



He Kumu Mea Hou

- New Beginnings -



NWS Diversity/ EEO Notes From the Community

Summer, Issue 4

July 23, 2010

June is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Awareness Month

By Eric Pytlak
Western Region

June's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Awareness Month (also known as Gay Pride Month) is officially recognized as a Special Emphasis program throughout the Federal Government. In June 1969, after police stormed a gay nightclub in New York City, days of protests and riots swept several major cities and exposed overt harassment of gay and lesbian people by both the government and society. After tempers cooled, the first anti-discrimination policies were enacted to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. Since the 1970s, tolerance of gay and lesbian people has increased steadily. Almost all Fortune 500 companies and several states ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, and most offer domestic partner benefits. In 2009, the Matthew Shepard Act became law, and made a crime committed because of one's sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation, a federal hate crime. There are ongoing federal policy reviews and bills working through Congress to permanently extend discrimination protection to federal employees and perhaps offer GLBT employees some domestic partner benefits. Several states now allow same sex couples to marry or enter into civil unions.

Unfortunately, discrimination against gay and lesbian people continues. Recent surveys indicate that over 80% of gay and lesbian people have experienced some form of verbal harassment in the last five years, and a 2009 Pew Study indicated that gay and lesbian people are now the most discriminated group in the U.S. Over half of all states still allow people to be fired simply be-



The Rainbow Flag is a symbol of Gay Pride

cause of the sexual orientation, or even their perceived sexual orientation. The federal government is not immune, even though strong protections against sexual orientation discrimination have been in place since the 1990s. In 2009, the federal government was successfully sued by a woman who was denied a top-level position at the Library of Congress simply because she is transgendered.

However, the tide of acceptance continues to grow. Since 2009 a lesbian woman was elected mayor of Houston, TX, several openly gay men and lesbian women were elected or re-elected to the House of Representatives, and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management became the highest ranking openly gay administrator in the Federal Government. Closer to home, several gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered people work in the National Weather Service in all levels of our organization and many of our straight employees have an openly gay brother, sister, parent, child, or close friend.

Inside This Issue :

LGