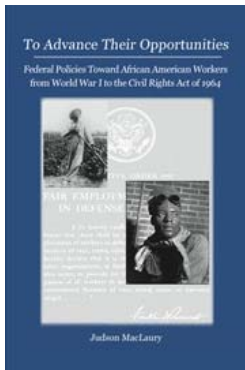
Book Review

The views expressed are personal to the employee reviewing the work and do not constitute official Department endorsements of the author or the work reviewed.

To Advance Their Opportunities: Federal Policies Towards African American Workers From World War I to the Civil Rights Act of 1964

by [former DOL historian] Judson MacLaury, Knoxville, TN, University of Tennessee (New-found Press)

Reviewed by Solidelle Wasser, New York Regional Office (retired), Bureau of Labor Statistics



In his book *To Advance Their Opportunities*, Judson MacLaury, former historian at the U.S. Department of Labor, traces the evolution of federal policies toward African American workers. He focuses on the period dating from the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson (1913, also the founding year of the Department of Labor, or DOL) through the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by the Lyndon Johnson administration. To his great merit, MacLaury has mined the national archives, the labor library, and other published and unpublished material from the executive branch of government to bring to light its role in ending a critical era in American labor history. The result is a valuable

permanent record, with rich documentation of the civil rights movement "on the ground."

One challenge when addressing the Civil Rights movement is defining the precise beginning of the Jim Crow era. Unlike MacLaury, this daughter of New Orleans found it difficult to accept the onset of the Jim Crow era as either an inevitable consequence of the Civil War or peculiar to the South, but rather a result of the disastrous Plessy v Ferguson Supreme Court decision in 1896 a generation after the end of the War. In this decision a group of whites, French creoles, and free persons of color from New Orleans (including Plessy, who had one black great grandparent), challenged the Louisiana law that separated railroad cars for blacks and whites. The defeat of this challenge meant that the de facto caste system became legal, with national repercussions when the demand for industrial labor resulted in black migration.

Dating the unconstitutional caste system to this turn of the century decision implicates the Wilson administration in the segregation of the United States capitol. This policy reversal saw the loss of black access to diplomatic and political appointments and the countenancing of attaching photographs to Civil Service applications that, under the Pendleton Act, had been "racially blind." Wilson fostered a policy that spread segregation into government offices, even to the point of dividing rooms and walling off spaces to separate blacks from whites. Segregated restrooms were often the only spaces available to blacks for eating meals.

Angry reaction to Wilson's policy by federal black employees and other conscientious Americans, in organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League, produced, paradoxically, two vehicles for redress which would support the nascent civil rights movement and nurture its growth to its culmination in the Civil Rights Act: 1) the resort to orders by the Executive Branch and 2) the Division of Negro Economics. Of the two, the one that influenced MacLaury's text most significantly was resort to executive orders, an effort to bypass a Congress whose Southern Democrats manipulated the Supreme Court decision to practically disenfranchise blacks.

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What is this?

MacLaury describes in detail the use of executive orders in each succeeding administration, and the shift from "moral suasion" to legal sanctions as the scope of their coverage broadened to federal agencies as well as federal contracts.

The Division of Negro Economics (DNE), was a federal-state program headed by George Haynes, the first black man to receive a Ph. D. from Columbia University (1912). MacLaury asserts: "The work of the DNE, along with the state and local activities it spawned during and after World War I, seems to have generated hope and enthusiasm among blacks and racial progressives throughout the nation. It demonstrated to the pressure groups the importance of government action. Then Secretary of Labor William Wilson endorsed it as a first step toward applying the mandate to black workers as stated in the DOL's Organic Act; to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, improve their working conditions, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment." The DNE died, but it established the prototype of a commission for the next Democratic administration.

MacLaury notes the Republican Party's tradition of non-intervention; Herbert Hoover, for example, refrained from introducing segregation into his department. It was not until the Franklin Roosevelt Administration that the executive branch was again called upon to show its mettle. Widespread relief programs during the Depression challenged the administration to come up with an even-handed distribution of Federal benefits at the same time that the administration depended on the legislative support of Southern Democrats. A number of progressive statesmen emerged. Harold Ickes, who administered the Public Works Administration (PWA) program, was an outstanding advocate for black employment. Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, was also an effective advocate. Both she and Harry Hopkins, who headed the Works Projects Administration (WPA), were sympathetic to employment of blacks, but they did run into problems when Laurence Oxley, Director of Negro Labor, followed the DNE model of federal state administration: local offices often resisted desegregation.

New Dealers had not only Southern Democrats but also their pro-union constituency to plague their effectiveness in handling black labor problems. With the notable exception of A. Philip Randolph, unions were not only uncooperative they actually resented government intervention. The attempt to prevent discriminatory apprenticeship training programs to prepare black workers for construction jobs met with sustained hostility. Extensive relief programs nonetheless did benefit blacks as they found a champion in the President's wife, Eleanor; as a result, Southern blacks shifted their vote to the Democratic Party. It remained, however, for Truman to desegregate the military. His close election in 1948 depended on black support.

Jim Crow was not legally overturned until the Brown v Board of Education decision in 1954 during the Eisenhower administration. Following traditional Republican policy, advances for blacks during that period were not publicized. The Kennedy Administration, in contrast, adopted the cause; by then, the concept of affirmative action had emerged. MacLaury's micro data documentation illuminates the step by step forging of concepts that necessarily prepared the ground for the executive branch of the Federal government to realize, finally, in the words of Kennedy, the "promise of our Constitution."

MacLaury amply demonstrates that justice does not just happen, it requires effort. Two quotes come to mind. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in a letter from Birmingham Jail that "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed." And, as President Lyndon Johnson told a group of labor and civil rights leaders who called on him to support the Civil Rights Act, "Go make me do it."

As an aside, an excellent insider's overview of the context of this work is supplied in a foreword by Professor Ray Marshall, Secretary of Labor in the Carter administration, and author of books on black labor.

Editor's Note: This book by former DOL historian Judson MacLaury can be read or downloaded for free online: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/newfoundpress/macLaury/to-advance.html>

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Book Review

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The OPA Intern Book Review

The saga continues and thanks to our DOL readers' suggestions, here's the latest book review in our intern series by Christopher Hamrick.

The Good Earth

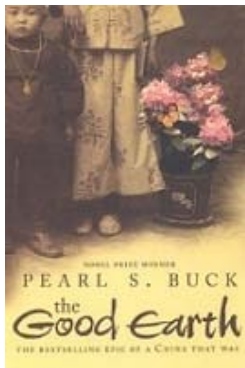
By Pearl S. Buck

Reviewed by Christopher Hamrick, OPA Intern

In our current state of economic affairs, it is very fitting that this month's book review is Pearl Buck's classic and widely popular novel named *The Good Earth*. Buck chronicles in her story the plights of a rural Chinese farmer and his family in the early 20th century. It however reads more of a statement on morality rather than a novel, with two key action scenes that are morally reproachable, with no punishment.



The story opens with its protagonist, Wang Lung, on his wedding day to a slave-woman. To place some context, this was a time in which marrying a slave was not necessarily uncommon. His father is a sick man, and feels obligated to take care of him, but cannot juggle the needs of his father with the work on the farm. As Wang Lung and his new wife, O-lan begin to have children, their lives change dramatically when the economy takes a turn for the worst. At their highest point, Wang Lung's family is a rural family, not wealthy in excess, but can be described as a middle-class farming family. As a result of their poor economic situation, out of desperation, Wang Lung feels obligated to kill his firstborn daughter, who is disabled, by drowning; yet Wang Lung continues to have children. As if that weren't enough, the family is forced to travel to the south to the big city. There, they are merely beggars.



Soon through a large riot in the city, Wang Lung's family ends up personally confronting and robbing a man of significant wealth. The fear which Wang Lung sees in the wealthy man's eyes startles Wang Lung, but who feels no personal moral opposition to the vile acts he commits. The resources gained from the theft of the wealthy man are those with which Wang Lung is able to move back to the country and live a comfortable life. Wang Lung makes the essential choice between right and wrong out of self-preservation, but at the expense of another's well-being. Indeed, he chose the selfish action, robbing the wealthy man to bring himself out of poverty. And he remains unpunished.

It's a timeless philosophical work on morality and its consequences, cast upon the backdrop of a great fiction classic. In a world where wrongs go unpunished, and in which the line between right and wrong becomes invisible, to what degree should a man hold himself accountable? I think it nearly impossible to read about this family without picturing images of our most recent recession. A bear market has sent many to the streets, unable to find a job, and has increased competition at home—I should know, one in four American youth who are looking cannot find a job. I'm one of the lucky ones.

Seeing Wang Lung and his family transition from middle-class farmers to urban beggars is a story common to many, which is not exclusive to countries or

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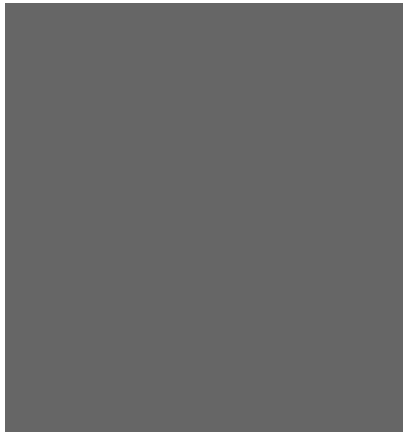
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generations, and in fact is very much still relevant today. But through my life experiences, I am convinced through hard work and perseverance, often times success in the job market is only a handshake away; and that in a modern society where individuals are held accountable, honesty and due diligence can always be rewarded.

Christopher Hamrick is a sophomore at Villanova University spending his summer as an intern for the Office of Public Affairs.

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Book Review

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The OPA Intern Book Review

And please welcome the newest writer in the intern series, Brittany-Rae Gregory.

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America

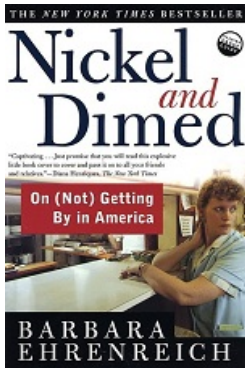
By Barbara Ehrenreich, Ph D

Reviewed by *Brittany-Rae Gregory, OPA Intern*

I love a great deal. As a college student on a budget, I often shop at stores like Wal-Mart to take advantage of the low prices on everything from toiletries to food to cleaning supplies. I have to admit, while I'm in these stores, I am more focused on how many items I can cram into my shopping cart than I am thinking about the people who work there.



But, Barbara Ehrenreich's book, *Nickel and Dimed* did get me to think about the workers and their personal lives. In the book, Ehrenreich goes undercover as a member of America's working class. For more than two years she works in minimum wage jobs to gain perspective on how anyone manages to survive with the most basic of resources.



The witty and emotional narrative brings light to and gives a voice to the often overlooked, underrepresented and ignored working class. Her journalistic account reveals that the most important aspect of a career is passion. Enthusiasm for their jobs is what keep the caretakers coming back to the nursing home, the cooks returning to the fast food restaurants and it is Ehrenreich's dedication to her writing that motivates her to return to the minimum wage jobs daily, when she can simply resume her comfortable middle class lifestyle.

As an outsider looking in, Ehrenreich easily pinpoints occupational health and safety issues that many of her colleagues are unaware of, and in an inspirational way, she single handedly educates her co-workers on wages, injuries and mistreatment. Instilling in them that they have a voice, she urges them to take a stand against wrongdoing at work. Many of the issues that the Department's OSHA and Wage and Hour Division confront on a daily basis are highlighted in *Nickel and Dimed*.

When I go to Wal-Mart, I'm there to shop. So I'm not thinking about the stores' business model or the lives of the workers when they get home. Ehrenreich's journey not only prompted me to think about the stories of local Wal-Mart employees or the cashier in the checkout line at the grocery store, but I also gained a greater understanding of the idea of "good jobs for everyone". A good job is not only one with adequate wages and benefits, but it is a job with a desirable work environment that allows for fellowship with great people and developing invaluable skills.

Brittany-Rae Gregory is a senior at Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA. She is currently interning in the Office of Public Affairs.

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Book Review

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The OPA Intern Book Review

The saga continues and thanks to our DOL readers' suggestions, here's the latest book review in our intern series by Jack Crutchfield.

The Harvest Gypsies

By John Steinbeck

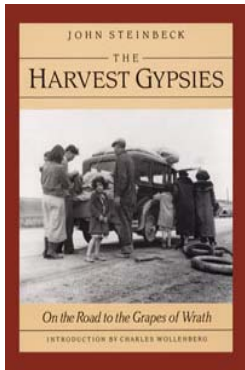
Reviewed by Jack Crutchfield, OPA Intern

The Harvest Gypsies is a collection of seven articles written by John Steinbeck in 1936 about the lives of farm workers during the dust bowl migration.



Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, in 1902. He wrote several books during the 1930's, including *In Dubious Battle*, a novel about a farm workers' strike. After the publication of this novel, Ted West, an editor for The San Francisco News, asked Steinbeck to do a series on the dust bowl migration in rural California. The articles in *The Harvest Gypsies* form the basis for Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Steinbeck journeyed throughout California's agricultural valleys. At one of the model camps for migrant workers, he met Tom Collins. Collins managed the camp and helped enlighten Steinbeck regarding the situation of the workers.



With compassion, Steinbeck does an excellent job of understanding the troubles of the workers and their families. He is skillful in his ability to describe their journey and emotional strife. The pictures in the book (by Depression era photographer: Dorothea Lange), further supports his description. He provides a broad view of their experience, but chooses just the right details to focus on to help readers understand the inhumane conditions and treatment of the workers. These details include accounts of how the camps were heavily policed to avoid laborers from organizing and planning strikes to demand decent treatment, benefits, and fair wages. Steinbeck describes how entire families (as many as 5) live in one-room paper shacks. He gives details of their diet, sickness, malnutrition, mortality, and the loss of basic human dignity. He seems to want to shock America into action.

Jack Crutchfield is a senior at Johnson C. Smith University. He is spending his summer as an intern for the Office of Public Affairs.

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Workers are my Business

Get to know your colleagues in a whole new way! Click on the photos to read their stories, view a short video introduction from them, and check out the elevator posters that featured their roles in making Good Jobs for Everyone a reality. Click on the photos below to learn more about each of your coworkers.

Naomi Barry-Pérez

Meet this pioneering woman who has faced discrimination and fought back, now leading the Department's Civil Rights Center at the Frances Perkins building in Washington, D.C. Her faith and her family is important to her and it's what's compelled her to work in civil rights.

When not reading Harry Potter books, Barry-Pérez enjoys spending time with her husband and toddler son.



Alison (ASP) & Brian (ETA) Pasternak

Studying for their masters in public policy and an interest in public service is what brought Alison and Brian together. Years later they found two different ways to help American workers. Alison became an economist while Brian went on to become a Deputy Administrator in ETA.

When not working or talking shop, this DOL duo enjoys raising their two daughters in Columbia, MD.



Tony Rios (OWCP)

A migrant farm worker who thinned and weeded sugar beets in the summers during his youth, Tony Rios took that experience and used his work ethic to bypass obstacles that stood in his path. Some 20 years since leaving Crystal City, Texas, he works as the deputy director for the Division of Federal Employees' Compensation in the Labor Department's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs in Washington, D.C.

He is a former Marine and enjoys travel in his spare time.



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What is this?

Diana Cortez (OSHA)



A long-standing interest in preventing accidents and injuries in the workplace, and reaching out to underserved populations, has propelled Diana Cortez into communities where she represents the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Working out of OSHA's Tarrytown, New York, office as its area director, Cortez is a married mother of three boys and one girl.

Day Al-Mohamed (ODEP)

A rock-climbing accident at 19 left Day Al-Mohamed visually impaired but ready to help others through her position at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. As she says, "It's not that you get up and go in for a job, it's that you get up and you're going out to do something."

Within the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Al-Mohamed is a senior policy advisor. She is a fencing instructor and pupil, blogger about disability policy, and a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in her spare time.



Tony Camilli (OASAM)

Tony Camilli's job focuses on a specific segment of American workers—veterans. A veteran himself, having served in the Air Force and currently with the Air Force Reserve, Camilli works as the U.S. Department of Labor's veterans' employment program manager in Washington, D.C.

Camilli plays Ultimate Frisbee, cheers for two Philadelphia teams, the Eagles and Phillies, and plays basketball and badminton in his free time.



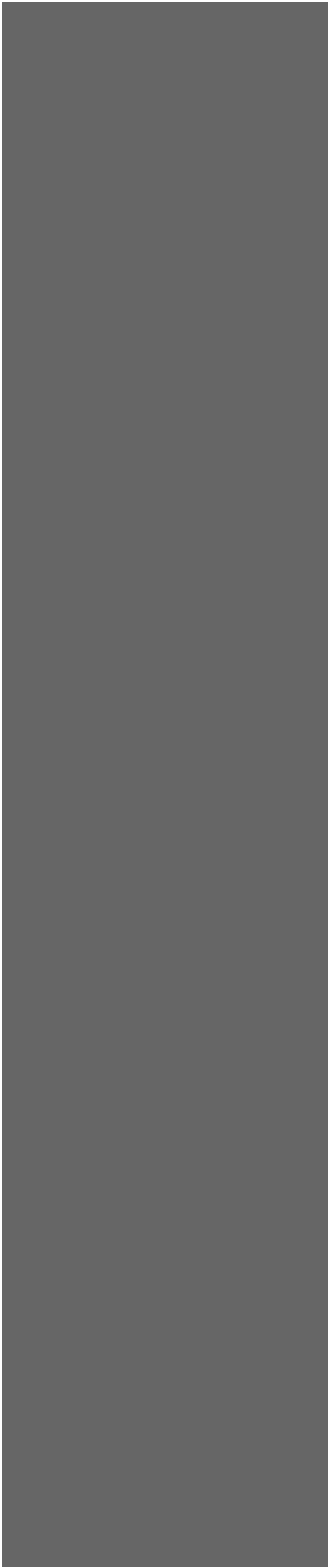
Keith Bell (MSHA)

"My focal point, and my true calling, is what I do here day-to-day at the U.S. Department of Labor. I've thought about it many times—what is my true passion? It's right here, it's right here," says Keith Bell, of his work as the Mine Safety and Health Administration's co-counsel for trial litigation.

When not at his Rosslyn, Virginia, office, Bell sings both secular and sacred music as well as with local bands in Washington, D.C.



Isabel Colon (EBSA)





"I absolutely feel that what we do makes a difference in someone's life and it has an immediate impact on people," says Isabel Colon. She is the deputy regional director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia.

She reads fiction more than nonfiction, just to get away from it all. Reading authors from James Patterson to Sue Grafton, murder mysteries to Harry Potter books.

Malaika Jeter (ILAB)

Her name means angel in Kiswahili, and in many respects, Malaika Jeter is an angel to the 49.3 million child laborers she helps through her work as an international relations officer for the Africa Division of the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking.

Coming to the Bureau of International Labor Affairs in Washington, D.C., two years ago, she likes to travel to expand her horizons and experiences.



James Pierce (OFCCP)

"I open doors for equal opportunity," Jim Pierce says of his more than 40-year government career, 28 years of which have been with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Now working at the national office as the deputy director for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs Division of Program Operations, Pierce grew up in Pineville, Louisiana. He travels on cruises and participates in activities with his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, during off hours.





The Watercooler

Hail & Farewell

Welcome Aboard

New hires for 6/19/2011 - 7/02/2011

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BLS	Contreras, Omar F	NEW YORK-MANHATTAN	NY
BLS	Gavilano, Gabriela E	MOUNTAINSIDE	NJ
BLS	Krauss, Lara A.	WASHINGTON	DC
BLS	Lundy, Jeffrey Dalton	WASHINGTON	DC
BLS	Mike-Mayer, Kathleen T	PHILADELPHIA	PA
BLS	Smith, Andrew L.	WASHINGTON	DC
BLS	Stuart, Grace R.	WASHINGTON	DC
EBSA	Alexander, Deidre E	NEW YORK	NY
EBSA	Holloway, Joy L.	SILVER SPRING	MD
EBSA	Hugler, Samuel R	BOSTON	MA
EBSA	Jones, Akayla J	KANSAS CITY	MO
EBSA	Kei, Richard J	BOSTON	MA
EBSA	Melikian, Kristen L	PASADENA	CA
EBSA	Park, Bom E	NEW YORK	NY
EBSA	Pearson, Chiya C	KANSAS CITY	MO
EBSA	Rim, Christina Y	NEW YORK	NY
EBSA	Spahr, Jeffrey T	KANSAS CITY	MO
EBSA	Sutherland, Aaron W	FORT WRIGHT	KY
EBSA	Tesauro, Collette M	PASADENA	CA
EBSA	Truppi, Samantha S	SILVER SPRING	MD
ETA	Hiester, Holly	CHICAGO	IL
ETA	Lorie, Maryulen C	CHICAGO	IL
ETA	Macas, Cheryl G	CHICAGO	IL
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MSHA	Akbarzadeh, Yasser	LAKEWOOD	CO
MSHA	Distasio, Mario V	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Dobrovich, Logan A	TRIADELPHIA	WV
MSHA	Fenton, Lisa G	PRINCETON	WV
MSHA	Foster, Nichole E.	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Freehart, Kyle	BRUCETON	PA
MSHA	Garrett, Ruby	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Hayes, Sylvia E.	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Hunt, Kevin D.	PIKEVILLE	KY
MSHA	Jimenez, Ramiro	DALLAS	TX
MSHA	Molina, Natosha A.	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Price, Jazamek K.	ARLINGTON	VA
MSHA	Przybysz, Matthew	TRIADELPHIA	WV
MSHA	Tate, Tyrone	ARLINGTON	VA
OASAM	Bundy, Keith	WASHINGTON	DC
OASAM	Cloud, Braye G	WASHINGTON	DC
OASAM	Gilbert, Charles	WASHINGTON	DC
OASAM	Gladness, Joye F	PHILADELPHIA	PA
OASAM	Hill, Margaret R	ATLANTA	GA
OASAM	Kazooba-Bakasara, Albert	WASHINGTON	DC
OASAM	Plasencia, Paul M	WASHINGTON	DC
OASAM	Vogt, Teresa	WASHINGTON	DC
OCFO	Kim, Michael H	WASHINGTON	DC
OCFO	Lin, Ching Yi	WASHINGTON	DC
OCFO	Rico, Natalie E	WASHINGTON	DC
OFCCP	Evangelist, Kelli	PHILADELPHIA	PA
OFCCP	Moses, Savita	BALTIMORE	MD
OFCCP	Peak, Bethany	WASHINGTON	DC
OFCCP	Syed, Rafay	BALTIMORE	MD
OIG	Pena, Richard A	DALLAS	TX
OSEC	Foronda, Diane A	WASHINGTON	DC
OSEC	McDevitt, Patrick J	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Akopian, Anna T	NEW YORK-MANHATTAN	NY
OSHA	Baldino, Robert P	TARRYTOWN	NY

OSHA	Chibbaro, Stephanie L.	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Ehr, Nicholas W	HARTFORD	CT
OSHA	Fenzl, Mark J	BOWMANSVILLE	NY
OSHA	Fitzner, Leanne D.	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Henson, Adam P	ANDOVER	MA
OSHA	Infante, Peter A. P.	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Keister, Sarah E	Arlington Heights	IL
OSHA	Patterson, Reginald E.	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Rogers, Ryan P	HARTFORD	CT
OSHA	Roudabaugh, Justine M.	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Smith, Lindsay A	CONCORD	NH
OSHA	Sok, Stephanie C	NEW YORK-MANHATTAN	NY
OSHA	Traverso, Matthew A K	WASHINGTON	DC
OSHA	Vance, Kaitlin M	PARSIPPANY	NJ
OSHA	Werkneh, Meron	WASHINGTON	DC
OWCP	Prusa, Norman K	CLEVELAND	OH
WH	Ann, Alisa	WILKES BARRE	PA
WH	Bates, Glenn D	HOUSTON	TX
WH	Cruz, Jullynet M	NEW YORK-MANHATTAN	NY
WH	Hodge, Sylvia E	PHILADELPHIA	PA
WH	Johnson, Isaiah R.	WASHINGTON	DC
WH	Jones, Christopher E	NEW HAVEN	CT
WH	Lazzeri, Michael	WASHINGTON	DC
WH	Martin-Asburay, Kathleen J	ALBUQUERQUE	NM
WH	McFadden, Vanessa J	TULSA	OK
WH	Olivas, Denise L	EL PASO	TX
WH	Small, Stefanie	ATLANTA	GA
WH	Valenzuela, Jacobo	ALBUQUERQUE	NM
WH	Vanech, Jacqueline M	DENVER	CO

Saying Goodbye

Retirees and Departures 6/12/11 – 6/25/11

Agency	Name	City	State
ETA	Zackheim,Ralph S	SAN FRANCISCO	CA
ETA	Mitchell, David M	ATLANTA	GA

OSECY	Archuleta, Katherine G.	WASHINGTON	DC
OWCP	Lindsay-Richards, Darlene	SEATTLE	WA
OWCP	Gray, Rita J	DALLAS	TX



FRANCES MAG

Interview: James Pierce (OFCCP)

A Man on the Move

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



"I open doors for equal opportunity," Jim Pierce said of his more than 40-year government career, 28 years of which have been with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

Now working as the deputy director for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) Division of Program Operations, in Washington, D.C., Pierce grew up in Pineville, Louisiana. Later, he went to Dillard University in New Orleans, but the Army draft brought him elsewhere. He graduated from Northwestern State University in

Natchitoches, Louisiana, with a major in business administration and an accounting minor.

The Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Alexandria, Louisiana, turned out to be his first federal position.

"When I first started there, I was a ward clerk. It was an administrative support position. At the time, I was working full time and going to school full time. So, when I finished school, I was able to get into a management training program for the VA."

After completing the training program, Pierce went to the VA Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska, serving as a laundry plant manager with responsibility for VA laundry facilities in Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska.

In 1982, a position became available as an equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialist in the DOL's OFCCP Omaha-area office. Pierce applied for that job and started his career with Labor. But what lured him to DOL?

"When I was at the VA, I had additional responsibilities in EEO counseling. I enjoyed that. The idea of working in the area to help people that may have been victims of discrimination was intriguing, and it seemed like something I would be interested in," he said.

As an EEO specialist, Pierce audited and monitored federal contractors. One day, he'd travel to a beef processing plant or a chicken plant, and the next day his job would take him to a bank or a manufacturing plant.

DOL officials recognized his hard work when he received a promotion in 1988 to the St. Louis, Missouri, OFCCP district director in 1988. There, he did work similar to an EEO specialist, but he managed eight compliance officers, who were responsible for auditing federal contractors and their work sites.

At the time, the auto industry consumed St. Louis with its two General Motors' plants, a Ford plant, and a Chrysler plant. Back then, McDonnell Douglas, the aerospace manufacturer now known as Boeing Co., had a presence, as well as Ralston Purina and other businesses and industries that were federal contractors.

"Our responsibility was twofold: one to audit federal contractors by conducting compliance reviews, but OFCCP would also receive complaints from individuals who believed that they were victims of discrimination. If their employer was a federal contractor, we would conduct a complaint investigation," Pierce said.

OFCCP has responsibility for enforcing three laws: Executive Order 11246 as amended, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based upon disability; and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Section 38, USC 12. This act covers protected veterans

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and disabled veterans. Each of the laws has two mandates. One is nondiscrimination and the other is affirmative action.

His work with OFCCP continued to offer rewards. "My greatest satisfaction has been negotiating a resolution with a federal contractor and preparing a letter that we have sent to applicants for employment, offering them a job and an opportunity to work," he said.

Following his stint in St. Louis, Pierce received a promotion and came to Washington in 1991. He started in the policy division at OFCCP's headquarters. After spending a short time there, he transferred to the division of program operations (DPO). At that time, the division had three branches to manage the activities of the regional field offices. Pierce was the branch manager for the central branch, with responsibility for regions in Atlanta, Georgia; Dallas, Texas; and Chicago, Illinois.

Supporting regional activities, including the resolution of investigation-related problems and managing case activities and correspondence on behalf of constituents—either to the complainant or to federal contractors who had concerns about their audit—were some of Pierce's responsibilities during his two years in DPO. Part of his job was to review completed cases. As a component of the complaint investigation process, complainants could appeal the result of complaints, and those appeals would come to the national office. Staff would review case files and see if the final determination was accurate, based upon the facts, laws, and regulations of the case.

As Pierce notes, many complainants appeal unfavorable determinations because often, when an individual files a complaint, they expect that their employer violated the law. Sometimes the facts suggest that the employer did not violate the law, and the plaintiff may not be happy with that finding.

However, as he points out, "There are people that are working across America because of OFCCP's mission in ensuring that there's diversity in the workplace."

Pierce was then asked to serve as executive assistant to the acting director of OFCCP. He was detailed to that job for about 10 months, and because he enjoyed working for workers, Pierce made a lateral transfer to New Orleans. He worked as the city's OFCCP district director beginning in 1994.

The district office had responsibilities for the states of Louisiana and Arkansas. In that office, there were two assistant district directors for New Orleans and one assistant district director for Arkansas. Similar to other district offices around the country, personnel conducted compliance audits and complainant investigations and worked with contractors to ensure that they implemented their employment practices in a nondiscriminatory manner.

For Pierce, "It was exciting to go home again. My home town of Pineville was about 200 miles away, so it was good to be in New Orleans. I had family in New Orleans, and I still have family in the town I grew up in.

"I'm a restless person. I used to have a pattern that I did this every five years—that I would either change jobs or move. So you know what comes next; I moved again. In 1999, I moved back to Washington and joined the policy division as a branch chief of planning and program development."

There, he had responsibility for developing the operational planning for OFCCP's enforcement for the area, region, and district offices. He also developed the training plans and scheduled and conducted staff training.

Because some of OFCCP's senior managers retired, for more than a year Pierce held three positions in the policy division simultaneously: branch chief, the acting deputy director for policy, and the acting policy division director. In the acting director capacity, he managed the entire policy division. In 2006, he was promoted to functional affirmative action program director. That program, he said, was an initiative for contractors in the development of their written affirmative action plans based on business lines, or functions, rather than establishments.

In January of this year, Pierce was reassigned to the deputy director for DPO. As the deputy director, he has responsibility for supporting the investigation activities of the regions, including their enforcement efforts, compliance evaluations, and complaint investigations. DPO supports and monitors the contractor investigation activities across the entire OFCCP organization, and he knows he has helped workers.

"I open doors for people to have opportunities," he says. "There are more people that are working because of the diversity that OFCCP ensures. OFCCP has

opened the doors for thousands of people to have opportunity, and I've had a hand in that."

Because of the nature of his job, Pierce has met many people, and throughout his career he says he's enjoyed his jobs and interacting with others. He notes, "I enjoy being able to work and accomplish those things that are necessary to ensure that the DOL is reflected in a manner that says, 'Here's an agency that's a credible agency that's going to do a good job.' "

With all the travel he's done, Pierce says his favorite place is Washington because of its international flavor. His two grown children are here, one in Germantown, Maryland, and the other on Capitol Hill, along with a grandson. He's now spending more time with his wife, Ada, and family. He travels on cruises; participates in activities with his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi; and takes up hobbies after spending 28 years as an officer in the Army Reserve, which kept him busy during off hours.

"I'm relearning to fish and my 13-year-old grandson is learning to fish. I'm a golfer, and I say that with this caveat—that I've been learning golf for 20 years. That's an area that I need to pay more attention to. I like music, particularly jazz. I like Kenny G, Joe Sample, and zydeco music."

The most challenging thing he's done, according to Pierce, is what he's doing now at the national level. He's attempting to support and monitor the activities of the field staff and respond to congressional inquiries about constituents, whether those constituents are individuals or employers. In short, he's responding to the public and workers, ensuring that what DOL's asked to do involves following the law as it is written, and following the interpretation of the law based on Labor directives and regulations.

"Government work is all I've ever done. I enjoy it, and it has sustained me and my family. It started from the military, that thought of the importance of government. It's about going beyond self. At OFCCP, we try to make sure that we take care of the workers, and we try to create good jobs for everyone as part of DOL's mission," he concludes.

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: Alison (ASP) & Brian (ETA) Pasternak

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Believing they have a calling to public service, Alison and Brian Pasternak are a married couple who work for the U.S. Department of Labor in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and the Employment and Training Administration, respectively.

Saying there are no drawbacks to working at the same building in Washington, D.C., they joke that their little girls are "becoming Frances Perkinites" who have come to understand the value of public service because of their parents' roles at DOL.

Alison and Brian met while working toward master's degrees in public policy at the College of William and Mary. A relatively small program, they had many classes together and married in January 1998 following graduation from the Williamsburg, Virginia, college the year before.

With graduate degrees in hand, Columbia, Maryland, became their home. They started a family that now includes daughters Jenna, 10, and Courtney, 7.

To support that family, Alison began work with DOL initially in 1997 for ETA as a workforce development specialist. In 2000, she took a detail with Dr. Bill Rodgers, her mentor at William and Mary. At that time, he was the chief economist for Labor. Working with various chief economists over the years, she ended up as an economist with ASP's Office of Economic Policy and Analysis.

"ASP deals with providing policy direction for the entire department. They help with regulatory issues and getting regulations out. My particular office specifically provides economic support for different agencies," she says.

She spends a majority of her time creating weekly summaries of economic conditions, including economic indicators such as the unemployment rate, the consumer price index, housing starts, building permits, consumer-confidence levels, and the gross domestic product. Her team pulls information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Board, and other sources. Every Friday, a four-page document produced by her team provides analysis and data for departmental leaders, giving them access to important information.

Saying her fondness for labor economics and statistics brought her to DOL, she admits, "It was a natural path to come here because I love numbers, I love working with data, and I'm fascinated with labor economics in particular. That's what I love and want to continue doing."

A full-time employee until the birth of Jenna, she switched to a part-time schedule that allowed her to work 20 to 25 hours weekly. "My family is my number one priority," she said. "I've made career sacrifices to work part-time, so that I can be home with my daughters. Three days per week, I'm home when my daughters leave for school and when they come home."

A telecommuter as well, she says she is grateful DOL allows her the flexibility to work part-time and sometimes from home. The arrangement and the work she does allows her to "help other DOL employees be more productive and knowledgeable as they serve America's workers. I keep them abreast of current economic conditions and trends, as well as provide their agencies with economic support."

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Even though she started out at ETA, where her husband now works, Alison says they rarely see each other at work.

Like his wife, Brian took classes related to labor and economics. He also had an interest in the workforce and international issues. "I entered the whole world of DOL at the state level first and became interested in the work in terms of job training and employment and seeing real people—inner-city youth, dislocated workers—get retraining and jobs. That whole experience kept me interested in the type of work DOL was doing," he said of his arrival at Labor in May 2003 in ETA's Performance and Results Office. Three years later, he became a program manager in the Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) and rose to be its deputy administrator.

OFLC has a strong connection to a variety of U.S. economic sectors. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act for employment-based visa programs, the Secretary has responsibility for a number of programs in Brian's area, which it administers on her behalf. The H1B program is often used by large technology companies, such as Microsoft, Oracle, and Hewlett-Packard, the health-care system, and the nation's universities and research laboratories, to find skilled workers. His office also runs the front end of the permanent green-card program, which allows workers to come into the country and work permanently. Additionally, there are programs that allow temporary guest workers to work on the nation's farms—harvesting, cultivating, and planting crops—and working in nonagricultural areas, such as ski resorts and hotels.

Brian's office receives and evaluates employer applications. "We look to see if the employer recruited U.S. workers in good faith and was unable to find enough U.S. workers to perform the job. The employer must also offer wages and working conditions that do not adversely affect similarly employed U.S. workers in that job. If those two statutory prongs are met, our office grants a labor certification to those employers," Brian explained. Applicants then move on to the Department of Homeland Security with a petition to obtain permission to admit workers into the U.S. to work for a specific employer.

OFLC administers its program responsibilities through three national processing centers. One is located in Chicago, Illinois, and adjudicates all temporary nonimmigrant visa applications. Another in Atlanta, Georgia, adjudicates all immigrant permanent labor certification visa applications. A third center in the district provides prevailing-wage determinations to employers considering whether to hire foreign workers.

Working in a high-profile area, Brian is convinced that he's helping America's workers. "We help ensure that America's workers have the best opportunity to get these jobs before employers are certified to bring in a foreign worker. We also ensure, by virtue of our certification, that all workers who are employed on American soil are getting fair pay and working conditions," he says.

With more than 180 federal staff and an equal number of contractors supporting the work at these processing centers and at headquarters, his team strives to provide better service to customers at a lower cost. As an example, the Washington, D.C. center opened more than a year ago and faced the prospect of massive paper filings for employer wage requests. However, within 10 months, OFLC developed and implemented a Web-based system for customers to file wage requests online. It also allowed agency employees to process requests online and send e-mail rather than paper outcomes to customers. In the first year, Brian said \$3.5 million had been saved because of reduced costs for office supplies, manpower, filing, and archiving.

"We are operating in an environment where the American taxpayer is sensitive about our budgets," he says. "You can take that as a bad sign that we may not get what we believe we need, or you can look at it as an opportunity to innovate and try to deliver your service to the customer more efficiently and avoid unnecessary costs."

Now at the intersection between the nation's workforce and the employer's need to have skilled employees, Brian continues to manage program operations, implement innovative business solutions, and have a direct impact on employers and workers.

But both Brian and Alison have each other as sounding boards, which both agreed was the best thing about their spouse working at DOL. "It's a joy and meaningful for me to be able to go home and talk about the things at work, and she understands exactly what I'm talking about," he said. She added, "I understand the people he's talking about, the issues, the problems, the exciting news, and vice versa. Who says it's not great to talk shop?"

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Have a story to tell about how you make America's workers your business? Email us at Frances@dol.gov

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: OWCP's Tony Rios

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



A migrant farm worker who thinned and weeded sugar beets in the summers during his youth, Tony Rios took that experience and used his work ethic to bypass obstacles that stood in his path. Some 20 years since leaving Crystal City, Texas, he works as the deputy director for the Division of Federal Employees' Compensation in the Labor Department's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP).

"It was humbling because not everyone in town was a migrant farm worker, but I look back now, and it made me the person that I am today," Rios said in an

interview from his Washington, D.C., office.

After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, went on to work as a paralegal for a law firm specializing in workers' compensation representation, and then became an insurance adjuster focusing on workers' compensation claims. Moving to the district, he began his federal career as a claims examiner in 1994 for OWCP. Later, he worked as a hearing representative, eventually managing the Branch of Hearings and Review, and becoming deputy director in 2009.

While advancing his DOL career during the day, Rios attended night classes to complete his undergraduate degree at Strayer University. He went on to receive his master's in public administration from American University.

That education, he said, helped pave the path to upward mobility and allowed him to handle the challenges he faces today. As deputy director, he manages the branches of technical assistance; fiscal operations; information technology; hearings and review; and policy and regulations. He oversees one of OWCP's field offices in D.C. and supervises six managers in the national office.

Rios' organization provides workers' compensation coverage to 2.7 million federal and postal workers. One of the largest self-insured workers' compensation systems in the world, he said last year it distributed more than \$2.8 billion in wage-loss compensation, medical payments, and vocational rehabilitation benefits to affected workers.

To do this work, Rios has an energetic team that continues to make culture shifts within DOL. "We've created an online learning center that provides training materials for our new hires. That provides consistency to our employees because we're spread around the country," Rios says. "The new training modules can be quickly referenced. Previously, we had classroom training instruction for the first three months. If you had questions, you had to go back to your book. That's time consuming. Now, people have information at their fingertips."

Hard at work, the OWCP team also updated its procedures manual over the last two years — it's first major revision in 10 years. "What we did was create a procedure manual advisory group of members nationwide who contributed to the development of these new chapters. By empowering the users, they helped in the development of new procedures," Rios explained.

Another example of progressive thinking involves a project Rios and his crew are managing that requires all federal agencies to provide a way to electronically file workers' compensation forms to OWCP by December 2012. To equip federal agencies for this technology change, his team is creating a free, Web-based portal for federal workers and agencies. "We are changing behaviors, because the sooner they get the claims and the supporting documentation to us, the faster we can adjudicate the claim and deliver benefits. The sooner these employees get the treatment they need, the faster they'll come back to work," he says.

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What is this?

Meanwhile, there are other changes afoot. Rios says he least expected to work on the development of new regulations that will complement his agency's 95-year-old statute, which hasn't been amended in 30 years. "I didn't expect we'd be changing our bible," he says. "When you're involved in possibly changing the law and the development of new regulations, it's incredibly rewarding."

Yet Rios knows that his department impacts America's workers daily. "Our program is a safety net that federal workers rely upon when they're injured in the line of duty. In my position, I play a large role in the information technology (IT) systems that are utilized to deliver the services that we provide. My priority is to ensure that we return injured workers to gainful employment as soon as possible. I consider my position important because I am able to effectuate changes in policies and in the IT applications that we use to deliver benefits more promptly to our stakeholders, which allows them to return to work sooner."

He added, "I hate to be held hostage by old and familiar bureaucratic ways of doing things. When technology has opened the doors for me to do things more efficiently, I've taken full advantage of it."

To share his passion about what he does, Rios often meets with his team of managers to share information on how they can improve their program. That entails looking at the various roles of each employee and hearing different perspectives.

"Although I've only been in my job for two years, in that time, I've been able to staff the national office with a team of compatible, high-performing leaders who know how to improve the delivery of our services, and who care deeply about our mission and the people we serve. That energetic team has set in motion a paradigm shift within our organization that is being felt by our employees and the hundreds of thousands of injured workers who rely on us for their well-being. Seeing that shift in culture and improvement in customer service really makes me proud," he said.

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: OSHA's Diana Cortez

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



A long-standing interest in preventing accidents and injuries in the workplace, and reaching out to underserved populations, has propelled Diana Cortez into communities where she represents the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Working out of OSHA's Tarrytown, New York, office as its area director, Cortez has seen a lot of change in the agency she's been a part of since 1980, part of which she initiated by embracing the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the working community. Her vision is "that every worker knows they have a right to a safe and healthy workplace, they can voice their concerns to OSHA when that is not the case, and every employer is familiar with their responsibilities under OSHA and adheres to them."

In the early 2000s, the bilingual Cortez noted an increase in fatalities among the Latino worker population. Consequently, she started outreach in her area that covers the Bronx, Rockland and Westchester Counties. These areas also happened to have a high Latino population. Approaching community organizations, church congregations, and workers at street corners, she provided literature and information on worker rights, whom to contact, and how to make a complaint about unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

"As a result, in 2002, I initiated the first Regional Hispanic Committee with the support of my regional administrator. As the committee chairman, my responsibilities included initiating and establishing cooperative relationships with organizations and groups working with the Latino community, coordinating outreach activities, and devising a plan to reach the immigrant population throughout our region of New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands," she said.

Members from the OSHA regional office and local area offices participate on this committee where Cortez is still chairman. She is also the regional Hispanic coordinator for OSHA's Region II. These individuals develop information-sharing programs and initiatives that prevent deaths and injuries to all workers, especially the most vulnerable populations.

Working with more than 20 community and faith-based organizations, Latin-American consulates, and Spanish-language media to reach the Latino workforce, she stresses the need to train employees about their worker rights and how to avoid and recognize hazards in the workplace to prevent on-the-job injuries.

To do this, she works on new initiatives to reach employers and employees — including young workers — by organizing and presenting conferences, training events, and safety and health fairs. Some of the groups she has provided training to include the local Girl Scouts, high-school students, safety professionals, and employers. She has helped the American Society of Safety Engineers, Voluntary Protection Program Participants Association, Construction Industry Council, various Chambers of Commerce, and the National Day Laborers Organizing Network.

"The thing I like most is interacting with employers and workers, meeting with them, and being able to share my knowledge of safety and health to help them, teach them, and impart the information, so that they have the knowledge and the skills to allow them to stay safe and healthy on the job," says Cortez, a married mother of three boys and one girl.

Responsible for all OSHA enforcement activities in her jurisdiction, Cortez manages a staff of 16 safety and health professionals and support staff, many of whom are safety and health compliance officers conducting workplace inspections

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What is this?

in a variety of industries within the construction and manufacturing sectors. They ensure employers meet their obligation under the OSH Act, which says they must provide workers with a safe and healthy workplace.

For noncompliant employers, she issues citations and penalties for failure to comply with OSHA standards. There are those business officials who contest the citations and the penalties, so she holds informal conferences and meetings with employers to ensure all violations are corrected and to resolve issues. If the issue is not resolved with mediation, the case moves onto an administrative law judge, and Cortez participates in the litigation process while trying to settle the case with the employer.

For the most part, Cortez acknowledges that employers are not happy to see OSHA at their workplace. However, she says, "I have to tell you, on many occasions, we have employers thanking us. Even though they get a citation, even though they get penalties, they'll come back and tell us they've implemented changes and improved their work practices and operations thanks to OSHA's visit. The changes are to improve and make working conditions and operations safer and healthier for the workers of the company."

Another part of her job is to respond to workplace complaints from employees or injury and fatality case referrals from police and fire departments. When 911 calls arise and relate to an imminent-danger situation, an employee injury or death, the police and fire department immediately notify her and hold the scene. She then assigns compliance officers for immediate response. In imminent-danger situations Cortez's compliance officers are required to remove an employee from a hazard that, if left unattended, could lead to death.

Cortez notes that a combination of enforcement and training are the two most important areas for OSHA. "Enforcement makes sure employers know OSHA is monitoring them to ensure they are meeting their responsibility. It is outreach and training that helps the employer meet standards and improve employee working conditions," she says.

During her years with OSHA, Cortez's responsibilities have grown tremendously, OSHA's standards have enlarged, and the reporting and information-gathering demands to Congress, the public, and the media have increased, as well as the inquiries.

"There's a demand to do more for the public," she says. "When I first started, there was no such thing as the Hazard Communication Standard (the Right-to-Know rule). Employers must now provide information to employees on all the chemicals they work with. There is also the lockout/tagout standard requiring that machines and equipment be locked when work/maintenance is being performed to ensure workers are not injured or killed in moving parts. Over the years, equipment has become more technical and complex.

"With changes in industry and the workplace, OSHA's moved forward in meeting the demands and recognizing these new hazards that are occurring in the workplace and taking immediate action to mitigate these."

To gain the knowledge she needed to do her job, Cortez started as a safety technician in OSHA's upward mobility program. This program required she attend college full-time at agency expense to study in the safety and health field, taking courses in engineering, electrical, sciences, and construction. Because budget cuts ended the program, she went on to OSHA's Training Institute and did on-the-job training to become a safety and health compliance officer in 1982. Eventually, she finished her B.S. at Mercy College in public safety administration; she's working on her thesis now for a master's in human resource management.

As a member of the American Society of Safety Engineers and Women in Safety Engineering, vice chairman of the Safety Professionals and the Latino Workforce, and an advisory member of the Diversity Committee, she stays connected with safety and health issues while also volunteering for these organizations.

Cortez says she's passionate about what she does. "I love my job. I love to come up with new ideas and new projects, such as organizing a conference or a training seminar, and I'm always doing that. If I finish one, I say, 'What other group can I reach or target, what's the next industry or topic?' I take advantage of every opportunity that's given to me to reach out to educate workers and employers to improve the working conditions of all workers."

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: ODEP's Day Al-Mohamed

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Day Al-Mohamed, a senior policy advisor with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), works tirelessly to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. She directs her passion to changing the ways businesses view people with disabilities. "Individuals with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in our workforce," she says. "We must remain focused on their talents and refuse to make assumptions about their abilities."

Visually impaired in a rock-climbing accident at 19, Al-Mohamed joined ODEP in November 2009 with an inherent optimism that her agency would lead a cultural shift in the way employers and society view and value people with disabilities. Within ODEP, she identifies policies and strategies for people with disabilities that can help them to find good jobs and move ahead in these positions.

She works with employers and community officials, specifically to help young people ages 16 to 25 enter the workplace. While some youths will go on to secondary education, others will enter the workplace. Al-Mohamed and ODEP's youth team are dedicated to ensuring these youths are well prepared.

"Sometimes, when it comes to disability, it's tough for young people with disabilities because the education system operates in a very different way," she notes from her Washington, D.C., office. "When you're in school, you get accommodations through a set process. Once you're in the workplace, it doesn't happen automatically. It's your responsibility to step up and say what you need. It can be hard to make that transition unless you've been prepared for it."

Working with coalitions, organizations, federal agencies, and those in the community, she advises these groups about the best ways to create effective policies and practices to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for people with disabilities. As an agency focused on disability employment policy, ODEP works to build collaborative partnerships and deliver credible data on the employment of people with disabilities.

"We discover what employment practices work and make recommendations that can impact how employers view and hire people with disabilities," says Al-Mohamed. "One of the most positive things about our work is that we get to team up with agencies across the federal government to make this happen, such as the Employment and Training Administration, the Women's Bureau, and the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

"In addition, we gather information from several demonstration project grants we launched at ODEP to discover new ways to improve disability employment policy. Our job is to find the best way to get people hired and promoted in the workplace, and these demonstration projects can be extremely useful."

The Add Us In Initiative is such a demonstration project. ODEP Assistant Secretary Kathy Martinez launched the project to identify and develop strategies to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities within the small-business community. Targeted businesses include those owned and operated by minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; and women and people with disabilities.

ODEP's Add Us In grantees have dynamic action plans with measurable objectives designed to shift attitudes and increase the employment participation rates of adults and youths with disabilities, while meeting the needs of targeted businesses and communities, she says.

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What is this?

The grantees are a consortia led by the University of Missouri-Kansas City in Kansas City, Missouri; the Integrated Recovery Network in Los Angeles, California; the Workplace, Inc., in Bridgeport, Connecticut; and the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma.

The grants for the Add Us In Initiative total \$2.3 million. "It's not a huge initiative, but it could have a big impact," she says. "This has never been done with the employment sector. We're looking at this as an employment disparity and asking what we can do to address these issues."

In February, ODEP will hold a national expert strategy meeting and bring in authorities who have studied these issues to share their knowledge with the grantees and ODEP. The goal is to leverage the information from researchers, providers, employment professionals, and community members to understand the needs of these businesses. The group also wants to identify effective strategies to address business and community needs and to establish networks to improve communication and collaboration between the business, diversity, and disability sectors.

From this gathering, Al-Mohamed says the idea is to move toward a National Diversity Forum in June, where grantees will share what they've learned and ask others for input. The forum will address the national implications of the Add Us In Initiative and support the creation of a national network for collaboration and dissemination of successful policies and practices.

ODEP will reach out broadly in June to various chambers of commerce and other representatives of national business associations; national professional organizations, including minority organizations; workforce systems; rehabilitation systems; disability organizations; and diversity and youth-system professionals. Participants will include public stakeholders, such as small-business owners, individuals with disabilities, and human-resources professionals, including diversity executives.

Working with others is something Al-Mohamed has done for a long time, since growing up in Bahrain, a small island off the coast of Saudi Arabia. She attended college at the University of Missouri-Columbia and went to law school there as well, picking Missouri because her dad did his medical residency there.

Following law school, she headed to Washington and the American Council of the Blind as its director of governmental affairs. She moved to the American Psychological Association's government-relations office and created a disability portfolio advocating for legislation that would keep her altruistic spirit alive.

"My disability portfolio ended up being much more than I ever imagined. I looked at a variety of vulnerable populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities, international issues, children and families, and people with HIV/AIDS. It was nice to have the freedom to explore how all these areas intersect and what kinds of specific remedies can be beneficial to many groups at once," she said.

Moving to DOL, she's looking at the process from the inside. To her, "ODEP is unique in that it's still kind of a policy shop and think tank, so it does have that similarity to my previous work, but you're operating from a different paradigm trying to figure out how pieces connect, so that real progress occurs."

A fencing instructor and competitor, disability policy blogger, and a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in her spare time, she says she enjoys her DOL work because of its potential reach.

"A lot of times we might say at ODEP, 'We're just a policy shop.' But I believe, when we come up with recommendations that show up in policies or best practices, those are real outcomes that impact people's lives. What we do here makes things better for workers and employers across the nation. And that is all that matters," she says.

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: Tony Camilli (OASAM)

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Tony Camilli's job focuses on a specific segment of American workers — veterans. As he says, "Veterans are special people who take an oath to defend America and are willing to write a blank check with their lives if called to do so — the true definition of unconditional service. That's a very powerful thing if you think about it, and I saw many blank checks cashed in Iraq when I served there."

A veteran himself, having served in the Air Force and currently with the Air Force Reserve, Camilli works as the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) veterans' employment program manager, a position in Labor's Human Resources Center (HRC), a part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) in Washington, D.C.

Accepting the position in October after working in the Office of the Solicitor as a labor and employment law attorney since 2008, he says he couldn't think of a more rewarding and fulfilling job because he deals with veterans' recruitment, retention, and outreach.

Even though he's been in the job two months, he has ambitious plans, including better branding of DOL through marketing.

"I want to spread the DOL brand and get it known by others. I'm getting out to events, such as hiring fairs, and meeting with senior leadership here and with other organizations with the goal of developing good partners. I'm also working with the military to develop a great rapport," he says.

Knowing he has an important mission where he can make an impact, Camilli says the difference between what he does and the role played by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is that VETS works on behalf of all service members who leave the military. His focus is internal to DOL, but he does work with VETS to share information and keep the dialogue going between the agencies.

"OASAM does a lot of different things and administration and management don't sound like sexy titles, but I like to think its most important contribution is to enable the other DOL agencies — especially enforcement ones — to do their jobs well," he says.

His role at the department is "to ensure these cherished heroes receive hiring preference and an opportunity to continue their service to America through DOL, if they so choose."

To do outreach, Camilli recently spent a day at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. He met wounded soldiers, or warriors as he called them, for the Operation Warfighter program, an initiative to recruit these military personnel to work as DOL interns. Dedicated solely to wounded warriors, he said the program can help the agency in many ways.

"I am looking to leverage skill sets and provide this department with the labor to do so. I want to bring these warriors in as soon as possible and have them be a part of DOL. They would join OASAM first, and then we plan to roll it out to all of DOL. Although the program has been around for years, there's been little participation at DOL," he said.

Mission one will launch within the next month or two, he says, to create a pipeline of talent with these warriors who can lead, take direction, and maintain an enthusiastic attitude. Claiming there are no downsides to the program, Camilli says it helps promote an executive order signed by President Obama.

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What is this?

Obama signed an executive order in 2009 requiring that federal agencies enhance recruitment and promote more employment opportunities for veterans. As part of that executive order, the president named Secretary Solis a co-chair on an interagency Council for Veterans Employment.

"I took this job with a vision to reform the way DOL handles veteran hiring, and my leadership in HRC and OASAM has given me the green light to creatively make things happen," says Camilli, who grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania.

"I want the chance to give back to my fellow veterans, who are struggling to find work in this tough economy, and have a chance to make an impact for them at DOL," he says.

While Camilli says that DOL has a good track record of hiring veterans, he adds that there is room for progress. To make those advances, he plans to form a DOL veterans' employee group, consisting of those who have served in the armed forces. Noting that 3,000 veterans work at DOL—18 percent of DOL's workforce—the veterans' hiring rate government-wide reaches 25 percent. Determined to see the number of DOL veterans rise, Camilli says, "I want to get us to that higher hiring level."

Looking into issues of hiring veterans noncompetitively and checking to ensure that DOL fully utilizes Veterans' Preference are other goals he has. Preference applies in hiring for many positions within the federal competitive service, and provides a uniform method by which qualified veterans receive special consideration.

In his role now, Camilli has come a long way from his upbringing in Pennsylvania, the youngest of five sons of a mechanic and a mother who worked multiple part-time jobs.

Maintaining friendships with people who chose to go to college, he knew paying for school was his responsibility. Yet, he said, "After a less than auspicious freshman year, I took some time off to think a bit more about my future and decided to work full-time in various jobs to pay the bills, including a warehouse that was probably inspected by OSHA at some point. During the holiday season I also worked for UPS, delivering packages doing 12-14 hour shifts. The workday was hard and long, but it gave me a better appreciation for my parents, who were first-generation Americans and worked hard at blue-collar jobs to provide for our family."

After reflecting on his lackluster college performance, Camilli transferred to East Stroudsburg University, a small teacher's college in northeastern Pennsylvania. There, he finished bachelor's degrees in psychology and communications, graduating *magna cum laude*. By his own admission, Camilli excelled there because of hard work and his professors.

As a self-described deliberative person, Camilli had to decide whether to attend graduate school for counseling, or law school or medical school. Instead, he postponed the decision and worked full-time at an inpatient psychological hospital and part-time as an intern for Pennsylvania State Senator Mike O'Pake.

Based on O'Pake's recommendation and Camilli's own interest, he attended law school at the University of Pittsburgh a year after graduating from college.

"At Pitt, I was heavily involved in activities beyond my classes: I competed in various mock trial and appellate advocacy competitions; I was a teaching assistant in legal writing classes for first-year students; I was an editor for the *Journal of Law and Commerce*, a publication I was published in after law school; and I worked a part-time job in my second and third years at the City of Pittsburgh's Law Department," he said.

Following graduation from law school, he stayed in Pittsburgh to work for a law firm, but he knew that government service would be in his future because he felt a calling to work for the feds.

Growing up with a World War I veteran grandfather, Korean War veteran father, and three half brothers who served in the Navy during the Vietnam War, Camilli began his public service by becoming a commissioned officer in the Air Force, where he served on active duty for more than seven years as a part of the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

His first assignment at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey involved trying criminal cases and running the tax center. He then went to Korea for one year and on to England for three years.

He says there was no more rewarding job than in Baghdad, Iraq, where he served for five months in a war zone. "I was not on the front line with the ground pounders,

but I was making sure our troops were safe by getting dangerous people off the street." He worked with the Iraqi judiciary and criminal courts.

Following that, he went to England for one more year and then on to Washington and an assignment at the Pentagon where he dealt with civil litigation and the U.S. Senate Youth Program as a mentor officer.

Because there were good job opportunities in the district, he decided to stay in the area once his active-duty commitment ended. A friend sent him a job posting for a DOL position, and he thought the job would be interesting because it dealt with litigation and employment policy. DOL hired him, and following two years in the job, an opening came up for the position he now occupies.

Working full-time at DOL and part-time as a reserve officer makes for little spare time, but Camilli manages to play Ultimate Frisbee, cheer for two Philadelphia teams, the Eagles and Phillies, and play basketball and badminton. Because his wife does charitable work with the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), he partakes in those activities, too. He also tries to stay engaged with his law-school alma mater and donates time to its D.C. chapter.

Claiming he's no Wolfgang Puck, Camilli takes pride in his breakfast omelet and says he has eclectic tastes and will try any food, but if he had to choose, "then I go back to my Nonna's homemade lasagna with Bolognese sauce."

As a major in the Air Force Reserve, he stays active and considers fitness a way of life. He's run in half marathons and marathons, including the Marine Corps Marathon several years ago.

"I'm devoted to my family and to traveling," says Camilli, who is married to wife Sara, a former naval medical officer and now a medical officer with the PHS serving at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "I always say, don't wait until you're older to travel. My wife and I try to visit one new place every year, and we also travel internationally. We make priorities. For instance, I don't own a car. We live in Silver Spring, Maryland, and we take Metro a lot. We don't own much, but we consider life experiences more valuable than possessions. Mark Twain said it best: 'Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.'"

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: Keith Bell (MSHA)

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



"My focal point, and my true calling, is what I do here day-to-day at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). I've thought about it many times—what is my true passion? It's right here, it's right here," says Keith Bell, of his work as the Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) co-counsel for trial litigation.

Speaking from his office in Rosslyn, Virginia, Bell says he rises daily at 4:30 a.m. to get to the office by 6:30 a.m. His clients go to work early: they are the nation's mine inspectors who help make the mines safe for the miners.

"I want to make sure that they have access to legal advice right from the start of the day," says Bell. Because there is so much trial work in MSHA's Safety and Health Division, Office of the Solicitor, he shares the job with Thomas Paige.

Despite dividing job duties, there's no work shortage for Bell who, as trial counsel, coordinates all national office litigation under the Mine Act. MSHA now has quite a bit of attention focused on it, he says, following the April 5 tragedy at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Raleigh County, West Virginia. There, 29 miners lost their lives.

Noting his exceptionally busy office, he says, "We've been pooling all of our resources to support MSHA in its accident investigation and all of the cases that have emanated from this accident, plus all the other day-to-day activities that we would normally handle."

To coordinate litigation, he helps manage seven full-time trial attorneys. Many of the cases that MSHA refers to Bell's office are cases of first impression, meaning an issue in the case may not have been tried before. His role is to assign the case to a trial attorney and to provide supervision for that attorney, which includes litigation strategies and a review of documents to be filed, including post-trial briefs.

As the attorney who handles discrimination cases that come under section 105 (c) of the Mine Act, commonly known as whistle-blower cases, he coordinates with the regional solicitors. These cases fall under Secretary Solis' Voice in the Workplace initiative, an effort to ensure American workers have a safe and healthy workplace and the right to file a complaint with an employer if that's not happening.

Of his caseload, Bell says, "Between the cases we handle directly here and the cases we advise on to the regions, I would say we had in the last year easily two dozen cases. When you consider the role we have in assisting the regional solicitors, it's probably a lot more than that. Depending on where you are, that may not sound like a lot, but that's a lot of litigation for a small staff."

Trial litigation can be protracted with lengthy, written discovery and depositions, culminating in a hearing before the federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, located in Washington, D.C. However, under the Mine Act, cases are often held close to the applicable mine, meaning the MSHA attorneys have nationwide jurisdiction, frequently traveling anywhere in the United States and its territories to handle a case.

The job has its David-and-Goliath moments. For instance, in 2001, the roof of a mine fell in and two explosions occurred at Jim Walters No. 5 Mine in Brookwood, Alabama, tragically claiming the lives of 13 miners. Trying to prove what happened in the aftermath of an accident is tough. It can be a near impossible task, especially in the aftermath of an explosion so volatile that it devastates the entire mine environment.

Going into court, Bell said he had the weight of the 13 miners on his shoulders. In

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a weird twist of fate, the lead MSHA attorney had serious family issues and was called away from the trial, leaving Bell as the head attorney for the agency.

"There I was facing a large Washington, D.C., firm and the largest law firm in Birmingham. I was now leading a group that consisted of one attorney who had never tried a case, one conference and litigation representative who was an MSHA employee and nonlawyer, and one paralegal," the 15-year MSHA employee said. "I have to say, even to talk about it today, it's a bit emotional for me. It haunts me until this day because we had an uphill climb."

Surviving on an average of four hours of sleep a night, the team worked literally around-the-clock on pure adrenaline. Living out of a Birmingham hotel, the MSHA employees set up office with files everywhere, Bell said, and had none of the comforts of home.

When they received the decision — a split decision with the other side winning on a majority of the violations — MSHA prevailed by meeting its burden of proof on some of the violations.

Bell remembered an attorney for the other side who phoned him and said, "You know, I've got to give it to you. You were outmanned, we had outsourced you, and I would have bet you anything that you weren't going to win any of those violations."

But Bell's effort and that of his team speaks to what he does daily. "Whoever said that I'm excited and passionate about my job hit it right on the head. That is what drives me out of bed every morning. Even though I'm in civil practice now, and these cases take a lot longer, you can still see the direct benefit to protecting miners and providing for their health and safety in the nation's mines. Every time you win a case, you know that you've done something for a miner, and there are just huge rewards to that," he says.

Growing up in the suburbs of Staten Island, New York, Bell said he couldn't even imagine that he would end up at MSHA. He attended St. John's University in New York and transferred to North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina, where he finished up his bachelor's degree in political science.

Loving North Carolina so much, Bell decided to stay there for law school, where he graduated from the North Carolina Central School of Law in 1991.

Initially, he became an adjunct professor at an historically black college and university, Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. He explained, "I was part of a pilot program to offer an opportunity for federal prison inmates to earn college credits. There weren't many takers at the time. There weren't many professors who were willing to go into the federal prison, so I volunteered. I went into the federal correctional institute in Butner, North Carolina, and I taught classes about criminal law and criminal procedure to 12 prisoners." Additionally, he taught undergraduates on the main Shaw campus.

Working as a professor was not his first choice. Because clerkships and jobs were hard to find in a down economy, Bell said he thought teaching would be a good avenue to take while he tried to find his first legal job.

In reality, teaching led to his future career. "I had to decide if I was passionate enough about teaching and about helping others in some form or fashion to make this work," he said. "That has been the common thread of my career — whether I was teaching or practicing law or choosing government service — I really enjoyed helping people. For me, that has been the biggest part of the practice of law in government. There are tangibles to the job I do everyday."

Not long after, Bell went on to find a state job, joining the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, District Attorney's Office where he was an assistant district attorney in the Municipal Court unit and prosecuted misdemeanor cases and conducted felony preliminary hearings.

He made the switch to the federal government after talking to a Philadelphia judge. Bell told her he wanted to broaden his horizons while early in his career and had no desire to be pigeonholed in criminal law. The judge's friend worked at the department as an MSHA counsel, and the judge passed on Bell's resume. He interviewed and DOL hired Bell.

He joined DOL through the Philadelphia Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and worked there for about six months. Transferring to the Mine Safety and Health Division of MSHA in Rosslyn, he became a trial attorney there in March 1995. Promoted over the years, in 2008 MSHA officials named him SOL coordinator for the Alternative

Case Resolution Program. This program consisted of non-attorneys called conference and litigation representatives, or CLRs, who worked as MSHA employees. SOL trained the CLRs to handle cases for the Mine Safety and Health Review Commission because the commission allowed non-attorneys to practice before it.

As Bell explains, “The CLRs assist us because we have a huge backlog of cases. Without the assistance of the CLRs, we’d be in dire straits. It was my job to oversee this program, which meant providing advice and guidance to conference and litigation representatives. We provided training to the CLRs and implemented new training policies and procedures for the program.”

Tapped in 2009 to be the acting counsel for trial litigation, Bell said he hadn’t thought about switching jobs because he was content helping the Alternative Case Resolution Program. “To suddenly change on a dime and convert to management was a bit different, especially when you became a manager in the same office that you’d grown up in,” he said.

He says he has no regrets about where he’s ended up, however. “What talented people we work with. From the client agencies, to the other attorneys that I work with on a day-to-day basis here in the national office and in the regions, what a marvelous group of people. I am constantly amazed by the level of knowledge and talent that the Department of Labor has amassed. The level of commitment is amazing, and that’s why I enjoy it so much,” Bell says.

When he hears people speak unkindly of government workers, he notes, “I am quick to say, I don’t know what agency that is, but I can tell you that does not exist at the Department of Labor, to my knowledge. The people that I have met in my career here are people who are truly dedicated and committed to the mission of providing good jobs for everyone and a safe and healthy workplace for every American worker. People that I know work long hours — almost as if they were in private practice — to make that happen on a day-to-day basis.”

Although Bell is at the job quite a bit, he leads an active life outside work as a singer and past master trainer and aerobics instructor for Bally Total Fitness. Singing since childhood, Bell sings both secular and sacred music as well as with local bands in Washington. He also writes music and poetry.

For a decade, he taught aerobics for Bally Total Fitness in the district, Virginia, and Maryland. As a master trainer, he trained Bally’s trainers on any new fitness equipment and trends and traveled to Canada and throughout the U.S. to offer instruction.

The frenzied pace he kept in his twenties and thirties helped him to handle the dizzying speed of his division, Bell said, and gave him the stamina to come to work to help miners each day.

“If my story encourages anyone who’s considering law or considering employment in general at the Department of Labor, I certainly hope that my enthusiasm comes across. I would encourage any person who is considering employment with the federal government in general, and the Department of Labor specifically, that this is good work. This is rewarding work, it’s satisfying work, and it’s the kind of work that gives true meaning to your life and causes you to get up with enthusiasm each day.

“Often I hear people say, ‘Oh gosh, I hate my job. On Sunday night I get panic attacks thinking about having to go into work tomorrow morning.’ ‘I think that’s terrible. I’ve never felt that. I get up with excitement. I’m joyful to come into work in the morning,’ he says. “First of all, in this economy to have a job, and then to have a good job that has meaning and a job that allows you to help other people, and you get paid for it, how good is that?”

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: Isabel Colon (EBSA)

Making a Difference in Other's Lives

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



"I absolutely feel that what we do makes a difference in someone's life and it has an immediate impact on people," says Isabel Colon. She is the deputy regional director of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia.

Recently promoted to the position, Colon's office has two regional units: a customer service unit, and an enforcement unit. The enforcement unit has investigative components in Atlanta with group supervisors known as investigative supervisors. Two enforcement units reside in DOL's

Plantation, Florida, district office. Colon oversees the group supervisors of the investigative units and manages all the civil investigations in that region.

For the civil investigations, she works with supervisors on how to proceed with a case at the crossroads, making decisions and providing guidance to move the investigation forward.

As for EBSA, its personnel oversee and protect employee benefits received from private employers. For example, a private employer may provide a 401(k) plan, where a worker has money deducted from a paycheck to go toward a mutual fund as a part of that employee benefit. EBSA conducts investigations of retirement plans and health plans to make sure the employer is doing what they need to do with respect to the employee benefit that they promise to give the employee.

"We're looking at the plans themselves to make sure they're in compliance with the law, that the money is going where it needs to be going, and if they're not following the law, then we get them to correct the violation. This is what our civil investigations deal with," says Colon.

"We get them to correct the violation, or if money has been taken from the plan, then we get the company to put the money back to the plan. If health benefits were promised, and maybe the participant's benefits were cancelled when they left the company, then employees may be entitled to COBRA benefits. We make sure if they're entitled to COBRA [Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act], they get their COBRA benefits. If they're entitled to a certificate of credible coverage under HIPAA [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act], then they get the certificate that they're required to get under the health plan," she adds.

After joining DOL in EBSA's Atlanta Regional Office as an investigator in 1997, Colon conducted numerous investigations of employee benefit plans of varying size and type. For instance, she was a member of the team of investigators that examined the Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa and investments made by the Plumbers and Pipefitters National Pension Fund. The Labor Department sued the Plumbers and Pipefitters National Pension Fund trustees for failure to prudently manage their investment in the hotel.

Selected as one of seven investigative-team members, the National Pension Fund had invested a big chunk of its assets into the most expensive hotel project ever built in south Florida. The plan was to invest \$400 million initially, but the investment ended up at \$800 million of the plan's assets in the hotel, a price two times original cost estimates.

In building the hotel, costs related to cement used to build the hotel; marble used to decorate the hotel; and furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) needed to equip the hotel were examined. A part of the FF&E team, Colon determined if the service

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provider, or the contractors and consultants who purchased these items, had assumed reasonable expenses for the plan and whether what they incurred in costs were necessary.

Team members traveled to different locations to meet with the consultants and the people involved in the project, interviewing them to make sure project spending seemed appropriate.

On another EBSA case, she was the lead investigator overseeing the probe of WorldCom Inc.'s various employee benefit plans. The participants and beneficiaries of the WorldCom Salary Savings 401(k) Plan lost millions of dollars saved for their retirement when the value of WorldCom stock held in the plan collapsed following revelations of accounting irregularities at the company. When WorldCom filed for bankruptcy, she investigated its 401(k) plans, health plan, and a severance plan to look at whether the plans were operated properly.

"If the plan was investing its money into the stock of WorldCom, under the law of ERISA [Employee Retirement Income Security Act], which governs what we do, the people responsible or in control of managing the plan are called fiduciaries. If a fiduciary knew what was going on with the company, then under the law they had an obligation to disclose it to the plan and to its participants," she said. "The WorldCom plan was investing money in company stock, and if you knew the company was not keeping the records properly, and knew the accounting wasn't done properly, and the stock was overinflated, then you had an obligation to disclose it to the participants. That's what ended up happening."

Because WorldCom invested a large percentage of its plan assets in company stock, someone should have monitored the stock investment to make sure it was appropriate for the plan, she said. Colon's team looked at how company events affected the plan. Were the employees given benefits they were entitled to, and did they have information to decide if they wanted to invest money in this 401(k) plan? In the health plan, did they get their health insurance and their COBRA? Were they getting their certificate of credible coverage? Under the severance plan, were WorldCom employees receiving the benefits to which they were entitled?

"It was a big investigation," Colon recalled. "I had two other people assisting me. We traveled to different cities to look at records related to these various plans. I went to Denver, Colorado; New York, New York; Washington, D.C.; and Columbus, Ohio."

No matter how big the challenge, Colon finds government work rewarding. "What I like most about government work is that we do something tangible. For instance, I can say I helped this person get their retirement benefits. They've been looking forward to their retirement for all these years, no one was helping them out, and I was able to get them their retirement benefits. Or, this person was trying to get COBRA, they couldn't get COBRA, but because we stepped in, they were able to get their COBRA. What we do really matters.

"When I worked for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), I wasn't really sure who I was helping and what difference I made. But I know here, with this agency, often we help others. To me, that's really important," she said.

As a part of Colon's background, she graduated from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida, with a bachelor's degree in finance in 1990. Returning to the same school, she completed her master's in public administration in 1996.

Once she finished her undergraduate degree, she started work for the IRS as a revenue officer, or collections agent. She held that job from 1991 to 1997 in the Orlando area. In 1997, she started applying for different jobs and then joined DOL in Atlanta.

In 2003, Colon became the district supervisor for the Miami district office in Plantation. There, she oversaw the day-to-day operations and supervised eight investigators and two support staff. In addition, she recently oversaw the relocation of the district office.

Her involvement in government work was not surprising. Her father was in the Air Force for 27 years, and Colon said she always knew that she wanted to work for the government, but at one point, she thought she would go into the military. "But being a vain female, I decided that I didn't want to wear a uniform every single day," she said. "Working at Labor is serving my country."

Both of her brothers are civil servants as well; they work as police officers in Tampa and Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Born on Torrejon Air Base near Madrid, Spain, she is the daughter of a Spanish

mother and Puerto Rican father. Having lived the first four years of her life in Spain, she later lived in Turkey, Italy, California, Florida, and Georgia. Raised bilingual, she visits Spain frequently to see aunts, uncles, and cousins, typically with her mother.

“My family is very important to me, so I like to spend as much time as possible with them. I’m single — I don’t have a husband and children — so I spend as much time as I can with my parents and with my brothers and their families. When I’m not with my family, I like to spend time with my friends and stay busy. I like to go to sporting events, like football games, and cultural events, including plays and going to the movies,” she says. She reads fiction more than nonfiction, just to get away from it all. Reading authors from James Patterson to Sue Grafton, murder mysteries to Harry Potter books.

At her best when challenged, Colon constantly asks herself, what kind of manager do I want to be? What are some of the skills and characteristics? What are some of the things that I don’t want to be?

In searching for answers, she says, “I think of some of the characteristics of past managers and what I did not like about them. I want to make sure that I don’t do certain things, because if I didn’t like it as an investigator or as a revenue officer, then I’m sure other people will not like that as well. What I like I try to incorporate into becoming the manager I want to be.”

She also seeks input and guidance from mentors, including Howard Marsh, a now-retired regional director, and Rebecca Marshall, the EBSA regional director in Atlanta. With both, she asks questions because they “have a wealth of information, knowledge, and experience.”

A detail she had beginning in January with EBSA Deputy Assistant Secretary Alan Lebowitz also helped her management skills and let her see how decisions at high levels were made. “You’re meeting with the EBSA assistant secretary, the deputy secretary of labor, and you may be in situations where you meet the secretary of labor,” she said of the experience. Because she shadowed Lebowitz during many of his meetings, she saw how the national office worked to help the regions; it made her appreciative of the department and what it did for others.

“I’m proud of what we do here. I think we’re very forward thinking about our employees and things that we can do. When I think about what we do at EBSA and Labor, I feel like the department and the agency try to find ways to make the lives of others better and the lives of the employees better. We do set the standard for the workforce, and we have many resources available for employees and those in the workforce. We set the bar high, we have high standards, and I think that’s good,” Colon says.

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FRANCES MAG

Interview: Malaika Jeter (ILAB)

Touched by an Angel

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Her name means angel in Kiswahili, and in many respects, Malaika Jeter is an angel to the 49.3 million child laborers she helps through her work as an international relations officer for the Africa Division of the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking.

Coming to the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) two years ago, Jeter works in Washington, D.C., to create awareness and let others know about the worst forms of child labor. One avenue to do that is technical assistance.

"A large part of my job is focused on communicating with our grantees, which are primarily nongovernmental organizations that have competed for awards, as well as the International Labor Organization, which receives an earmark for child-labor activities," she says.

Another aspect of her job involves research on other governments' efforts to eliminate child labor. Her office, the largest in ILAB with a staff of more than 40, looks at government policies, laws and regulations, the prevalence of child labor in a country, and social programs that support families of child laborers for all countries eligible for trade preferences with the United States.

Child labor, Jeter says, is not always a priority for many countries and people. Creating awareness and letting people know why it's important for children to attend school and get an education that will ultimately improve their lives, rather than work now, is a continuing challenge.

"Some people say that there is no child labor in their country because what immediately comes to their minds are egregious types of hard labor or slavery-like conditions," says Jeter, the daughter of a retired Foreign Service Officer. "But you have to take a step back and explain that we're not against children of legal age working, but we are against children working when it prevents them from having access to education, or when they work in potentially dangerous conditions, or when they're not allowed to be children and have a normal childhood."

Knowing she has made an impact in her federal government work, Jeter said she traveled to meet some of the beneficiaries of ILAB programs.

In 2008, she visited Angola, a postwar country with poor infrastructure and inadequate schools with makeshift desks, few writing materials, and no blackboards.

Through the ILAB-funded project ONJOI, the grantees ChildFund International and World Learning refurbished schools, withdrew children from hazardous labor conditions, and provided them with school equipment, uniforms, and books. For many in the community, this was the first time their children had access to school and educational materials.

"It was a very powerful trip," she recalls. "It's moments like this when I feel very good about the work that we do. It's hard to see when you're behind a desk, but when you're actually there and you meet some of the beneficiaries of the programs, it makes a very strong impact. It makes a difference."

Another trip brought her to Tanzania to visit the TEACH Project implemented by Winrock International, a U.S. nongovernmental organization that partners primarily with rural, agricultural communities to remove and prevent children from working in dangerous conditions and provides vocational and agricultural training. Awareness

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workshops about existing laws and the importance of having children go to school and not work are offered. Those children who are of legal working age are provided safety equipment, boots, hard hats, and protective eye gear, Jeter notes.

A second project component is the provision of income-generating activities, including training families about how to start and sustain a small business. If someone decides to begin a business selling vegetables, for example, they might receive seeds through the project and tips on how to grow vegetables to produce the best yields, as well as training in budgeting, bookkeeping, and marketing. Opportunities such as these help improve families' livelihoods and provide alternatives for them to earn an income outside of relying on their children's wages.

ILAB's grantee works with the Tanzanian government to strengthen its ability to combat child labor, Jeter says. The project works closely with government officials, especially at district and community levels, to monitor businesses and farms, reporting to the Ministry of Labor on child-labor conditions. "This effort encourages additional laws on child labor, as well as strengthens laws that already exist and improves enforcement," she says. "It's one thing to have a law, but if no one knows the law exists or if nobody complies, it's not really effective. ILAB works with the government of Tanzania to do that as well."

Her interest in Africa stemmed from her upbringing. Having a father who spent most of his career in Africa, including as the president's special envoy to Liberia and the U.S. ambassador to Botswana and Nigeria, she moved around, living in Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Mozambique.

"I had so many adventures as a child. I pony-treked through the mountains of Lesotho; sand skied down the dunes of Swakopmund and hiked the Fish River Canyon in Namibia; and was chased by an elephant in Botswana—all by the age of 12!

"My family was treated to a home-cooked meal prepared by Queen Mamohato Bereng Seeiso of Lesotho. I guess not many people can say that they've had a meal specially cooked for them by a queen!" she said.

Jeter moved to the United States to finish high school and attend Oberlin College in Ohio, where she was an English major with a concentration in American literature.

After graduating, she worked on Capitol Hill as a legislative correspondent. Introduced to politics, policy formulation, and everything that made Washington what it was, she had the opportunity to see the impact of legislation, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act, on development prospects in Africa. "That was the moment when I realized that working on African issues might be my career calling," Jeter said. She left the Hill to broaden her background in international economics and African studies at the Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies, in Washington, where she obtained her master's degree in international relations.

Soon after, she found her niche in development, landing a position working for Africare, a nationally known nonprofit that celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Started by Africans and African-Americans who were concerned about development in Africa, she worked as a project manager for the organization's Francophone West and Central Africa regions. Her projects focused on HIV and AIDS, agriculture, microfinance, food security, and child and maternal health.

"It was an exciting time for me. Africare is a relatively small organization, so I had the opportunity to gain experience in a number of functional areas. I worked on budgets, wrote and developed proposals, represented the organization at public events, and responded to donors' requests and inquiries," she said. While at Africare, she served temporarily in five of her area countries, sometimes as acting country representative, to work with local staff in their offices, visit projects, and offer recommendations for improvements. She heard about an opening at ILAB while working at Africare.

Spending time with her friends and her mother, father, and younger brother, Jason, is what she enjoys most in her spare time. She also loves the theater and movies and likes to read, especially fiction. Jeter's now reading Michael Holman's *Last Orders at Harrods: An African Tale*.

According to her, keeping fit originates from her days in high school and college when she swam on her school teams as a 50- and 100-meter freestyler and a 100- and 200-meter breast stroker. Now, she practices yoga, works out, and takes classes at the gym, including spinning and zumba, a form of dance aerobics.

Moreover, she likes to travel to expand her horizons and experiences. She traveled

to India in February and recently to Mexico. She's been to 16 countries in Africa, and wants to see the remaining 38. Traveling to Egypt, Morocco, and Ethiopia, and making her way to Asia and South America, are still on her list of things to do and places to see.

Because she comes from a family of teachers, education is important to Jeter, and this is why she serves as a tutor and mentor to a 10th-grader at the School Without Walls here in D.C. As a part of the program called College Bound, Jeter works with Angel Gray every week on SAT preparation, writing exercises, and homework.

Whether it's international or domestic—working to improve the lives of children overseas or one girl at a time here at home—all know they have been touched by an ILAB angel.

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Have a story to tell about how you make America's workers your business? Email us at Frances@dol.gov

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Job Fare

After Hours

Regional Recruitment Coordinator Uses Spare Time to Coach and Mentor His Son's Military Career

By Christine Adkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



Ret Army Sgt 1st Class Rafael Abreu

For Rafael Abreu, Philadelphia's regional recruitment coordinator in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, most of his spare time is spent coaching and mentoring his son's military career. Abreu's son, John Fravert, Jr., began his career with the U.S. Army on the day Abreu retired from 20 years of military service.

In July 2010, Abreu finished "final out-processing" paperwork in Jacksonville, FL. "As I was signing out, five minutes later I got a text message saying Fravert had just finished swearing in," said Abreu. "I didn't even know he was going there until the night before." John's official enlistment was just the first in a string of

similarities between Abreu's life and Fravert's future.

Abreu's military career began July 3, 1990. Graduating from high school at the age of 17, he enlisted in the Army instead of pursuing scholarship options at several colleges. "I didn't think I was mature enough for college," he said.

After his initial four-year tour expired, he kept renewing his contract. "I really enjoyed what I was doing," said Abreu. Eight years into his career, Abreu moved from active duty to become a recruiter, a job he held for the remainder of his time in the military. In September 2010, he joined the department as regional recruitment coordinator for OASAM, putting his military recruiting experience to work for the civilian side.



Abreu's son Pvt John Fravert, Jr

Abreu first learned about his son's military interest in 2009 when John was a high-school junior. "At the time I thought it was a passing thing," said Abreu, because his son had never before shown an interest in the military. "I wanted him to really think about it." Fravert did, and the desire to serve stayed with him. So Abreu played the supportive parent and helped his son as he met with his recruiter, a man Abreu, coincidentally, had worked with four years before.

Abreu, in his spare time, had kept abreast of Fravert's progress. He learned his son had done well on the military's recruitment Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and had decided to enlist in combat arms. Fravert had chosen to become a 19K M1A1 armor crew member, the same decision Abreu made when he joined a tank detachment in 1990.

It was then that the realization of his son's commitment to a military career set in. "I told him, whatever you decide to do I'll support you," Abreu said. Yet, he admits, "as a parent, I'm proud but nervous."

Abreu uses his spare time to provide advice to his son. Fravert is stationed in Germany, the same place where Abreu began his military career. He notes, "My son has now been in Germany about 6 months; he is getting used to the country, his daily routine and, slowly but surely, military service. One of the things I continue to harp on him about is getting out and doing some traveling. I was fortunate that, in the time I was stationed there, I was able to see places like Italy, Spain, France

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and England. Let's face it. This type of opportunity does not come around all the time. To be young and living in Europe is quite the adventure!"

Abreu also shares tips with his son that may help him should he decide to remain in the service past his first tour. "Things like going to school and getting some college under his belt are essential if he is considering advancement in the future. I share with him that even now as I continue to go to school in order to improve my current and future opportunities. Above all, I share with him my experiences and things he needs to consider in order to keep himself safe and out of harm's way."

"He did this on his own," said Abreu of his son. "I couldn't be anything but supportive of his decision, and that's why I try to help him in my spare time."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

A First-Class Citizen

By Mike D'Aquino, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



Meet Donald Cirino. He is the planning and review officer for the Wage and Hour Division in the Southeast Regional Office.

When Cirino isn't busy with his Labor Department responsibilities, he enjoys teaching a citizenship class at Holy Cross Church in Chamblee, Ga.

The class is designed to prepare students for their citizenship exam by teaching basic reading, writing, and speaking skills in English and providing an overview of American history and the U.S. government.

Cirino, standing, with his students

The class typically has between five and 10 students who are of many nationalities with the majority Hispanic. Their ages range from 18 to 70 years old. The seven-week class meets once a week.

"Each person who has invested time to prepare for their citizenship interview by attending my class has already passed the English and civics portion of the exam," said Cirino.

Cirino has been teaching classes since the early 1990s.

Over the years, he has had many memorable moments teaching the class. His daughter helps teach the class, too. In 2004, his wife, Jackie, took the class. The night before her citizenship interview, his daughter, only six at the time, asked her two questions that ended up being on the exam. The questions were: What are the three branches of government? and Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? Jackie answered them correctly and is now a citizen.

He also remembers a young man named Juan from El Salvador who took the class, passed the examination, and is now a citizen.

"Once Juan became a citizen, he petitioned residency for his wife and two children, who had been living apart for more than five years, to join him in the United States. They are still here contributing to society and attending Holy Cross Church. His wife is now in my class," Cirino said.

Why teach the class? Cirino's answer is simple: "I enjoy it. It gives me personal satisfaction to know families, including my own, have been reunited and individuals can fully participate in our government."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

A Voice of the People

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Orrin Ellis is a voice of the people in many ways — as a Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Councilman, American Federation of Government Employees chief union steward, and medical scheduler.

Elected in December 2009 to serve a two-year term on the KCNAC, Ellis represents the residents living in the southeast region of Kansas City, Missouri. By day, he works for the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs in that same city.

Speaking of his role with the KCNAC, Ellis says, "It's after-hours work, and I'm glad we have flextime, so that I have the opportunity to do it. We meet once a month at city hall."

He decided to campaign for the KCNAC position after he heard President Obama urge federal employees to become active in their communities. While surfing the Internet for community outreach and service work he could perform, he spotted an ad for an opening on the KCNAC. Ellis submitted an application and campaigned for the nonpartisan, volunteer position.

Working on the council, Ellis says he's an advocate for home associations and neighborhood groups and all residents who live within the city limits. He makes recommendations on existing or proposed city ordinances and policies and programs that affect the quality of life of city residents.

A hot-button issue now includes an earnings tax in Kansas City. Currently, people who work within the city limits pay an earnings tax of 1 percent of their salary. That money is used to provide basic city services to city residents. Some want to do away with the earnings tax, but Ellis says people don't realize the impact and financial loss a repeal of the tax would mean to city residents.

"Secondly, the city has not done a very good job of improving its infrastructure over the years," Ellis, a 31-year federal employee, says. "We're faced with the problems of fixing the streets, bridges, and roads, so that people can drive safely. That's a big financial obligation that the city has to make, and we have to struggle with ways to keep up with the funding to get the job done."

Following his term, Ellis will run again. "I don't think anything will transpire in the next year that would change my mind. It's been a whirlwind for me. After work, I'm out in the street meeting other community leaders. I get around to all the region's neighborhood home associations' board meetings, and their annual meetings in addition to other neighborhood group meetings," he says.

Ellis enjoys being a voice of the people and meeting influential people. It's necessary to not be complacent, to care about each other, and care about what's going on in our city."

While he has no plans to run for any other elected office, he says the volunteer position is worthwhile.

"The greatest joy I've had while serving has been to connect neighborhood leaders with one another. Surprisingly, I found that there was a real disconnect. For example, people who lived in one homeowner's association really didn't interact with another home association, even though they were bordered by the same street. I found that to be a curiosity and something that I really tried to resolve," he

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said.

Ellis represents the largest of the six defined regions on the council and is one of 12 members. To campaign for the position, he attended many homeowners' association meetings and introduced himself and presented citizens with his hopes and dreams for the city. From those meetings, he created a cadre of names and groups for e-mail distribution of timely information that people otherwise wouldn't have access to.

A trendsetter since college, Ellis was the first African-American to graduate from the School of Business at Northwest State University in Maryville, Missouri. He helped establish the first African-American fraternal presence, Omega Psi Phi, on campus. Ellis received a bachelor's degree in finance and insurance.

From college, he went into private industry, working with Liberty Mutual Insurance Company as a claims adjuster in the workers' compensation area. He advanced to a supervisor, but left in 1980 to work for the U.S. Government after his mother, a former federal employee at the U.S. General Services Administration, suggested working for Uncle Sam.

He started with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax examiner, proceeded to the GSA as a payroll clerk, and went to the Federal Aviation Administration as an accounting technician. He came to the Labor Department in 1988 as a fiscal officer and moved to his current position as a medical scheduler in 1992.

"Our mission is to provide medical care and medical services for injured federal employees, so they can return to work. We are not a retirement program. We don't deal with private industry and its employees, strictly federal government employees, including the U.S. Postal Service," says Ellis, the father of four children and two grandchildren.

Frequently, his peers encounter situations where there are conflicting medical reports from doctors about a person's medical condition. He schedules appointments for injured government employees to secure a "referee opinion," or a third-party evaluation, to determine which of the two opinions provides the best medical conclusion. A DOL computer program randomly selects physicians for the appointments.

In addition to his work as a medical scheduler, Ellis has been a steward and chief steward for the National Council for Field Labor Locals (NCFLL), AFGE Local 1748, since 1994. Each DOL office in the Kansas City region has an assigned steward. The local AFGE union president appoints the stewards to these positions. For his work, Ellis has twice received the Secretary's Exceptional Achievement Award while working on combined national management-union teams.

Ellis' effort motivated his children — three girls and a boy — to take part in community service. One daughter, Shimika, devised and implemented a program for young girls financially unable to afford the prom to do so. She located and solicited business sponsors and community organizations to donate dresses, shoes, transportation, accessories and makeup.

As a role model to his kids and others, he says, "You make time for what you want to do and what's important to you. The important thing is — and I know my parents left a legacy — that I'm trying to leave my own legacy. That way, people can remember me and that I tried to make things better for others."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

Take Me Out To the Ball Game Results in DOL Reunion

By Michael Volpe, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C



Roger Dean Stadium

Some say it is a small world. Others believe in "six degrees of separation." But a few U.S. Department of Labor employees who did and now toil at the Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C., had an impromptu reunion at a spring training baseball game in Jupiter, Florida.

Celebrating my March 24 birthday with me that day in a game between the Boston Red Sox and Florida Marlins was David Zeigler. Zeigler was a long-time director of administrative programs for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, now enjoying retirement and travel from his home in Virginia.



David Zeigler

From our seats behind the home team's dugout, Zeigler spotted someone that looked familiar, let out a laugh, turned to me and said, "There's Tom Komarek." He meant, of course, Thomas C. Komarek, the department's assistant secretary for administration and management under a number of Labor secretaries.

Sure enough, the stadium usher standing near us with the deep Florida tan and the name badge that read "Tom" on an orange floral shirt was our old colleague. Komarek said he lived in retirement in New England, but came to Florida one month of the year to work as an usher and enjoy the warm weather. We talked about old times and old faces, probably a little too loudly for the baseball fans that surrounded us.

Komarek finally bid us adieu and returned to his post. It was at that point that a gentleman seated in front of us turned around and asked, "Did you guys say you worked at the Labor Department in Washington?"

"Yes," Zeigler and I both replied.

"In the 1980s?" he said.

"Affirmative again," we said.

Taking off his baseball cap and big sunglasses, he stood and proclaimed, "Do you remember me, Bob Monks, I ran the pension program there under President Reagan?"

Sure enough, it was our old colleague Bob, or Robert A.G. Monks, who served in the department as administrator of the Office of Pension and Welfare Benefits Programs, having jurisdiction over the U.S. pension system.

More DOL reminiscing with old names and faces ensued. Monks told us he continued to work as a shareholder activist and corporate governance advisor, which his Web



Mike Volpe



Tom Komarek

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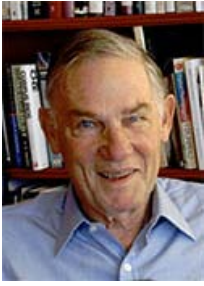
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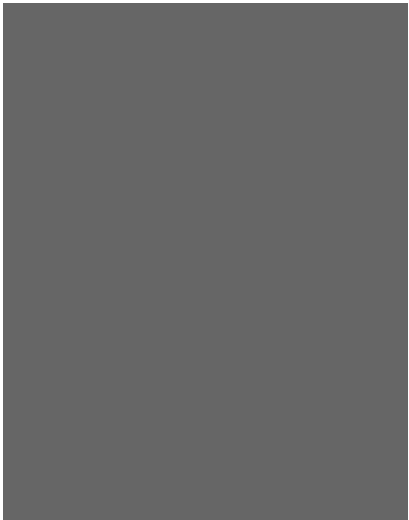
Bob Monks

site mentioned is headquartered in Maine. We said our goodbyes and finally returned to watching the game, now well into its middle innings.

“What are the odds that four DOL employees from different parts of the country would bump into each other at a baseball game in Florida?” my good buddy, Zeigler, said.

“Probably astronomical!” I had to admit.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

Father/Son Experience Inspires OSHA Compliance Officer

By Julia Holland and Joanna Hawkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



Joe Burrichter admits he has always been a nuts-and-bolts person. A compliance officer with the U.S. Department of Labor's area office of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for more than 15 years, he was deemed a "motor head" during his youth because of his fervent interest in mechanics.

In Burrichter's case, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as his son, Matt, shares similar interests with his father. In 2004, Matt, then a freshman at Haverford High School in Havertown, Pennsylvania, discovered the Robotics Club at school and immediately wanted to participate. The elder Burrichter was thrilled and decided to get involved and volunteered as a club mentor.

The Haverford High School Robotics Club is a result of the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology organization, which inspires young people worldwide to serve as science and technology leaders.

Burrichter and his son worked with the other students and mentors designing and constructing a robot that would compete against others during the regional spring competition, one of many annual competitions in which the team participated. The compliance officer incorporated his OSHA knowledge and training to assist the students, particularly with power-tool training and safety. For both father and son, spending quality time together strengthened their bond and brought them closer. "It was enjoyable times," said the elder Burrichter.

The experience inspired him to continue serving as a mentor throughout Matt's high-school years and even after Matt graduated in 2008. Now in his sixth year as a mentor, Burrichter remains committed and passionate, as evidenced by his recent actions when the high school attempted to end the club. He single-handedly fought with the school board to reclaim the club's rights and was victorious.

"As long as students are interested, I will be involved and will do what I can to support them," Burrichter said, adding that he believes there is potential for the Robotics Club to exist for many years.

The "motor-head" kid, now an adult mentor, has no plans to call it quits from the club anytime soon. He said he cherished the close relationships made with past and present students and mentors. Most importantly, he will always be grateful to the club for cultivating an unwavering father-and-son bond.

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After Hours

Philadelphia Public Affairs Director Puts Passion for Public Service Into Action

By Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



Leni Uddyback-Fortson, regional director of public affairs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is taking her gift of gab and her passion for public service on the road in an effort to recruit new members of the federal workforce. As a member of the Annenberg Speaker's Bureau through the Partnership for Public Service, Uddyback-Fortson travels the country during her off hours speaking to students, faculty, and university career- services staff to encourage them to give the federal government a second look when considering career options.

During her most recent trip to Denver, Colorado, she was a featured speaker during the University of Colorado's Denver Federal Week. Within the past two years, she has also traveled to universities in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Lafayette, Louisiana; and Long Island, New York. In April, she gave a presentation at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois.

"I joined the Speaker's Bureau because I saw the need for an infusion of young talent within the federal government, and I wanted to use my communications skills to help facilitate that process," she said.

The Partnership for Public Service is a national organization located in Washington, D.C., which works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to pursue federal service, as well as by transforming the way government works. The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Public Service Speaker's Bureau functions under the organization's Call to Serve initiative, and is one aspect of this effort.

A member since 2003, Uddyback-Fortson began volunteering with the Speaker's Bureau by presenting at schools in the greater Philadelphia area, including the University of Pennsylvania, University of Delaware, Villanova University, and Bryn Mawr College. Her early success led the partnership to feature her in the organization's liberal arts recruitment brochure: "Red, White and Blue Jobs: Making a Difference with Your Liberal Arts Degree." The scope of her involvement expanded to schools outside of her region in 2008, after the Partnership for Public Service received a grant from the Annenberg Foundation.

Reflecting on the experience, Uddyback-Fortson not only appreciates the opportunity she's been afforded to travel and meet interesting people, she also touts the residual effects on her work in the Office of Public Affairs. "I am energized after every trip because they help to reinforce what I love most about my job," she adds. "I encourage everyone to consider joining — it's inspiring."

For more information about the Partnership for Public Service or the Annenberg Speaker's Bureau, visit <http://www.ourpublicservice.org>.

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After Hours

Chicago OASAM Employee Returns to Boy Scouting

By Scott Allen, Office of Public Affairs, Chicago Region



Cercone (right) swears in a new scoutmaster on the Boy Scout Handbook held by the senior patrol leader

"I have to laugh when people comment about me being a volunteer," says Chuck Cercone of the Chicago, Illinois, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management for the U.S. Department of Labor. "It's way too much fun to be called volunteerism." Cercone works with the local Boy Scout troop in his hometown of Morton Grove, Illinois. When his now 15-year-old son, Keith, joined Cub Scouts some years back, Cercone was drafted as a den leader. Father and son crossed over into Boy Scouts four years ago, and now Keith is one step away from being an Eagle Scout. Cercone

moved on to committee chairman for the Boy Scout troop and now enjoys being an assistant scoutmaster. He likes to say that he has moved from administration to production.

"I would recommend this to any parent, particularly a dad, who is concerned about keeping communication lines open and reserving quality time with a son. About 10 times per year, we have a weekend together without iPods, video games, or telephones. I get to watch him interact with guys his age and with other adults." Cercone is convinced that the best time in a man's life is at age 12 and feels privileged to be a spectator to the dozens of boys in his troop making that passage.

"Guys that age are smarter and funnier than you would ever expect. I've learned that if you want kids to talk to you, typically, you only have to shut up and listen. Also, I have come to understand that they don't need their hand held so much as they need us to believe in them. They really are quite capable."

Cercone says that he has nothing but admiration for the Boy Scouts of America, which is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. "That is where my CFC money goes. It's this amazing, finely-structured organization that not only reinforces community values in a very big way, but also teaches a wide range of skills to youngsters who don't realize they're learning because they are simultaneously having so much fun. And, trust me — the local BSA councils do this on a shoestring budget."

Cercone understands that you can't go back and relive your youth, but he feels that this may be the next best thing. "I go camping, sledding, wall-climbing, and hiking. I've been on zip-lines over deep valleys and have improved my swimming ability. Around campfires I enjoy ghost stories and corny skits. Best of all, based on what I'm seeing, I'm hopeful that our country is going to do just fine in the years to come."

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After Hours

Scott Allen Teaches the Next Generation of Photojournalists Chicago Pro Takes Students Beyond Simply Snapping the Shot

By Office of Public Affairs, Chicago Region



Scott Allen (left), the regional director of public affairs in Chicago and a professional photojournalist, reviews a participant's images during the D.C. Shoot-off photography workshop.

When roughly 100 fledgling military photojournalists squared off in the nation's capital for the D.C. Shootoff, a recently hosted workshop presented by the National Association of Naval Photography, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Scott Allen, from the Chicago, Illinois, Office of Public Affairs, was among a handful of senior advisors recruited to mentor and assist the photojournalists.

"It's a chance to give back to the profession," Allen, an award-winning military photojournalist, said. "I have a passion for photojournalism, and the opportunity to teach others who share that passion is an

opportunity I am honored to accept."

The workshop provided attendees with the opportunity to create photographic stories as part of a competition designed to broaden the thinking process beyond simply snapping a telling picture. "We lead them into new ways of communicating visually and to think beyond the frame of a shot and into the emotions the shot will create in those who see it. The program blends the technical aspects of photography with the best of what a journalist can hope to share visually with his audience," Allen said.

Allen adds that instructing at workshops, such as the Shootoff and the Eddie Adams photojournalism workshop in upstate New York, provide an excellent opportunity for him to learn as well. "These young folks are the photo techies of today. They keep abreast of changing technology and pass along a lot of new information to all of us. I love learning just as much as I do teaching," he says.

Having worked as a professional photojournalist for well over 25 years, Allen says the greatest feeling of accomplishment comes from being able to identify and capture a good image, an image that will grab a moment in history, and then share it and possibly affect change.

"As a military photographer, I was placed in positions where the situation is filled with the deepest of emotions," he said. "From my personal experience — covering the mass graves of women and children murdered by Saddam Hussein — that is something that will stay with me forever. It's not that the photos I took there were carried by newspapers and magazines around the world, it's that those pictures told the world of the horrors that had happened there."

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After Hours

Helping Kids Pursue Small Successes

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



As assistant coach of the Texas Stallions Track and Field Club that had seven athletes compete at the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Junior Olympic Games in 2009, James Carnes said he helped kids pursue small successes — changes in body posture, attitude, confidence, and psyche — and build character.

With a motto of “dedication, determination, and discipline,” Carnes and his wife, Lavoxkeia, have had success reaching out to youth in Houston, Texas.

Carnes, who works as an apprenticeship and training representative for the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration’s Office of Apprenticeship, says he became a Stallions’ coach in 2009 because of his four school-age children.

“I am a former athlete and career soldier, and so is my wife. We try to stay physically active,” says Carnes. “Throughout Texas school districts, there are no athletic programs for children in grades one through six. They are not eligible to participate in school athletics until seventh grade.”

Because his wife ran track at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and he played football at Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee, they were naturals to take on a coaching role. In fact, Stallions’ Head Coach Paul Durisseau, a former Texas A&M track-and-field standout and son of a former Olympian, recruited the Carnes.

The Carnes then pursued coaching certification from the USA Track & Field (USATF), the governing body for all amateur cross-country and track-and-field organizations unaffiliated with a school. After that, they became coaches for the youths, who range in age from six to 18.

Attracted to the AAU because of its variety of sporting events and role as one of the largest, nonprofit, volunteer sports organizations in the country, Carnes said he liked the group’s mission. Dedicated to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical-fitness programs, the AAU Junior Olympics are like the actual Olympics. The event has bowling, basketball, swimming, diving, archery, and track and field.

As for the Stallions, the team averages 28 children. Carnes says it’s not hard to get kids to participate. The team has a Web site and posts fliers to advertise. Acknowledging that his squad is small, Carnes says team officials have no desire to have more than 50 athletes.

“Right now, we have a small coach-to-athlete ratio,” he explains. “We found that we’re able to develop the athlete better when that happens, helping them with self-esteem, motivation, development, and technique.”

Carnes says he doesn’t seek many athletes for the team, but because they practice at a local high school, many people see the squad.

Because of the resurgence of the AAU program, there’s an informal partnership with the local high school, junior high, and elementary school. Physical-education teachers from these grade levels support the program because they know children will compete on school teams, Carnes says. In fact, his son, Christopher, participates on the Klein Collins High School track team and his daughter, Brittany, is on the Schindewolf Intermediate School squad.

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"We agreed informally with the school coaches to keep from overtraining the kids. I told them I'm not going to run them at our AAU and USATF meets until the school season is over. That school season could end in March or as late as May, depending on how well they do in school meets and if they advance to district or state competition," Carnes says.

With seven coaches on the Stallions' staff, some teach sprint work and others short-distance races. Another group of coaches instructs about distance races, including the 1,500 and 3,200 meters. Carnes' specialty is the field events — shot put, discus, and javelin.

The children practice together in groups focusing on different activities, despite their age difference.

"We find, with the younger children, there is a yin and yang kind of thing. The older kids don't want to be beat by a younger child. The younger children tend to compete harder, and run harder, because they're running against bigger kids," he says.

When the temperatures are extreme, he changes the practices for the six-to-eight age group and those slightly older, limiting the activity.

Carnes said that coaching was a challenging experience because he hadn't participated in track and field as a youth and "didn't have a lot of respect for track and field until I got really involved and understood the science of running."

As part of his Army career, fitness was a job requirement until retirement. Though he continued leisure running, Carnes never took track seriously. However, track and field consumed his wife and became a way for them to keep fit.

"My mother-in-law is still certified as an official for the AAU and the USATF. An aunt on her side was a former Olympic hurdler in the 1988 Olympics," he says.

Because of those family ties, Carnes had the perfect opportunity to learn about the sport. Gradually and patiently his wife taught him, so that once they received level-one certification for coaching track and field, it allowed them to use the most contemporary training techniques available.

The team practices three times a week and has meets on Saturdays. At these practices, there is an assessment period where the coaches look at each child's strengths and weaknesses. Then, they try to take their strengths and improve on those.

For those who do well in meets, there are the 2010 AAU Junior Olympic Games at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia, July 31 through August 7. In the 2009 Junior Olympic Games in Des Moines, Iowa, 8,199 athletes represented 42 states and Washington, D.C.

"The only way we can afford to go to these games and coach is to make it the annual summer vacation for the family," the father of kids ages six, nine, 14, 15, and two grown children, says.

In some cases, he has support from his local Chamber of Commerce, and he's working on corporate sponsorships, but that's a long-term project. Normally, the parents need to support their athlete's costs for the Junior Olympics, and they let the participants know the price up front, he says. The team usually has some funds to defray expenses for an athlete if a family is not able to afford the trip.

Whether his athletes go on to the real Olympics or not remains undetermined, but Carnes notes that Maurice Greene, a retired Olympian and track-and-field sprinter, came out of the AAU system to win four medals total at the Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, and Athens, Greece.

"This program gets them out from behind a computer and away from the video games, and that's a good thing to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle," says Carnes.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

Charleston, W.Va., OSHA Safety and Health Officer Excels as Successful eBay Auctioneer

By Julia Holland, Philadelphia OPA



For most working people, 5 p.m. Monday through Friday marks the end of a hard day's work. But for John Cook, compliance safety and health officer with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Charleston, W. Va., it marks the start of what he considers his second job – an auctioneer on the online auction website eBay.

What began as a leisurely activity to earn extra spending money quickly became “an addictive hobby” spanning more than a decade. Now much of Cook’s free time is consumed by updating his eBay account, and taking trips to yard sales, flea markets and auctions on the weekends. These places are breeding grounds for many items he desires, such as valuable electronics and Blenko glass, which are hand-blown collectibles.

With the help of his wife, Evelyn, Cook can pick out any number of seemingly ordinary or worthless items and sell them for a profit. In one instance, he purchased a pull string *Casper the Friendly Ghost* doll for \$1 and sold it for \$75 to a customer that had a sentimental connection to it. His most memorable selling experience was his first exposure to eBay, when he made \$4,500 by reselling what seemed like useless stereo equipment. These experiences confirmed for him that one man’s trash is truly another man’s treasure.

Cook’s lucrative hobby has proven to be well worth the long hours he puts into it, as much of his success is attributed to his dedication and persistence. He suggests that those interested in starting a career on eBay should start by concentrating on selling a few items they know well. “It is crucial not to get discouraged if business starts off slow because it only takes a sale or two to get you hooked,” adds Cook.

For those interested in purchasing items on eBay, Cook’s best advice is to do research first. Potential buyers can read a seller’s purchase history, which he strongly recommends before making any expensive or large purchases.

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Job Fare

After Hours

DOL Team Successfully Completes the Baker to Vegas Relay Race

By Michael Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region, and Deanne Amaden, Office of Public Affairs, San Francisco Region



If you remember [our last article](#), more than 30 runners and support personnel from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) planned to participate in the 2010 Baker to Vegas relay race. This was the sixth year that DOL had fielded a team in the race.

For those of you who don't know, the Baker to Vegas Relay is sponsored by The Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club and claims to be the largest law-enforcement event of its kind in the

world. As the name implies, the race begins near Baker, California, approximately 25 miles north of the city, with the finish line at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel Convention Room.

The team represented a cross-section of DOL regions and consisted of members from the Wage and Hour division (WH); the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA); the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); the Office of the Solicitor (SOL), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM); the Office of the Inspector General (OIG); and the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP).

Team co-captain Todd Bruininks reported that "2010 was a brutally hot race with lots of injuries and, according to the race coordinator, more runners had helicopter and ambulance rides this year than in any of the previous 26 races due to the high heat."

As an additional challenge, the team had to substitute four runners in the week leading up to the race because some runners were unavailable this year.

"Over the years the group has really grown together into a team. This year was very challenging, but will undoubtedly be a race we can point to when we tell B2V tales and say 'you should have seen 2010!'"

Besides the race, this year the DOL team adopted one of the children from the Baker Unified School District as their "team member" and gave him one of their T-shirts. The school district has built a special relationship with the race over the years and wanted to tighten the relationship by involving their students.

We are now pleased to bring you the outcome. For the second year in a row, the DOL team finished in the top half of the invitational mixed division, and everyone on the team earned a commemorative mug.

One sadder note, during the race a member of the Anaheim Police Department running team suffered heat stroke, which resulted in the officer needing a liver transplant to reactivate his kidneys and possibly prevent the need for a future kidney transplant. The DOL team is now collecting money for this police officer, and anyone wishing to donate can contact Bruininks.

Despite all of this year's hardships, the team is already preparing for next year's race. Bruininks adds, "I am proud of what we accomplished this year and look forward to 2011."

Anyone interested in participating, either as a runner or as part of the support team, should contact Bruininks at bruininks.todd@dol.gov or Danny Pasquill at

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pasquil.daniel@dol.gov before they put together their race roster in September.

2010 Team Members:

- Jamie Benefiel (WH, Detroit, Michigan)
- Doug Betten (OASAM, San Francisco, California)
- Diane Beyer (WH, San Francisco, California)
- Todd Bruininks (OWCP, San Francisco, California)
- Juan Coria (WH, San Antonio, Texas)
- Miguel Coria (WH, Los Angeles, California)
- Ty Cox (WH, Atlanta, Georgia)
- Matt Dufresne (WH, Washington, D.C.)
- Bob Garcia (OWCP, San Francisco, California)
- Jeff Genkos (WH, Portland, Oregon)
- Elisabeth Gerstacker (OWCP, San Francisco, California)
- Andrea Gibson (WH, Nashville, Tennessee)
- Michael Ginley (WH, Retired)
- Adam Huggins (WH, Kansas City, Kansas)
- Jason Husband (WH, Las Vegas, Nevada)
- David Kahn (SOL, San Francisco, California)
- Wayne Kotowski (WH, Atlanta, Georgia)
- Jay Mariani (OWCP, Washington, D.C.)
- Jose Medina (WH, Minneapolis, Minnesota)
- Gaspar Montanez (WH, Las Vegas, Nevada)
- Cara Morkert (OASAM, San Francisco, California)
- Maria Munoz (OWCP, San Francisco, California)
- Danny Pasquil (WH, West Covina, California)
- Greg Piotti (BLS, San Francisco, California)
- Joe Reilly (BLS, San Francisco, California)
- Josephine Rice (WH, Las Vegas, Nevada)
- Victor Rojas (WH, West Covina, California)
- Brad Soshea (OWCP, Houston, Texas)
- Karl Spargur (EBSA, San Francisco, California)
- Ashley Strickland (OIG, Los Angeles, California)
- Chris Swanson (EBSA, San Francisco, California)
- Sam Trinh (OWCP, San Francisco, California)
- Al Villoch (WH, Atlanta, Georgia)
- Chris Wilkinson (SOL, San Francisco, California)
- Eric Williams (WH, West Covina, California)

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Job Fare

After Hours

Labor Department Attorney by Day, Recording Artist by Night

By Mike Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



What do you do in your spare hours? If you are MaryBeth Zamer, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) senior trial attorney in the Office of the Solicitor's (SOL) Nashville, Tennessee, office, you pursue a successful singing career that now includes the release of her first CD.

One half of the successful duo that also includes songwriter-musician Mike T. Lewis, the pair, known as the Twangtown Paramours, has been touring around the country since last summer. In December 2009, they played at the Bitter End in New York City. Their new CD is getting playtime on radio stations in Illinois; New York; Maryland; Massachusetts; Maine; and, of course, Tennessee.

The sound is described as Americana, which may be best explained as a mix of country, Texas blues, and some folk. The result is smooth, with lyrics that range from serious to whimsical.

Zamer has been singing since age 18. Before moving to Nashville, she was a fixture on the local music scene in the Washington, D.C., area, but has also toured Europe and worked as a guest artist with several other bands. After relocating to Nashville, Zamer continued her musical career working as a demo singer for local songwriters, as a background vocalist for several new country artists, and working on her own projects, including serving as lead vocalist for the band Blue Martini.

So, what is it like to balance life as a trial attorney and as a singer?

"Here in Nashville, I handle lots of cases for MSHA, particularly whistle-blower and injury and fatality cases. I really enjoy my work here, as I've traveled pretty much all over the South and have met a lot of hardworking people trying to earn a living for themselves and their families.

"It remains a privilege for me to be able to represent MSHA in its quest to keep miners safe in their work and to try to get miners their jobs back after they've been wrongfully discharged for making safety complaints. Though it's sometimes hectic balancing both careers, I love my work at DOL and I love singing. I plan to do both as long as the world will have me."

Want to know more about this duo and hear them? The Twangtown Paramours had their first live radio show and performance on WTBQ in Knoxville, Tennessee, on May 21. The group has shows scheduled in Bowling Green, Kentucky, June 5; Athens, Georgia, June 19; and Red Hook, New York, July 11. You can download their song titled "On My Way" and buy their CD from their website at <http://www.twangtownparamours.com>. The CD is also available on iTunes and Amazon.com.

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After Hours

DOL Team to Participate in 2010 Baker to Vegas Relay

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Approximately 20 runners and 20 support personnel from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will participate in the 2010 Baker to Vegas Relay in April. The race, which has runners travel through parts of California, into the Mojave Desert, up a 5,600 foot mountain, and end in Las Vegas, Nevada, will be the sixth time that DOL has participated.

"We have DOL employees from all over the country participating, and it is a fantastic way for us all to meet other DOL colleagues whom we would likely never meet," says one of the co-captains, Todd Bruininks, with the Office of Workers' Compensation in San Francisco, California.

He, along with DOL co-captains Danny Pasquil in West Covina, California, and Jose Medina in Minneapolis, Minnesota, will get agency participants to train for the event, organize them, and unite them as a team.

"Aside from having 20 runners all in the right place at the right time, we also have to have van support the entire time," Bruininks explains. "We probably have the most unique team in the race because we are entirely self funded, mostly train separately, and come from all over the country to assemble."

Originally started in 1985, the Baker to Vegas Relay was the idea of Los Angeles police officers Chuck Foote and Larry Moore. Offered primarily for law-enforcement officers, the race offers an incentive for the police to maintain a physical-fitness program and helps them to perform their duties. During the 21 years of the race, more than 100,000 law-enforcement personnel have participated.



In fact, the race has grown substantially from the 19 teams that participated in 1985 to the 247 that joined in last year. Today, the event is the largest law-enforcement event of its kind in the world, attracting teams from as far away as Berlin and Hamburg, Germany, to teams throughout the United States.

Because DOL has law-enforcement-like agencies—Office of the Inspector General, Wage and Hour, Employee Benefits Security Administration, and others—the department made an application to the race, which race officials accepted. Now, new teams are rarely accepted into the race.

It was tough going at first, Bruininks said, to get people to join the team. In fact, because there were not enough runners in southern California to make up the team, he said they contacted other offices, notably in Nevada, San Francisco, and Texas to garner interest. That first year, in 2004, DOL scraped together a team of 20 runners.

"Our goal was simply to survive and have fun," said Bruininks, the District Director for the Division of Longshore and Harbor

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Workers' Compensation Program. Responsible for the San Francisco and Honolulu, Hawaii, district offices, he's been with DOL for more than 15 years.

Beginning in 2007, Bruininks, Medina, and Pasquil captained the team. Pasquil is the Assistant District Director of the

West Covina Wage and Hour district office. Medina serves as the district director for the Minneapolis Wage Hour district office.

Under their direction, the team continues to make progress, with the 2008 team breaking a time of 20 hours for the first time. In 2009, the team ran the race in 17.5 hours, making it one of the squads with the better time in its division.

To recruit members, Bruininks said they use several different avenues, including the Wage Hour division's national meetings with managers and new employees, the San Francisco Federal Building fitness center that has a network of people who tell others about the race, and word-of-mouth from past participants.

"It is a great event, and many of us have developed friendships across agencies and across the country. I have friends on the East Coast in divisions I would never have contact with simply due to us all coming together for this race," Bruininks said.



"The first couple of years of the race, it was not uncommon for us to not know who we were handing the baton to," added Bruininks. "Now, we are pretty cohesive, and it feels like a real team."

Bruininks says he is assembling the DOL team now for the 2010 race. If you are interested in participating, contact him at bruininks.todd@dol.gov or Pasquil at pasquil.daniel@dol.gov.

FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

After Hours

ETA Employee Follows Mother's Lead to Run the Distance on Mother's Day

By Carolyn Holl, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



Inspired by her mother, federal project officer Chantal Watler, with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, region, found a passion for marathon running. This athletic pastime dates back to 1998, the same year Watler began her ETA career.

At that time, Watler's mother decided to run the New York Marathon. Watler could not believe that her mother, then in her fifties, would run 26.2 miles. However, her disbelief quickly faded after watching her mother run in a downpour to train with friends that

Mother's Day.

After seeing her mother's determination, Watler decided to volunteer at the New York Marathon, so she could watch her mother run. "I saw her cross the finish line and was moved emotionally to see her cover more than 26 miles, when at the time, I couldn't even run a mile," Watler remembers.

The following year, motivated by her mother's accomplishment, Watler laced up and ran the New York Marathon. Since then, Watler has found running to be an enjoyable stress reliever. To date, she has run in 11 marathons across the country.

Watler runs all of her marathons with her best friend, who lives out of state, as a way to keep in touch and to have a good running partner. "I run to have fun and to finish injury-free," she adds.

She said the New York Marathon was her most memorable. "You feel like a celebrity with more than a million people cheering you on to the finish line." Watler always remembers that watching her mother in the very same race prompted Watler to run in the first place.

After the 1998 marathon, when her mother had her medals and race number on, Watler and her mother took a picture together to remember the accomplishment. A year later, after she ran the same race, they took a similar picture. This time, however, Watler was the one suited up, which she said made the race even more memorable.

Every Mother's Day, she and her mother run a race together. "It's symbolic to do the race together because she has been my inspiration and where it all began," says Watler.

Watler walks two miles daily and exercises regularly to stay in shape. She finds it is good discipline that gives her the greatest sense of achievement and says, "The most enjoyment comes when crossing the finish line to feel that sense of accomplishment."

Her next race is the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., in October.

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Job Fare

You Do What?

Erin Nagy, TAA Investigator

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Erin Nagy has helped workers in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., through her work with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program offered by DOL's Employment and Training Administration.

The TAA program certifies workers who have lost their jobs due to the impact of international trade. When this happens, these trade-eligible workers are entitled to a number of benefits: job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances, a tax credit to help pay the cost of health insurance, and a wage subsidy to workers age 50 and older.

TAA has always had a 50-state program, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, but its activities have traditionally focused on workers in manufacturing and textile production states like North Carolina and Virginia.

In 2009, however, the program expanded to include new categories of workers, including those in the service sector. Because of this, activity increased and moved to include states that previously had little or no TAA activity. This is how Nagy became involved.

Part of her job as an investigator requires Nagy to look into layoffs to determine if the job losses can be tied to international trade.

"When I first arrived there was a backlog of more than 1,000 cases," said Nagy, who joined DOL in 2009 as a temporary hire under the American Resource and Recovery Act and later became a permanent employee. "Now we're down to 160 petitions received under the 2009 trade program, so it's been a great success for TAA in the past several months. It took a real team effort to reduce the backlog and provide these workers with benefits."

The petitions that Nagy investigates come from company officials, union members, state labor offices, or employees who have been threatened by a potential layoff or laid off from a company because of foreign trade, a shift in production, a movement in services, or increased imports of items once produced in the U.S. To proceed, she contacts the company to research the allegation and find supporting data.

How does she know if domestic layoffs or threatened layoffs were caused by foreign trade? Often it's pretty straightforward. For instance, if a company shifts production of component auto parts to China, the company tells TAA it opened a facility in China and will close U.S. operations. If she doesn't have enough information from a source, Nagy sometimes surveys customers to see if they import goods rather than use a particular company, or looks for data to support such allegations. Investigations can be quite complex, especially those dealing with bankruptcies and plant closures. She must ensure that the right workers are covered under a particular petition.

Nagy, a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Green Bay Packers' fan says, "Company employees are sometimes eligible for TAA based on a large aggregate increase in imports for whatever it is that the company produces. Take one example, paper. If U.S. imports of paper have increased and exports have decreased, contributing to sales declines, that can help the TAA case on behalf of the workers."

"In most instances, the company is cooperative in providing information. Officials

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understand that we're just trying to help their workers," says Nagy.

Deadlines to respond to petitions are tight. Nagy says her division does its best to keep investigations under 40 days from when ETA receives a petition. To close the case, Nagy drafts an investigative report and a determination document, presenting it to her supervisor, or certifying officer. If in agreement with her determination, he signs it and the final determination moves on to appear in the Federal Register. The state then handles benefits distribution and employee notification.

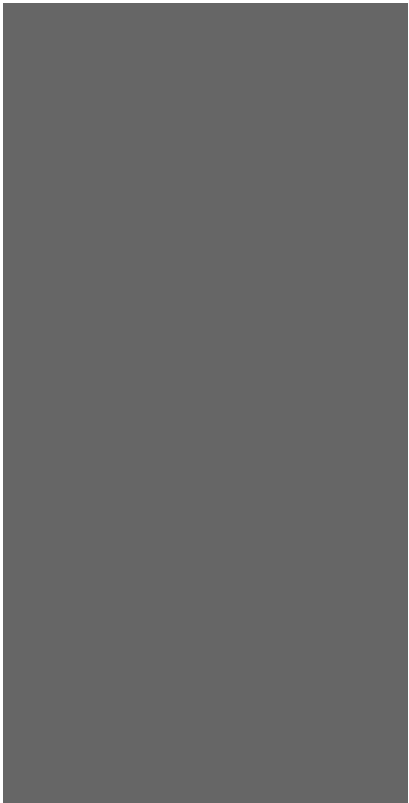
It is not uncommon for investigators to work on 30 to 40 petitions at a time. "It's often collaborative work. It's not a competitive atmosphere; it's one where everyone works to get the job accomplished for the sake of the workers," she says.

When talking to workers who have been trade-affected, Nagy says she finds it motivational because she hears their individual stories and feels like she's helping people if she can certify them as eligible to apply for TAA benefits.

Since coming to DOL she's worked on 300 to 400 cases with one that was particularly interesting for her. Though she lives in Madison, Wisconsin, she was born in Washington state and claims some Native American ancestry. A case came in that dealt with an Indian reservation in Washington near her birthplace. She dealt with the chief of the Coleville Indian reservation who just happened to also know her grandmother. It was after thorough investigation that she was able to obtain assistance for this reservation.

"TAA is a great program that has helped a lot of people, especially with the job situation the way it is now. Everyone talks about jobs and labor, and TAA is something that isn't mentioned but it's really important. A lot of people rely on it. We're doing what we can here to help as many people as possible."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Charleston, W. Va., Disabled Veteran Personally Inspired to Help Coal Miners Affected by Black Lung

By Joanna Hawkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



As a workers' compensation assistant with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation in Charleston, W. Va., Doug Adkins provides assistance to coal-mine workers.

Adkins is passionate about helping coal miners to the best of his ability because of the personal connection he feels with them. Like many coal miners, Adkins was exposed to danger in the line of duty.

A disabled veteran who served 12 years as an active duty and Army Reserve soldier, he deployed in 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to Tal'Arfar, Iraq, one of the most perilous parts of the country during

that time.

During his deployment, Adkins faced grave danger and was even injured; but despite this, his 10-person team achieved a high-level of success with their mission and returned home with no casualties.

After returning from war, Adkins hit a rough patch and reached out to the Department of Veterans Affairs for help. He joined the VA's compensated work therapy (CWT) program, which helps veterans get back on track personally and professionally.

Through the CWT program, Adkins made great strides. He eventually learned of a job opening at the Labor Department and decided to pursue it.

"I appreciate the department taking a chance and hiring a vet," said Adkins. "I enjoy helping coal miners while also now serving my country in a civilian capacity."

Adkins says he likes the day-to-day business of his job. His military experience taught him how to maintain a positive attitude and not to sweat the small things. "No matter how bad it gets, it's nowhere near as bad as it could be. There are worse situations," said Adkins.

Adkins and his wife, Hollie, have a 12-year old son and an 11-year old daughter. He plans to continue working toward achieving his goal of becoming an OWCP black-lung claims examiner and remains committed to serving coal miners, the department, and our great nation.

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Job Fare

You Do What?

Preparing for Anything Is a Part of Her Job

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Only one month into the job as an emergency preparedness/continuity of operations (COOP) specialist, Kimberly Pierre faced a tsunami that could possibly affect DOL employees in California, Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan. Instead of hitting the U.S., the great sea waves mainly ravaged Japan, causing billions of dollars in damage and killing thousands.

Based in San Francisco, California, as a part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), she noted, "We never experienced anything like this. We could only imagine how it would be if a tsunami hit. But you always need to

be prepared."

Her emergency planning involvement for this weather event was significant. The night before the tsunami, March 10, there was a tsunami warning for the West Coast. Then by early the next morning, it was downgraded to a watch.

"We had employees in the affected area, which included Saipan, Hawaii, and Guam, who were our main concern. I had to make sure we accounted for all those employees. I contacted their supervisors or management in those areas, sent out e-mails, and made phone calls to make sure that all DOL employees would leave the affected areas. I also made sure we had additional contact information for those people in case we needed to reach them at a relative's house," Pierre said.

More close to home Pierre had to deal with her federal office building, located near San Francisco Bay, which could be affected by a tsunami. In addition, more than half the employees at the San Francisco DOL office commute to work by Bay Area Rapid Transit. Because BART travels through a tunnel from the East Bay to San Francisco, the trains would be halted in a tsunami emergency. At one point, BART officials said they planned to cease operations.

To relay this information to employees, the San Francisco native activated the DOL phone tree after she received authority from human resources, which allowed supervisors to call their employees and tell them to delay their arrival.

"I'm responsible for the DOL information hotline for the Seattle, Washington, and San Francisco regional Labor offices. As the lead tenant here in a federal building, we are also responsible for getting the word to other federal agencies in our building. I prepared hotline messages about the tsunami watch and late arrival."

In the end, Santa Cruz, California, about an hour from San Francisco, felt the blow of the sea waves.

Although DOL employees in Hawaii, Saipan, and Guam were not affected, Pierre and her team were able to account for those 37 employees in less than an hour. Warnings of aftershocks and the potential of a nuclear fallout continued after the tsunami hit. This generated much unease from employees in the area.

"We had an employee in Saipan who was very concerned, so I reassured him and e-mailed him information about nuclear safety — how to protect yourself, and what to do and what not to do," she said.

In her job, Pierre prepares for the unseen, mainly getting ready for the "what ifs." What if an earthquake happened tomorrow? What if a fire blocked off the street?

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What plans does DOL need to have in place?

"If something huge and devastating happens, we should have the knowledge and know-how to get through it," she explains, and this is why she works with the Emergency Management Center* (EMC) at the national office and the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to handle weather-related crises.

The ill-fated tsunami was the largest disaster she had ever faced. Nonetheless, Pierre said she's thankful for her background in emergency preparedness and safety, dating from her days working for Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the largest supplier of natural gas and electricity in California. She worked with PG&E's Safety Committee, taking that experience with her when she joined OASAM in January 2010 as a human resources specialist.

"This was a good experience for me. Lessons I learned were that communication is key and how critical it is to ensure the data you have is up-to-date. Being aware of the tools you have and how to use them is also important," she said.

In fact, each night after work she takes with her a "go-kit." In it she has her laptop -- that allows her to change messages on the information hotline -- important phone numbers, a list of contacts for the EMC, and a map of the region.

Having these vital items made all the difference in preparing for the tsunami. "That day, we were up at 4 a.m. and out the door by 5. On the way to work in San Francisco, my human-resources officer and I started making phone calls and sending out e-mails. With these items we were able to get a jump-start on contacting people," she recalled.

When she's not tracking tsunamis, she spends time with her husband and four-year-old son. According to Pierre, her son has such a hectic schedule that he "needs his own Blackberry to keep track of his events." But much like his mother, the son wants to be ready for anything.

** The DOL EMC is responsible for implementing the Department's comprehensive emergency management programs. The EMC ensures the safety and security of DOL personnel and maintains the capability to perform DOL "essential Functions" in case of any emergency.*

In response to an anticipated or actual emergency, the EMC activates the DOL Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EMC manages the EOC throughout the incident as the primary information conduit between organizations, both internal and external, and the Department. The EMC performs a variety of other functions, such as coordinating; personnel accountability, and safeguarding of physical and cyber Departmental information.

The DOL EMC essential functions are:

- To coordinate emergency preparation and response for DOL;
- To coordinate DOL's continuity programs; and
- To maintain situational awareness and communications with internal and external organizations.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

You Do What?

Making an Impression One Clearance and Meeting at a Time

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Imagine the stress of a job where each day you don't know what assignments will fall in your lap. While some days may be easier, other days are hectic as you work at a fever pitch to assist department officials in responding to critical, real-world crises. Welcome to Tiffany Allen-Holmes' world, where she works as a senior policy advisor, or agency liaison officer (ALO), in the U.S. Department of Labor Office of the Executive Secretariat within the Office of the Secretary.

As an ALO, Allen-Holmes supports the Office of the Secretary by acting as an intermediary between it and DOL agency leadership to ensure coordinated and consistent policies and programs. In doing so, she serves as a conduit of information on DOL policies and priorities; provides information on critical issues; and helps to resolve disagreements between DOL agencies. To accomplish this, she provides guidance to those she serves and supports Deputy Secretary Seth Harris and his staff in meetings.

Orchestrating and coordinating these tasks is complex. "It involves review for critical issues, taking into consideration policy, and information we've received when meeting with the deputy secretary and other key officials," Allen-Holmes, a 17-year departmental employee, says. "We're charged with having some level of understanding of the importance of various documents and knowing when to inquire whether other agencies might need to see them."

The steps involved in document clearance are numerous. Her involvement ranges from receiving the documents to determining who reviews the materials before they go forward for the Secretary's approval.

Five career staff work as ALOs in the Office of the Executive Secretariat, and each has a portfolio of DOL agencies. Allen-Holmes handles the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs; the Office of the Solicitor; the Women's Bureau; the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management; the Office of Disability Employment Policy; and the Office of Recovery for Auto Communities & Workers.

Allen-Holmes says her job is unique and never dull, with each day bringing its own challenges. "One day could be full of meetings. The next day you may not have as many meetings, but you have tons of clearance items that you have to get through. You could have a big event coming up with the Secretary's participation that may require you to clear something in record speed in a few hours. Days can be full of surprises with things that you have not experienced before," she says.

Her job requires knowing who to contact and acting with diplomacy. As an example, Allen-Holmes often deals with critical documents whose contents eventually represent DOL's position on a topic. To get to that point, often she must have every agency at the national office clear a document quickly.

She explains, "What it usually takes is a lot of outreach. You've got to set the precedent and set the tone before it goes into clearance. In addition to sending it out for review, you're constantly on the phone, running down the hallway to track someone down. You ask, 'Did you get this? When do you anticipate getting it back to me?'" At the same time, you are interfacing with the agency that requested that the item go through clearance."

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Each document traveling through clearance experiences revisions. Part of her job demands that every agency relevant to the document sees it, comments, and has their remarks incorporated. In that way, she says, “Everyone then gets a final document that they stand behind and support.”

The final step involves getting the document to the Secretary and deputy secretary to obtain approval, and having the document issued within the requested time frame.

All of this takes tremendous effort, and the person coordinating each project is usually the ALO.

“We are really under the gun, because each agency puts in their little piece, but we’re responsible for making sure everything is considered and incorporated,” she says. “If something’s not incorporated, there’s a reason why it’s not incorporated, and that’s explained. The document needs to be technically correct, the tone appropriate, and something the Secretary and the department can stand behind confidently.”

Allen-Holmes says she enjoys assisting and helping agencies to produce a quality product. “At the end of the day, if I’m getting a good, finished product out the door, that’s a positive reflection on the Secretary and on the administration, as well as a reflection on me and the employees of the Department of Labor,” she notes.

Allen-Holmes said she never thought that she would do something like this for a job and enjoy it as much as she has. Raised in Indiana and educated at Catholic University’s Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C., her life differed before government with private-sector work and corporate-level retail jobs. She came to the government because of her desire to return to the district after working in Chicago, Illinois.

Initially hired into the government under the Outstanding Scholars program, she has worked in the Wage and Hour Division and in what was once the Employment Standards Administration. She came to the Office of the Executive Secretariat in 2010.

While her position is not that of a practicing attorney, Allen-Holmes says that her legal skills are utilized daily. “Part of my job is to issue spot analysis as well as provide reasoned assessments and recommendations on complex subjects for the effective development of departmental policy. As my job titles connote, I also act as an advisor and liaison for agencies on various items and, as such, must constantly advocate for the best product by providing advice to agencies and using persuasion to gain each agency’s clearance and trust that the final product will reflect consideration of their relevant comments and concerns. As an extra bit of excitement, I am also available to participate in special projects, which may include supporting the development of background or issues papers in response to Office of the Secretary inquiries,” she says.

When not keeping tabs on document clearance and meetings, Allen-Holmes laughs and says she’s a “slave” to her 3 ½-year-old daughter. “My daughter has taken up all my hobby time, but my hobbies were—and will be again—going to the movies, the theater, and reading. I don’t have time for any of those things now because I’m committed to going to indoor playgrounds, parks, birthday parties, and kids’ activities with her.”

Critical to her success as a working mother, she notes, is the love and support of her husband. “I couldn’t do this without him. He’s my best friend, my biggest supporter—my rock.”

Proud of what she does to support her family, Allen-Holmes says the Labor Department touches on so many aspects of people’s everyday lives, making its mission significant. “I’m amazed at things that happen in the world and the communities directly impacted by the decisions that are made by and coming from DOL. From the employment situation to what happened in New Orleans with the oil spill, I think the work we do affects people at the grassroots level. That’s significant and meaningful, and it makes the job we do here every day, and in the Office of the Executive Secretariat, very important,” she concludes.

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Job Fare

You Do What?

Labor Economists Inform the Public

By Michael Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



Few U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) employees would be surprised to know that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is full of labor economists who collect and study a host of economic statistics, including some of the nation's most important economic indicators.

Most think that while collection of these data is done nationwide, the analysis and release of the information is done at headquarters in Washington, D.C., but some of these key numbers are actually analyzed and released by

BLS's regional economists.

Each month, under tight security, eight economists sit in their respective regions and prepare news releases announcing regional and local area changes in the U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI), the nation's most widely used indicator of inflation.

"Traditionally, the BLS regional economists supervised a staff that answered customers' questions, but with the Internet, fewer customers need to call us for information," explained Karen Ransom, BLS regional economist in Atlanta, Georgia.

"That has allowed us to switch our focus to producing more analytical products. Not just news releases, but also reports and articles that dig deeper into the numbers.

"What hasn't changed is our desire to inform the public. Since most of our surveys depend on voluntary cooperation from the public, hopefully, our dissemination of the information will encourage them to cooperate with us in obtaining timely and accurate data," she said.

For the regularly issued CPI regional news releases, the process followed in each regional office is similar to the preparation of the national news release, and the regional releases are issued at the same time as the national information is made available, so the public can make comparisons between the national and local numbers.

In each region, the basic data are supplied through an encrypted computer system, which are then analyzed in a locked room that has no electronic access to any network, including computer networks and telephone systems. The regional economist analyzes the data and then prepares news releases for the areas covered.

While the national CPI is published monthly, along with four regional releases, local areas vary with some published bimonthly or semiannually, so the workload varies each month by region.

After preparation, each regional news release is reviewed by the BLS regional commissioner for that region, so it is ready to be issued at the same time that the national CPI is released.

"One of the attractive parts of the job, but also the most stressful, is the constant deadlines," said Ransom.

All of BLS's economic-indicator releases are released precisely at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time following a calendar that is published at the beginning of each calendar year, so that everyone knows exactly when a release will be issued.

"That CPI release must come out precisely at 8:30 a.m. ET on the scheduled day,

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or else the public begins to wonder if the data are being suppressed for some reason. Missing a deadline, if only by a few minutes, can upset the financial markets and cause journalists on cable stations to start talking about 'the meaning of the delay.'"

Regional economists do a lot more than just write CPI releases. They analyze local labor- market trends, prepare research reports, respond to media inquiries, give presentations, and represent BLS at conferences.

"One of the attractions of this job is the diversity of work," Ransom explained. "You get to work with all BLS programs, so you are always working with different statisticians and economists within BLS who have a great knowledge of the nuances of their particular specialty.

"It also allows us to build knowledge in a variety of commercial software packages, such as SAS and Dreamweaver, and we get pretty good at producing products that utilize the capabilities of these off-the-shelf products."

The regional economists also develop presentations for BLS' regional commissioners, who are often asked to speak to local groups about the general economy and how their areas are being affected by national economic trends.

"I am not sure if most people would think that economists are also speechwriters, but part of our job is to assist our bosses, the regional commissioners, in preparing remarks when they talk to local groups, such as local economic clubs.

"Each day when I walk in the door, there is something new and exciting happening," she said.

All this is done with the goal of assisting the public in understanding and appreciating the statistics being produced by a world-class statistical agency.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

You Do What?

Helping the Public Get Answers to Labor-Related Questions

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Growing up in Long Island, New York, Tanya Slater Lowe thought she might enjoy teaching. Although she has an associate's degree in early childhood education and a bachelor's in psychology, she never made it into the classroom. Instead, she now teaches customer-service representatives to handle the 1.5 million calls annually that come in nationwide to the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) national contact center.

The DOL NCC is responsible for communicating answers to the public about DOL-related issues through e-mail, toll-free phone (including TTY for the hearing-impaired), and the contact link on the Internet site www.dol.gov. The 100 customer service

representatives of the DOL-NCC answer questions pertaining to the Employment Training Administration; Mine Safety and Health Administration; Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Wage and Hour; Office of Disability Employment Policy; Women's Bureau; and the Office of Small Business Programs.

"We start out by providing tier-one services," says Lowe, program manager for the national contact center in Washington, D.C.'s, Office of Public Affairs. "These questions are answered with subject-matter-expert approved content. For instance, we manage frequently-asked questions and apply an if-then question-and-situation format, where the representative navigates through the computer knowledge base for the correct answer to the caller's specific question."

For those 10 percent of questions that the customer-service representatives can't answer with the help of the DOL knowledge base, the call gets "escalated," or routed, to a DOL expert, she says.

"Part of what we do at the national contact center, and what must be accurate, is the information we provide to the public. It must be timely, accurate, and consistent. To do that, we must reach out to dozens of subject-matter experts at Labor and at other federal government agencies," says Lowe, who joined DOL in April 2007.

To organize and track content, and to make sure it's consistent and approved by DOL experts, remains challenging. Constantly improving the approval and methodology processes, Lowe and her colleague, program specialist Andy Huynh, monitor the primary program expert communications, so that when one moves on, a replacement comes aboard. Otherwise, the two scramble to find another expert. The ultimate goal, Lowe notes, avoids overtaking the national headquarters' experts with basic information requests.

With contact centers in Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas, Lowe says the center remains a part of the DOL continuity of operations plan (COOP), hence the three locations. The COOP, last used in February after a massive snowstorm hit the East Coast and closed the district's federal government for four days, routed calls to the other sites. Additionally, contact-center officials handle employee emergency management communications — known to DOL employees as "DOL-SAFE."

Supported by the working capital fund subsidized by all DOL agencies, Lowe said the most frequently asked questions of call-center representatives are about wages, general unemployment issues, employment and training questions, and leave benefits.

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For the most part, Lowe said she wanted to come to Labor to apply her past workforce development experience at the national level.

"I brought a decade of experience with me from local city and state government to DOL," she said of her work with the Mayor's Office of Employment Development in Baltimore, Maryland, and the state Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation in Maryland. "I understood the administrative, the management, and the bureaucratic issues at all different levels of government, so I was able to use that information to provide more seamless services to the American public."

Lowe took that experience to make the contact center even better than when she came aboard.

"When I came here, the contact center did wonderful things. What I did was take my own experiences in developing training curriculum, increasing customer service, and improving the customer experience, and applied it to an already successful contact center. I have a very strong philosophy about customer satisfaction, and it's important to me, but more important is the customer experience. It's important to know, what is the result of customer satisfaction? At the contact center, we continue to improve the customer's experience," she says.

Customer satisfaction and customer experience is not the same thing, Lowe explains. Ordinarily, her team meets the best industry practices of answering 80 percent of calls within 30 seconds, courteously, and accurately. They listen, repeat, and restate what the customer wants.

Yet, beyond the basics, she says the key is to make the call a good experience from beginning to end. Because people may be happy with only parts of the contact — they may get their question addressed, but it's not the answer they wanted — that's where customer satisfaction comes into play.

"If I can guarantee an excellent customer experience, that's when the contact center has really fulfilled its role because we can't guarantee that the answer that we provide is what satisfies the customer. Our focus in training is perfecting the customer experience," she notes.

To get to the level that Lowe would like, she has staff trainers who work with the customer-service representatives. Typical training involves an orientation to teach about the agencies and what happens at Labor, as well as how to navigate through the computer knowledge-base information provided to the public. Afterward, representatives go on to a "nesting bay," where they are supported by peers for two weeks during the process of answering calls. Periodic automated training helps representatives with their knowledge base; for instance, they have quizzes, exercises, and informational bulletins provided to them.

But life for Lowe is not just about phone calls. An animal lover, she and her family own a dog, cat, dove, lizard, fish, and a 60-year-old turtle that's been handed down through the family.

As a result, her son Michael, 18, attends Stevenson University, Stevenson, Maryland, as a pre-veterinary medicine student. Her other son, Marcus, has the same dream, but he's only 12.

Her husband of 19 years, Michael Sr., helps her to acquire real-estate investments across Baltimore. She says most of her spare time goes into purchasing, repairing, renting, and selling homes.

"The only things we don't do are major plumbing, electrical, or roof installation. Other than that, we do it all, especially carpentry. I learned carpentry from my dad as the youngest of three children. He was a master carpenter, so instead of going shopping with my sisters and Mom, I ended up doing work that my dad did.

"I've been able to maintain those skills. Carpentry is very soothing for me. It's an instant satisfaction. I can come in and put up studs, and by the end of the day, I've got walls ready to be painted. It's a tangible hobby," she says.

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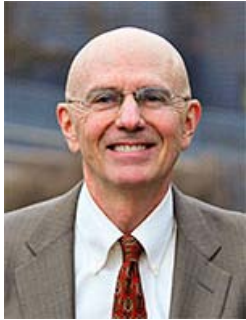
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Job Fare

You Do What?

Joseph Kane: Working on the Law at Labor

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Joseph Kane, an administrative law judge (ALJ) with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), is sure he'll work at least 50 years for the federal government, which is not a stretch considering that he already has 47 years in with Uncle Sam. "Hopefully, I'm good for several more years. With government service, it's the quality of the people you work with and the interesting work that makes it worthwhile," he says from his office in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Influenced by his father, a Navy carrier bomber pilot in World War II who passed away at the end of the war, Kane attended the U.S. Naval Academy and studied

engineering. He graduated in 1965 during the Vietnam era.

During his five years on active duty with the Navy, he had three Vietnam deployments on a destroyer escort. He then served on a much bigger ship, a guided-missile cruiser on a Mediterranean cruise. As a benefit of his military service, while at his home port in Hawaii, he met the girl who would become his wife — the sister of his Navy boss's wife.

After leaving active duty in 1970, the New York native wasn't sure what he wanted to do; he ended up applying to both graduate business school and law school and chose business school. Kane attended the M.B.A. program at George Washington University (GW) in Washington, D.C., for one year, and then got married in 1971.

Thinking that law school might be a better fit for him, he applied and switched to the GW night-school law program. In the meantime, during the day, he had started working for the Veterans Administration (VA), now known as the Department of Veterans Affairs, as a computer systems analyst, shortly before he entered law school.

Kane said he didn't announce to anyone at VA his intention to attend law school at night, but it turned out that his boss was in his law-school class, and they became good friends.

When his boss at the VA transferred to the Department of Justice as the deputy for computer systems, Kane joined him at the same agency and became a litigation information support staff member. "We did computer support for different trials around the country, and we trained people in using computer research tools, such as Juris and Lexis, which were then in their infancy," said Kane.

After completing law school, Kane applied for a position at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Columbus, Ohio. "I didn't really have any litigation experience," Kane recalls, "but they were looking for someone with a computer background to help them automate their case tracking system. I wound up in Columbus, and I was in that job for 17 years and did some criminal prosecutions, but mostly a wide range of civil cases, such as federal tort claims and Title VII (race, sex, age discrimination) defense. It was very exciting."

Seeking a change, Kane applied for and got on the ALJ register, and then acquired a job as an ALJ with the Social Security Administration Office of Hearings and Appeals in Cincinnati. He worked there for more than three years, presiding over more than 1,000 hearings.

When an opportunity for a lateral transfer to the DOL's Office of Administrative Law

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Judges (OALJ) came up in 1998, Kane jumped at the chance because of the wide range of cases and the overall importance of his role..

"The federal judges you most hear about are part of the judicial branch, the federal District Court, U.S. Court of Appeals, and U.S. Supreme Court," Kane explains.

"The executive branch also employs judges, and these are referred to as administrative law judges. There are about 30 federal executive-branch agencies with ALJs. They typically specialize in whatever statutes their agency has responsibility for.

"When I was a Social Security judge, I heard disability cases under the Social Security Act. Rather than having the federal courts further clogged with cases in these specialized areas, we fill in that gap. We're part of the executive branch, although we are independent from the Secretary of Labor."

Kane says that his trials are much like that in federal court, except that there are no juries involved. About 80 percent of his docket in Cincinnati consists of black-lung cases, while the rest consist mainly of longshore workers' compensation cases.

"Those two sets of cases are the benefits cases," Kane says. "The other cases we refer to as "traditional" because they are more like the traditional civil docket of a federal judge."

When he is not presiding over cases, Kane likes to travel with his wife, a hobby that is much easier to pursue now that one daughter is married and the other daughter is on her own.

For now, Kane will continue as an ALJ. "I may have the most government service, but there are still a number of judges in OALJ offices nationwide that are older, but I expect to be around for awhile," he says.

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You Do What?

A 57-year DOL employee, BLS's Edward Pratt has Seen IT from the Beginning

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Edward Pratt is the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) employee with the second longest record of government service nationwide. He's served Uncle Sam for 57 years and, as he puts it, "takes it a day at a time."

A native of Washington, D.C., Pratt attended the now-defunct Armstrong High School, where he played on the football, basketball, and baseball teams.

Following high-school graduation, he entered the United States Air Force as an enlisted man, serving from 1952 to 1956. Pratt selected the Air Force, he said, because he "didn't want to be drafted into the

Army." He did several types of jobs during his four years of service.

He started basic training at Saks Air Force Base in Geneva, New York. From there, he went to training in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Finally, he ended up in Okinawa where, along with the other airmen in his wing, he supported the mission for the 19th bomb wing of the 20th Air Force. He traveled to Japan, Guam, Hawaii, and other areas in the Pacific that had Air Force bases.

Once out of the Air Force, he received a job tip from a friend who worked at the Department of Labor. His friend asked Pratt, "Do you want a job?" To which Pratt replied, "Of course!" It was then that Pratt decided that the DOL was the place for him.

Starting on March 19, 1956, Pratt began work at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) as a GS-1 messenger. Later, he became a GS-2 clerk, rose to a GS-5 clerk, and then switched over to what's now known as information technology (IT), but in 1965 they called it computer operations.

So how did he make the leap from clerk to information technology? As Pratt explained, "Back in the early 1960s, most everything in the BLS was clerical. IBM, at that time, came around and gave an aptitude test to all the employees. If you passed the aptitude test, you could work in the IT area. That's how I got into it."

Pratt passed the aptitude test, going on to training schools to learn computer programming.

With a start in computer operations in 1965, he processed data for all of BLS's computerized surveys and tested programs written by programmers. He also helped upgrade the BLS IBM computers to rely less on punch cards for data storage and to use computer tapes instead.

Pratt then moved to the computer programming section for the U.S. Consumer Price Index to do analysis on users' requirements and to write computer programs to process data for the index. For the past 22 years, he's been an information-technology supervisor, with a staff of 15.

What Pratt said he likes about government is his work on the index's computer system. The index, which comes out monthly from BLS, measures changes in retail prices of goods and services.

"I enjoy working with the statisticians, economists, mathematicians, and the other information technology people. I just think it's wonderful working with all these

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individuals.”

His longevity with the government has allowed him to handle even the most unusual of situations. During the brief federal government shut down of the 1990s, he needed to make sure the systems he was responsible for would still be able to help put out the index. Fortunately, the index came out on time because government employees resumed work, “but we were prepared just in case we had to be out long,” he said.

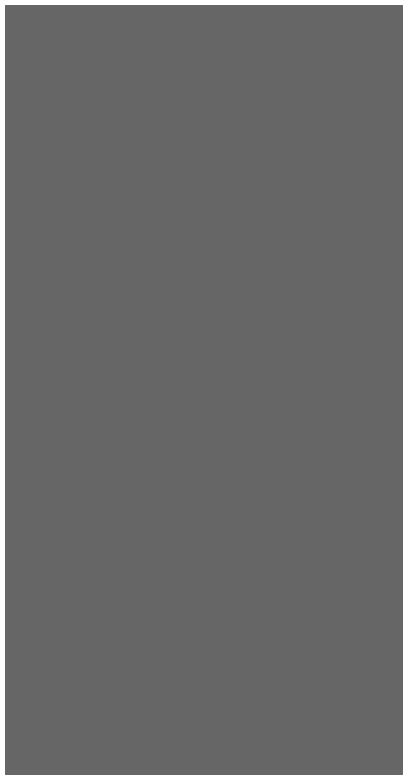
During his career, Pratt said he’s probably supervised about 50 people who have come to the agency and have since left. “I’ve found that over the years, however, most of the people that I originally knew have retired,” he said. “There are one or two people that are older — like me — that are still around with me.”

One person that is still with Pratt is his wife Marie, who retired as a federal benefits specialist from the Office of Personnel Management after receiving an early out. According to Pratt, she didn’t work for the federal government for as long as he has because she was busy raising their three children — two boys and a girl.

In his spare time, the Fort Washington, Maryland, resident does yardwork and enjoys his garden flowers in the summer. Having three grandchildren, one who is grown and on his own and two who are in college, also keeps him busy.

At this point, Pratt said he would continue to work at Labor because he considered it a “very good place to work as opposed to working for other agencies.” He added, “Naturally, you think about retirement when you’re my age, but I don’t plan to. I don’t plan to work until I can’t lift my feet anymore — I’ll just take it a day at a time.”

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

You Do What?

Is There a Personnel Psychologist in the House?

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



You probably didn't know that the U.S. Department of Labor employs a personnel psychologist, but it does. He is Richard Fischer.

Fischer works for the Division of Program Operations in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). He's about to gain an associate because he has so much business.

The OFCCP employs two part-time consultants to help Fischer, but soon a career staffer will help Fischer, too. Compared to industrial/organizational psychologists, personnel psychologists focus more specifically on the hiring, assignment, and promotion of employees. Such

a psychologist may be involved in the continued development and validation of assessment tools for selection, placement, classification and promotion of employees.

"Let's just say I had a lot more hair before I started this job about five years ago," he says about being a personnel psychologist, which has a different role at OFCCP than what personnel psychologists perform at other agencies, such as Homeland Security, the Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

OFCCP administers and enforces three legal authorities that require equal employment opportunity: Executive Order 11246, as amended; Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212. Taken together, these laws ban discrimination and require Federal contractors and subcontractors to take affirmative action to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity for employment, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran.

Fischer is OFCCP's resident testing expert. Whenever a federal contractor uses a test in the interview or hiring process, Fischer may be called upon to assess it.

Personnel psychologists do bring value to the workplace, Fischer says, and he estimates that OPM has the most personnel psychologists because they do hiring and research and have a division that contracts out to government agencies. Their psychologists work with other government agencies as part of a cost-reimbursable program where the agency using the personnel psychologist pays OPM for its services. Fischer suggests that may be why some agencies don't hire personnel psychologists because they can go through OPM to get their projects done. However, the increase in testing information identified in OFCCP investigations, creates an urgency for a resident expert in this area.

As for Fischer, he says of DOL, "I feel like I found a home. I like working with clients, and that's what I do here. It's a great way to make a living."

Fischer did work previously for DOL when he was a full-time contractor between 1978 and 1985. He worked on a billion-dollar program that Labor started with the Saudi government to funnel petrodollars back into the U.S. The U.S. went in and created training for vocational trades for the Saudi government, constructing vocational facilities and schools.

During that time he also pursued a doctorate in measurement and statistics from

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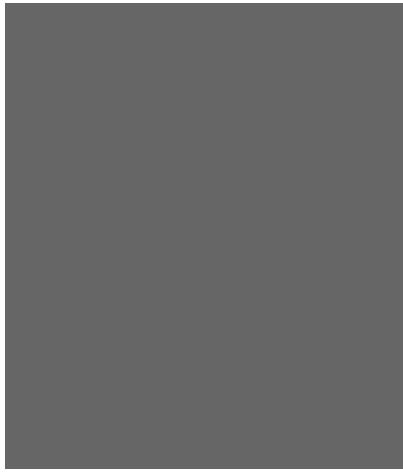
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Columbia University, a goal that took him 10 years. He worked four days a week and a day or two on the weekends. The schedule allowed him to fly to New York one day a week to take classes, and DOL was happy to have someone working weekends to take any calls from project staff because Saturday and Sunday are normal workdays in Saudi Arabia. He got the Ph.D. in 1987.

Originally from Philadelphia, Fischer married a psychologist, which can be helpful for him to release steam because of the job's pressures. He said, "It's high stakes for the government if I make a mistake. It can be stressful, especially if you're sitting across from three lawyers and 10 experts."

But Fischer has a sense of humor about it. He recalled the start of one case, when the lawyer stood up and said, "Dr. Fischer, there's six of us, and there's one of you."

Something clicked in his mind and he replied, "OK, there are six of you and one of me, so we're about even."



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Job Fare

American iDOL

Home Safe, From Iraq

By Denise Kiser, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Dallas Region



1st Lt. Richard Perez, a Dallas employee with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, reported for active duty in January 2010 with the U.S. Army, 368th Financial Management Detachment. Perez and his detachment returned home safely.

Before his deployment, Perez, who has worked for DOL since 2003, was the program manager of the department's RegionNet web site. He and his team developed and published Web content. Perez also

contributed to the emergency preparedness and safety and health programs within OASAM.

"These and many assignments have afforded me with opportunities to work with great employees throughout the Department of Labor," he said.

Perez left a great group of people to join another 8,000 miles away where his duties and responsibilities took on a different dimension.

As the officer in charge of the base financial unit, he and his detachment of 25 soldiers were responsible for providing financial services to more than 20,000 military personnel. This included managing more than \$50 million in annual disbursements to support construction, contractor payments, and military pay. They were split into two finance offices at separate bases: Joint Base Balad and Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

Perez and his soldiers went on numerous missions to offer financial service to soldiers at remote operation posts. Their ability to get to those locations was critical because soldiers relied on their services to manage their personal finances, including making cash withdrawals for purchases. The finance unit's presence was a big morale booster to the troops and word would spread quickly when the finance team arrived at the base camps.

A typical day for the troops was getting up at 6 a.m. and conducting physical-fitness exercises while the weather was still tolerable. The hottest months were from May through September, when temperatures could reach up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. It didn't rain during those months. "We stayed indoors as much as we could. Once in awhile a sandstorm would roll in. The fine dust would enter the AC system and get all over the office equipment. The dust also would set off our smoke detectors," said Perez. October through April produced temperatures in the low 40s in the morning.

When asked if he had any good memories of Iraq, Perez said, "My soldiers and I celebrated Christmas day with a gift exchange. For gifts, some used the care-package goodies to exchange with. I wanted to give someone a gag gift, so I picked some rocks outside the office, cleaned them, and placed them in a nice gift box. I printed a certificate of authenticity that the rocks were from Iraq. We had a nice laugh."

Although he was far from his home in McKinney, Texas, where he and his family enjoy the great outdoors and play video games, Perez communicated with his family at least three times a week, through e-mail, text messaging, and Skype.

"I used the USO's book-reading program to videotape myself while reading a

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storybook. The USO mails the book and the video CD to my house for free. The videos were a big hit, especially with my 5-year-old daughter, when putting her to bed," said Perez. "The DOL Dallas Regional Office provided us with calling cards, so we could call loved ones during the holiday season," he added.

When asked what advice he would give to other soldiers due for a tour in Iraq, Perez replied, "The separation from family and friends will be the biggest adjustment. Establish your new routine to stay focused on your job. Communicate with your loved ones. Set some goals like saving money, paying off debt, and continue your education by taking online college courses. Connect with a buddy in the unit to share your thoughts and feelings. Approach your leadership with any news, good or bad."

"Everyone who goes to Iraq goes through their own experience," according to Perez.

"On a personal note, the separation from my wife and three children was the toughest for all of us. But it helped us become strong within ourselves and for each other. We're much closer now, and I'm thankful for that," he added.

Perez reported back to work with OASAM in May. He was recently selected as director of the Division of Finance, Acquisition, and Administrative Services.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

American iDOL

Seattle Staffer Gives Back Through Scholarship Work, Professional Associations

By Michael Shimizu, Office of Public Affairs, Seattle Region



Dedication to education sums up a passion for Jeannine Lupton, U.S. Department of Labor assistant regional director for public affairs, in Seattle, Washington.

"I was captivated by the motto 'changing lives, one scholarship at a time' when I was asked to join the University of Washington's (UW) Alumnae Board. Helping others to achieve their educational goals and giving back has been a major goal ever since I received a UW scholarship," she said.

Lupton was honored at the University of Washington Alumni Association's recent quarterly meeting for her work as scholarship chair of the UW Alumnae Board. She attended the meeting with six former scholarship recipients, who spoke about the difference the alumnae board scholarships made in their lives.

Lupton was named to the two-year position in September 2009 to oversee more than 200 annual scholarship applications. She leads a committee to review, evaluate and award full-tuition UW scholarships to students with high academic achievement and community-service involvement from middle-income families. She was also recognized for her role as a mentor for students at the UW School of Communications.

Carrie Cowgill Thompson, the first woman to receive a scholarship to UW, formed the alumnae board in 1947. Her \$100 scholarship in 1909 made such an impression that she started the alumnae board as a way to help deserving students with scholarships. UW Alumnae Board scholarships, now open to women and men, are also the only full-tuition scholarships awarded from the UW Alumni Association. In 2007, the UW Alumnae Board was recognized as a laureate, a distinction given to any individual or organization that contributes at least \$1 million to the university. The UW Alumnae Board is listed on the donor wall in UW's Suzzallo Library as a permanent symbol of the university's enduring gratitude.

Today, the UW Alumnae Board consists of 14 professional women who want to give back by raising scholarship funds. It is the most prolific scholarship fundraising group of the UW Alumni Association.

Lupton, who holds a UW degree in editorial journalism, also raises scholarship funds for students majoring in communications through the Seattle chapter of the Association for Women in Communications (WIC), a professional, national organization dedicated to education, professional development, and networking for those in communications professions. Lupton has served in several WIC board positions, including Seattle chapter president. WIC also includes several student chapters throughout the U.S.

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Job Fare

American iDOL

An OSHA Compliance Officer Who Serves in the Army Reserve

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



John Young is a man who is truly dedicated to the service of his country. As a colonel in the Army Reserve, he helps to protect the freedom of Americans. As an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance officer in Bismarck, North Dakota, he helps ensure a safe environment for America's workers.

Following his college ROTC days, Young started in the military in 1984 as a second lieutenant in the Army. It was, he believed, the exposure he had to the Army during his days at the University of Wisconsin—Lacrosse that led him to join the Army.

When he left active duty in 1990, Young decided to continue his commitment to the military by joining the Army Reserve. During his time in the reserves, he has had many assignments, including deployments overseas as the psychological operations (PSYOP) team leader that supported Marine Corps' personnel during the first Gulf War and as the deputy commander for the Joint Psychological Operations Task Force during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

During his time in the reserves, he has steadily risen through the ranks, from company commander for a battalion in Minnesota, to rear commander of the 311th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC). He now serves as the deputy commander of the 311th ESC, the person one step below the commanding general.

Just like his military service, Young's nonmilitary career has been marked by twists, turns, and devotion to serving his country. Working for a private-sector company in South Dakota, he started as a production manager. As the company grew rapidly, he transitioned to the company safety and health manager position.

Right before the technology bubble burst in 2001, Young heard about the opening with OSHA in Bismarck. He joined the Labor Department in July 2001.

At OSHA, he works as a compliance officer, performing inspections and investigations of work sites. Seven compliance officers help service his territory in North Dakota and South Dakota.

The job is not without challenges, including fatality investigations, which Young says are difficult.

"These investigations are usually very emotionally charged. The company, the family, and the coworkers are in a state of shock. There may be feelings of guilt or anger, but you have to get through the guilt and anger to find the facts," he explained.

The job also requires a lot of independence, he says, because he constantly travels to job sites for inspections.

"The Dakotas probably only have about 1.4 million people, and the geographic area is about two-thirds the size of Texas. Phone reception is not necessarily great, the weather is a factor. For instance, in the winter it can be 22 degrees below zero. If you're not that independent person that can make things happen on your own, you're probably not going to make it here," says the Wisconsin native, who grew up in Baraboo.

It's in Young's nature to help employers and others. "When I'm out there at

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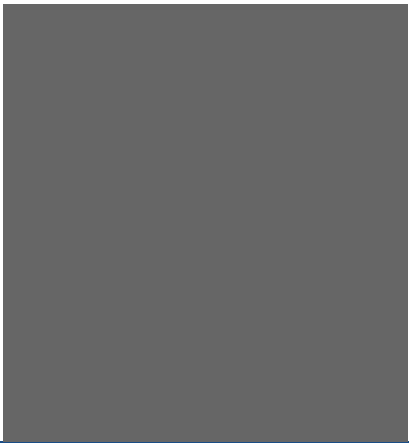
businesses, it might not be a citation-type event, but you can say something like, 'Hey, guys, you might want to consider doing this to make it safer and to keep people from getting killed.' ”

Despite his busy schedule, Young says he always makes time for his wife and five children. The oldest, 24, is married; the youngest is 17 months. With his four boys, he fishes, hunts, and camps. The newest Young, a girl, will join in those activities soon.

With his commitment to the Army Reserve, OSHA, and his family, Young said his life could be hectic.

“If you talk to my supervisors here, it’s not uncommon for me to be gone one week on reserve duty, fly back on a Sunday, and work for OSHA for one week,” the military veteran of more than 27 years said. “It makes it challenging.”

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

American iDOL

A Mission of Helping Others

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



After a car hit him at age three and he suffered seizures from youth through college, Shane Alexander said he made it his life's mission to help others because of the help he received from the medical community.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) emergency management specialist and continuity of operations (COOP) site coordinator repaid others not long ago when he put into action a plan that rescued 47 people from snowbound travels and lodged, fed, and administered to their medical needs at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beaver, West Virginia.

As with many things in his life, this rescue mission was accidental.

"I was almost one of the stranded citizens out on the road myself," the married father of two boys said. "I had worked late that evening and was on my way home in the snowstorm, but I couldn't get to the apartment that I keep here. I found a turnaround on the interstate and made it back to the Academy."

Alexander took shelter at the Academy, only to learn, as the storm progressed, that more people became stranded on the roadways. Soon after, Academy Superintendent Janet Bertinuson contacted the Raleigh County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and said the Academy could function as a shelter.

People streamed in beginning on a Friday night. Alexander accommodated travelers, and because of his emergency medical technician (EMT) background, he managed on-site health issues, which included a diabetic, a person on oxygen, and a busload of deaf-and-blind children who lacked a sign-language interpreter. Additionally, he worked with the Raleigh County EOC and the American Red Cross to ensure that all guests had food.

The Academy housed the commuters until they later moved to a county facility called the Dream Center.

Alexander says the effort wasn't just all him. "The Academy stays prepared to operate in the event of a citywide emergency affecting the D.C. national capital region. Folks here all know that they can be called upon at a moment's notice to support our national headquarters' COOP program. But they pulled together as a team, because when this happened, we had a skeleton crew of about 10 people," he says.

What Alexander accomplished at the Academy that snowy weekend related to his full-time work, where he maintained the Academy's readiness as the alternate work site for Frances Perkins' building executives and contingency staff from Washington, D.C.

Potential hazards can bring people to the Academy, including hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks: anything that affects the national capital region may initiate a COOP to the alternate site. Secretary Solis, the assistant secretaries, and agency representatives are a part of any COOP event and, if required, will work from West Virginia.

"COOP is the continuity of operations and COG is the continuation of government. At the ultimate relocation site, we assure that DOL can continue its national mission and essential function with very little interruption. We want DOL to be able to carry

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out its mission to the public," said Alexander, who came onboard in 2007.

As an emergency management specialist, Alexander handles what the Academy needs for DOL to continue its operations. That includes an operational computer network, a working crisis center for the Secretary, and a joint operations center where agencies can manage their business.

During a COOP event, Alexander manages the DOL EOC, which is a branch within the Emergency Management Center (EMC) and a part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management. Alexander works in the Academy EOC with 11 members of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to act as a single point of contact for Labor during an event. The EOC ensures employee accountability and gets information to the correct individual or agency. A team of four MSHA information-technology staff helps him with network connectivity.

Working with Bertinuson, he helps her understand necessary preparation tasks in case a citywide emergency in the district activates the COOP.

According to Alexander, he considers the Academy the perfect place for relocating personnel.

"The Academy is on a different power grid, a different water table, and we're far enough away that any fallout from anything radioactive would be stopped by the mountains," the West Virginia native explains. "DOL owns the Mine Academy, and we have 147 hotel rooms that we can put people up in. We have a cafeteria, so we have a means to feed people for a long period. We have a generator, so it just makes sense that, instead of paying for space, DOL would utilize the Academy."

At the Academy this May, Alexander participated in a White-House-mandated national COOP exercise with DOL's contingency and executive staff. Traci Smith, an EMC employee, along with the DOL Emergency Management Working Group of representatives from all DOL branches, had been meeting at Tech World and the Frances Perkins building to prepare for the COOP exercise. A simulated event, they saw if participants could do agency business from West Virginia. Other partners included Cabinet-level agencies and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the event leader.

Explaining his role he says, "I'm really a behind-the-scenes type of guy, but it gives me satisfaction knowing that, if God forbid something were to happen in the national capital region, the DOL would still be able to meet its mission because of something I do on a daily basis."

Alexander had a long journey to his position at the Academy.

He suffered head trauma as a child and had a seizure condition that forced him to leave West Virginia State University near his senior year. Married and with a young child, Alexander lost his job, forcing him to accept Social Security disability pay.

Dissatisfied with his situation, Alexander came into the government under a federal disability-hiring program. He initially took a position not to exceed 90 days for a GS-4 part-time job. The 90 days turned into a not-to-exceed-one-year slot. Then, in 1994, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) hired him full-time.

During his whirlwind IRS career, he rose from a GS-5 to a GS-12 by taking on jobs that people didn't want to do. No longer suffering from seizures, he worked as a director's staff assistant within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in West Virginia, where he took on business resumption and disaster recovery.

Reluctantly accepting the responsibility, he received training, and had one of the first sites within the IRS that tested a COOP plan successfully.

Beyond work, he volunteers as a firefighter and EMT for the Ghent Area Fire Department, just outside Beckley, West Virginia, limits. He has 24-hour shifts biweekly as an ambulance service EMT and is on call as a firefighter when not at DOL.

What he lives for most, however, is his wife and two sons, who live in a home in Twilight, West Virginia, next to his wife's parents. Alexander's 12-year-old son has spina bifida, an opening in the spinal column. To manage the child's condition and care, the family "juggles its schedules with our son's doctor appointments, and everything that happens, but we still spend quality family time together," he says.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

American iDOL

A Revamped Pro bono System Leads to Success for Clients

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



For many Americans, quality legal representation is not a right, but a privilege that is simply too far out of reach. Recently, two DOL employees set out to change that by making it easier for government attorneys to lend their talents to those with limited means and access.

SOL attorneys Kathy Easmunt and Liz Goldberg have long encouraged others in their profession to provide their services via pro bono (volunteer) cases. But when they examined the Department's policy on participation in pro bono activities, they determined it needed to be revamped in order to make it easier for government lawyers to provide

legal help to those in need.

Their efforts, which earned them the Secretary's Exceptional Achievement Award for the SOL Pro Bono Coordinator Program, resulted in streamlined procedures for participating in pro bono work; the production of a comprehensive outline of the possible ethics considerations surrounding pro bono work; and the establishment of a pro bono committee to coordinate and promote pro bono efforts throughout SOL.



With the process improved, Easmunt and Goldberg then worked with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ heads the Federal Pro Bono Program) to identify specific opportunities for pro bono involvement by SOL personnel. Each agency has the option to participate in the federal pro bono working group, and Easmunt and Goldberg are members of that organization.

"By attending working group meetings and through regular e-mail notices from DOJ, we are made aware of upcoming federal pro bono opportunities, such as training events, presentations, legal clinics, and case clinics," says Easmunt, an ethics attorney in SOL's Office of Legal Counsel. "DOJ alone works with the local bar associations, legal service providers, and nonprofits. Liz and I do not contact these organizations on behalf of SOL/DOL, but thanks to DOJ, we remain informed of current pro bono events."

According to Easmunt, the federal pro bono program typically works with the D.C. Bar Association. "The D.C. Bar's Advice and Referral Clinics are popular with volunteers because they are only asked to commit to a few hours of time on a Saturday morning. SOL personnel have also participated in pro bono wills training and clinics, family law training, and the DOJ case clinics."

As a result of their efforts, the number of SOL attorneys participating in pro bono activities has increased, with involvement ranging from entry-level attorneys to SOL's most senior managers. Easmunt estimates that 50 to 75 SOL staff members nationally have taken a pro bono case, volunteered at a legal clinic, attended a training program, or attended a pro bono presentation in the past two years. In fact, the program has been so successful that the DOL received the 2009 Federal Pro Bono Leadership Award from the Federal Government Pro Bono Program

In addition to bringing prestige to the Department, an attorney's participation in pro bono activities advances their professional development. Says Easmunt, "Attorneys in the private and public sectors tend to specialize in a finite area of law. Pro bono activities provide attorneys with an opportunity to expand their legal skill set and to work on legal issues outside of their niche. For example, a DOL attorney who

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specializes in employee benefits may decide to take a landlord-tenant pro bono case. Further, many federal attorneys do not have an opportunity to litigate, and taking a pro bono case gives them this opportunity.”

Speaking about her pro bono work, Goldberg, a trial attorney with DOL since October 2005 said, “By doing the work with DOL, I had the opportunity to supplement my own work at SOL. For example, I am a trial attorney in the Plan Benefits Security Division. We don’t often have the opportunity to go into court. In one of my pro bono projects, one of the things I did gave me the opportunity to conduct a hearing before a judge in court. So it advances your career in the sense that it’s an opportunity to do something other than what you would do in your normal job. I think there are a number of attorneys who enjoy that aspect of pro bono work, particularly the ability to get into court, which is an unusual option for our line of work.”

Pro bono work also benefits the legal work that attorneys are doing on behalf of the department.

“In my opinion, SOL participation in pro bono work increases the staff members’ ability to work well with clients and independently analyze legal issues, which is a clear benefit to the agency,” says Easmunt. “Federal pro bono work also provides DOL employees with the chance to network with legal staff from other federal agencies.”

“The work enriches me as an attorney because I’m able to engage in opportunities and use skills that I don’t have in my normal job. As a trial attorney, you’re always trying to get into court, so that you can increase your litigation skills. On the type of cases I do, there are not always frequent opportunities to do that,” says Goldberg.

While it has certainly enriched their careers, pro bono case participation has also had tangible benefits in the surrounding community. “As with many other towns and cities, the D.C. area has a high population of low-income residents. By providing free legal services in their personal time, federal personnel are able to assist residents with life matters that are extremely important to them, such as a will, the custody of a child, a civil-protection order, or an unlawful eviction. These residents would not be able to afford private legal representation, and the federal pro-bono community is an invaluable resource,” says Easmunt.

The pro bono work that Goldberg handled involved a divorce proceeding for a woman who was in an abusive relationship. The divorce involved child-custody and child-support disputes. “I was able to help her file and obtain all those things through D.C. Family Court,” Goldberg said of her client. “Because we’re at the policy level, we don’t get the immediate gratification of helping someone, and when you do a pro bono case, you have that opportunity to help someone on an immediate level.”

“In addition to being a complement to our regular work, you get to interact with clients and people who need legal assistance — that is something we don’t often get to do at DOL,” she adds.

Goldberg says there’s a huge need in the D.C. Metro area for legal representation. Because SOL and DOL attorneys provide that, it’s a great service to the community.

“Anyone can volunteer, but only a lawyer can provide someone with expensive legal assistance at no cost. Our work at DOL is often disconnected from individuals and more at a policy level. The pro bono work often involves direct contact with people and dealing with their immediate needs, such as housing, a domestic dispute, or things that affect their day-to-day lives,” says Goldberg.

Recent pro bono case participants from SOL include employees Goldberg; Evan Nordby; Melissa Moore; Brad Mantel; Stephen Silverman; Thomas Tso; and Edmund Baird. Emily Snider, Nikkia Wharton, Amanda Horner, and Ann Ryder from the Office of Administrative Law Judges, and Jennifer Marion from the Wage and Hour Division, have also taken pro bono cases. SOL’s legal support staff, including Johnnetta Hart, Quinisha Mack, and Patricia Morgan, has been involved in the local D.C. Bar Advice and Referral Clinics, where they help with the client intake process.

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Job Fare

American iDOL

Project SEARCH Program Prepares High-School Seniors to Enter Work World

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has successfully launched Project SEARCH to prepare high school seniors with disabilities for employment. The one-year program provides classroom instruction with work-based career preparation and skill development.

The program, launched in 1996 by Cincinnati Children's Hospital, got its start in the federal sector at DOL's national office in 2008, when the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) officially funded Project SEARCH.

After several months of planning, the project launched on August 24, 2009, with six students. The students spent their first three weeks at DOL in a classroom where they participated in work-readiness lessons, received travel training, prepared for interviews, and had interviews conducted by potential supervisors. The students also spent time on three work-experience rotations.

A typical day for the students included morning classroom sessions about employability and independent living skills, several hours of learning job skills through work-experience placements provided by volunteer managers and mentors who are DOL employees, having lunch with peers, and receiving individual feedback from job coaches and their on-site D.C. Public Schools' (DCPS) teacher at the conclusion of the school day.

Partnerships with different groups help the program to operate. The program development team includes representatives from the DCPS; the D.C. Department on Disability Services/Rehabilitation Services Administration; the Joseph P. Kennedy Institute of Catholic Charities; the Cincinnati Children's Medical Center's Project SEARCH national program; and ODEP.

The groups that secured office space for the classrooms and an orientation included personnel from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (ASP). ASP and Wage and Hour employees also made sure the program met Wage and Hour guidelines.

Susan Picerno with ODEP was the department's business liaison to Project SEARCH's staff, assisting with periodic problem solving as issues came up for the students or their DOL supervisors.

Part of Picerno's responsibilities included mentoring Project SEARCH students through their work-experience rotations at ODEP and leading the DOL Project SEARCH Implementation Team of ODEP and non-federal partners. The ODEP members of the team included experts in youth employment and research staff who measured the program's outcomes. More than 10 DOL departments volunteered to participate in the program.

Picerno said it was an amazing experience to work on the project. "It was inspiring to see the students gain confidence in their abilities and interact as equals with federal employees in an office situation. Through the Project SEARCH program, the students learned the office skills that they could use on other jobs in the future, but more importantly, they learned how to express themselves in a very mature manner and take pride in their accomplishments. Many of the students had never had the

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chance to do so in their school setting," she said.

"This type of project shatters people's stereotypes about urban youth with disabilities," said Rebecca Salon, a consultant with the D.C. Department on Disability Services. "Our experience in recruiting this first cohort of students was that the people who knew them best were seriously skeptical about whether or not they could possibly succeed. However, the program itself and the high expectations placed on the students were transformational."

Salon said that the students and their families were amazed, as was the staff from their home schools.

"In a very short amount of time, these young people could envision a different kind of future for themselves — one in which they could be successful and in which they were valued. It was truly wonderful to see the change in their confidence, self-concept, and maturity, having met the students prior to the start of the project and then visiting them a few weeks after they started their first work experiences," she said.

Picerno added that several Project SEARCH students did such a good job that DOL officials hired them into summer positions at the end of their work-experience rotations. Others went on to jobs in the community.

In short, "The Project SEARCH graduates showed the American public that they could be valued employees and could accomplish many tasks in a competitive work setting on a par with their coworkers with disabilities," Picerno said.

The DOL staff won a Secretary's Honor Award for 2010 in the Exceptional Achievement category. Noted for outstanding achievement in support of the development of a federal government model of the Project SEARCH academic transition program were: ODEP, with 22 members on the Project SEARCH team; OASAM, 14; CRC, three; ASP, two; the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, five; the Office of Workforce Investment, one; ETA, two; and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, one. Each of the winners works at the national office.

Here are the names of the award winners:

ODEP

Akinyemi Banjo
Rhonda Basha
Beth Bienvenu
Carol Boyer
Christopher Button
Patrick Cokley
John Davey
R. Speed Davis
Rachel Dorman
Barbara Haight
Richard Horne
Cherise Hunter
Laura Ibanez
Jennifer Kemp
Lisa Lahrman
Sara Mahoney
Shaun McGill
Colet Mitchell
Susan Picerno
Maggie Roffee
Janet Voight-Miro
Taryn Tyler Williams

OASAM

Susan Barker
Douglas Bork
John Brevard IV
Jacquelyn Coleman
Tony Faulkner
Ed Hugler
Yann King
Carla Lopez-Edwards
Maria McAlpin
Philip Puckett
Tracey Schaeffer
Sheila Speight
John Void
Thomas Wiesner

CRC

Carla Broddie
Violet Parker
Ramon Suris-Fernandez

ASP

Leslie Cooper
Mary Ziegler

Office of Workforce Investment

Darlene Towles-Kelly

ETA

Kirk Jefferson
Kenneth Lemberg

OCFO

Valerie Hall

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American iDOL

Education and Outreach are Key in Fight Against HIV and AIDS Secretary Solis Honors ILAB Employees for Outreach Effort

By Peggy Abrahamson, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Secretary Solis recently recognized two employees of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), Stephen Marler and Paula Church-Albertson, both international relations officers, for their work in helping to educate workers worldwide about HIV and AIDS. Both received the Secretary's Exceptional Achievement Award.

Marler and Church-Albertson worked cooperatively with the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Academy for Educational Development, and Project HOPE to increase awareness and address stigma and discrimination to ensure the rights of workers living with HIV or AIDS and workers affected by the disease. To date, the projects they are working on have reached more than 3 million workers in more than 600 entities, resulting in workshops and training for over 16,000 workers, managers, and government-agency officials.

Since 2000, the department has contributed \$41 million toward HIV and AIDS education and outreach through the ILO, the Academy for Educational Development, and Project HOPE. Specifically, the program improves workers' understanding about the spread of HIV and AIDS in an effort to reduce the risky behavior that leads to HIV transmission. The program also educates workers about how to treat people living with HIV and AIDS, focusing on dignity and respecting human and worker rights.



"It's been a privilege to help support those in the field who are struggling against the HIV and AIDS epidemic," said Church-Albertson. "The project staff and the workers who become peer educators are helping to save lives by using the workplace to spread messages to prevent stigmatization, encourage testing, and avoid risky behaviors. Their stories are inspiring, and we are happy to be able to support their efforts."

One project, The "Hometown Fellow" campaign, is an HIV and AIDS Workplace Education Program implemented with the support of the department and ILAB. Twenty-nine enterprises in China's Yunnan, Guangdong, and Anhui provinces implemented an HIV and AIDS education program covering 250,000 workers. Between 2007 and 2009, worker awareness of all five measures for prevention of HIV increased from 14.8 percent to 54.5 percent. Positive attitudes toward people living with HIV, reflected in seven key questions on the survey, increased considerably from 7.6 percent to 54.9 percent. Reported condom use during last casual or commercial sex significantly increased from 49.2 percent to 73.3 percent.

"It is bad enough to have AIDS, let alone not be able to get a job or be fired because of it. It makes me feel good to know that this project gives people with HIV or AIDS a fighting chance by tackling discrimination at the workplace," said Marler. "It is amazing the misconceptions that people have about HIV and AIDS and how you get it. Knowing that one life may have been saved due to the project's prevention strategy makes it worthwhile," he concluded.

More recently, Marler and Church-Albertson worked closely with the U.S. Department of State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator. The U. S. Global

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AIDS Coordinator's mission is to lead implementation of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). PEPFAR has recognized DOL's effective outreach effort.

Launched in 2003, PEPFAR is the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. It is a comprehensive approach to combating HIV and AIDS worldwide. Under PEPFAR, the U.S. government has committed more than \$25 billion to the fight against global AIDS, making it the largest contributor to the fight against global AIDS.

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DOL is at Work Protecting Workers' Retirement Savings Secretary Solis Honors Goldberg and Prouty for Training in Dallas Region

By Peggy Abrahamson, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis recently gave a Worker Protection Award to the Employee Benefits Security Administration's (EBSA) Dallas Region Bankruptcy Trustee Education Project Team for their exceptional achievement in planning and conducting the Bankruptcy Trustee Education Project. The project helped Trustees understand their roles when managing bankruptcies involving sponsors of employee benefit plans.

Two employees, Robert Goldberg, Office of the Dallas Regional Solicitor (RSOL), and Mary Prouty, EBSA, demonstrated great skill and knowledge in developing, organizing and delivering the training sessions for the trustees on the details of the new law. Often trustees are private attorneys and most have had little or no exposure to ERISA and retirement plans of the debtors. EBSA's presentation of the "ERISA Primer for U.S. Bankruptcy Trustees" provided the trustees with updated information regarding their fiduciary obligations under the Act and ERISA as well as information about EBSA and how the agency can provide assistance to them.

"Being a part of the Bankruptcy Trustee Education is very rewarding," said Prouty. "So many of the trustees I have spoken with have stated that the process isn't as complicated as they first perceived it and are very thankful for the assistance we give them."

Goldberg and Prouty conducted outreach sessions and training for more than 270 trustees at each of the U.S. Trustee's offices in the Dallas Region, including Houston, New Orleans, Austin, Oklahoma City, Little Rock, and Albuquerque. Not only did the training equip the trustees with knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities, but it also helped to build a network within the trustee community and helps them to better recognize when funds are not properly managed.

The response to the training has been very positive. "The Chapter 7 bankruptcy trustees seemed to appreciate the Department's outreach to educate them about what for many were unknown responsibilities under ERISA-covered employee benefit plans," said Goldberg. "The true benefit of such outreach is that the Chapter 7 trustees now understand not only that they must take action to protect participants and beneficiaries of employee benefit plans, but that they understand what kinds of actions they can take that will promote the interests of the participants and beneficiaries."

"Many of the trustees now say they feel more comfortable handling business debtors with pension plans. Thanks to the training, they now know that they can contact EBSA should they have questions and concerns regarding clients who may not have handled pension or retirement plans properly," added Prouty.

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Boston Has a Year-round Santa Claus!

By Ted Fitzgerald, Office of Public Affairs, Boston Region



On Christmas Day, the readers of the *Boston Herald* learned that Santa Claus worked for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

The holiday profile of Denise Taylor by veteran columnist Peter Gelzinis confirmed what many Labor Department employees in Boston, Massachusetts, already knew — that the staff assistant in the Boston regional office of the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) personified the spirit of the holiday season yearlong for disadvantaged young people in Boston's inner city.

For the past several years, Taylor has worked tirelessly — and paid out of her own pocket — to provide young people of humble circumstances with gifts and memories to brighten lives often shadowed by poverty or neglect.

It began when she noticed young people who arrived at her church, the Bethlehem Healing Temple in Boston's Grove Hall neighborhood, in dirty or frayed clothing, or without socks. While some people complained about how the youngsters looked, Taylor saw something else — a reminder of her own upbringing in humble circumstances. "I said, 'Wait! This might be all they have. Let's get them some new clothes and see if they wear them.' And what a difference that made!"

And still does. Each Christmas season since, Taylor has prepared boxes of clothing for about 35 to 40 youngsters ranging from babies to 18-year-olds, ensuring that each one received what they needed, be it pants; underwear; pajamas; shirts; socks; or shoes. She noted that for some, it might be the only Christmas present they would receive.

But it doesn't stop there. Each August, Taylor arranges a day trip to an amusement park or similar venue in New England. It's the one time all summer that most of her young people get out of the city.

"The kids go back to school in September, and the teacher asks them what they did during the summer. Most of them can't say they've done anything," says Taylor. "This trip gives them a memory of something exciting. They can say, 'I went somewhere!'"

Taylor and private donations pay for the trips. One result of the *Herald* column was a donation from a small church on Boston's Beacon Hill generous enough to cover the rental of a Peter Pan tour bus for this year's trip to Six Flags in western Massachusetts. Why not a school bus?

"Who wants to sit in a bumpy, sticky school bus for two hours?" she replied. "These kids are not used to riding in a bus with a bathroom or air conditioning. Once a year they should be able to go somewhere in a nice bus."

Santa's picked up a few helpers along the way, in the form of her DOL colleagues from EBSA, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, and the regional Office of the Solicitor. These employees have donated money; clothing; time; gifts; school bags; a year's worth of school supplies; and snack food for the trips.

Taylor asks for no reward, but finds it in the smiles and accomplishments of the

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children she helps — five of whom have gone on to college and five more that have made their school honor rolls. She credits her activities to a childhood music teacher who took an interest in the young girl from a family of 10 and instilled a love of music — and possibility — that Taylor passes on in weekly music lessons to youngsters at her church.

“This is my calling,” she said quietly.

There’s one reward, though, that bears mentioning. In 2007, Taylor became seriously ill with bacterial meningitis. One of her youngsters, concerned because she was unable to reach the woman who made her memorable day trip possible, contacted Taylor’s pastor. The pastor intervened and rushed Taylor to Boston Medical Center. Doctors later said that Taylor would not have lived another 24 hours otherwise.

Taylor credits that young person, and the dedicated team of doctors and nurses that cared for her for months, with saving her life and allowing her to continue her work—for EBSA and her “children.”

“I tell the Lord, as long as it’s your will, I’ll make it.”

You see, Santa is a VIP in many lives and can’t afford to take too much time off.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

American iDOL

OLMS District Director Volunteers During Atlanta Floods

By Mike D'Aquino, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



The Atlanta area hadn't experienced record-breaking rainfall since 1946 until September 2009, when torrential flooding occurred throughout metro Atlanta. Heavy rain began falling on September 15 and continued for the next four days causing President Barack Obama to declare a state of emergency in 17 Georgia counties.

The flooding of rivers, creeks, and streams closed many schools and businesses. Numerous bridges and state routes became impassable, and several homes were destroyed.

After hearing about the devastation in the area, Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) District Director Takia Anderson, of the U.S. Department of Labor's Atlanta District Office, felt compelled to do something for those residents who were less fortunate.

"After taking a tour of the Katrina-affected area in July 2009, I wanted to offer my assistance in any way I could," said Anderson.

Quickly Anderson learned about an organization called Samaritan's Purse through her church, Victory World Church located in Norcross, Georgia. Samaritan's Purse is an international Christian relief and evangelism organization that provides spiritual and physical aid to victims of war, poverty, natural disaster, and disease.

Anderson, along with a group of volunteers, assisted area residents by removing water-damaged furniture, clothes and household items from victims' homes. They also cleaned the homes, which were filled with mold.

"I was shocked when I realized the travesty," said Anderson. "I visited two homes and worked in one in Dallas, Georgia, where the watermarks inside were six-feet high and the entire house was gutted. Everything was wet and molded. The residents had lived there for 30 years and lost everything with no money to stay in a hotel."

Anderson spent several hours removing wet clothing, furniture, and laundry equipment. What could be salvaged, she washed with bleach for the family she helped.

Glad to work with her church group and assist those affected by the floods, Anderson looks forward to continuing charitable work on behalf of Atlanta's flood victims.

"I have always volunteered in some capacity throughout my life. That is in my blood," said Anderson.

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American iDOL

EBSA Team Wins Secretary's Worker Protection Award for Investigative Work in Bernard Madoff Case

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Bernard Madoff made history when a judge sentenced him to 150 years for defrauding investors of at least \$13 billion. But did you know that five members of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) helped in the investigative effort that resulted in Madoff's conviction for embezzlement from an employee benefit plan?

The Madoff criminal investigation team for EBSA worked out of the New York regional office on the case from January 2009 to September 2009. They assisted the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York to prosecute Madoff.



During the investigation, David English acted as lead investigator assisted, at times, by Ivette Maddi. Angelo Gaglias, the New York regional office's criminal coordinator, supervised English and Maddi. Gaglias guided and coordinated the investigation between the New York regional office, EBSA's national office, and the Securities

and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

English worked with Federal Bureau of Investigation investigators, conducted or participated in interviews with Gaglias, and reviewed voluminous records concerning employee benefit-plan investments made with Madoff. During their examination of records, English and Gaglias identified specific transactions that established that Madoff had embezzled employee benefit-plan assets.

To confirm that Madoff provided clients with false monthly statements that showed client money invested in large-cap stocks or government securities, which covered Madoff's illicit activities, English and Gaglias conducted interviews with Madoff's investors and owners of companies that sponsored employee benefit plans.



Jeffrey Hinman, EBSA's deputy director for Criminal Enforcement, and Benjamin Apt, his assistant, helped New York regional investigators develop investigative approaches to support the potential charges against Madoff. The two reviewed select documents obtained from civil and criminal investigations, which supported impending

embezzlement charges concerning the employee benefit-plan assets. Hinman also coordinated with the Department of Justice on possible legal theories and reviewed evidence necessary to support the criminal charges.



Later, based on the team's overall effort, Gaglias and English explained to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York how the collected evidence supported the embezzlement charge lodged against Madoff.

On March 12, 2009, Madoff pleaded guilty to 11 felony charges, including securities fraud;

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investment adviser fraud; mail fraud; wire fraud; three counts of money laundering; false statements; perjury; false filings with the SEC; and theft from an employee benefit plan.

With a complex case in the public eye, English, the team spokesman, said the group went through a range of emotions daily, ranging from excitement to exhaustion.

"This was an elaborate scheme that had been transpiring for quite some time, so it was like solving a giant jigsaw puzzle that had been purposely camouflaged and pieces strewn about. Meanwhile, the whole world was watching you put the pieces back together. The work was exhausting at times because, of course, with most fraudulent schemes, lack of detection is the primary goal," English said.

He noted his tasks included scouring through documents, interviewing multiple witnesses, and remembering names, places, and timelines of events. However, like solving a jigsaw puzzle, each new finding or piece of evidence pulled from the haystack of deceit put him and his team closer to putting the puzzle pieces together.

The team assembled the pieces and helped the American public to know that "EBSA is here to look out for and protect its interests as participants in employee retirement and welfare benefit plans," English said.

The Madoff Ponzi scheme, a fraudulent investing technique promising high rates of return with little risk to investors, drastically affected quite a few employee benefit plans; most of the victims or participants were not the affluent victims shown on television stations. Largely, affected plan participants were your average hard-working Joe.

"I like to think, by seeing the headlines and news stories that the Department of Labor and the Employee Benefits Security Administration were involved in the Madoff investigation, that there was an increased awareness by the public of what we do as an agency and that the public felt there was someone who was looking out for them and their benefits in all this," English said.

Aside from seeking justice by helping to convict Madoff, English found working on the case rewarding because of the active interest and collaboration of the government investigators. He also noted, "When I have children someday, I will be able to honestly tell them that I worked on this case, and that the Employee Benefit Security Administration and other government agencies worked hard and came together to find justice for the American people."

Gaglias (New York, New York); English (New York, New York); Maddi (New York, New York); Hinman (Washington, D.C.); and Apt (Washington, D.C.) are one of the winners of the Secretary's Honor Awards for 2010 in the Worker Protection Award category. This award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions in planning, establishing, administering, or enforcing worker-protection programs at DOL.

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ProFile

Abby Daquiz, Giving Back

By Jeannine Blue Lupton, Office of Public Affairs, Seattle Region



Abby Daquiz with infant son Jimmy

A spark lit for Abigail Gonzales Daquiz when she discovered her career path while majoring in political science at the University of Washington and volunteering at the Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice.

Daquiz, who emigrated from the Philippines at age six, wanted to respond to the many questions about immigration issues and labor

rights, and assist with the needs of immigrants and others who needed help working through the legal system. The questions, posed to her as a volunteer, inspired her to earn a law degree, graduating from UW School of Law with honors in 2004.

Now a trial attorney with the Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor in Seattle, Daquiz serves as a volunteer for the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), an organization that provides legal services to low-income immigrants. She works on the development committee to raise funds and is also part of the organization's executive board serving as their secretary. Prior to her work at SOL, she also worked as a volunteer attorney for the organization. Daquiz enjoys her role on this governance board, raising awareness and funds to provide legal access for those who need assistance.

"Working with NWIRP is incredible — the organization stands for the proposition that immigrant rights are human rights. Supporting the advocates and lawyers that represent low-income immigrants, who would otherwise face an immigration judge without an attorney, through my work on the board has been a rewarding experience. We educate and empower new immigrants by helping them assert their rights," said Daquiz.

Daquiz is also a founding member and current president of Filipino Lawyers of Washington. In this capacity she is serving on the new Race and Criminal Justice System Task Force, formed by deans of Washington state's three law schools — Gonzaga University School of Law, Seattle University School of Law, and the University of Washington School of Law. This task force addresses the disproportionate prosecution and imprisonment of minorities by the criminal-justice system.

"We cannot be complacent when faced with real injustice, and we can do more when we stand together," said Daquiz. The task force incorporates members of the justice system, legal professions, minority bar associations, and the community to study the issue of race and the criminal-justice system, with a final objective to recommend specific reforms to the criminal justice systems in Washington state and the country.

Daquiz also serves as a volunteer attorney at a legal clinic sponsored by the Asian Bar Association of Washington, advising clients on a variety of legal issues not related to federal labor laws. Often her volunteer work is similar to triage as she works to get clients the assistance they need.

In her position with the department's SOL, Daquiz represents the Secretary of Labor and DOL agencies in litigation, including both enforcement actions and defensive litigation, and in alternative dispute-resolution activities. She has worked on cases involving enforcement of the Mine Safety and Health Act, the

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Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Service Contract Act, and laws protecting non-immigrant workers.

"I am the luckiest person I know — I have a wonderful family and I work with amazing people doing good work. In addition, I have the privilege of working with some great organizations in the community," said Daquiz, who lives in Seattle with her husband, James, and 17-month old son, Jimmy.



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ProFile

Spirit of the OLMS Southern Region Award Honors Jose Lopez

By Michael Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards Southern Region in Atlanta, Georgia, named investigator Jose Lopez the first winner of the new Spirit of the OLMS Southern Region Award in recognition of his Fiscal Year 2010 accomplishments.

Investigator Lopez is assigned to the Houston, Texas, Resident Investigator Office, which is managed by the New Orleans District Office. Lopez completed 25 percent of the NODO's deficiency and delinquency cases while fielding duty officer calls and public inquiries within the HOURIO office as one of only two investigators in that office.

He also spent more than one-third of his time on criminal investigations, ending the year with one indictment, two convictions, two cases pending prosecution, and six ongoing criminal investigations.

At the same time, he devoted part of his time to educating trustees on audit principles and provided compliance assistance during a union election, which he supervised.

"I believe that it is important to recognize investigators like Jose Lopez for the accomplishments they have made to the agency throughout the fiscal year. Investigator Lopez not only accomplished work on his own cases, but he also assisted other investigators even outside of the HOURIO. I am very proud to be associated with employees who go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the mission accomplished. Investigator Lopez certainly is not the only employee within this region who does that, but I am especially proud that he is receiving this honor at this time," said Southern Regional Director L. Antoinette Dempsey.

Lopez earned the award, which includes both a plaque and a monetary bonus, because of his outstanding efforts and his willingness to "get in the trenches" to do the job.

He began working for OLMS in November 2004 as a federal investigator. Prior to working for OLMS, he worked at the Internal Revenue Service for 14 years.

What Lopez says he enjoys most about his job is "dealing with people and detailed investigative aspects of my job. Whether it is working with other federal investigators or union members, it is always a pleasure to work with and learn from others."

Convinced that he is helping the American public, he says, "When we are able to successfully indict and convict an officer or employee for financial malfeasance, a sense of justice is brought to the union members and the American public in general. We help the American public by bringing them that sense of justice through our well-investigated cases."

Lopez said it was a great honor to represent OLMS as its first New Spirit winner. "It is a privilege to work with outstanding investigators in my district, region, and nationwide. As investigators, we all show the spirit of teamwork, friendship, and professionalism in the job we do for OLMS," he said.

OLMS administers and enforces most provisions of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, which primarily promotes union democracy and financial integrity in private-sector labor unions.

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The OLMS Southern Region includes unions within Alabama; Arkansas; the District of Columbia; Florida; Georgia; Louisiana; Maryland; Mississippi; North Carolina; Oklahoma; Puerto Rico; South Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; the U.S. Virgin Islands; and foreign countries.

The new Spirit Award is meant to recognize outstanding activities by OLMS investigators assigned to the Southern Region in furthering the mission of the agency in the areas of public disclosure, compliance audits, civil/criminal investigations and education/compliance assistance. Dempsey created the award as a way to celebrate the significance of good public service.

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ProFile

From Cantonese to Yoruba, Philly has it Covered

By Elizabeth Zimmer, Wage and Hour Division, Philadelphia District Office



At the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, District Office of the Wage and Hour Division, language is important. Since the year 2000, the Philadelphia metropolitan area's foreign-born population has increased by approximately 33 percent, resulting in approximately one in 10 people in the city being foreign born. Additionally, more than 12 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home.

Diverse language abilities have never been more vital to the Wage and Hour Division's mission. An investigator's ability to communicate effectively with the diverse population within his jurisdiction has had a direct impact on overall enforcement success. Because of this, staff at the Philadelphia office recruit a highly diverse group of investigators so that the growing number of non-English-speaking workers can receive assistance in his or her respective language.

Currently, investigators in the Philadelphia office speak 10 different languages, and more than half of the staff is multilingual. Born in Nigeria, Osbert Okebata speaks Ibo and Yoruba, Rowena Luk is a native Mandarin and Cantonese speaker, and Nata Mamulashvili, from the Republic of Georgia, speaks Russian and Georgian.

There are also several fluent Spanish-speaking staff members, such as Natalie Martinez and Ana Kinnard, both from Columbia, Francia Yops from Mexico, and Assistant District Director Ivette Vigano from Puerto Rico. One of the agency's newest investigators, Rachel Dinetz, speaks Portuguese, French and Spanish.

The Philadelphia team consistently finds that this arsenal of language abilities results in more effective enforcement of wage and hour laws for a number of reasons. When workers can speak directly to the investigator in their own language, they are empowered to assist them and feel more comfortable reaching out for help. Additionally, for the investigators, their language ability allows them to engage in outreach and impact a wider range of people.

This has become particularly important with vulnerable populations, such as recent immigrants and migrant workers. When there is no language barrier, investigators are better able to personally connect with workers to explain the rights they have, and how the WHD is a place to go for help when those rights have been violated.

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Helping Those Most in Need

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Believing that providence brought him to the United States and a career at the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Akinyemi Banjo seeks to help those most in need to find a job.

Growing up in southwest Nigeria in a village called Ode Remo, Banjo was the youngest of six children. Working hard and studying constantly, he earned his master's degree in adult education from the University of Lagos. But fate brought him to the U.S.

In 1995, a parcel came to Banjo from the United States. Applying for scholarships to continue his education abroad, he thought it was a response to one of those applications. He opened the package and learned that his application for a green card was successful. A green card grants an alien permission to live and work in the U.S. However, he hadn't applied, so he was taken aback.

The documents requested an item that was initially challenging for Banjo. It asked for an original birth certificate, which wouldn't be an issue in the U.S., but in Nigeria it posed a problem.

Banjo decided he would give up on the possibility of getting a green card, but his mother, now deceased, suggested that they pray about the matter. "With God behind this, things will work out," Banjo remembered her saying.

His mother suggested tracing the location of the maternity ward in which he was born. They knew that the maternity ward no longer existed, and the doctor who delivered him switched to politics from medicine.

Banjo's mother located the building that housed the maternity ward. The woman saw his mother from inside the building and called to her. Banjo's mother told her she needed his birth certificate.

The former doctor retrieved the document for his mother while she was in town: her schedule had her leaving for East Nigeria the next day, where she lived. Again, the planets aligned.

It turned out that a friend of his mother's, whom she had taken under her wing to help years earlier, had applied for the green card. The friend had not planned to file for Banjo, but had filed for her 10 siblings and added Banjo's name at the last minute. From the 11 names that she filed, his was the only one picked.

Getting the green-card paperwork back to the United States was also difficult, he said. At that time, Nigeria had a corrupt postal system. However, the woman who had filed for the green card on his behalf had a brother with a cousin who worked for the Nigeria Customs and Immigration Service. His mother knew the area in which he lived, but she didn't know his address.

With the green-card package in hand, he and his mother searched for the friend's brother. During their search, a dog started barking, and the owner looked out. They had searched for that house. The younger brother of the Customs worker called out and wanted to know what Banjo's mother was doing there so early in the morning. It turned out that the Customs' worker would leave for the U.S. the same day and would take the package with him.

Banjo arrived in the U.S. in July 1996. To support himself, he took a position in

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What is this?

August 1997 at an adult day-program center that catered to adults with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, from which he developed an interest in disability issues.

He attended New York's Hofstra University and got a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. After graduating, he eventually moved to Maryland to work with the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. He helped clients with disabilities to reenter the workforce.

In February 2003, he moved to the federal sector and a position at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). In the Washington, D.C., office, he served as the vocational rehabilitation specialist and worked primarily with veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Going from the VA to ODEP in 2005, he now works as a policy advisor. "I work with the employer's policy team to increase the amount of people employed that have disabilities. I look at the policies from the employer's perspective to see what their challenges are and to see how ODEP can be of assistance to them. We want employers to increase the number of employees that they hire that have disabilities," he says.

Banjo works with federal government departments, such as human resources, selective placement coordinators, and the Federal Disability Workforce Consortium, an interagency group made up of federal employees and human-resources staff working to accommodate people reasonably and try to improve employment for people with disabilities. Together, these groups try to shape employment practices with the public sector.

"Because the mission of ODEP is improving the employment situation of people with disabilities, that is a perennial issue," he says. "You can see from the numbers that the representation of people in the workforce with disabilities continues to be on a downward trend. One issue that we know is that it has to do with the attitudes of those hiring and the perspective that they have of individuals with disabilities. The biggest challenge is, how do you change those attitudes?"

Banjo said that often you know what you need to do, but your hands are tied because of policy and the way it's written. Because barriers in policy bothered him, he always wanted to know how policy came about. That piqued his curiosity and brought him to ODEP.

"What I like about government is that I have a flair for service. I like to meet people and to help them out. I have a service-oriented personality. When I was working with people, I could see the immediate results. When you work with policy, the result is not immediate. You cannot immediately quantify your impact, but it is an important role," says the married father of three children, ages eight, six, and four.

As to what influenced him to work in his field, he said that he wanted to find a career that would let him use his service-oriented nature. He explained, "Where I come from, disabilities are completely a family issue. There are no concrete government programs to help. Most of the time, there is a sense of shame and the person stays in the house. Society thinks maybe you did something wrong, or that God is punishing you and that's why you have this problem.

"Here, people have a level of care that is supported by the government. People with disabilities are viewed as human beings, just like anyone else."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

New Vision for Atlanta OASAM

By Michael Wald, Office of Public Affairs, Atlanta Region



There are probably few jobs in the U.S. Department of Labor that require the diversity of skill sets as a manager in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM). An OASAM regional administrator is expected to have expertise in such areas as contract management, human resources, financial management, and emergency preparations.

So how does one prepare for this sort of job?

In the case of Veronica Singfield, OASAM's new regional administrator in Atlanta, Georgia, her foundation begins in her heart for service and preparation. Beginning in the military as an Army combat medic, it led through a career as a senior leader in health-care administration before serving as spokesman for the U.S. Army Surgeon General and liaison for the Army Medical Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) before becoming deputy director of the Division of Applications and Awards for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

"Each of my positions has allowed me to serve our nation and help others. I've been fortunate to develop and use a plethora of skills over my career," she says about her various roles.

The daughter of a retired Army master sergeant, Singfield enlisted in the Army Reserve as a combat medic after completing high school. "The leadership and discipline exemplified by my father, and my service in the military, refined me and postured me for future leadership opportunities," she explains.

After suffering an injury while on active duty, she career transitioned from combat medicine to clinical counseling psychology after earning a degree from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Singfield's 20-year marriage to a career soldier resulted in two tours of duty with her husband in Germany, as well as two well-traveled sons. During this period, she was employed as a senior advisor to military health-care executives, served as an administrative officer at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and later became an administrative director for radiology service at the VA. Along the way, she even found time to earn an M.B.A. from Liberty University.

Then came the opportunity to broaden her skills as a program director in Washington, D.C. for the DOD/VA Healthcare Resource Sharing Program, which coordinates the exchange of health-care resources between the Army and the VA.

Several years later, Singfield accepted a position at HHS as deputy director of the Division of Applications Awards, handling issues such as administration of health professions scholarship and loan repayment programs to encourage and enable clinicians to work in underserved areas nationwide.

"In the meantime, my father had retired to Augusta, Georgia, where most of mine and my husband's families live, so I desired to move closer to my family and still have a stimulating career serving the public," she said.

"The OASAM position came along right at the correct moment, when we needed to move closer to our families and provide our sons opportunities to spend more time with family. To me, OASAM is a dream job. Its function is to support all of the client agencies within DOL, so that they can help those who depend on them and give a

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What is this?

voice to those without a voice.

“Here, my mission is to provide a vision that encourages our OASAM employees to support one another and provide the best service possible to our customers. I bring a fresh pair of eyes to see DOL activities and, hopefully in a collaborative way, I can contribute to the strong culture that the agency’s leadership has developed, beginning with Secretary Solis and spreading throughout the DOL agencies.”

Singfield credits the current leadership at DOL headquarters with giving the department a positive energy and the family-friendly atmosphere that she finds. Her goals are to be both proactive and responsive.

“It is important for me to be true to the department’s mission. That is what grounds me,” she says.

When asked about which aspects of OASAM are most important, Singfield focused on being intentional about customer relations, providing top-class customer service, and deepening her own staff’s knowledge of their worth and importance to the DOL mission.

“In D.C., the focus is rightly on policy, where as in the regions, we need to focus on how to implement those policies, which ultimately depends on the intricacies of the relationships we develop. You learn a deep respect for what it takes to execute an idea at the regional level,” she says.

“I keep a small saying with me that really sums up my feelings: ‘The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the greatest intention.’ We need to have fun, to actively listen and engage our customers and learn,” she notes.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

Eastern Kentucky Native Uses Mining Experience as Inspiration for MSHA Work

By Carolyn Holl, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



For 27 years Bob Cornett has promoted safety in many ways while working for the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). He is currently a district manager in Morgantown, West Virginia, and enforces mine safety and labor laws in northern West Virginia, Maryland, and Ohio.

Cornett grew up in rural eastern Kentucky in a town so small there was only one road through. He was fortunate to take advantage of opportunities that allowed him to expand his horizons and venture beyond his hometown.

He enrolled in a program called Upward Bound, through which he took the American College Testing, or ACT. His scores "shocked a lot of people" and gained him entrance into another program called A Better Chance, where he had the opportunity to go to summer school at Williams College in Massachusetts. From there, he received a scholarship to attend Blair Academy Prep School in New Jersey. At Blair, classes were held class six days a week, and the only opportunity to get away was to volunteer, so Cornett traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to rebuild a church. He was also sent to do work in New York, New York.

"I never saw the world until the Upward Bound program, and it's made me who I am today," he said. "If I could come from where I did and make it, anyone can."

Cornett incorporated the knowledge gained from his vast experiences into his study at college, where he graduated with a teaching degree. Seeking a teaching job was difficult then because there were limited jobs available. He ended up working at the Scotia mine in eastern Kentucky in 1974 after a friend helped him get a position as an engineer. In 1975 he was injured in a mine explosion at the Scotia mine, which resulted in Cornett enduring plastic surgery three times. To this day, he suffers from double vision. The next year, the infamous Scotia mine explosions occurred, killing 26 people. This brought about the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977.

"This incident shaped my views about the importance of mine safety, and it also helped change laws in mining safety," said Cornett.

In 1982, he made a career change and began working for MSHA. He felt a personal connection to his new job. "I know the impact mining has on families, which caused me to be a lot more responsible once I started working for MSHA," he said. Throughout his numerous years at MSHA, Cornett has learned to be the example of practicing good safety.

Cornett inspires today's youth with his life success story, encouraging them to persevere and work hard to achieve their goals. "You shape who you are and what you can be," he says to young people. "There are opportunities available if you take them, and don't blame your culture or your background if you don't achieve."

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Job Fare

ProFile

WIA: Creating Jobs for the Disadvantaged

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



To recognize exemplary effort in implementing a successful Workforce Investment Act (WIA) summer youth employment initiative for Indian and Native Americans under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009, eight U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) employees received a Secretary's Honor Award for 2010

under the ARRA program.

Evangeline Campbell (Washington, D.C.); Sibert Seciwa (San Francisco, California); Guy Suetopka Jr. (San Francisco, California); Craig Lewis (Washington, D.C.); Duane Hall (Dallas, Texas); Dawn Anderson (Washington, D.C.); Andrea Brown (Washington, D.C.); and Belinda Taylor (Washington, D.C.) were award winners. DOL officials recognized them for having made significant contributions in planning, establishing, administering, or enforcing ARRA programs.

Called the Indian and Native American Supplemental Youth Service Program (SYSP) grants, these were among the first Recovery Act investments implemented in Indian Country. In total, 133 grants went to 31 states from as far away as Alaska to Florida. ETA reserved \$17.82 million for the SYSP, where the average grant was \$102,170.

Grantees began operation of the SYSP grants on April 1; the grants run from July 1 to June 30, 2012.

Section 166 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) authorizes programs to serve the employment and training needs of Indian and Native American youths through competitive two-year grant awards with Indian tribes; tribal organizations; Alaska Native entities; Indian-controlled organizations serving Indians; or Native Hawaiian organizations.



The intent of the youth program is to offer summer and year-round employment and training activities for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian youth between ages 14 and 24. The employment and training activities proposed for the grants must develop the academic, occupational, and literary skills of individuals; make these people more competitive in the workforce;

and promote the economic and social development of Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities.

Grants must address the education and training needs of these populations, including how those activities will accommodate the skill and education level, age, language barriers, and work experience of the individuals. The grants must focus on industries, occupations, skills, and competencies that are in demand.

Those individuals who face substantial barriers to educational and employment success, including high school dropouts and youth in need of basic skills training, were those targeted for these grants. Additionally, those residing on or near isolated reservations or villages impacted by the recession were also grant recipients.

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In general, the Recovery Act envisions a stronger workforce environment for youth, including Indian and Native Americans, in which they can easily transition between the labor market and higher education and training to advance in their careers. Education and training closely align with jobs and employment opportunities available on or near reservations.

The plan is to incorporate culturally relevant training approaches, including mentorships, internships, placements at tribal colleges or at other training centers that develop academic, occupational, and literacy skills. SYSP grantees are encouraged to use on-the-job training as a mechanism for introducing youth job seekers to industries and jobs that employ “green” skills or technologies.

Awards under the SYSP ranged from approximately \$1,380 to \$3.9 million. The program’s largest grant was to Arizona’s Navajo Nation for \$3.9 million to help in the areas of job search and applications; cover letters to employers; job interviews; job apparel; and college scholarships and resources.

“Indian and Native American communities have some of the highest unemployment rates in the United States,” said Campbell, who led the team of eight dedicated federal project officers to provide training and technical assistance to the Indian and Native American grantees.

“Recovery Act funding helped this hard-to serve and disconnected Indian and Native American youth population to obtain employment and training. Moreover, Recovery Act funding allowed WIA Section 166 grantees to almost double the number of reservation youth served and provided supplemental income to their families,” she explained.

For Lewis, working on the project presented a fulfilling experience. His role on the project was to develop policy guidance on how to implement the WIA-ARRA youth programs.

“This was a project with no precedence, so it was exciting to help create a meaningful strategy to assist native youth. I was able to provide input, based a lot on experience in the field, to incorporate ARRA into the overall employment and training arena for native programs,” Lewis said.

One of the rewarding facets of the program was “knowing that, with these added funds, more opportunities will be provided to Indian Native American youth to pursue their education and world of work goals and toward self-sufficiency,” said Seciwa.

Additionally, “The American public was helped by our unit working together to ensure our grantees understand the purpose and use of the ARRA funds,” said Suetopka, a federal project officer. Noted Hall, “It was exciting to be involved in a high-profile, national government initiative that involved all government agencies. Working on the Recovery Act gave me the opportunity to work with employees throughout ETA, including the six ETA regions. It made me realize that ETA has a lot of very talented employees.”

Sonya French-Begay, ARRA policy analyst at the national office for the project, was also responsible for overseeing ARRA grantees. Because DOL hired her after October 1, 2009, she could not be included in the nomination. However, she did consider the experience wonderful because of the grantees’ ingenuity.

“They were full of imaginative, creative, and progressive ideas that fit within their community. They extended out these ideas, which sparked the fire under the youth in their community which, in large part, is missing within our society today,” she said.

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Job Fare

ProFile

Philadelphia ETA Gives More Than Dollars to YouthBuild Grantee During Day of Service

By Lakshmi Balaji, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



A typical day for the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) discretionary grants unit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, includes tackling heaps of paperwork and meeting deadlines. But for Discretionary Director Leo Miller and his employees Kenisha Davis, Keith Hubert, Marc Orsimarsi, Kimberly Smith, and Chantal Watler, a desire to volunteer in the community offered the team an opportunity to break from the norm.

When brainstorming ideas for how to volunteer, these ETA employees remembered their visit last year to the Resources for Human Development's (RHD) YouthBuild construction site in Chester, Pennsylvania. In 2007, RHD received a \$1.1 million YouthBuild grant from Labor to provide an alternative educational venue to 74 at-risk youth ages 17 to 24. The trip to the site inspired the Labor employees to give back to their community, and they decided to volunteer to help another YouthBuild organization.

As part of the YouthBuild initiative, which is sponsored by ETA, students receive education, leadership training and hands-on construction experience by building affordable homes in their community. Recently, the six Discretionary Unit employees rolled up their sleeves and assisted students and staff from the Philadelphia Youth for Change Charter School, a YouthBuild grantee in 2009, with constructing a home in the Philadelphia area. They did roofing, put up wall framing, and hammered down materials.

The DOL staff found the physical labor to be a refreshing affirmation of the importance of the YouthBuild program. They witnessed firsthand how the grants they monitor take shape beyond the program reports familiar to them.

"The day of service makes the grant experience real for federal staff. These grants are more than the paperwork," said Miller. "They are young adults learning work skills, completing their education and working as a team."

The participating students also understood the value of the program in their own lives through their hands-on experience. They were able to reflect on their individual development which was highlighted through the work they performed. Wearing their tool belts and being involved in a collaborative effort gave the students a sense of pride in knowing that they were participating in something bigger than themselves.

Simran Sidhu, executive director of the charter school, added that the students' involvement in the project was "identity shifting," referencing the personal-growth process that many experienced from the beginning of the project through the end.

The ETA employees received fulfillment through the volunteer experience at the charter school. They plan to adopt the day of service as a scheduled event on a regular basis.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

Atlanta's Federal Women's Program Honored Five Memorable Women

By Michael Wald (Office of Public Affairs) and Karen Ransom (Bureau of Labor Statistics), Atlanta Region



U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) agencies in Atlanta, Georgia, hosted their 37th annual breakfast this spring for the Federal Women's Program. Regional DOL employees made history come alive by depicting five memorable, historical women.

Dressed in costumes related to the characters they portrayed, each woman gave the audience a sense

of their character's personality and what made them unique.

Toni Buxton from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) inspired the audience with her portrayal of Marian Wright Edelman, the first African-American woman admitted to the Mississippi State Bar and the founder of the Children's Defense Fund. ETA's Dianna Milhollin gave a lively rendition of Frances Perkins, a U.S. Secretary of Labor and the first woman to hold a cabinet position. Robin Moyer, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), gave a rousing performance as Madam C.J. Walker, an entrepreneur who overcame poverty and a lack of formal education to become the first African-American millionaire. BLS Regional Commissioner Janet Rankin stayed true to the good nature of Juliette Gordon Low and portrayed the humorous and caring founder of the Girl Scouts of America perfectly. ETA's Connie Taylor provided moving insights into the life of Luisa Moreno, a labor activist who worked tirelessly to establish and maintain the rights of Latinos in the United States.

The breakfast also gave DOL a chance to recognize employees who had outstanding achievements throughout the past year, including Personal Achievement — Administrative/Technical — Sherrilyn Callaway, Office of the Solicitor, and Personal Achievement — Professional — Janet Collins, BLS.

Following the awards, the crowd, which numbered more than 100, enjoyed a wonderful breakfast served by the culinary arts students from the Atlanta Job Corps Center, which has handled the breakfast for this event for several years. After being served delicious culinary treats, Job Corps officials made a presentation about their program and introduced their participating students.

Next step is to try and top this for next year's event!

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

At the Academy, Keeping Miners Safe and Healthy Every Day

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Even U.S. Department of Labor employees may be surprised to learn that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) operates an educational facility called the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beaver, West Virginia. The Academy provides state-of-the-art education and training to MSHA inspectors, mining-community personnel, and government employees.

Janet Bertinuson, a lifelong worker in occupational safety and health, heads the Academy.

Born in Denver, Colorado, she grew up in Connecticut and considers herself a Yankee, even though she's been in West Virginia for the last 13 years.

Getting her start in the occupational safety and health field with a bachelor's degree in biology from Clark College in Dubuque, Iowa, and a master's degree in environmental health from the University of Cincinnati, she says she's always worked with labor organizations, both in the United States and in Canada.

While working as an occupational health and safety consultant, Bertinuson saw a part-time opening at the Academy in 1997 for someone to develop industrial hygiene courses. After accepting the job, it morphed into a 32-hour-a-week position and then became a full-time slot for Bertinuson working as a course developer and industrial hygiene teacher for inspectors. She also worked on a joint program with the National Stone Sand and Gravel Association that provided hands-on noise and dust sampling training for the industry.

Bertinuson became the Academy's deputy superintendent in 2001. She served in that capacity, and later as acting manager of the Academy, until May 2008, when named as the superintendent.

The Academy, which looks like a small college campus, has 147 hotel rooms. The buildings and the grounds have some things that no college campus has.

"This is a pretty amazing facility," she says. "We have a mine-simulation lab and other laboratories and a state-of-the-art data center."

The mine simulation laboratory is an above-ground simulated mine that provides hands-on training. The 48,000 square foot facility has a simulated coal mine on the lower level and a simulated metal/nonmetal mine on the second floor. There, Academy personnel trained more than 1,600 mine rescue team members in Fiscal Year 2009.

The data center is one of the information technology centers for the MSHA local area network, which links computers within a geographically limited area.

The Academy has an online course catalog that features 50 different courses, seminars, and workshops, including "Accident Prevention Techniques," "Electrical Safety for Coal Miners," and "Roof Control Seminar." The public and government employees can enroll in any class listed. In 2009, there were 2,413 students.

Academy officials have also increased class offerings. Approximately 20 years ago, there were five entry-level classes. Last year, at any one time, there were 22. MSHA inspector training has also recently increased, she said.

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Academy classes have always featured standard courses dealing with mine law, regulations, policy, information technology, and the mechanics of how inspectors should do their jobs. However, the technical classes have changed to meet the demands of updated equipment and changes in regulations and legislation. The Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act of 2006 required new training, for example, on teaching people how to switch out their self-contained self-rescuers, a portable oxygen source.

Bertinuson and Academy instructors continue to respond to those changes. "There is a renewed emphasis on health in general at MSHA, particularly black lung, so our classes and the courses that we develop will reflect that. Anytime there is an initiative, we focus on that."

She claims her job is never dull, and there are many rewards, especially knowing that you are contributing to a good cause. "Everyone here, from the housekeepers to the cafeteria workers, is contributing to the health and safety of miners," she says. "We support the inspectors while they're going through the training, and we help them learn what they need to do to conduct good inspections and to know the law."

"We also provide facilities for mine rescue teams, and we do that training. Everything we do here focuses on keeping miners safe and healthy. That's really our core mission to use education and training to make the mines safer and healthier."

With a staff of 130 to 140 employees, ranging from housekeepers to instructors, Bertinuson says her management style includes managing as a team because "when you have a good team, things get handled."

As an example, she points out the recent snowstorm, where the Academy provided shelter for 47 people rescued from snowbound travels.

"It was clear with our experience with the snowstorm that people did their jobs. People worked together, and that's pretty much how this facility works. You have long-time federal employees here who have been with the government for more than 35 years. You have dedicated people here, and that's really made a difference," she said. "That we were able to do what we did is really a testament to how well we work together."

During her tenure, there have been many physical changes to the Academy. She's had workers repair leaking roofs, fix plumbing, and install generators. When people compliment her about the improvements to the Academy infrastructure, she utters one of her favorite phrases: "Thank you, but it wasn't me!"

At this time, Academy personnel are redoing the miner's rights booklet, the facility's most in-demand publication. Employees are developing an online training program and six new DVDs to illustrate miner rights and what employees can do to avoid discrimination.

Despite the fast pace, Bertinuson says she loves her job.

"Quite frankly, I like being a public servant. Certainly at this facility, and with the work that we're doing, it's my money, as well as other taxpayers' money well spent. In some jobs it's not that easy to see the direct connection to the people that you serve, but I see miners and mine rescue teams here everyday. I see that money being spent for a very direct, positive outcome," Bertinuson notes.

While her government experience has been limited mostly to MSHA, she has worked with people in other parts of the agency. "DOL seems to have people that work as a team and people focus on end results. What I see the Secretary doing and all the initiatives—it makes me really proud to be part of the DOL team," Bertinuson says.

A knitter, gardener, and mystery reader while not at work, she says one of her favorite authors is Barbara Kingsolver. She likes Southern writers and says there are plenty of good West Virginia authors.

A kayaker, Bertinuson headed to Baja, Mexico, in February to kayak and whale watch. She went with a group that she traveled with to the Grand Canyon and the Galapagos Islands.

Her start in kayaking began at the beach on the Intracoastal Waterway. At the end of the season one year, she broke down and bought a sit-on-top ocean kayak, which can be slid off of if tipped. In Baja, she used a sea kayak, the sit-inside-with-the-skirt variety. "It's just one more adventure for me," Bertinuson said.

FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

ProFile

Advocating for Workers' Rights Runs Through Veins of 36-Year Career Department Union Representative

By Joanna Hawkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



At the age of eight, Jim Weyrauch participated in his first picket line with his father, an organizer for the Teamsters union during the late 1930s, in their hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Young Weyrauch rolled marbles underneath the hoofs of the horses carrying the billy-club-toting policemen to prevent the police from getting traction. Since those early days of his life, Weyrauch has developed into a staunch advocate for workers' rights and equality, being arrested an astounding 48 times on picket lines while he supported labor, women's, and civil-rights issues.

Now 74 years old, he continues to fight for workers as the 25-year president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 644, which represents U.S. Labor Department (DOL) field employees in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

"I fight harder than anyone else in the free world," said Weyrauch from his Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, office. "I give all I can to the people and organizations I fight for."

In 1974 he began work for the Labor Department as a compliance officer with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), then a two-year-old agency that was still getting off the ground. On his first day of employment, he joined AFGE Local 644; he has been an active member ever since.

He remained with OSHA until 1994, when he transferred to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management to serve as a full-time union representative and, simultaneously, as president of Local 644. In this position, he has achieved numerous accomplishments, such as negotiating four significant contracts and settling an \$8 million Fair Labor Standards Act case in 1994. The case was on behalf of 4,000 field employees from several DOL agencies nationwide.

Weyrauch holds a host of titles, including executive vice president, political and legislative director of the National Council of Field Labor Locals, and vice president of the Pennsylvania American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). To him, titles are just that—titles. "With all the titles and everything, I'm still basically a steward that represents the people," he says.

There were several interesting facts about Weyrauch and his long history of advocacy and working with unions. He first joined a union in 1951 at the age of 16 when he worked at a construction site in Pittsburgh during the summer. He received his first union card at that time and has had a union card for 58 consecutive years. Weyrauch has been a delegate to Pennsylvania's AFL-CIO since day one of the organization's start more than 50 years ago.

With no plans for retirement soon, Weyrauch said, "As long as there is breath in my body, I'm working. I like what I do, and I can't see myself sitting at home staring at the dog and not being in the fight."

His personal mantra, "la lucha continua," a Spanish phrase meaning "the struggle continues," will persist to drive the resilient Weyrauch to fight for workers' rights.

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Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

After a Mine Emergency, Family Liaisons Get to Work

By Eric Kleiman, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



The MINER (Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response) Act became law five years ago and established a new requirement for the Mine Safety and Health Administration to create a liaison program to provide families with factual, accurate and timely information during mining rescue operations. MSHA currently has 58 trained staff members to serve as conduits to family members after a life-threatening incident at a mine.

These liaisons undergo intensive training in the technical and emotional aspects of working with

families after an explosion or accident. They provide briefings as often as every two hours as families undergo the excruciating wait to determine if there are survivors. They sit with the families and offer a direct pipeline to the command center where decisions are being made on rescue efforts.

Most MSHA family liaisons were once miners themselves. They volunteer for this duty in addition to their regular job responsibilities.

We recently caught up with Michael Dickerson, an MSHA family liaison in Mount Hope, WV, who was one of the first DOL employees on the scene following the tragic mine explosion at Upper Big Branch on April 5, 2010.

Frances: *How many families have you worked with as an MSHA family liaison?*

Dickerson: I had worked with 14 families in individual cases. Then we were called out to Upper Big Branch, which claimed 29 miners. That is 43 different mining families who have lost loved ones as a result of mining accidents.

Frances: *What do you think most people don't understand about miners?*

Dickerson: What offends miners the most is the portrayal that mining is the only thing they can do because of a tough economy. That's not the case. They are proud of what they do. Most of them choose the profession. It's not a pick-and-shovel profession anymore. They are running expensive, complicated equipment. A lot of miners are college graduates. They're there because they want to be.

Frances: *What is the first thing you do when you are brought in as a family liaison?*

Dickerson: My job is to keep the families updated. When it's a single fatality, I call the family immediately — before the funeral — and say, "When you're ready to talk, give me a call." Usually, within a day or two after the funeral, they do.

I go wherever the family member wants to meet — our office, their home, a restaurant. The accident investigation coordinator goes with me, and we give them all the details we can. I tell them there's going to be a thorough investigation. We explain there is going to be a rumor mill, and that they can contact me any time to clear up those rumors.

We stay with them from the beginning until the final report is issued. Some families prefer close contact and communicate with us frequently, and some prefer their space and communicate very little. We let them set the pace that they are comfortable with. We go through the report with the family first — before the company, before anyone else. We clarify anything they don't understand. We answer any technical questions.

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There can be a lot of mining terminology some families don't understand. I've even taken pictures of equipment identical to equipment involved in accidents. Most of the underground equipment and much of the larger surface-mining equipment is never seen by people who are not involved in the mining process. Families need to understand what happened. The mining company usually won't let them see the accident scene because their lawyers get involved. So we show them, using pictures, diagrams or anything else that's helpful.

Frances: *When you sit down with these families after the funeral, what do they want to know?*

Dickerson: A lot of families want to show you who their loved one was and what kind of person they were. I've looked at photo albums. I've heard so many stories. I want to hear them. I care about these miners. You start to realize what the family needs. They want someone to listen to them. They want someone to understand [the victim] wasn't a reckless person. Occasionally, the family will have information that is important to the investigation. We have obtained information about deficient training or equipment defects in these meetings that has sent investigations in a new direction.

Frances: *Your job sounds very emotional.*

Dickerson: It is. It gets very emotional. The investigators, the liaisons, the witnesses all put themselves in the place of the family of the miner. Sometimes there was obvious suffering, or a young family left behind. There is always a heartbreaking story with each fatality. There have been interviews when witnesses break down or even investigators break down and we have to call for a break. Recently, in the investigation of the death of a young miner, we had to call a recess for everyone to recover. We were all parents or grandparents and knew the distress this was causing.

Frances: *You were one of four MSHA family liaisons at the Upper Big Branch explosion. What did you find when you got there?*

Dickerson: I had dealt with a lot of single fatalities before UBB, but never anything like this. When I left the office with my district manager, all we knew was that there was possibly a belt fire. That's a serious situation. So we got in a Jeep and headed that way. When we got to Beckley, we got a call from Massey's regional safety person. She said it was bad and there were several people down. So we knew we had an explosion.

They reportedly had recovered nine miners, including two survivors. One of them had put on his self-rescuer, which creates oxygen from carbon monoxide. He reportedly held his breath and put it on when he heard the explosion, and by his quick action, he didn't breathe any contaminated air. I heard he had tried to put rescuers on all of his fellow miners.

Frances: *How long were you with the families?*

Dickerson: I stayed with them all week following the mine explosion. Four of us rotated shifts. We were there, two at a time, for at least 12-hour shifts. It was hard to leave, to tell you the truth. We were there round-the-clock.

A lot of the families and community members who were there, waiting for news, were religious. They were praying. Their ministers would come in. The community was pouring in food and supplies. There were blankets. There were extra phone lines. Businesses were coming in constantly bringing food and supplies. The Red Cross was there, including a retired doctor and a nurse. All the families' physical needs were taken care of. Anything they needed, the community made sure they had it.

They made a family center out of the safety department at the site. Every time we made an announcement and put a mine map up, the room was packed with more than 200 people. We provided updates every two hours, whether there was anything new to report or not.

There were usually eight police cars outside and 10 to 12 ambulances. There were a lot of medical needs. People passed out during some of the more traumatic announcements. There were two pregnant women and some individuals on oxygen tanks.

The thing that sticks with me the most out of that entire week was the notification to a family that they had lost three family members. People were praying out loud. When they were notified, everyone in the room was crying with them. On another occasion, after some bad news had been delivered, a member of the [West

Virginia] governor's staff began singing "Amazing Grace" and everyone started joining in.

Frances: *Did the families stick together?*

Dickerson: Absolutely. It was a long wait. At one point, I remember that someone had set up canopies and picnic tables outside. Families were talking and the kids were playing outside. I remember I thought it looked like a church social. These families are so resilient and caring. It inspired you. They came up to me and said, "We haven't seen you eat. We haven't seen you sleep." During their emotional turmoil, they were concerned about me.

Most of the families didn't like the press. Reporters were always waiting for them outside. At one point, the governor had to send police over to run a reporter off a grandmother's front porch. But despite that, I remember the families sending food out to the press. That really said a lot to me.

Frances: *How did you prepare the families as prospects for survival grew dimmer?*

Dickerson: They would come around and ask us, "What do you think, could they be in a rescue chamber?" We never wanted to give anyone false hope. I said, "If they are in the rescue chamber, it would be a miracle, but I can't rule it out." By the time the announcement came, a lot of them already knew. Still, when they announced that there were no survivors, it was chaos. I was standing near the back of the room. People were moving around, shoving, very upset. I was in the back and afraid that one of the small children would get stepped on. So I found a back door and helped a couple of young mothers get their kids out.

Folks needed time to grieve. I remember seeing a large young man who appeared to be solid muscle. He was standing in the gravel parking lot just screaming. The police were out there. They placed themselves between him and the remainder of the people. They never attempted to stop him and just let him work it all out until he collapsed in exhaustion. I was very impressed with the state police.

Frances: *Why did you volunteer for such a difficult assignment as a family liaison?*

Dickerson: I knew it was something the families needed. I'm empathetic, but I'm not an overly emotional person. I thought I could handle it better than most. I have met some wonderful people in the process. I just wish we could have met under different circumstances.

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Behind the Scenes

Charleston, W. Va., Disabled Veteran Personally Inspired to Help Coal Miners Affected by Black Lung

By Joanna Hawkins, Office of Public Affairs, Philadelphia Region



As a workers' compensation assistant with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation in Charleston, W. Va., Doug Adkins provides assistance to coal-mine workers.

Adkins is passionate about helping coal miners to the best of his ability because of the personal connection he feels with them. Like many coal miners, Adkins was exposed to danger in the line of duty.

A disabled veteran who served 12 years as an active duty and Army Reserve soldier, he deployed in 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to Tal'Arfar, Iraq, one of the most perilous parts of the country during

that time.

During his deployment, Adkins faced grave danger and was even injured; but despite this, his 10-person team achieved a high-level of success with their mission and returned home with no casualties.

After returning from war, Adkins hit a rough patch and reached out to the Department of Veterans Affairs for help. He joined the VA's compensated work therapy (CWT) program, which helps veterans get back on track personally and professionally.

Through the CWT program, Adkins made great strides. He eventually learned of a job opening at the Labor Department and decided to pursue it.

"I appreciate the department taking a chance and hiring a vet," said Adkins. "I enjoy helping coal miners while also now serving my country in a civilian capacity."

Adkins says he likes the day-to-day business of his job. His military experience taught him how to maintain a positive attitude and not to sweat the small things. "No matter how bad it gets, it's nowhere near as bad as it could be. There are worse situations," said Adkins.

Adkins and his wife, Hollie, have a 12-year old son and an 11-year old daughter. He plans to continue working toward achieving his goal of becoming an OWCP black-lung claims examiner and remains committed to serving coal miners, the department, and our great nation.

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Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

William Meeker Leads OFCCP Region to Employer of the Year Award

By Rhonda Burke, Office of Public Affairs, Chicago Region



The Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired named the U.S. Department of Labor's Midwest Region, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), its employer of the year during a recent awards ceremony. The award went to an employer who made a difference in the lives of people with vision disabilities.

This recognition is given to an organization that has employed a blind individual for three or more years. The OFCCP Milwaukee, Wisconsin, District Office hired William Meeker, who was born with retinitis pigmentosa, as a compliance officer

21 years ago.

"Bill has been an asset and valued contributor to the mission of the agency and particularly the Milwaukee District Office," said Sal Guerrero, OFCCP Midwest. "When interacting with Bill, what's very apparent is his knowledge and experience regarding the laws and programs the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforces. He is successful in his job despite being visually-impaired because his real vision may be much keener than some of us that are not impaired at all."

As a compliance officer, Meeker reviews the written affirmative-action programs of federal contractors and subcontractors and investigates complaints of employment discrimination by these groups. The office has provided him with screen-reading software, a Kurzweil 1000, a BrailleNote, a Braille embosser, and a part-time reader and driver.

"I think it is important to recognize employers who make accommodations to provide jobs for the visually impaired, because 70 percent of working-age, visually-impaired adults are unemployed," Meeker said. "It's important to know that, with the proper training, we can all do the same job as our sighted peers."

Meeker has worked at the Milwaukee office since November 1989 and began his career with the U.S. Civil Service Commission in Detroit, Michigan, in 1974. He graduated from the University of Detroit in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in mass communications, and joined the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in 1973 after experiencing housing and employment discrimination. It was the networking opportunities of the NFB that led him to federal employment.

"I was one of the fortunate ones because I was able to find work with the federal government just a few years after losing my vision at the age of 23," Meeker said. "My co-workers have always been very supportive of me. The key for me was training. Because I lost my sight from a progressive disease, I had to learn blindness skills and living skills as an adult."

Founded in 1952, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired is a private, nonprofit agency. Its mission is to promote the dignity and independence of people in Wisconsin who are blind or visually impaired by providing services, advocating for legislation, and educating the general public.

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Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Job Corps Students Gain Experience, Maintain Frances Perkins Building

By Michael Volpe, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Daily renovation and maintenance of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C., is providing Job Corps' students with on-the-job work experiences as they sharpen their trade skills in areas such as carpentry, electrical wiring, and facilities management.

"Ever since I was little, I wanted to know how electricity worked, so I enrolled in the program to learn that trade," said 21-year-old Irving Phillips of the Washington, D.C., Potomac Job Corps Center as he installed new televisions in the building's fitness center.

"We are learning actual skills in the workplace, not a classroom," said 22-year-old Cherrell Tucker, also of Potomac Job Corps, as she replaced window weatherstripping in Secretary Solis' office.

Both said they experienced the most fun recently on the rehabilitation of offices at the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). We got to cut through a wall, and pry two-by-fours from their studs piece by piece. "It was cool," said Phillips. "We got to pull stuff apart without getting into trouble for it," added a joking Tucker.

On the serious side, both students praised the program for giving them experience working in an office environment. "You learn how to cope with problems, deal with people, and anticipate their needs," said Tucker. The program "teaches you how to be polite and kind. It makes you a better person," added Phillips.

The Home Builders Institute offers trades training to Job Corps students, and its six-week DOL work-based learning program has existed at the department for more than 30 years.

In recent projects, DOL building engineers have asked Job Corps students to demolish walls, build new offices, weatherstrip doors, repair furniture, and install wiring, according to Gary Shavlik, HBI's DOL site supervisor for the students, who has been in his current position for about four years.

Working in the building gives students "an opportunity to get experience, interact with people, learn their trade, and enter the workforce prepared," Shavlik said.

HBI is the workforce development arm of the National Association of Home Builders. Job Corps, a part of the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration, is the nation's largest career, technical training and education program for students ages 16 through 24. It services more than 100,000 young people each year at 123 centers in 48 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

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Behind the Scenes

"Sometimes it Pays to Be a People Person"

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



You'd expect nothing less than to hear the daughter of a mayor is a people person, but that's how Sharon Smith describes herself.

Smith, who has worked for the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) since April 2009, serves as a personnel assistant.

"Sharon is the face and voice of OASAM when it comes to serving our customers," says Kelley Pettit, the agency's

regional administrator in Dallas, Texas. "She is often the very first person our customers talk to when they call or visit our offices."

Smith's job requires her to meet and greet people who are looking for government careers. Additionally, she handles recruiting tasks for her Dallas office.

Working with the incoming paperwork to advance the application-and-interview process, she ensures that people meet the criteria for a DOL job. Applications come in worldwide, and her team of four recruiters receives approximately 500 applications weekly from people seeking DOL employment. For one job, a wage-and-hour technician, she accepted more than 500 resumes.

Typically, for most positions, she gets 45 to 75 resumes. "We're being flooded and overwhelmed with applicants applying for positions," she says. "It's extremely hard because so many people are qualified."

Among agencies, she says that OSHA is hiring the most, particularly inspectors.

Working as a personnel assistant is fulfilling, she says, "because I get to meet people of all different nationalities and work for all different agencies. I help those that are new to the Department of Labor feel comfortable."

Smith also said that she enjoyed the varied tasks with her previous DOL jobs, having dealt with workers' compensation claims for 9/11, the Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, and New Orleans' residents for Hurricane Katrina. In each case, she worked directly with families of the wounded, deceased, or displaced in her jobs with the Office of Workers' Compensation. There, she had duties as a resolution clerk, benefits technician, a customer-service representative, and later an accounts technician.

"With these 'hot' cases, I had to make sure that DOL had all proper documentation, which at times was disturbing because of all that these people had gone through," she explained. "But I feel my employment has given me a chance to learn a lot about labor laws, DOL activities, and things that go on."

Job opportunities brought her to Dallas in November 1987, where she worked for Kelly Temporary Services. Soon after, she pursued a career with the U.S. Department of Defense, later moving to the Social Security Administration, where she worked for four years.

After taking time off to have a baby, she heard through a friend about an opening at DOL. She joined the agency in 1994 as a GS-3 mail and file clerk.

To hear her story, though, it's amazing that she juggles a job and family. Her 12-year-old received a brain-tumor diagnosis in 2006, and the ensuing treatments resulted in a cancer-free announcement for the past several years.

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"I'm looking forward to him living," says Smith, also a mother to a 19-year-old daughter, a 28-year-old son, and a four-year-old granddaughter.

Despite her family's situation, Smith gets involved in church activities, helping to feed the homeless and, during holidays, bringing them clothing or blankets. With her kids, she visits nursing homes to bring the residents gifts, such as a Bible or toiletries.

Moving forward in life with resolve, she mentions that her mother is mayor of Arcola, Mississippi, a town of 2,500 residents near Hollandale, the town where she grew up. Her mother first ran for mayor four years ago and lost by two votes. In another election four years later, she won, unseating the previous mayor, who had been in the position 24 years.

"Sometimes it pays to be a people person," she concludes.

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Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Encouraging the Team Concept

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



The trophies of softball players in various poses line his credenza. The framed Redskins football artwork has yet to make it to his wall, but Bruce Brown is a sports lover who considers the environment at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) encouraging of the team concept.

Brown started as a contractor at DOL's warehouse 25 years ago, storing agency publications, delivering bulk paper to agencies, and removing any unwanted or excess furniture from offices. Because he performed well on the job, his supervisor suggested that he join the government. Eager to become a permanent part of the "family," Brown became a fed in 1987, working as a supply technician before moving on to a 10-year stint as a transportation specialist.

When Bruce joined the print shop, he joined a team that was learning to rely on more technologically advanced machinery. To learn about the technology that could help his department do things more efficiently and speedily, he took classes through Labor's in-house continuing-education program.

Meanwhile, a promotion to the post of supervisory, electronic documents specialist in the Printing and Supply Management Division, Office of Administrative Services, arose. Brown leapt in, tasked with the mission of getting things up and running electronically for the department, rather than relying on the old system of people using signed forms to request print jobs and others handing over mammoth stacks of materials for photocopying.

Brown made change his priority. "I'm working out the kinks in the system," said the graduate of the district's Spingarn High School, where he played football and basketball. "It's tough when you're trying to get people to send you a file electronically. They're used to doing things a certain way, and we're trying to get them to adjust to a new routine."

Brown estimates that 60 percent of his jobs come in electronically, but he'd like to see that number rise.

"Technology just makes the job easier," he says. "But right now, my biggest problem is the security of documents that are sent. The IT folks are concerned with people from the outside accessing the system, so they're working on that part to make it better."

Predicting that it will be another year before the print shop operates completely by accepting electronic files, Brown has a goal of making DOL's system one of print-on-demand, where it can print one booklet, or a thousand, quickly.

For the most part, Brown says the system is in place to bring the print shop to its peak, with color and black-and-white scanning capabilities, plus the necessary high-tech equipment for any of the varied jobs that his team handles.

While technology has lightened the load for Brown somewhat, because of it, some jobs have disappeared.

"We used to print all the earnings-and-leave statements and the OPA news clips. That's now done electronically," says the supervisor of three employees.

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However, there are always priority projects, such as printing the Labor Department's annual budget and employee 1099 forms in time for tax season, not to mention the rush jobs that frequently come in at 2 p.m. Friday with a deadline three hours later that same day.

Staying busy is just a part of the job, with many large-scale projects occupying Brown's working hours. "We have been working on a Vets' project that was an end-of-the-year annual report. We just finished a Philadelphia Enforcement Conference outlook book. We completed 5,000 postcards for Vets for an upcoming event, and we're completing end-of-the-year reports. The OCFO's office is bringing down bits and pieces of the budget. Wage and Hour has weekly conferences that keep us busy printing their books on basic training skills. The work never stops."

Brown says, "My main role is to give the customer what they want. I want to help them make the proper choices for their project by recommending what should be done to get the best final product."

He says he's a supervisor that stands next to his workers, rolling up his sleeves to get the job done. Teaching his team new ways to accomplish tasks and encouraging them to work with the equipment and computers to learn as much as they can about features leads to career growth for his employees, Brown insists.

But he's not all about work. One of his passions includes travel, especially long drives to Florida, often twice a year, to destination spots Fort Lauderdale and Key West. The warm temperatures help him recharge, as does slow-pitch softball.

"I had 10 years of play with the DOL softball league," Brown said of his days pitching for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's team. "In our coed league, we played after work in the evenings. I just loved it because we were a team, and it also was like being part of a family. We won several championships, too."

The team and league have since disbanded, but that gives Brown time to focus on Washington Redskins football. A long-time fan who lives near FedEx field in Landover, Maryland, he reminisces about some of the Skins' glory days.

"If I had to say who my favorites were, I'd guess I'd say The Hogs," an affectionate name for the Redskins' offensive line during a time when the team won Super Bowls back in the 1980s. "They were great, unassuming players who opened up big holes for John Riggins and other players."

The father of four chuckles. "It's not quite the same team now."

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Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Claims Examiner Overcame Sight Impairment to Land Dream Job

By Office of Public Affairs, Denver Region

Photo of Linda Walczyk Linda Walczyk always sat at the front of the classroom. Never by chance or because she was being punished. Rather, it was something more of a habit, something she was compelled to do, something she asked to do.



Little Miss Perfect, apple on the teacher's desk, always early, hand up first, tattle on the bad kids, straight-A do-gooder — right?

No, not Walczyk. You see, she didn't sit at the front of the classroom to gain favor with her teachers. She did it because there was simply no other way she could see the material presented on the chalkboard. It's all the all-but-legally-blind woman could do to ensure she got the

same education her classmates had.

Today, the 27-year career civil servant goes through life doing what she has to do without whining or complaining or wishing she was anything more than she is with an air of self-actualization that can only be described as inspirational.

"My parents never raised me to think I had a disability," said Walczyk. "They never taught me to feel like I had special needs. I just thought, 'OK, I don't see as well as others do,' and so I just did what I had to do."

Linda's can-do attitude led her to her current position as a claims examiner with the U.S. Labor Department's Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation in Denver, Colorado. And when Linda tells you it's the best job she's ever had, you know she truly means it.

But the best job hasn't come easy. Her journey has been rough from the start, a start that came about six weeks earlier than most.

"They say your eyes are some of the last things to develop completely — I guess I came a little too early," she said. "Just six months after being born, my grandmother noticed that one of my eyes just kept moving back and forth uncontrollably."

Come to find out, the muscles responsible for controlling eye movement never completely developed for Walczyk, leaving her in a world that was bright enough, but one without focus or definition. At three, her first pair of glasses helped a little. Still, she could hardly make out anything definitively unless it was right in front of her face. As for depth perception, forget it. Depth perception for Walczyk had come through the lessons learned from countless bumps, bruises, trips, and falls.

That said, it's no surprise that Walczyk's never driven a car. However, she admitted to trying to get a driver's license once.

"I walked into the testing center and they set me up with that eye-test machine. I couldn't see a thing," she said. "I just turned around and walked right out the door." Out the door meant that Linda would rely on public transportation and, more recently, her daughter for rides to and from work.

"You lose a lot of your independence when you don't have a driver's license. And, for me, waiting for the bus — all I see is a big, bright blur coming toward me," she said. "For all I know, I could be waving down a potato-chip truck."

The potato-chip trucks came and went, but rest assured, so long as she was at the bus stop, she knew the bus would eventually come. It did, and in late 1983 it took

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Walczyk to her first job in the civil service as a GS-3 pulling vouchers at the finance center at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver.

Walczyk stayed with the Air Force for years working in publication distribution as well as with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and in records management. She made it to a GS-7, and not long afterward, she told herself if she was ever going to make it any further, she'd have to finish her degree.

In 1999 she earned her bachelor's degree in business management and continued to work in finance for the Air Force. In 2007, a term position as a claims examiner with the Labor Department came open and Walczyk thought it was worth a shot. Lyn Kirkham, supervisory claims examiner, remembered Linda well during training sessions prior to hiring.

"She showed great promise early on, and I knew I wanted her on my team," says Kirkham, who today is Walczyk's supervisor.

With the help of a device that enlarges document text on a screen, as well as a program called Zoomtext that enlarges text and icons on the computer, Walczyk quickly made her mark as a claims examiner. When her term appointment — along with many others — was coming to an end, with only a handful of permanent positions available, Walczyk's work ethic and record of achievement were key factors in being rehired in one of those permanent positions.

"She carries the same caseload other claims examiners manage," said Janet Kapsin, Denver district director for the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation. "She holds her own."

It's hardly ever easy. Still, she gets it done. And if she ever hits a moment of doubt or despair, she just turns back to that person who's been her pillar of strength and support for more than 40 years: "My husband. We were married very young. All throughout life he's always encouraged me telling me, "You can do this." "

She can and she does.

Walczyk still takes that seat at the front of the classroom during ongoing training sessions. Now, though, she doesn't have to ask the teacher.

It's already set aside just for her.

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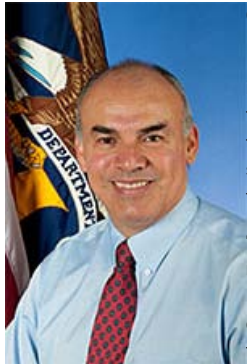
FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Mr. Telephone Man

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Call Jose Figueroa when you can't call anyone else.

Figueroa handles the 10,000 to 12,000 telephone lines in the building in his role as a telecommunications technician. Each of the more than 5,000 employees in the Washington, D.C., building has a phone line, he says, but there are also conference rooms with phones, fax lines, and TTY lines.

"I receive calls daily from the personnel within the national headquarters," Figueroa, a member of the Division of Space and Telecommunications, says. "It could be as simple as resetting someone's password for their telephone, or it could be as complex as redoing

the cabling to ensure that they have a dial tone. There are also issues of getting the proper lines—an analog line versus a digital line."

Figueroa said he learned the job as he went along.

"Because the technology is changing constantly in the telephone system, you need to be able to adapt. Every day you have different scenarios, and it forces you to learn," he says.

For instance, he's now accommodating the employees from the former Employment Standards Administration who have split into new divisions. Some have relocated, but all need products that work. According to Figueroa, there's pressure to get the work done for staff on the same day, expediting the process. For the most part, he's been setting them up in the proper location and getting them telephones.

Luckily, he has a partner who helps him—Grace Rodriguez-Dewan—and he says she usually handles the more complex tasks. There is also an acting supervisor for his department, Sheila Speight.

To ensure good service, Figueroa says he constantly monitors the DOL telephone services e-mail box, which he uses to accept requests. He then lets people know when he will fix their problem. Of course, he receives phone calls, too.

He handles repairs on a first-come, first-served basis, but if the request comes from the Office of the Secretary, those issues receive priority service.

What he enjoys most about the position is the personal contact with people.

"I'm a people person, and because of the job I have, a lot of people know me. It is a pleasure to help people," he says. "A lot of times things break down, and it takes awhile to figure the problem out. A lot of people aren't happy then, but for the most part, people have a good attitude, and we get positive feedback about the job we do."

Figueroa came to DOL after getting in touch with former Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, whom he knew through his catering contacts. She encouraged him to apply for a job at the department. He did, and was eventually hired by the Department as a program analyst in the Business Operations Center. Six years later, he moved to the Division of Space and Telecommunications for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management.

When not at work, Figueroa, a father of four, is very much a family man. He explains, "I like to spend as much time with my family as I can. We go to church,

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get involved in the community, and help people in need.”

Figueroa is a long way from his roots in Guatemala, where he went to a four-year college called Humanities. He attended school full-time and worked full-time. Because of the time constraints, he said he knew he wouldn’t be an excellent student, but he would do the best he could by “burning the midnight oil.” He tells his children that there was no greater satisfaction in life than earning his college degree.

He received a bachelor’s degree in accounting and eventually would like to become a certified public accountant. Because his friends and family know that he has a background in accounting, they call on him for help with tax issues. On the side, he helps friends to resolve issues with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and he interprets for others what the regulations mean. He responds to letters from the IRS and then helps friends to try to find the documents they need or detail their expenses. A hobby for Figueroa now, he says, “Accounting is my background and also my passion.”

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

Behind the Scenes

Working for the Agency Down the Street

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Gary Byrd grew up in the shadow of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) on 610 Third Street NW in Washington, D.C., the current site of an FBI office. Watching the construction of the Frances Perkins building as a child, he had no idea that he would one day work for the agency down the street.

His mother, a disciplinarian, stressed the importance of school, so at 14 Gary entered a boarding school in Maine. Once there, Gary earned a scholarship to attend Gould Academy, where he thrived among the multicultural student body, making the honor roll and studying as an exchange student in the Dominican Republic.

Following a year of school at Rollins College in Florida, Gary came home to the district, where he worked several jobs before joining DOL as a contractor, hauling mail and moving office furniture.

One day, while helping with the mail in place of a sick colleague, his supervisor asked why he did the task when it was not his job. Gary replied that he just wanted to help. The supervisor saw Gary's initiative and immediately asked him for his civil-service rating. That open avenue brought him into the government as a mailroom employee.

After eight years in the mailroom, an opportunity opened in the print shop to do graphic reproduction and photocopying. "I never worked with the machines in my life, but it was a great opportunity to learn something new," said Gary.

As an electronic document specialist, he assists DOL employees with reproduction jobs, including color and black-and-white projects, in the Printing and Supply Management Division of the Office of Administrative Services.

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Job Fare

My Town: Cleveland, OH



By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



When one thinks about mining, one doesn't immediately think of Cleveland. Although mine regulations for coal mines are the same at all coal mines, they differ from the standards for metal/nonmetal mines.

Just ask Lynnette Grubb, a mine inspector based in the Hebron, Ohio, office of the Mine Safety and Health Administration. For her job, she inspects some of the mines in the 88 counties in Ohio, one of eight inspectors with that role.

At MSHA, there are two groups. Coal is one, which works exclusively with that product, and the other division is metal/nonmetal, which includes all other mining — sand and gravel, limestone, salt, gold, and bauxite mines to name a few.

"As an inspector, you're picked to work for one class or the other — metal/nonmetal or coal. My background is 33 years in coal mining, but in terms of where they needed inspectors at the time I was hired, it was on the metal/nonmetal side," said Grubbs, who began work for the U.S. Department of Labor in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2002.

She transferred to Hebron, and each Monday she goes to her assigned travel area in Ohio, for the most part working solo on the job site. But it is an expansive job. On one day, she might complete mine inspections, on another some special investigations, and on a third aid in compliance assistance. Her inspections take in a wide variety of surface and underground metal and nonmetal mines, mills, and any related facilities, which include mine shops.

When at a mine site, "In addition to safety items, we also look for health problems. We prepare written reports of the inspections or investigations, and if we find a citable condition, then we issue citations, or orders, for what we find during the inspection," Grubb says. "We may also have to testify at a hearing based upon a violation that we wrote."

On the investigations, "We help out with serious accidents. We could be called to help out on a fatality," she says. "With a regular accident, we try to determine a root cause and how the company might prevent such an accident from happening in the future."

The job is different when comparing underground versus surface mines.

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Underground has some additional standards. “For instance, in an underground mine, you can’t use gasoline to power internal combustion engines without restrictions due to fire prevention. On the surface, you can store and use gasoline-powered engines as you do in roadway vehicles. Underground, they primarily use diesel engines, which have the potential health hazard of diesel particulate emissions. MSHA monitors for diesel particulates annually,” she notes.

Some of her inspections take place in Cleveland. In the Cleveland area, there are two larger salt mines and some sand and gravel and limestone mines. One massive mine is Cargill, located downtown near the flats — a big revitalization project. They mine highway salt, as does Morton, on the east side of Cleveland. Both mines send their product to clients by ship, rail, or over-the-road trucks, helping to make the roads passable in winter.

On a typical day, Grubb might visit a small sand and gravel mine with two people working there with three to five pieces of equipment. She looks at their processing equipment, such as conveyors that move sand and gravel. She also examines their shop area, their maintenance efforts, and their company records to ensure they’re following the company’s training plan.

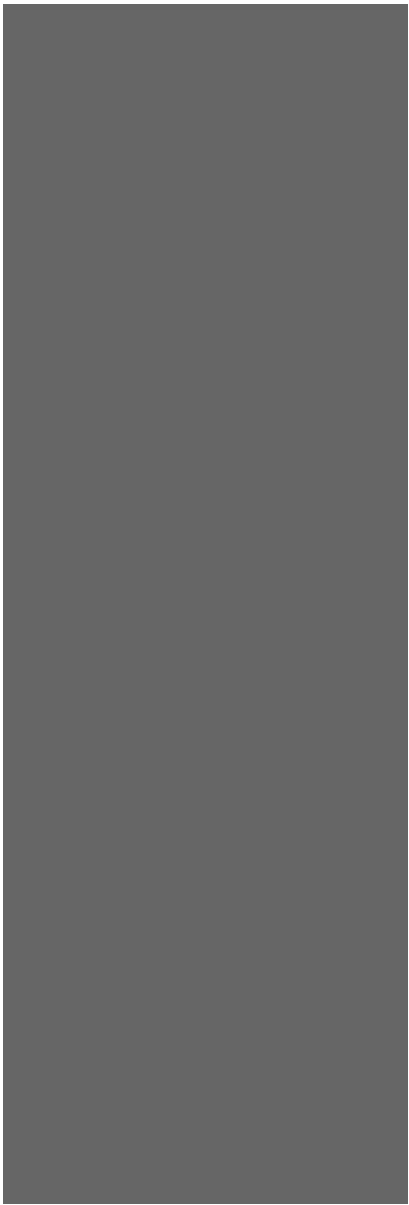
“In a small mine where you have two people, you may be able to do the inspection, processing equipment, and records in one day. You go to a salt mine like Cargill with 150 employees, and it will take up to two weeks because it’s more involved. You take an elevator underground nearly 2,000 feet to where they’re mining, so while you’re traveling there, you check for compliance, monitor breathing air, ventilation, and roof control,” she explains.

Just as no two mines are the same, Cleveland is a unique city with the Rock-and-Roll-Hall of Fame and sports teams, including the Indians from baseball, the Cavaliers from basketball, and the Browns from football. Grubb adds that you can take a boat ride just about anytime you want on Lake Erie, and Cleveland has had two TV shows filmed in its city, with Betty White starring in one now and Drew Carey previously in the other.

“Cleveland is one of those diverse places. You can go down to the market, you can go across the bridge to the stadium, you have all the ethnic groups here with their restaurants and all sorts of great food,” she says.

For Cleveland, where some of her friends and family reside, she has a special message. “When I visit the mines, I try to say a few words about safety and health with everyone I can. I know that the employees have been trained, and they know what the laws are, but sometimes a word or two from an inspector shows that we do care. It’s not just a job for us. It’s a way of life. To the people in Cleveland, we want to say we hope your workers go home safely every day. We expect them to.”

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: Louisville, Kentucky



By Carmen Rendon and Judy Coogle, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Louisville, Kentucky, Area Office, and Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Judy Coogle and Carmen Rendon

Located in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, the compliance officers and staff who work with the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs are affected by the traditions of the city, such as the Kentucky Derby and related events.

Not far from some of the largest corporations in America, Judy Coogle works as an OFCCP compliance officer. Each workday since joining Labor in 1987, she has conducted compliance evaluations of federal contractors, made on-site visits to contractors doing business with the government, and enforced Executive Order 11246, section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment

Assistance Act. These regulations ensure that contractors doing business with the government in 422 cities and counties across Kentucky are in compliance with all regulations.

Coogle has visited companies in Kentucky whose leadership believed in men-only jobs and have said, "That's too heavy for our girls to lift." It's a comment she has heard often in her career. The Louisville OFCCP has also been involved in complaint investigations at coal mines in the "hollers" of eastern Kentucky, where hiring has been limited to "friends and family."

But she's also seen resolutions to female pay because of maternity leave, made facilities more accessible to those with disabilities, and heard interviews of harassed minority employees at a local manufacturing plant.

In short, Coogle's role as a compliance officer has provided her with an opportunity to change lives and minds, to promote diversity, and to provide a remedy for violations perpetrated by old ideas.

"When we look at companies, we're looking at their compliance with employment standards, their numbers of females, males, minorities, and nonminorities, disabled employees, and veterans to see that they're practicing equal employment opportunity and affirmative action," Coogle said. "They need to have a diverse workforce and treat their employees fairly. We are also looking to ensure good jobs

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What is this?

for everyone.”

Carmen Rendon, assistant district director of the Louisville area office, oversees that office to ensure companies comply with DOL regulations. Guiding and directing her team, she determines companies to audit, assigns cases, and leads employees to areas that they should examine. When there are violations, these are noted in a conciliation agreement, a legal document that tells the particular offense. The conciliation agreement has remedies. If a company official signs the conciliation agreement, it agrees to solve the violations noted.

Unlike other cities, the Louisville OFCCP does compliance evaluations of corporations, manufacturing companies, construction companies, and universities — all with leadership sitting on the board of directors of many Kentucky Derby-related events and many high-profile Derby activities.

Even with an event such as the Derby, known to spectators nationwide, Coogle notes, “In all our audits we ask companies, including those with a large role with events such as the Kentucky Derby, to comply with the executive orders that we enforce.”

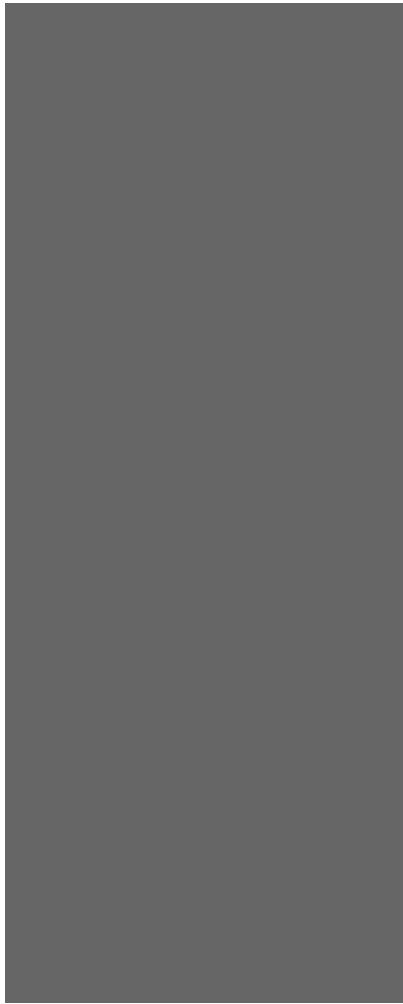
In addition to the sporting event, Coogle had dealt frequently with a sausage company that faced a large discrimination case because it did not hire Hispanics. DOL settled the case with the company for approximately \$1 million.

Another case in her area against a utility company had a class of females that filed a complaint against the organization based on sexual harassment in a hostile work environment, alleging unequal treatment of women.

While DOL finds problems, it also provides solutions to others, such as that with the utility company. “We resolved the issue, got a conciliation agreement, and they did training with the EEOC,” Coogle said. “We look at their personnel activity, their compensation, and we also do linkages with recruitment sources to link them up with sources to recruit females and minorities. We also help them to hire veterans and disabled individuals.”

As the Run for the Roses continues to define Louisville, Coogle and Rendon mark out their roles in making a better city, shaping history one workday at a time.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: The Fields of California

Anything But *Cortito* -- Ensuring Workers Protection Under the Law

By Jose Carnevali, Office of Public Affairs, San Francisco Region



Wage and Hour Division San Francisco, California, District Office investigator Paul Ramirez knows a thing or two about what farm workers face every day. At age eight, he began to slowly capture snippets of a reality that defined what labor in the fields was all about in the early 1960s.

Ramirez's father and his older brothers worked on a large farm near Brentwood, California. He was one of 10 children in his family.

"We all worked in the fields. Buying school clothes was a big deal for us, and my parents needed help. My mother used to ask me if I wanted to work in the fields, and I always responded that I didn't. 'Well,' she replied, 'if you don't want to work in the fields, you better study hard.' "

Working conditions then were strenuous. Employee rights and protections were minimal. Pesticides, such as DDT, were in common use, and there was no protective equipment for the workers using the pesticide or working near it.

Ramirez vividly remembers the harassment and frequent cheating by land owners he observed when it was time to pay. Farm workers would lower their heads in disbelief when they were not paid the money they were promised.



"Workers were really upset. You could tell that they were being cheated," said the U.S. Department of Labor employee.

California today continues to rank number one in the production of many agricultural staples, including almonds, broccoli, celery, grapes, nursery plants, hay, and a host of other products. Agricultural enforcement activities continue to be a primary focus for WHD throughout the state.

"We hope for compliance every time that we conduct a field visit, but workers sometimes don't feel at ease with the presence of a federal investigator," says Ramirez. He often sees Spanish-speaking workers turning the other way when they note the presence of the *federales*.

Recently Ramirez and fellow WHD investigators were conducting a field visit at a Salinas Valley farm, in the Central Coast region of California, where the majority of the salad greens consumed in the U.S. are grown. He approached a group of workers, who clearly did not seem to appreciate him. He needed to ask them just a few simple questions about their work, their wages, and working hours. The group hesitated, their discomfort with the questions obvious.

"Back in the early days, I, too, worked in the fields, I told them," Ramirez remembers. "They looked at me as if they believed nothing of what I was saying. I insisted, sharing with them that my dad and my family had also been farm workers. But yet again, the tactic was clearly not working, until I mentioned my own experience as a farm worker, including two very special words which immediately melted away the wall of distrust that seemed to stand between us. Those two

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words were *el Cortito*."

Ramirez remembers when the workers used the infamous *el Cortito*, a short-handled hoe that forced farm workers to bend and stoop for many hours each day, often leading to incapacitating and sometimes permanent back injuries. *El Cortito* was finally banished in 1975, but the memories of the pain are still shared in the fields today.

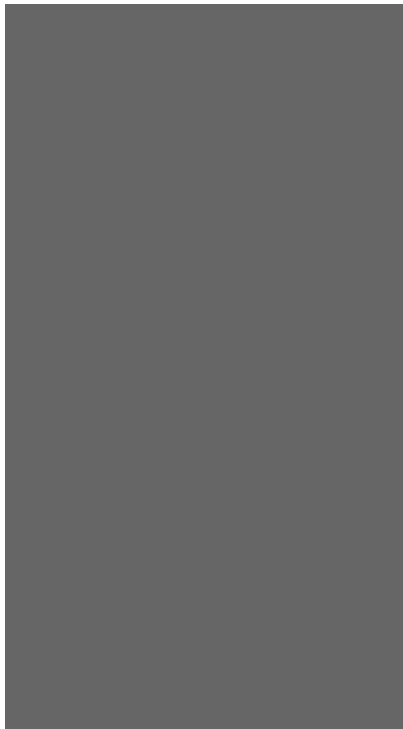
"When they heard those words, they surrounded me with great curiosity, as if they had heard a familiar chord, for they just knew that I knew and lived through what they had heard about so many times from their elders around the dinner table," he said.

Mentioning *el Cortito* made an important connection with these workers, Ramirez says.

"Once they knew that I had come from those ranks by actual experience, they finally opened up and talked freely about other farm-labor contractors or agricultural employers that were either mistreating or not fairly paying their workforce. As I recall, we did get some leads in helping underpaid workers that season. Ultimately, these workers made it very clear that it was good to see someone like me that knew, in my position as a *federale*, how we could help," he said.

Ramirez loves his work. "Undoubtedly, when workers get tangible results, such as overtime back wages, it seems easier to comprehend more fully who we truly are, what we do, how we do it, and why we do it at the U.S. Department of Labor."

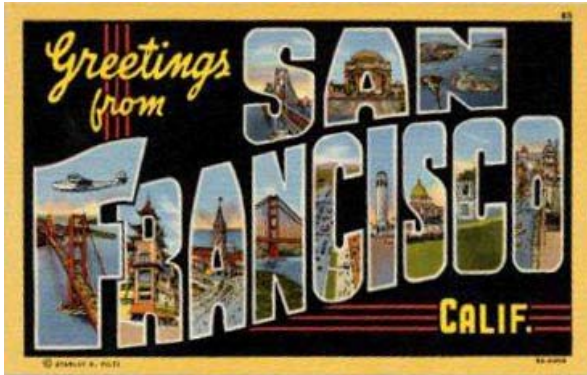
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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: San Francisco Region



San Francisco's Chinatown a Special Beat for Wage and Hour Investigator

By Jose Carnevali, Office of Public Affairs, San Francisco Region



Harry Hu arrived in San Francisco, California, with his parents and sister 30 years ago from the Philippines. For the last 20 years he has worked as an investigator in the San Francisco District Office of the Wage and Hour Division. His expertise includes the ability to communicate in languages other than English, including Cantonese, Mandarin, and Tagalog, or Filipino, a Philippine language.

These language skills are of particular importance because of where he does his work. Hu's investigations take him through 13 counties in northern

California in a territory that stretches as far north as the Oregon border and as far south as the town of Monterey. Although his language skills can be helpful in his work anywhere, his duties in demographically and ethnically diverse San Francisco have some unique and special features.

San Francisco Chinatown, for instance, is not only the largest Chinatown outside of Asia, but also the oldest in North America. Besides being one of the top tourist destinations in San Francisco, the 30 blocks that make up this area are also a network of businesses and residences with complex socioeconomic and labor characteristics.

San Francisco Chinatown is a neighborhood with one of the highest population density rates in California. It also has a high percentage of first-generation immigrants living in cramped quarters. Many newly arrived workers from China and other Asian countries find their first jobs in one of the many restaurants and shops in Chinatown. Most arrive without English-language proficiency.

Hu explains that many Chinatown businesses have traditionally ignored U.S. labor laws and regulations, and many recent immigrant workers are unfamiliar with such laws, which may not have existed, or been enforced, in their native countries.

"Many people have the misconception that as long as you get a salary, everything is OK. But it is absolutely not OK," he says. "There are labor laws, such as overtime, and minimum wage, and workers rights. Workers need to know about this and we are here to help."

Hu says that some 15 years ago, workers'-rights violations in the garment industry

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were prevalent in Chinatown and in the rest of the city as well. San Francisco, Hu says, had about 500 garment workshops in operation, with some 300 more operating in Oakland, California, across the bay. Today, however, most of these small- and medium-size garment factories have either relocated to Los Angeles, California, or moved offshore. Wage and hour violations are now more commonly found in the restaurant industry and other small businesses in Chinatown.

“As wage and hour investigators, we act as a neutral party in the enforcement of several comprehensive labor laws,” Hu says. “I am very glad that, thanks to our work, many employees in Chinatown and elsewhere are getting their hard-earned wages.”

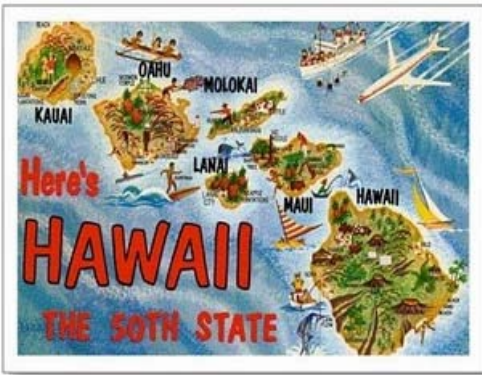
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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: Honolulu



Cultural Diversity Makes Hawaii a Paradise and a Challenge

By Peggy Abrahamson, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Jamika Lopez is passionate about her work as a Wage and Hour investigator and about the city she called home for the past three years. When the job was offered to work for Wage and Hour in Honolulu in 2007, "I jumped at the opportunity," said Jamika. "I had never even visited Hawaii before boarding the plane, and I immediately fell in love with the islands and the people."

The diversity of Hawaii permeates every aspect of life on the island, and for Jamika, that diversity is both a blessing and a challenge. "One day, you might be working with Spanish-speaking migrant farm workers hiding under the coffee trees in the rainy region of Kona on the Big Island; the following day you can be on Oahu aboard a snorkeling catamaran interviewing a predominantly Japanese crew off the shore of Honolulu."

To meet the challenges of working with a diverse population, Hawaii recently transitioned from an area office into a District Office. "This made doing the work in Hawaii much easier than trying to work out of San Francisco, and we can hire employees who understand the employers, workers and the culture better," Jamika explained. WHD now employs investigators that speak Tagalog, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese.



Recently DOL's Wage and Hour's Hawaii Area Office received information advising them of possible wage violations for agricultural migrant workers employed by a company located near Waianae, Hawaii. Jamika found violations under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Both of these laws are meant to ensure that workers receive the pay they earn, that proper

record keeping is done, and that employers follow the standards in the Acts for youth and migrant workers. As a result of her investigation, the company agreed to pay all back wages, provide safe housing to workers and adhere to all safety and health regulations. "At the end of the day, I feel honored that I am able to assist those who are the most vulnerable of workers, especially in this economy when so many are struggling to get by," she said.

Though Jamika loved working in Hawaii, she recently moved back to Fresno,

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California and works out of the Bakersfield area office. In about six months, she is expecting her first child and wanted to be near family where she grew up.

Prior to joining the Department of Labor, Jamika worked for a wage and hour class action litigation firm in the San Francisco-Bay Area representing low-wage workers.

She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 2001 and received a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 2005.

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: Ft. Lauderdale



For a Florida OSHA Inspector, Work Sometimes is a Beach

Snow recently blanketed—and shut down—Labor Department offices throughout the Northeast, but for DOL employees working in balmy climates, there are different challenges.

Marcelina Santiago, a health and safety investigator for OSHA in Ft. Lauderdale, knows these challenges well. An industrial hygienist with a PhD in Chemistry from the University of Miami, Santiago is a familiar face at Port Everglades, where hundreds of cargo ships come and go every month.



Cargo shipping has its own unique workplace health and safety issues that, in some cases, may prove deadly for workers. In May 2005, at Port Everglades, several tanks filled with argon gas were placed in the cargo hold of a ship bound for Peru. When a leak developed in one of the containers, the cargo supervisor and two crew members went into the container to investigate. All three workers died as a result.

During a six-month investigation after the incident, Santiago, working closely with the U.S. Transportation Department and the U.S. Coast Guard, found that the crew members had not received adequate safety training and were not outfitted with Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) masks. As a result of the investigation, mandated safety training is now in place.

A native of Miami, Santiago is fluent in Spanish—a big asset as she works closely with non-English speaking immigrant workers in South Florida's large Latino population. Since joining the Department, she has conducted OSHA investigations at major ports, a speed boat manufacturer and a tomato packaging plant. When asked about the best part of being a Ft. Lauderdale Fed, Santiago replies, "The diversity of the people I meet every day."

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FRANCES MAG

Job Fare

My Town: San Francisco Region



Former Navy Veteran Enjoys Helping Vets Return to Productive and Healthy Lives

By Peggy Abrahamson, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, DC



Helping veterans to retain the jobs they left when deployed overseas or to find jobs when they return is both challenging and rewarding for Christopher "Chris" Still and his staff. Still is the regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in San Francisco, California.

"I like working in San Francisco because of the diversity of the people; you have Americans from all walks of life here," said Still, a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "It serves as

the epicenter for the Western United States that reaches out to all veterans in the region." Because California is strategically located on the Pacific Coast and is easily accessible by land and sea, there are more veterans here than anywhere else in the country. California leads the nation with 1.9 million veterans, followed by Florida at 1.7 million; Texas, 1.6 million; and New York is fourth with 1 million veterans, according to the latest data from the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The job is challenging because the economic recession resulted in high unemployment for many veterans, especially for those ages 18 to 24 and living in California. For the month of May, approximately 94,000 veterans, or about 9.2 percent of California's 1.9 million veterans are unemployed, according to BLS. San Francisco VETS is also responsible for helping returning veterans from Hawaii, where the unemployment rate is at 8.3 percent. The unemployment rate for all workers nationally is currently 9.5 percent and down from 10 percent in December of 2009.

A bright side of helping jobless veterans is that they often have excellent job experience compared with their peers, complete with seven-day work weeks in war zones and tested leadership skills in handling crises. Such experience can translate well in a workplace and is something that young veterans need to emphasize when they are interviewing, according to VETS officials.

Still, who has been in his position for nearly 11 years, enjoys helping these veterans in retaining or finding employment; he is a veteran of the first Gulf War known as Desert Shield/Desert Storm. "I want to help those who served and sacrificed for our country. I understand veterans and their needs," said Still. "You don't join the U.S. military to get rich. You join for a much greater cause and calling."

Another important and challenging aspect of helping veterans is getting them used to being back home and a part of American society. "These are different times now

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in these wars our veterans are involved in. The TBIs (traumatic brain injuries) are a direct result of a lot of our troops living through a lot of terrible assaults or attacks, whether they involve car bombs, roadside bombs, or IEDs (improvised explosive devices). This is a new kind of war, and it's a terrible assault on our troops physically and mentally."

Still and his staff have helped many veterans work out reemployment issues with their employers under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. USERRA protects civilian job rights and benefits for veterans and members of reserve components for five years and sometimes longer in times of a national emergency. USERRA also provides protection for disabled veterans, requiring employers to make a reasonable effort to accommodate the disability.

As the regional administrator, Still also mentors and develops his staff to help veterans the same way he has for more than a decade. Though he is humble, he is known as a great role model for younger veterans. In addition to his service during the first Gulf War, Still served just over 20 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a chief petty officer in 1997. He served on four different combat vessels, including the USS Enterprise, the USS America, the USS Iowa battleship and the USS Belknap.

When asked about success stories, Still reported, "There are success stories daily. VETS has a statewide grant that consists of federal grant money that's given to state workforce agencies across the United States. They have employment representatives, who assist in helping veterans find work. They're known as disabled veteran outreach program specialists and local veteran employment representatives. These individuals act as a conduit between an employer and the veteran to assist the veteran in landing a job. Our investigators in this region are handling USERRA cases daily and resolving issues between claimants and their employers."

For Still, the assistance from the DOL's grant programs is vital to returning veterans. "Veterans are starting a new career when they're leaving the military and need someone to rely on to help them bridge that divide from leaving the military to joining the civilian workforce."

The VETS' Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, teaches veterans how to go about finding employment in the civilian workforce. Service members attend the class before leaving the military, and it gives them the fundamentals in job hunting; preparing a resume; handling the interview; dressing for success; and other elements of the successful job search.

San Francisco VETS has been able to help numerous veterans obtain education and training, counseling, and other services to assist them in getting back to work this year. For example, several veterans are training in various skilled labor positions at the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) in Livermore, California, under an agreement with VETS. At the lab, teams of physicists, chemists, biologists, engineers, and others work together to achieve technical innovations and scientific breakthroughs, transforming these advances into solutions to national challenges.

Harold Irwin, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, is earning \$1,075 per week as an electrical maintenance trainee. Another veteran placed at Livermore, Ioni Andrade, who served in the U.S. Navy, is working in the National Ignition Facility doing web-based research for information for the lab. Marlene Salmo, who served in the U.S. Air Force, is working in the business development and engineer project management field for LLNL. Two other veterans are waiting to enroll in the program later this summer or fall.

Still said he is proud to help other veterans because he feels they sacrifice their lives and so much when they leave their families to go to war. "It's all very fulfilling . . . I know I'm doing something good in the end," he said

Still holds an Associate of Science degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice administration from Park College in Parkville, Missouri. He is a single parent to his son, Christopher, 17. His wife, and Christopher's mother, lost her battle with cancer two years ago.

For more information about VETS, visit <http://www.dol.gov/vets/>.

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FRANCES MAG

Elevator Interview

OASAM's Charlotte Hayes

By Suzy Bohnert, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Charlotte Hayes, deputy assistant secretary for policy with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, has a connection with Wellesley College women as an alumna of that school.

The liberal-arts college near Boston has a special place in her heart. She talked with FRANCES about her link to the school and its interns that have recently come to work at the U.S. Department of Labor this summer.



FRANCES: *What is your involvement with the summer interns who will be at DOL?*

Charlotte Hayes: I graduated from Wellesley and for the past eight years have worked with summer and winter interns who come to work in Washington. I have 20 young women coming this summer, three of which will participate in the department-wide internship program here at the Department of Labor.

Those three interns will work in different capacities. One at the Office of Public Affairs will be exposed to

all the forms of media OPA works with to get the department's message out, including researching and writing for FRANCES and the weekly DOL newsletter. She has an interest in TV news writing, and the best way to become a good writer is to write on deadline and have an editor review your work frequently.

Another intern is an economics major and will work with chief economist and Wellesley alumna, Betsey Stevenson. Hearing Betsey's real-time answers to questions about unemployment claims, job growth, and why the numbers are up or down will be a perfect "real-life" economist's learning experience. The third intern will work for the Office of Job Corps and me. She will work on the Job Corps' sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction target project for the department's compliance with President Obama's executive order 13514.

FRANCES: *How did you get involved in this program to help Wellesley women?*

Hayes: When I worked in the White House for Vice President Al Gore, I reunited with my old professor from Wellesley, who was also Secretary Hillary Clinton's political-science professor. When Secretary Clinton was first lady, she would call the Wellesley alumnae to meet with the students when they visited the White House. He and I were equally enthusiastic about these young women and the career paths that public service and Washington can offer, so I have been boosting D.C. to Wellesley women since the early '90s.

FRANCES: *In addition to placing interns, what does the deputy assistant secretary for policy in OASAM do?*

Hayes: The assistant secretary is responsible, among other things, for providing the department with leadership and direction on strategic planning and performance management. I support the assistant secretary in this role working with the great team in the Center for Program Planning and Results and all the amazing departmental and agency staff on the department's strategic and agency annual operating plans. Our group also works with the Departmental Budget Center to ensure that agency plans, goals, targets, and priorities are embodied in the budget request. Other parts of my portfolio include federal sustainability and any other issues the assistant secretary asks me to address.

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Elevator Interview

OSHA's Jose Benavides

By Jose Carnevali, Office of Public Affairs, San Francisco Region

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration from Region IX recently conducted the Latino Workforce Outreach and Education Conference on safety, health, and worker rights in Oakland, California. We spoke with OSHA's Regional Hispanic/Latino Outreach Coordinator Jose Benavides, in Region IX, for details.



FRANCES: Why did OSHA put on this conference?

Jose Benavides: Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that deaths among Hispanic workers continue to rise while fatality rates for other groups are falling. In fact, Latino workers suffer a much higher

percentage of work-related deaths in the United States than any other segment of the working population.

Frances: What were the primary objectives of the conference?

Benavides: The conference and new initiatives for 2011 and beyond underscore three fundamental elements: outreach, education, and training. The conference helped develop new and effective partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, with unions, consulates, and other organizations.

Frances: How was this achieved?

Benavides: OSHA can't do it alone; even if our budget were doubled or tripled. The role of community based organizations, other partners and stakeholders and the media is critically important, as it is vital that we work together to address the very serious topic of worker protection and safety.

Frances: Tell us about your job as regional Hispanic outreach coordinator?

Benavides: My primary role is to develop and implement a comprehensive Latino outreach and educational plan for our region. California, Nevada and Arizona have a substantially higher population of Hispanic and Latino workers than any other region in the country.

Frances: Many Hispanic workers face particular challenges due to several factors, including language barriers. Isn't that true?

Benavides: It is true. Because of language barriers, literacy, and other limitations, these workers are often hard to reach through traditional communications methods. We are working hard to bridge those gaps and to ensure that these workers know and exercise their rights. Many Latino and immigrant workers are indeed the least likely to speak up for their workplace rights. They are often exploited and exposed to health and safety hazards, endure little or no training, and often lack necessary protective equipment.

Frances: What does it mean to you personally to be working today at the U.S. Department of Labor?

Benavides: Working to protect employees is the reason that I became a safety-and-health professional more than 20 years ago. We at DOL work very hard to make that happen every single day.

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Elevator Interview

Carol Pier, the U.S. Department of Labor's Associate Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs

Recently, President Obama and Colombia's president Juan Manuel Santos Calderón agreed to an action plan that Colombia will implement to improve labor rights for Colombian workers before the two countries move forward on the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. The department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) has been playing a critical role in this process.

We asked ILAB's Associate Deputy Undersecretary, Carol Pier for details. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Harvard Law School, Pier worked for Human Rights Watch for a decade before joining DOL in 2009.



Frances: *What are some of the actions Colombia has agreed to take that will benefit workers in that country?*

Carol Pier: Colombia has agreed to strengthen workers' rights, better prevent anti-union violence, and do much more to prosecute those responsible for such violence. Under the plan, Colombia is expanding the scope of its protection program to cover threatened labor activists and organizers, in addition to union leaders. The Colombian Attorney General's

Office, under new leadership, has promised to accelerate efforts to resolve both old and new cases of labor violence. Colombia has agreed to improve labor law enforcement and to punish with large fines and even jail time those who violate workers' right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Colombia has also committed to crack down on employers using phony labor cooperatives to exclude workers from labor law coverage. These commitments that Colombia has made are meant to address the country's complex and violent history that continues to impact workers' rights today.

Frances: *What was ILAB's role in this process?*

Pier: ILAB played and will continue to play a critical role in this process. As the international arm of the U.S. Department of Labor, ILAB brings unique expertise to the table as the U.S. Government engages with Colombia on these difficult issues. ILAB has followed the labor rights situation in Colombia for many years and deeply understands the kind of actions and reforms that can bring real and sustainable change for Colombian workers. ILAB pushed very hard for those steps to be included in the action plan and now will work even harder to ensure they become a reality.

Frances: *What happens next?*

Pier: The next step is ensuring implementation of the action plan. The plan establishes ambitious dates by which Colombia will take concrete and wide ranging steps, including drafting regulations, initiating promised inspections, hiring additional personnel, and more. By assessing these actions, the United States will know quickly whether real progress is being made towards the fulfillment of the action plan. Once these first critical steps have been taken, the United States will continue to carefully monitor the situation, including through regular technical and high-level meetings between the countries.

Frances: *Why is all of this significant to U.S. workers?*

Pier: In this global economy with global competition, the struggles of workers in the United States, Colombia, and around the world for better lives, decent jobs, and greater respect is interconnected. This is especially true between free trade partners, who eliminate all barriers to trade between their economies. Trade can bring benefits to citizens in both countries. However, if labor rights abuses are tolerated in U.S. trading partners, the playing field tilts against U.S. workers, which

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must be prevented. "Good jobs for everyone" in the context of free trade must mean good jobs both in the United States and Colombia, as well as in other countries. The action plan outlines the important steps that can make this a reality.

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FRANCES MAG

Elevator Interview

OSEC's Betsey Stevenson

Frances: *You're a labor economist with an expertise in happiness. There's got to be a story here.*



Stevenson: Economists care about how people are doing, but we disagree about how to go about measuring it. In my research I've shown that data in which people are simply asked about their happiness or life satisfaction can tell us a lot about how people are doing. For instance, people in richer countries report being happier and more satisfied with their lives than are people in poorer countries. And there is no point at which more money stops making you happier. But I don't think that it's the money itself that makes people happier, it's that more money is often associated with greater opportunities. And people with

more opportunities are likely to be happier. Perhaps the most controversial thing that I've found is that women around the world have become less happy relative to men. Or put it another way, men around the world have become happier relative to women. I really don't know why this has happened.

Frances: *Your other area of expertise is divorce. Tell us something we didn't know about the divorce-happiness-economics connection.*

Stevenson: The thing that most people don't know is that the divorce rate in the United States has been falling for more than 30 years. Everyone focuses on the big increase in divorce that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. In my research I've emphasized a shift in marriage away from what economists call "production-based" marriages—where a woman stays home and focuses on the work in the home and a man focuses on bringing home an income. These marriages have become less common as more women have entered the labor force and a new kind of marriage has become more popular—what I call consumption-based marriages. These are couples who share a lot of the same tastes and like to do things together — their marriage isn't driven so much by what they do apart but what they do together. This shift in the types of marriages that make people happy may have contributed to the big divorce boom in the 1960s and 1970s — many people during this time married a person who wasn't able to make them happy given the rapidly changing roles for men and women both within marriage and outside of it. Luckily we are all doing a better job finding that special person who will help us live a happy life

Frances: *We're impressed to see that you have your own cappuccino machine in your office. Is your own personal happiness tied to caffeine?*

Stevenson: Indeed it is. And I think I should go now and have a coffee.

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Elevator Interview

MSHA's Joe Main

In the wake of the April 5th explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine, MSHA has devised an ambitious strategy for determining the cause of one of the worst coal mine disasters in decades.

Frances: *Can you tell us about your agency's plans to conduct public hearings?*



Main: Our approach is driven by a commitment to learn exactly what caused the explosion that killed 29 miners, a commitment to transparency and openness, and a commitment to ensure that MSHA's investigation does not impede any potential or ongoing criminal investigations.

Frances: *How is this different from past accident investigations?*

Main: It's unprecedented. Since the federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 went into effect, MSHA has held only two public hearings following a major mine disaster. This time we're taking it a few steps further: In the first hearing, miners, contractors, mine officials and others with knowledge of the workings of the Upper Big Branch mine will testify; a second hearing will focus on the technical aspects of the leading theory or theories surrounding what caused the explosion. Following that, there will be a public forum so that the family members of the 29 miners have an opportunity to express their thoughts about the explosion, the response, the investigation and potential reforms in mine safety and health laws. A fourth public gathering — a town hall meeting — will solicit of ideas on how best to create a culture of safety at mining operations and recommendations on how to improve mine safety moving forward.

Frances: *What do you hope to achieve by holding so many public hearings?*

Main: I'm confident that, from the wide range of public hearings, along with internal and independent investigations, we will learn what happened at the Upper Big Branch Mine. Once we learn what caused the explosion, we will hopefully have the knowledge, insight and tools to prevent another such tragedy from occurring again.

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Elevator Interview

Sandra Polaski Brings the World to DOL



In late April, the Department will host a meeting of the G20 Labor and Employment Ministers. It will be the first time in history that Labor Ministers from the world's 20 largest economies meet as the G20. If you think it's hard putting together a meeting of representatives from ten different agencies, try doing it with 20 different countries!

But Sandra Polaski, Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs here at DOL is up to the global challenge. We caught up with her--in between her world travels and preparations for the big meeting--to

find out more.

FRANCES: *The G20 Labor and Employment Ministers' Meeting is a big deal for the US DOL. How'd it all come about?*

POLASKI: This grew out of a proposal President Obama made when the G20 leaders were holding their Summit in Pittsburgh last September. The leaders were grappling with a global economic meltdown that had turned into a jobs crisis, and the President was looking for solutions. He suggested that Secretary Solis host a meeting of all the G20 Employment and Labor Ministers in early 2010, and the heads of state agreed. We have sent invitations to the Ministers and their response has been overwhelming—every one of them plans to attend! The meeting will be held here at the Frances Perkins Building on April 20th and 21st. We're transforming the Great Hall into a state-of-the-art plenary room.

FRANCES: *What are you expecting to happen during the meeting, and what do you hope to accomplish as a result of it?*

POLASKI: The G20 Heads of State said this meeting should “ensure continued focus on employment policies.” We will look at the latest research on how the crisis has affected employment, and on the different steps countries have taken to create and protect jobs and livelihoods. The Ministers will share information and analyze which policies and programs have worked the best in their countries and what they have learned. Then they will discuss additional measures that may be needed to shore up employment, provide support for the unemployed, and train our workers for the jobs of the future.

The Ministers will draft recommendations to give to the G20 Heads of State at their next Summit meeting in June. The Leaders gave us a broad mandate, and we're excited about it, and our counterparts in other G20 countries are too.

FRANCES: *Canada is hosting the meeting next year. Any advice for them on how to put together a world class meeting for world leaders?*

POLASKI: We are already working closely with the Canadians and we're very impressed by their efforts and supportive attitude. Since they are hosting next year's Summit, they are playing a prominent role in this meeting as well. Among other things, they've offered to host a reception for delegates and a dinner for Ministers at their very beautiful embassy two blocks from the FPB—on the rooftop, no less!

As to advice, we've learned that these 20 countries have an amazing number of important national and religious holidays and other scheduling constraints. Second, you can't send out invitations until you figure out who likes to be called “His Excellency,” who is “The Honorable” and who prefers “Minister.” Third, you will need to provide everyone with an interpreter. And finally, when meeting with key

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officials from around the world, be sure to provide a limitless supply of very, very strong coffee!

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Ahead Hunting

Career Planning: What are Critical Steps in the Job-Search Process?

By the U.S. Department of Labor Career Assistance Center staff, Washington, D.C.

In 2010, there were approximately 179 internal job transfers among DOL agencies and regions.

Before beginning a job search, even an internal one, applicants should engage in career planning. That starts with self assessment.

Identifying career goals makes the process more manageable and focused. Applicants can target specific internal agencies and jobs and create marketing materials, such as resumes, application essays, and cover letters, that align individual talent with specific tasks.

Kenneth Lemberg, an ETA employee at the national office for more than seven years, said he has participated in career assessments with the department's Career Assistance Center. "Over the years, the center has made available a number of lunchtime workshops to assist DOL employees in further assessing their careers," Lemberg says.

Additionally, Lemberg has used the facility to provide support with his job search and ongoing training. He said the workshops have been helpful, particularly the networking that occurs among participants and counselors within the small group.

"I have learned much about responding to federal applications/postings and to internal processes within DOL. I have updated my presentation of my accomplishments. For example, using a 'CAR' (Circumstance, Action, and Result) approach. That is, dealing with what a problem was, what I did to address it, and what the result was — basically an elevator pitch."

The U.S. Department of Labor's Career Assistance Center identifies five steps in the career planning process:

- 1. Self-Assessment:** The ideal career is one that is congruent with your personal set of needs, values, skills, strengths, interests, and personality. There are a variety of career assessments available to help with this process.
- 2. Exploring Options:** Based upon the results of your self-assessment, begin to develop and explore options. In this phase of career planning, you may determine you need to acquire different skills, change occupations, or obtain a degree. At this point, you are considering possibilities and conducting your own research to develop options.
- 3. Goal Setting:** When you have explored options and obtained the information that will help you make a decision, you are ready to set goals. In this phase of career planning, you begin to define what goals you will work toward. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) can be very helpful to chart out the steps to your goal. An IDP is comparable to a road map for your career. Beginning with where you are now, the IDP provides that map to accomplish your goal.
- 4. Identifying Available Resources:** Determine what support you have in accomplishing your goals. Perhaps you may wish to obtain a mentor, coach, or career counselor to assist you.
- 5. Implementation:** In this phase, you will establish a method and set a timeline for when you achieve your goals. This will help keep you on track and working toward your future.

After completing the career assessment, there are several ways that the Career Assistance Center can provide support with internal job searches and ongoing training. The center offers a range of training courses — both in the national office

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and in the regions — that assist with resume development, completing the federal-job application, researching new opportunities, and identifying career paths that better complement your personality type or personal interests. For more information, call the center directly at (202) 693-7798 to schedule an in-person or telephone appointment with one of the career counselors.

Professional career counselors provide DOL employees free, confidential, and ongoing consultation in person, over the telephone, and through e-mail. For more information, please see the [DOL Career Assistance Center on LaborNet](#).

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In Labor

Ahead Hunting

Add Safety to Your Knowledge Base

By Helen Li, OPA

As a newly assigned COOP (Continuity of Operations) coordinator for my agency, I was hesitant to take on a new body of knowledge that involves emergency management. Fortunately, our helpful Emergency Management Center (EMC) staff alerted me to the EMC resources on LaborNet. One of the many useful links includes free web-based training from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA offers an independent study program as one of the ways to provide training to the general public. Since all of us share the responsibility to protect our safety and health, this training can be empowering. Just take a look at a few course titles:

1. ["A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance" – \(IS-7\)](#)
2. ["Animals in Disaster, Module A: Awareness and Preparedness" – \(IS-10\)](#)
3. ["Household Hazardous Materials: A Guide for Citizens" – \(IS-55\)](#)
4. ["Fundamentals of Emergency Management" – \(IS-230.a\)](#)
5. ["Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters" – \(IS-366\)](#)

Interested DOL employees can access these emergency management courses through LaborNet's link to the EMC resources (<http://labornet.dol.gov/security/emc/Programs/TTE/training-opportunities.htm>).

If you are out of the DOL environment but have access to the Internet, you can visit www.fema.gov directly and do a search for the independent study program (<http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>).

I tried one of the shorter courses called **Household Hazardous Materials - A Guide for Citizens**. The course describes the common types of household hazardous materials and shows how to protect yourself and your family from injury or death as a result of mishandling.

In this course, you can learn important safety tips about pumping gas at gas stations (a spark from static electricity can be explosive) and you'll read news clippings from past incidents of injuries and deaths of people improperly using generators indoors or mixing chemicals.

The course contains much, much more. Do you know not to mix bleach with ammonia-containing cleaners? If you are pregnant, do you know what fish to avoid to minimize the risk of mercury poisoning? How many injuries or deaths result each year from the mishandling of household chemicals?

Take the course and find the answers yourself! Each unit contains a quiz. But, if you are not the quizzical type, just skip them. Keep clicking on the "next" button without answering the question, and you can still get to the end. For additional references, there are links to other government websites and nongovernment websites. Even a link to resources for kids and teachers — how thoughtful!

If you want a training certificate, go ahead to take the Final Exam. Don't worry about grades. You are allowed to go through the course slides to find the answers.

I persuaded a colleague to try out a FEMA course. He described his impression: "I found the course well organized, readable, and easy to navigate. The content was substantive and in my opinion useful for anyone responsible for organizing the evaluation of an exercise regardless of the reason."

Taking a safety class doesn't have to be a part of your job description – but

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learning about safety should play a vital role in your life. Share your new knowledge with your family and friends.

Helen Li is a content researcher and senior analyst in the Office of Public Affairs.

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In Labor

Ahead Hunting

How Do You Go About Getting a Security Clearance?

By Lillie Hughes, Director, Office of Personnel Security, OASAM, Washington, D.C.



Individuals often use security clearance to describe the process that a federal agency uses to determine whether or not to hire or retain an individual for employment. However, there are two types of determinations made about individuals: a suitability determination and a security determination. In both cases, the agency considers a person's character and conduct in making the decision, but the standards for these decisions differ. Let's look at the differences.

Suitability refers to the consideration of a person's character and conduct to decide whether or not that person's hiring or continued employment in the agency and the federal government would protect the integrity and promote the efficiency of the federal service and the agency's mission. All federal employees are subject to a suitability determination.

Security refers to the consideration of a person's character and conduct to determine whether a person's access to classified information is or is not clearly consistent with the interests of national security. The need for a security determination depends on whether the person's position and work assignments require access to classified information. Depending on the type of classified information that the person has access to, he or she may be assigned a confidential, secret, or top-secret security clearance.

One requirement common to both suitability and security is the background investigation. A person's investigation begins with the completion of a questionnaire that asks for information, such as previous employment, education, and foreign travel. There are three different questionnaires, Standard Forms (SF) 85, 85P, and 86. The questionnaire that a person must complete is determined by the nature of the position and duties to which the person will be assigned and whether or not the employee requires access to classified information.

Before employees begin work or within 14 days of their employment, the Human Resources Office (HRO) will instruct them to complete the appropriate questionnaire. The employees and/or applicants will complete the questionnaire using the electronic questionnaire in the e-QIP (Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing) system. They are expected to provide complete and accurate information in response to all the questions regarding themselves, their residences, education, work history, and their conduct. Omissions and falsifications are the basis for an unfavorable determination.

Once the HRO has reviewed the information and determined that the questionnaire is complete and there are no issues, the request for investigation goes to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

When OPM completes its fact-finding and verification of information, a report of investigation is sent to the Labor Department. The designated DOL official will review the report and determine whether or not there are issues that may result in a negative suitability and/or security determination, requiring further review and adjudication. If there are no actionable issues, the case is closed with a favorable result. If issues are raised that could have a negative bearing on the employment of the applicant/employee, the deciding DOL official will determine whether or not the individual is suitable for employment in the position or whether a security clearance may be granted, if applicable.

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The DOL security director must issue final approval for security clearances. DOL follows OPM guidance in making suitability determinations.

Additionally, at DOL one of the above processes must have been initiated, with favorable results, to be eligible for the Personal Identify Verification badge allowing you entry into the building you work in.

Questions regarding suitability, security, and investigations should be addressed to your servicing HRO.

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In Labor

Ahead Hunting

DOL Employees Agree that Training is an Opportunity for Reflection and Growth

"We all left with a feeling of accomplishment, growth, and a re-dedication to providing great service to our country as federal employees."

— Eugene "Chip" McCoy, Office of the Inspector General

By Peggy Abrahamson and Tiffany March, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Every year about 25 DOL employees are selected by agency heads to attend the prestigious Federal Executive Institute, a leadership training center for senior federal managers known as the "West Point of civil service."

DOL participants in the Institute's four-week program have a rigorous schedule. They take one week of core classes on the Constitution, leadership and public service in a democracy, and they choose three week-long elective classes based on their own interests.

They can also take special health and fitness classes, like 6 a.m. aerobics, and have access to the gym and swimming pool in their occasional free time. A resident chef provides three healthy meals a day with restaurant-style table service – no waiting in buffet lines.

Located in picturesque Charlottesville, Va., the main FEI campus is located on 14 acres of rolling hills surrounded by trees. Charlottesville is home to the University of Virginia, and is also known as the home of three presidents: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe.

Attendees stay in a converted hotel that was featured in the classic 1956 film "Giant," starring Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean.

The historic setting lends atmosphere to the FEI experience, said Michael Schimmenti, a special assistant and acting director of Administration and Management at the Mine Safety and Health Administration, who attended in February 2008.

"If you're studying the foundation of the country it helps to be in the proximity of structures and institutions that have been around since then," Schimmenti said. "You have this sort of physical connection with the ideas you're studying as opposed to doing this in some very new place or online."

He also liked the program's dual emphasis on mental and physical health, and said FEI gave him time to reflect on his career in a peaceful setting. "It is a rare opportunity that I recommend," Schimmenti added.

OWCP Polityc Chief Miranda Chiu, who oversees the administration of a compensation program for federal maritime workers, echoed Schimmenti. "It gave me time to look inward to discover/rediscover who I am and where I want to be, keeping in balance the need of the self and of the community," she said.

She especially enjoyed one seminar-style elective, which she described as an intellectually stimulating book club. Participants read and discussed the Bill of Rights, Plato and complex articles on global policy. Chiu's other electives included coaching and leadership classes.

Eugene McCoy, a GS-15 level employee who has worked in the Office of Inspector General for 22 years, attended the Institute this past January. When his manager

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recommended him, he saw it as an opportunity to get re-energized and to “see what’s going on outside the Department of Labor.”

Interacting with federal employees from other agencies was a highlight, McCoy said, and he recommends FEI to both new and seasoned managers.

“The exposure to so many bright minds and new ideas... learning about what other agencies and programs are doing around the country and around the world... combined to make FEI an exceptional experience,” he said.

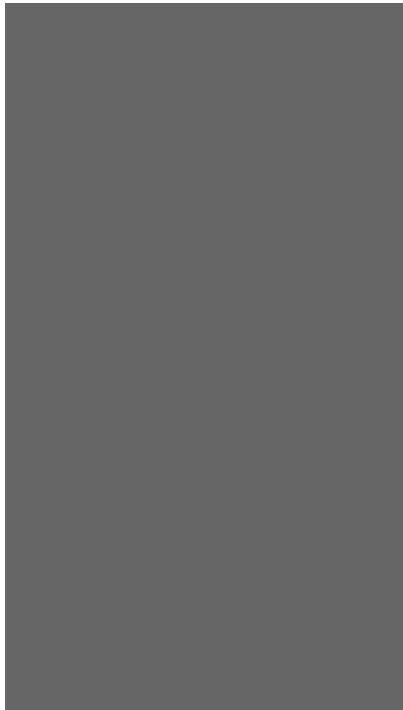
FEI was created by the Civil Service Commission in 1968, prompted by President Lyndon Johnson’s order to “improve the quality of government for the American people.” The first classes were held at the University of Virginia, and FEI moved to its current site in 1970.

The original FEI program, Leadership for a Democratic Society, is still offered, along with Custom Executive Programs, Open Enrollment Courses and the Center for Global Leadership.

This summer, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Human Resources will invite agency supervisors to nominate managers for Leadership for a Democratic Society.

For more information about the Federal Executive Institute, please visit <http://www.leadership.opm.gov/Locations/FEI/index.aspx>.

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In Labor

Ahead Hunting

Want to Succeed? Add Harvard to Your CV

By Peggy Abrahamson, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, DC



She may have spent only a month on the famous Ivy League campus in Cambridge, MA, but Rachel Leiton is a "Harvard Woman." In 2006, Leiton, who is the Director of the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation in the Office of Workers Compensation Programs, participated in the Senior Executive Fellows (SEF) Executive Education program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The leadership training program helps promising senior-level officials learn the skills needed for practical, effective leadership in the public sector. "I found it to be a tremendous experience and I gained

valuable insights into a broad array of issues," said Leiton, who has worked at Labor for more than 15 years.

Created over twenty-five years ago, Harvard's SEF program is one of the most prominent government leadership efforts around. The 30-day residential program (participants live in Harvard provided housing) focuses on strategic approaches and frameworks to problem solving a variety of issues in the federal arena. Participants learn to look at challenges and issues from different perspectives, so that they are open to vast array of possible solutions.



Christopher Wilkinson, Counsel for Civil Rights Programs in the Office of the Solicitor, found the Harvard experience to be both personally and professionally rewarding: "As a manager in the region, it has given me a very broad outlook on the federal government and DOL's entire organization across the nation. The program has helped me become a more efficient and effective public servant and, I hope, has brought those qualities to those around me."

In addition to classroom lectures from world-class experts on vital issues such as the economy, healthcare and workforce management, the program also helps to hone practical skills in areas like union negotiations and crisis management.



Both employees attended in the fall of 2006 and said they would highly recommend the program to other managers. "Given the diversity of backgrounds of the students, there was a variety of outlooks on the issues, which led to lively and

fascinating debate and caused me to think outside of the norm. It helped me to be more understanding, patient and willing to listen to other perspectives when I returned to my DOL work environment," said Leiton.

Leiton said the Harvard SEF program "definitely led in part to my entering the SES (Senior Executive Service)" within two years of her participation. The SES is the top executive level of government employees.

The Senior Executive Fellows program is designed for managers and professionals

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at the GS-14/GS-15 level. Tuition, including room and board, is \$17,500 for the April 2010 session and \$18,300 for the October 2010 session. Candidates need to have supervisory approval to apply. Visit the [Web site](#) or contact DOL's Career Management Center for more information.





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Book Review

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Full Disclosure: Perils and Promise of Transparency

By Archon Fung, Mary Graham, and David Weil

Reviewed by Xiang Jie Zheng, Wage and Hour Division, Washington, D.C.

With the rollout of policy initiatives geared toward the goals of transparency and open government at the U.S. Department of Labor and other federal agencies, this book provides readers with guidance on its promises and pitfalls.

In "Full Disclosure: Perils and Promise of Transparency," authors Archon Fung, Mary Graham, and David Weil explore the contextual and developmental aspects of targeted transparency policies, which aim to reduce specific risks and improve particular aspects of public service by requiring both government agencies and private-sector firms and other organizations alike to collect, standardize, and disclose factual information that will inform public choices. This is different from the first generation right-to-know policies because the latter generally tries to create a more informed public by simply requiring existing government information to be made available.



The authors acknowledge the promising, but sometimes perilous transparency tool as a complement to older-generation transparency policies and existing standards — market-based policies to redress certain policy problems. This nicely interplays the factors of politics, economics and cognitive powers of varying stakeholders to analyze the development and sustainability of existing and future domestic and international transparency policies. In addition to providing a contextual and developmental description of the targeted transparency policy in general, the authors also provide an analytical framework for analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of these types of policies, the likes of OSHA workplace hazard

disclosures and Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification notices, both of which are pertinent to DOL.

In the latter part of the book, the authors critically examine advances in information technology, like that of the Internet and related technologies, such as instant messaging, online blogs, and online book reviews, which led to the rise of a third-generation transparency policy that differs from the right-to-know and targeted transparency policies because of the collaborative information-sharing aspects of the new policy. This enables users to customize the way information is presented and allow them to become disclosers themselves.

Lastly, the authors provide recommendations on crafting effective targeted transparency policies as they see a growing use of targeted transparency to advance public priorities in the future, but also caution about its uncertainty.

Overall, this is a good policy reference book for those who are interested in improving existing or designing new transparency policies, as the authors provide a powerful analytical framework that was used to analyze 18 different targeted transparency policies across the policy spectrum, ranging from safety and health to home-mortgage data disclosure. The objectivity of the book comes from the authors' assessment of both effective and noneffective targeted transparency

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policies that are currently in place. They do not cherry pick only effective ones that might implicitly favor the use of transparency policy as a stand-alone policy panacea.

If nothing else, this book offers readers a three-generational perspective on a policy that is gaining momentum throughout the federal government.

Xiang Jie Zheng works as an analyst in the Wage & Hour Division.

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Book Review

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Morning Miracle: Inside the Washington Post

By Dave Kindred

Reviewed by Carl Fillichio

I love newspapers. If you work in my business (public relations), you have to. Newspapers, along with TV and radio news — and don't forget the Internet — are our bread and butter.

And I've loved one newspaper since I was a kid. Like countless others, I was introduced to the Washington Post during the Watergate scandal. In 1976, the quintessential motion picture about the Washington Post — "All the President's Men" — was released. I saw it a dozen times in less than two months. I was in the seventh grade. My mother still jokes that the Washington Post was my first boyhood crush. I've been a faithful reader for more than 25 years.

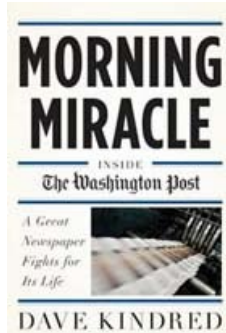
Journalist Dave Kindred loves the Washington Post, too. He admits it up front, in the book's introduction, when he confesses that he's a "hopeless romantic about newspapers." The story he tells is both heartfelt and for him and readers like me, often heartbreaking: A great newspaper (and "paper" is the important word here) fights for its life in the Internet age.

Kindred "reports" the story and has amazing access to a cast of characters (and they really are characters) that are the heart and soul of the Washington Post at a critical time in its history — when its gloried past bumps against its uncertain future. Among them: From the glory days — Ben Bradlee, the swashbuckling, larger than life editor; Don Graham, the heir and chair, son of the legendary Post owner, Katharine Graham; Bob Woodward, whose Watergate reporting catapulted him to mythic superstardom; columnist and Washington insider David Broder; and former "Reliable Source" gossip columnist Annie Groer. And the new breed: Katharine Weymouth, Kay Graham's Harvard-educated granddaughter and current Post publisher who must turn the paper from a "must read" into a "must view" on the Web (and turn a profit); Chris Cillizza, the "new media"-savvy political junkie who represents the future of the Post's most important asset, political reporting; and Anne Hull, the Pulitzer Prize winner who equates news reporting to a form of addiction.

Each has a unique perspective on the future and fate of the Washington Post, which inexplicably ignored the emerging power, promise, potential and, most important, profit of the Internet. As they struggle to play catch up, lives are turned upside down, mistakes (big and small) are made, and relationships sour while others are strengthened. It's all drama and trauma Washington-style. And if it happened at any other institution, the Washington Post would have probably flooded the field to cover it.

You don't have to love newspapers, or this specific newspaper, to learn from the story. It's a classic tale of change: The phoenix that wakes up one morning and discovers it's a dinosaur. People just aren't buying newspapers anymore, so businesses aren't buying advertising space. What choice do you make — go quietly into the night or reimagine, reinvigorate and reinvent yourself?

Thank goodness the Post has chosen the latter. How it got to that choice is what the book is all about.



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The title is the nickname most Post staffers affectionately call the paper. It comes from a comment Bradlee once made during his tenure as executive editor: "We ought to call this thing 'The Daily Miracle,'" he cracked. "It's a miracle we get it out every morning."

Readers of Kindred's book — and of the Washington Post — are hoping that it's not going to take a miracle for the paper to survive.

Carl Fillichio works in the Office of Public Affairs.

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policies that are currently in place. They do not cherry pick only effective ones that might implicitly favor the use of transparency policy as a stand-alone policy panacea.

If nothing else, this book offers readers a three-generational perspective on a policy that is gaining momentum throughout the federal government.

Xiang Jie Zheng works as an analyst in the Wage & Hour Division.

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Book Review

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First Things First. To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy

By **Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, Rebecca R. Merrill**

Reviewed by *Helen Li*

Spring is here. Most of us probably have already broken our New Year's resolutions to do things better, exercise more and eat healthier, and be more organized.

Heard this quote before? *"I'm always in crisis because I procrastinate, but I procrastinate because I'm always in crisis!"*

Most of us may think that by doing things more efficiently we'll eventually gain control of our life, and that increased control will bring peace and fulfillment.

Not likely, according to the authors of "First Things First."

It's futile to try to control everything. The authors point out: while we do control our choice of action, we cannot control the consequences of our choices. Traditional time management essentially ignores the reality that most of our time is spent living or working with other people who cannot be controlled.

The authors stress the need to stop and reflect, examine our values, our principles, our inner conscience, shifting focus from "urgency" to "importance."

Some questions to ask yourself are:

Are we doing something that's merely "urgent" or what's really "important" in our lives?

Are we doing the right things vs. are we doing things right?"

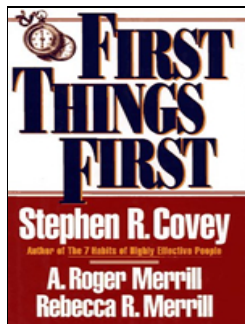
For illustration, the authors use a compass and a clock. The clock represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals, activities — what we do with and how we manage our time. The compass represents our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction — what we feel is important and how we lead our lives.

The struggle or guilt comes when we sense a gap between the clock and the compass...when we can't walk our talk.

One can go for the "quick fixes" and techniques with apparent success. But in the long run, the law of nature governs. We can cram for an exam, but we can't cram for a real education. We can't grow a beautiful garden by just throwing seeds out into the barren yard. Can we overcome years of no-exercise to run a marathon the next day? The law of Cause and Effect is the unerring and inexorable law of nature.

To get the most out of this book — to learn to tap into the inner conscience and listen to the heart and mind — one must be willing to go through a highly introspective process. The materials provided as guides and exercises can empower people to close the gap between the compass and the clock.

For the time-challenged reader, the Problem/Opportunity Index is handy. Page numbers and chapter headings are provided to address specific issues such as "Determining what's important in the family, group, or organization," "Setting and



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achieving meaningful goals," or "What if *other people* are the problem?" Anecdotes, worksheets, or summary charts are provided to enlighten, entertain and educate the reader.

For the super time-challenged manager or employee, read Section Three "The Synergy of Interdependence" for advice on win-win processes, the importance of shared vision, and creating empowering synergistic roles.

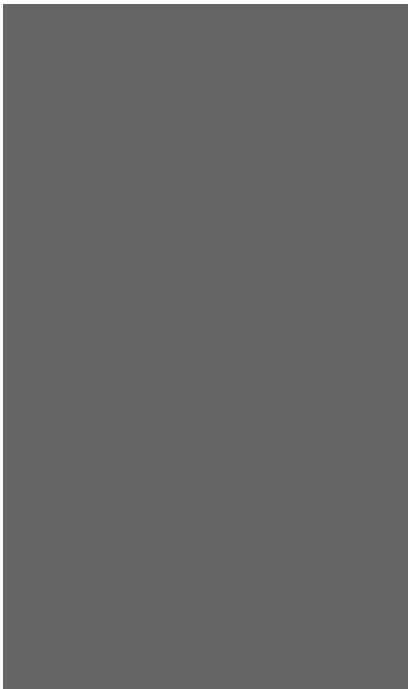
The authors praise the virtue of humility. It's important to recognize that the quality of life is not "me," it's "us" — that we live in an interdependent reality of abundance and potential that can only be realized when we interact with others in fully authentic synergistic ways.

We don't know what opportunities, challenges, surprises, sorrows that lie ahead of us. Make each moment count at home and at work. Live, Love, Learn, and Leave a Legacy. The power to create quality of life is within us — in our ability to develop and use our own inner compass so that we can act with integrity in the moment of choice. This book offers a roadmap for all of us.

Helen Li is a content researcher and senior analyst in the Office of Public Affairs.

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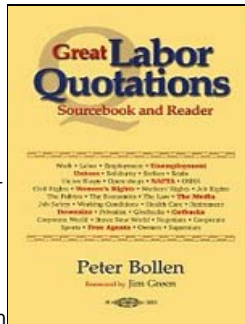
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The Great Labor Quotations: Sourcebook and Reader

By Peter Bollen

Reviewed by Lisa Stuart

Peter Bollen has created an indispensable guide for a labor history buff or speechwriter. As the title implies, his book serves as a labor quotation sourcebook and provides an overview of issues of work and labor. More than 1300 labor quotations are interspersed with historical labor photos and etchings, modern cartoons and short biographies arranged by 17 subject areas — including the timely area of “unemployment.” Quotes are easy to find by person or subject using one of three indices, a resource directory and a bibliography. The pictures and text of unionizing banners and slogans give insight into what was really happening “on the ground” during various labor struggles. And while this 2000 edition is no longer new, it is still widely available and well received.



This book has helped me refresh my labor history knowledge and gain some general historical sense. I've been keeping the book on my nightstand as I enjoy just picking it up and reading a quote or two. One of my favorite quotes (and one of the book's oldest) is from Confucius: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” Of course, there are other memorable quotes and images throughout. While many labor leaders are quoted here to excellent effect, I also was able to improve my general knowledge of history by reading it. I was able to put together historical timelines with quotes from various people, like George Bernard Shaw's “What is the use of money if you have to work for it?” I even learned something by reading the preface/introduction — it was the author's case that went to the Supreme Court to allow federal employees the right to freelance.

This book is a reminder of how far labor has come, but that for many groups of workers challenges still remain. And the author does a good job covering broad current issues for middle-class America, like cutbacks and downsizing. The book was unusually rewarding, inspiring and a surprisingly good read.

Lisa Stuart is an economist with the Office of Regulatory and Programmatic Policy, OASP.

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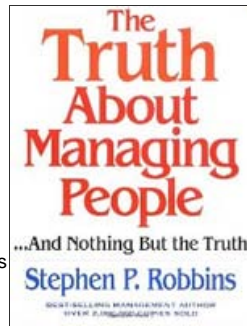
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The Truth about Managing Peopleand Nothing But the Truth

By Stephen P. Robbins

Reviewed by Helen Li, OPA

Anyone interested in human interactions and improving workplace relationships will benefit from Stephen P. Robbins' insights in his book **The Truth about Managing Peopleand Nothing But the Truth**. He is a respected professor and researcher, with corporate management experience. He is also a bestselling author.



Let's take a quiz first.

True or False

1. A happy employee is a productive employee.
2. You can teach old dog new tricks.
3. 2+2=4
4. Experience counts.
5. What is the most powerful workplace motivator?

Hint. Some are trick questions.

According to Robbins, the correct statement to Question 1 should read:

"A productive employee is a happy employee." People are happiest when they are put in jobs that align with their personality and when they fit in the organizational culture.

The answer to Question 2 is true. Older workers may need longer time to learn some complex skills. But once trained, they perform at comparable levels to younger workers. Evidence also shows that older workers are more committed to their jobs and have lower rates of avoidable absence.

Question 3 is not about math. When it comes to people management, a team of four is not twice as productive as a team of two. Not everyone is team material. In fact, there may be some negative impact, a phenomenon referred as "social loafing." To prevent a "free rider" syndrome and create positive group synergy, managers are advised to put in place a means to identify and recognize individual contributions to the group effort. Hey, 2+2 =5?

The author makes us aware of another phenomenon, known as "GroupThink." Oftentimes when the team is eager to reach concurrence, unpopular views are ignored or discouraged. How to avoid GroupThink? Appoint one team member to play the role of devil's advocate. Encourage diversity of thinking and discussions by requiring members to first focus on the negatives of a decision or an alternative. Following these suggestions, the group is then less likely to suppress dissenting views and more likely to gain an objective evaluation of a product or a decision.

Question 4. Experience counts, but what kind of experience? Twenty years of experience may just be one year of experience repeated 20 times. In selecting personnel, look for quality and diversity of experience. Hire smart conscientious employees.

Question 5. Everyone knows what motivates people. It is "Recognition, recognition,

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and more recognition!" (exact quote from the book!)

The author is not talking about expensive trophies. He stresses the importance of small gestures. Timing and specificity. A word of thanks right after completion of the task. A pat on the back for the team, acknowledging each person's special contribution.

More "truths" revealed in this little book:

"Treat someone as a loser and they (sic) won't disappoint you."

"The Essence of Leadership is Trust."

"No matter what a leader does, if followers don't respond, then the leader fails."

While not all management concepts are listed in question and answer format, the book's sixty-three "truths" will stimulate interesting discussions around the room and may raise an eyebrow or two. What is unique about this book, other than the eye-catching title, is the bibliography section, citing studies from organizational dynamics, communication methodologies, applied psychology, behavioral sciences. The word "truths" is used because these statements are evidence-based, scientifically speaking.

No MBA or Ph.D. needed to digest the information. Robbins summarized each "truth" in plain language in just 2-3 pages. The book can be read in any order.

The author compares some managers to compulsive dieters in looking for a quick solution to complex problems. He cautions organizations against quick fixes or trendy opinions. Remember TQMs, Core Competencies, EQs, Outsourcing, Self-Empowerment, Knowledge Management, Work-Family Balance, etc? The list continues. While these general/universal theories or approaches can serve as tools in the tool chest, not one can change quickly a dysfunctional organization or an ineffective manager. None can address a specific workplace contingency.

Robbins book doesn't make the claim to be a solution to all. It shines a light on behavior psychology research and helps us understand more about our workplace issues. Pick up this book at the Wirtz Labor Library. Find out why more communication does not necessarily lead to more clarity or why there are cases FOR conflict or why not everyone seeks a challenge on the job (but on the golf course) or how to acquire Charisma.

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Change Your Questions – Change Your Life 7 Powerful Tools for Life and Work

By Marilee G. Adams, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Helen Li, OPA

Whether we call ourselves optimists or pessimists or realists, we all have challenges to overcome. We do not have a choice in the stressors of life but, as Dr. Adams reminds us, we do have the power to choose how we deal with them.

In her book "Change Your Questions – Change Your Life," she shows us the power of questions to direct our thinking and therefore our actions and results.

Using the character of Ben Knight, Dr. Adams tells the story of how this person was able to learn to think productively rather than reactively and successfully transformed his professional and personal relationships

Her system called QuestionThinking is applicable for work and home.

A two-step change process that first involves identifying the self-doubt type of questions and then changing them around to produce better results.

Dr. Adams introduces the terms "Learner," "Judge," "Choice Map." Are we a learner or a judge? A "judge" asks "who is to blame?" "What did I do wrong?" "Does this person approve of me?" or "Do I approve of this person?"

A "learner" asks "What can I learn from this situation or this person?" "What is possible?" "How are others feeling?"

When you are standing in Judge lane, the world can look pretty bleak. Constant criticism of others and ourselves. There is hope for Judges. Her "Choice Map" shows a switching lane. Once on the switching lane, we step into choice, with infinite possibilities. We can become Learners. It's a metaphor obviously to allow us to view a situation from a different perspective.

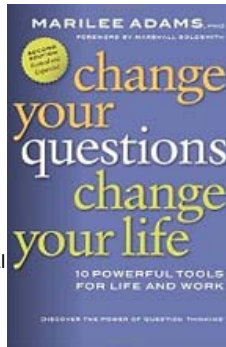
To use the author's example, when we get into a traffic jam, how do we react? Do we get uptight and frustrated and blame some incompetent driver or do we try to find alternative routes or just wait out the jam, stay calm and feel compassionate about the victims of a possible accident ahead?

How can we switch lanes? By asking "switching questions," of course. Questions like: "How else can I think about this?" "Where would I like to be?"

Sounds simple enough. But like everything in life, to become adept in QuestionThink one has to practice and practice.

Dr. Adams' book provides tips on workshops and sample questions for us to use among friends and colleagues. She generously shares her top 12 questions for change and recommends that we practice and pass the list on to help others. Here they are:

1. What do I want?
2. What are my choices?
3. What assumptions am I making?
4. What am I responsible for?



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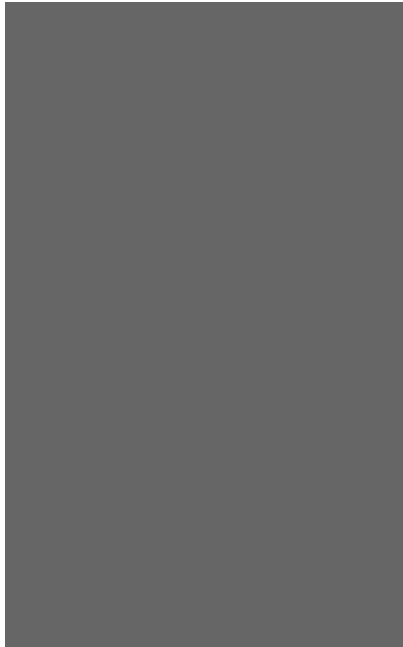
5. How else can I think about this?
6. What is the other person thinking, feeling, needing and wanting?
7. What am I missing or avoiding
8. What can I learn from this person or situation? What can I learn from this mistake or failure? What can I learn from this success?
9. What questions should I ask myself and or others?
10. What action steps make the most sense?
11. How can I turn this into a win-win?
12. What is possible?

Reading this book from cover to cover, I've collected a few gems of quotes.
"Curiosity is one of our greatest assets." "The best result of any question is not necessarily an answer, but a better question." Great results begin with great questions. So let's begin changing our lives for the better by asking great questions.

"Change Your Questions – Change Your Life" is available in the Wirtz Library

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Txtng – The gr8 db8

By David Crystal

Reviewed by Helen Li



If you've worked in DOL for a while, you know SOL stands for the Office of the Solicitor. What if you receive a text message from a non-DOL friend telling you that he'll call sol*, what does that mean? What if someone texts you to sit**?

Less than a decade ago, hardly anyone has heard of the word "texting." In a short space of time, we are witness to a linguistic phenomenon which aroused reactions ranging from curiosity/confusion to antagonism/condemnation.

Does texting hurt or help brain development? If you are wondering whether your child's ability to write standard English is going to be impaired, read this book and find out what steps you can take. (Spoiler alert: don't worry.)

In his book *Txtng — The gr8 db8*, David Crystal takes a long hard look at the phenomenon and its effects on literacy, language, and society. He investigates how texting began and who uses it, why, and what for. He explains the different uses of logograms and pictograms (eg. smileys). Each chapter starts with a cartoon and each page is filled with entertaining real life examples of people using shorthand messages ever since the beginning of time. He shows how texting works in different languages and even includes a glossary in eleven languages.

Here are some text abbreviations included in the appendix of his book:

- * sol – sooner or later
- sit – stay in touch
- ttul – talk to you later

My favorite?

t+ – think positive

If you like to solve puzzles, need some ice breakers for social situations, or just want to be part of the latest communication trend, you'll like *txtng* ... I mean the book. It's a 1dافل exploration of the English language.

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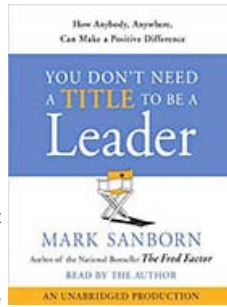
Book Review

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You don't need a Title to be a LEADER – How Anyone, Anywhere Can Make a Positive Difference

By Mark Sanborn

Reviewed by Helen Li



On the back shelf of the DOL Wirtz library, a small almost pocket-sized book caught my eye. The book title “You don't need a Title to be a Leader” resonates with my desire to rule the world (just kidding!) I was curious to see what this little book has to offer, being a collector of “how to” tips. I was not disappointed.

Although the author says the focus of the book is on the little *I* in *Leadership*...about the small things each of us can do everyday to positively influence our environment, the words of wisdom can aptly serve those with the big *L* responsibilities. Every page contains a gem worthy of a bumper sticker or a refrigerator magnet. Every story touches the heart.

One can pick up a few tips just by a quick scan of the section headings

The Six Principles of Leadership: Power of Self-Mastery, Power of Focus, Power with People, Power of Persuasive Communication, Power of Execution, Power of Giving.

Leadership Action Points: Express Your Appreciation, Ask Others What Motivates Them, Collaborate, Practice Diplomatic Confrontation.

The Barriers to Execution – Paralysis by Analysis, Fear of Failure, Confusing Talking with Taking Action, Accepting Explanations as Excuses.

How to Increase your IQ – Dream Big, Plan Small, Team Up, Keep Striving, Act Boldly

Those with project management responsibilities will appreciate the author's suggestion in creating an effective plan. Just four buckets to fill.

1. What needs to be done?
2. Why are we doing this?
3. Who is responsible for each task?
4. When will things happen?

Quoting well-known authors on corporate and personal success, management gurus, pastors, professors, and everyday people, this little book is really a digest of advice on time management, project planning, team building, self-mastery, relationships with others.

Here are some quotable quotes:

Leadership = positive influence.

TEAM -Together Everyone Accomplishes More.

To get others to follow you requires Character, Competence, Connection.

Leaders increase ROI ...Relationships, Outcomes, and Improvements.

As a leader, your job is to act as a thermostat, not as a thermometer. Show others

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the attitude, commitment, and performance you expect from them. You get the best out of theirs when you give the best of yourself.

Effective leaders help their audience answer the question “What does this mean to **me**?”

“Entertain to Engage,” the author advises. He says, “People remember stories. Stories are the coat pegs of the mind. They are where people hang their ideas.” Is it any surprise that his book is filled with stories to help make his points?

There is a wonderful story about a company executive who retired after many years of service. Throughout his career, he made it a point to send handwritten notes when he noticed somebody doing something that merited recognition. At his retirement party, he was amazed at the number of people clutching the yellowed handwritten slips of paper, thanking him for his encouragement and acknowledgment.

Another story involved a well-known philanthropist who declared he has stopped *giving*. When asked why, he said he has been given so much in life that now he is *returning*.

On a serious note, the author asks us to self-examine.

How do you live life? As an obligation or as an opportunity? A victor or victim?

Have you attended a meeting in the past week that was a complete waste of time?

How you manage those precious twenty-four hours in each day will determine how effective you are in life –whatever your title.

Few of us live our lives to our full potential. The challenge for anyone is to make a life while making a living. What is your legacy?

Plenty of food for thought! Suffice to say this book will inspire and empower you to improve your corner of the world through your positive influence.

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Book Review

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Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do

and

Studs Terkel's Working, A Graphic Adaptation by Harvey Pekar

By Studs Terkel

Reviewed by Jennifer R. Marion, Senior Advisor, Wage and Hour Division



I first read Studs Terkel's *Working* while in law school at the University of Chicago. Terkel received his JD from the school about 70 years earlier and had achieved an almost legendary status – a famous liberal from a school well known for producing conservative law and economic types. I wanted to read something of his and settled on *Working*, partially because of my labor background, partially because it is probably his most famous work, and partially because reading something that was 598 pages and had nothing to do with the law seemed decadently, almost rebelliously, inefficient.

Working, first published in 1972, is about how various people, from steelworkers to farmers to actors to prostitutes, feel about their jobs. Although compiled from Terkel's interviews, his presence is almost completely edited out, leaving autobiographical essays with the feel of oral histories. This was a somewhat radical choice; compared with today, when everyone has a blog, *Working* challenged traditional notions of whose lives and voices are worth being documented and heard. The result is an intimate look at all of the unique ways in which people do their work, whether it was their chosen or default occupation, whether they love it or hate it, and whether the work is hard or easy.

Through the individual stories in *Working*, despite the vast array of occupations and personalities, Terkel brings into clarity those threads that tie us all together. Wanting respect, appreciating what you have, and taking pride in doing your best are common themes throughout the book. The supermarket bag boy, the domestic worker, and the actor all chafe at feeling like they need to be subservient. The independently wealthy younger woman and the older jazz musician who sets his own hours both see the benefit of having the structure and purpose that comes with working.

I recently decided it was time to re-read *Working* to see how my perspective has changed after working at the Department. When I discovered that Harvey Pekar, working with a number of both established and new comic artists, had adapted *Working* into graphic form last year, I decided to try it. There is no one better suited to this task than Pekar, the writer behind the autobiographical underground comic *American Splendor*, which, similar to *Working*, takes a look at the day-in, day-out lives of ordinary people. As a stand-alone piece, the graphic version is a success. The artwork is visually stunning and the editing (the graphic version has 28 stories, a few of which are abridged, to the original's more than 100) is in keeping with the spirit of the original.

Unfortunately, though, the graphic adaptation suffers a bit in comparison and in the context of the original. Part of the beauty of *Working* is how compelling the workers' stories are when told in their own voices. I often found myself ignoring the pictures – or even resenting their presence as too distracting. Although I finished the graphic

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adaptation and enjoyed it, I got out the original when I was done.

In *Working*, Terkel managed to create something that is simultaneously timeless (a shoe workers organizer worries about outsourcing), a look at a passing era when people stayed in one job for their entire working lives, and a snapshot of a time when the workplace was changing demographically. And, in the context of the work we do at the Department, *Working* is both a reminder of how far we have come and how far we have yet to go.

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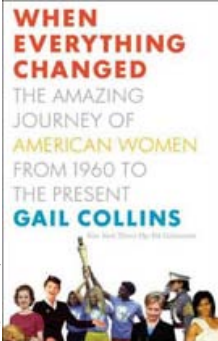
Book Review

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When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present

By Gail Collins
Published by Little, Brown and Company

Reviewed by Stephanie Swirsky



Back in 1964, the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau had a rather shocking non-policy policy: "It is not the policy of the Women's Bureau to encourage married women and mothers of young children to seek employment outside the home." Back then, the highest salary for any of the Bureau's employees was \$2,000--far below that of comparable men at the department--because a Congressman at the time thought that "no woman in the world is worth more than that." This is the world that Gail Collins sets off on her fascinating cultural history, "When Everything Changed: the Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present."

Collins mixes oral history, startling facts and commentary to bring us back to America of the 1960s when women couldn't have a drink alone at a hotel bar or a credit card in her own name. She takes us through the last 50 years of cultural, social and economic history, one woman's voice at a time. And these women have a lot to say.

Famous, infamous or ordinary, each has a story to tell, one more interesting than the next. From Pauli Murray, an African-American lawyer who graduated from Hunter College, Howard University Law School and Yale Graduate School who steered the Commission on the Status of Women, to Sylvia Acevedo, the Latina NASA engineer who went to Stanford to study engineering because in 1975 she couldn't follow her older brother to West Point, Collins portrays America's women of the second half of the 20th Century as unstoppable forces of nature.

She doesn't skimp on historical facts, providing rich detail along with the little-known, such as the inclusion of women in the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a poison-pill joke, in an unsuccessful attempt to defeat it. She also reminds us that progress is often uneven but never uninteresting. While women's contributions to our cultural and economic tapestry are unquestioned, the challenges of the work/family divide remain unresolved, workplaces inflexible and wage inequality stubborn. This is done without bitterness or regret, Collins storytelling keeps us on the edge of our seats, waiting for the next act.

Whether working in an office, factory or at home, women awake everyday to the same challenges as their mothers and grandmothers, armed with education, historical perspective and a healthy sense of humor. Gail Collins takes us on a women's-eye journey through our nation's recent history no man or woman should miss. Not since Lois Rabinowitz was barred from pleading her case in traffic court for wearing pants (in 1960!) have stories so cried out to be heard.

Stephanie Swirsky is a senior policy analyst in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy.

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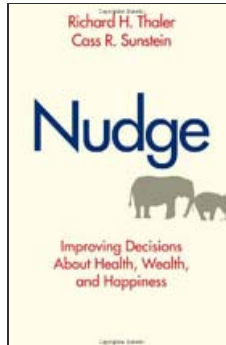
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Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness

By Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein
Yale University Press

Reviewed by Alex Mas

In Nudge, authors Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler draw from the world of psychology and economics to show how big decisions can be guided by how choices are presented.



It's no surprise that an individual's decision making-process is influenced by the environment in which that decision is being made. Think about every day activities like shopping for groceries: people tend to purchase products that are placed at eye level, and are more likely to buy the same product if there is another similar product placed next to it with a higher price. These techniques have been perfected by marketers, but we are just scratching the surface for how these insights can be used to design better policy.

To that end, the author's goal for Nudge is to reshape public policy by providing insight as to how government can guide (nudge) citizens into making better decisions so that they live healthier and more successful lives. An example: Are Americans saving enough? This is a hotly debated topic, but as they put it, "the costs of saving too little are greater than the costs of saving too much." Despite all the benefits that saving in a 401(k) offers, enrollment can vary quite a bit among eligible employees. So Thaler and Sunstein look at how the enrollment process is designed as an example of how presenting choices fundamentally impacts decision making. Studies have found dramatic increases in enrollment rates when employees are automatically enrolled into plans with the option to opt out as compared to when employees must opt into the plan. Under both alternatives employees have the same options: either enroll or not enroll in a 401(k) plan. But how the decision is framed matters quite a bit.

How information is released and presented by the government can also benefit society in important ways. For example, in 1986 the EPA instituted the Toxic Release Inventory as a record-keeping tool to identify the hazardous chemicals that were being stored or released into the environment by companies. As it turns out, the inventory, which was made publicly available, became an important source for media and environmentally concerned groups to identify heavily polluting firms. The resulting bad press served as an incentive for these companies to reduce their emissions to keep themselves off the worst of the worst list. The EPA's data collection and transparency served as a "social nudge" that influenced good behavior by companies and saved lives.

Behavioral economics as applied in the way Sunstein and Thaler suggest can have truly substantive impacts on many aspects of American society, or even just the way you go about your everyday life. Public policy questions of national savings rate, health and nutrition and energy consumption can all be improved by creative ways of presenting choices and information. Given the importance of the ideas contained in this book, I would nudge it up to the top of anyone's reading list.

Alex Mas is the Labor Department's Chief Economist.

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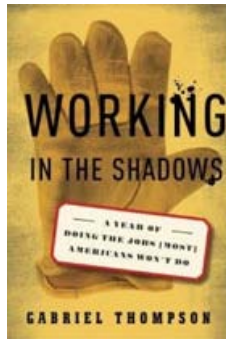
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Working in the Shadows: A Year of Doing the Jobs (Most) Americans Won't Do

By Gabriel Thompson
Published by Nation Books

Reviewed by Carl Fillichio



When I was a kid, growing up in South Florida, there was a “u-pick-em” near my home: a strawberry field where families could pick their own fruit. You paid to enter, and paid by the pound for the strawberries you picked. The father of one of my schoolmates worked in a nearby orange grove, and I once asked him why they didn’t have a similar operation. “There’s nothing fun, or charming, or delightful about working in the fields,” he replied. “Picking fruits and vegetables is hard work. The fields aren’t a family amusement park.”

Author Gabriel Thompson learned that firsthand, and the hard way. He spent a year undercover, working the toughest jobs that mostly immigrants do: picking lettuce in Arizona, toiling in a poultry processing plant in Alabama, and braving the streets of New York City on a bicycle, delivering take-out meals for an upscale restaurant.

Thompson doesn’t attempt to survive on his shocking low (and often illegal) wages (he has the luxury of renting a car when he needs one, and paying his rent in Alabama in advance). He simply tries to survive the job, each for two months. The reader is quick to wonder how anyone could do this kind of work for a season, a year, or a lifetime.

He starts his journey in Yuma, AZ, where under the scorching sun, he cuts row after row of lettuce. From there, he separates chicken breasts by hand during the graveyard shift at a poultry plant in Russellville, AL (he gets “caught” a week shy of his two months). His final gig: as a bike delivery man for a Manhattan restaurant, working for \$2 an hour. Thompson also does a week’s work in New York’s flower district, but is fired after enduring 11-hour days without breaks and verbal abuse from his supervisor.

There’s nothing “interesting” about the monotonous, grueling labor that Thompson does, and he doesn’t try to make it so. But what is extraordinarily compelling are the stories of the people (predominately immigrants) he works with, those who do the jobs most Americans won’t do: Manuel, Pedro and Adriana in the lettuce field; Kyle, Squirrel, Mario and Jesus at the Pilgrim’s Pride Plant in Alabama; and Guillermo and Rolando at the swanky Manhattan restaurant. They don’t get the pay they legally earn, but Thompson—by telling their stories—gives them the respect they deserve.

Carl Fillichio works in the Office of Public Affairs.

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FRANCES MAG

In Labor

(60) Second Opinion

By Gregory R. Wagner, M.D.



Question: I got a really bad sunburn last weekend. What is the best way to ease the pain?

What you need to do depends on how bad the burn is. If it's really bad — with big blisters that ooze or if you're having fever over 101, chills, nausea or confusion, see a doctor.

The worst sunburn I ever treated landed a nurse in the intensive care unit. She had gone for a 3-day weekend in the Bahamas in the fall. After two rainy days, the sun came out and she decided to pack a long weekend of tanning into the 12 hours before plane time. She

suffered!

Most burns aren't that bad but can be painful and annoying. Pain relievers like acetaminophen or ibuprofen can help, and cool compresses may provide some relief. Topical moisturizing creams (including some sunscreens) and 1% hydrocortisone can be bought without a prescription and can be soothing. Cool oatmeal baths (look it up!) can relieve itching and pain. If it looks like any of the burned areas are getting infected, use an antibiotic cream and cover lightly with gauze. Avoid the temptation to break blisters — this can increase infection risk. Drink lots of liquids — burns and summer heat can combine to cause dehydration.

Unfortunately, painful burns aren't the only problem from too much sun. Skin cancer, cataracts, and premature skin aging are possible future effects.

Prevention is the best approach, both for people who choose to be in the sun, and those who have to because of their outdoor work. Limit exposure especially between 10 am and 3 pm. Clouds may not provide protection from harmful rays. Wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses with UV protection, and tight-weaved clothing.

And, yes, wear sunscreen — a minimum of SPF 15. The SPF number let's you know the **relative** protection the sunscreen gives. Someone can stay in the sun about 15 times longer without burning wearing covered with SPF 15, or twice that long with SPF 30. But how long you are protected depends on how fast you burn, how much you sweat, and whether the sunscreen washes off in the pool, lake, river, or ocean. Some sunscreens need to be applied 15 to 30 minutes before getting in the sun — read the label. A good rule of thumb is to re-apply at least every 2 hours. And don't forget to apply to the tips of your ears and nose.

Gregory Wagner, M.D., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Mine Safety and Health, once practiced medicine and twice suffered from bad sunburns. He now uses sunscreen and believes in prevention.

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FRANCES MAG

In Labor

(60) Second Opinion

By Gregory R. Wagner, M.D.



Question: I want to stop smoking . . . and there are so many ways to do it today: drugs, patches, gum, hypnosis, acupuncture, etc. What question or questions do I need to ask myself and my doctor to find the best method for me?

Answer: The most important question to ask is the one you ask yourself: Am I ready to quit smoking? If the answer is "yes," you're on your way.

Figure out **why** you want to quit: To save money? To stop family and friends from nagging? Irritated at burning holes in clothes? Tired of running out for

cigarettes in the middle of the night? Angry at being exploited by tobacco companies? Vanity — avoiding wrinkles? Health worries? Whatever the reason or reasons, it's good to take stock, share the reasons with family and friends, and keep a list. It will help you through the process.

Quitting smoking has become very commercial and "medicalized," with proponents advocating for various interventions. But it doesn't have to be. Many individuals, with the help of friends and family, have substantial success **without** the assistance of doctors or other external and sometimes costly assistance. It's not easy, and people often fail. Those who finally succeed have tried and "back-slid" a half dozen times or more.

It would be great if we had a checklist to guide the best therapeutic supports — to tell us who responds best to hypnosis, who to nicotine replacement gum or patches, who to drugs, hypnosis, or acupuncture. But we don't. That would take the kind of "comparative effectiveness" that seems to stimulate so much political resistance. Different approaches could be compared with one another. This kind of research would test a range of interventions and collect data on a large and diverse population and see what worked best for whom. That research hasn't been done.

On the other hand, there are a lot of great resources online that don't cost you anything. Information and assistance from the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, and others can be accessed through a single page on the website of the Centers for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/index.htm.

So the bottom line is (1) decide to quit, (2) try something that sounds like it may work for you, and (3) if it doesn't work, try something else. (4) Then something else again. (5) Go back to (1).

If you know where you're going, many roads can take you there.

Gregory R. Wagner, M.D., once practiced internal medicine and occupational medicine. He is Board Certified in both fields. He is now Deputy Assistant Secretary for MSHA. His mother wants to know what went wrong and, more important, what to tell her friends.

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In Labor

(60) Second Opinion

By Gregory R. Wagner, M.D.



Question: I never got a H1N1 flu shot. I'm not in one of the "High-Risk" Groups. Do I really need one?

Answer: It depends. How much do you want to avoid feeling really crummy—achy, feverish, coughing, tired, maybe with shortness of breath, diarrhea, and vomiting for a week or more? Even though the flu season seems to be waning, there is concern that it could bounce back. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the flu is still making the rounds. The usual seasonal flu typically peaks in February and March and influenza activity can occur as late as May. We could easily see more seasonal flu and H1N1 this season.

In case you need another reason for concern: during the 1957-58 flu pandemic, flu cases first dropped in December and January, lulling public health officials into complacency. They stopped recommending vaccination to the public. Then, in February and March, 1958, flu activity and related hospitalizations and deaths increased abruptly. Although H1N1 is a different flu sub-type, such a surge could happen again.

Flu spreads to families, friends, and co-workers. The more who are protected by vaccination, the less it spreads through the community.

The vaccine for H1N1 flu, according to the [CDC](#) and the government Web site [www.flu.gov](#), is safe and effective. It's available without cost to you at the DOL. So maybe the right question is, why not take the shot?

- [More Pandemic Flu Information and Guidance](#)

The material on (60) Second Opinion is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. If you think you may have a medical emergency, immediately call your doctor or 911.

Got a question for Dr. Wagner? E-mail us at Frances@dol.gov

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The Watercooler

Recipes

Each month, the editors at Frances will try to highlight the recipes of notable DOL employees past and present. We will also ask DOL employees to submit their recipes that relate to the theme ingredient of the month. This month, the theme ingredient is not "an" ingredient, but any unique ingredient and the recipe is from Treci Johnson in OPA.

Coca-Cola Cake

Submitted by Treci Johnson in OPA

Cake:

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups small marshmallows
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 cup Coca-Cola®
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Frosting:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 6 tablespoons Coca-Cola
- 1 box (16 ounces) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, sift sugar and flour. Add marsh- mallows. In saucepan, mix butter, oil, cocoa, and Coca-Cola. Bring to a boil and pour over dry ingredients; blend well. Dissolve baking soda in buttermilk just before adding to batter along with eggs and vanilla extract, mixing well. Pour into a well-greased 9-by-13-inch pan and bake 35 to 45 minutes. Remove from oven and frost immediately.

To make frosting, combine butter, cocoa and Coca-Cola in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and pour over confectioners' sugar, blending well. Add vanilla extract and pecans. Spread over hot cake. When cool, cut into squares and serve.

*The cake recipe was contributed by Lee Avery Catts to "Atlanta Cooknotes" published by The Junior League of Atlanta.

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The Watercooler

Recipes

Mrs. Wirtz Lemon Cookies

MRS. W. WILLARD WIRTZ
5009 39TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016

LEMON COOKIES

Grease a 9"x9" pan with ~~Vegetal~~ oil.

Mix together and press in bottom of pan:
1/2 c. butter 1 c. sifted flour
1/2 c. powdered sugar

Bake at 350 for 15 min.

Sift together:
1 c. sugar 2 T. flour
1/2 t. baking powder

Add:
Juice and rind of 1 lemon
2 beaten eggs
Pour this over baked crust and bake 25 min. longer.

When cold, cut in bars and then sift powdered sugar over all.

MRS. W. WILLARD WIRTZ
5009 39th STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

LEMON COOKIES

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Mary Jane Wirtz

Mary Jane Wirtz, the wife of Kennedy and Johnson Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz, was known for her sly wit and grace and as a strong advocate for the less fortunate. She served on the Executive Committee of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped in the early 1960s and later served as chairman of

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the Board of Directors of Project Earning Power, up to that point one of the largest efforts to employ disabled people.

Mrs. Wirtz was known as an excellent public speaker and even served as a campaign trail companion of Lady Bird Johnson. She was also notable for her sewing skill—her self-made clothes earned her praise as one of the best-dressed women of Washington. Let's hope her cookies are as good as her clothes.





The Watercooler

Recipes

Turkish Salad

Submitted by Rachel Miller in EBSA

Ingredients:

Romaine Lettuce

Tomatoes

Peeled Cucumbers

Vegetable Oil

White Vinegar

Cumin

Salt

1-2 lemons

Directions:

1. Chop lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers
2. Mix equal parts vegetable oil (not olive oil) and white vinegar. Add cumin, salt, and the juice of 1-2 fresh lemons to taste.

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What is this?



The Watercooler

Recipes

Lemonade Icebox Pie

Submitted by *Laura MacDonald* in *O CIA*

Ingredients:

- 2 (5-oz.) cans evaporated milk
- 2 (3.4-oz.) packages lemon instant pudding mix
- 2 ¾ (8-oz.) packages Neufchatel cheese (light cream cheese), softened
- 1 (12-oz.) can frozen lemonade concentrate, partially thawed
- 1 (9-oz.) ready-made prepared graham cracker crust

Directions:

1. Whisk together pudding mix and evaporated milk for 2 minutes or until thickened.
2. Beat cream cheeses at medium speed with an electric mixer until fluffy. Add lemonade concentrate, beating until blended; add pudding/milk mixture, and beat until blended.
3. Pour into crust; freeze 4 hours or until firm. Garnish with whipped cream or lemon wedges if desired.

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What is this?



The Watercooler

Recipes

Lemon Bundt Cake

Submitted by *Glenda Manning in OCIA*

Ingredients:

- 1 (18.25 ounce) package lemon cake mix
- 1 (3.4 ounce) package instant lemon pudding mix
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup lemon-lime flavored carbonated beverage

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Grease and flour a 10 inch Bundt pan.
2. In a large bowl, combine cake mix and pudding mix, then stir in the oil. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, then stir in the lemon-lime soda.
3. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake in the preheated oven for 35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool.

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The Watercooler

Recipes

Lemon Glaze Icing

Submitted by Tiffany Williams in OCIA

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter (melted)
- 1/4 tsp of yellow food coloring
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp lemon extract
- 3 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1/3 cup milk

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together and pour over your favorite cookies or cake.

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The Watercooler

Recipes

Baklava

Submitted by Yvette Meftah in OSEC

Many cultures make their version of baklava, this recipe is my father's which uses some American ingredients to re-create traditional Iranian baklava which has an unexpected ingredient – rose extract.

- 9 x 13 metal baking pan (**not** non-stick and not disposable)
- New soft 2" paintbrush for spreading butter
- 1 pound sweet unsalted butter, melted
- 16 oz Phyllo dough defrosted
- 1 ¼ pound unsalted pistachios (or walnuts)
- 1 cup sugar
- dash nutmeg

Syrup:

- 1 bottle Karo syrup (16 oz)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon rose extract

Place nuts, sugar and nutmeg in food processor – pulse until ground fine, set aside.

Place the baking pan in front of you, with melted butter and brush above pan. Open phyllo dough box – if leaves are separated into two 8oz packets, only open one laying flat on counter to the right of pan – if there is one packet take about half the leaves, place flat and cover completely with **very lightly** dampened dishcloth to prevent them drying out.

Working quickly, butter bottom of pan, then place full sheet of dough, butter top, place another sheet and so forth until 8oz of phyllo dough leaves have been used. The dough dries quickly, do not worry if sheets crack or break a little – it makes no difference.

Place the nut/sugar mixture on top evenly and then lightly press with your flat hand to compress. Butter the remaining sides of the pan. Bring your second 8oz of phyllo dough next to your pan and begin placing as before – the first sheet on top of the nuts is tricky, so press an edge against a buttered side of pan, then carefully butter and place next sheet against the opposite side to hold – from there it should be as easy as before. Cracks and tears will show on the very top piece, so try to have a nice full one for the top – butter the top sheet generously.

Place pan in freezer for 15 – 20 minutes and turn oven on to 350 degrees to preheat.

Remove pan from freezer – using a very sharp knife quickly and methodically cut the baklava into equal-sized 1 ½ inch squares or diamonds, being careful to cut all the way to the bottom of the pan. As the butter starts to thaw, you may need to support the top layers of dough with your fingers as you cut through, to prevent it moving. When you finish cutting, place in oven.

Bake for 50 minutes, covering lightly with foil after 30 – 35 minutes when it reaches a golden brown.

As baklava is baking, open Karo syrup, add lemon juice and rose water into the bottle, cover and shake vigorously until thoroughly mixed.

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What is this?

Remove baklava from oven and place on cooling rack – remove foil and set aside – immediately pour the syrup on top of the hot baklava (it will sizzle). Once fully cooled, cover lightly with the foil until ready to place pieces on tray. With a small knife, remove a corner piece of baklava – removing the first one will give you better leverage to remove all the others.

Variations:

1. If you don't like rose water, 1 teaspoon almond extract is a good substitute.
2. Turkish and Greek baklava use walnuts & cinnamon, and honey for the syrup (no rose water)



FRANCES MAG

The Watercooler

Parting Shots

Have great photos from a vacation that you'd like to share? How about some great pics from a DOL meeting, training or retreat? Share it here. Send them to us at frances@dol.gov and we'll post them in Parting Shots!

Dennis Reid, from the BLS office in San Francisco, snapped these great photos during a recent trip to Africa.



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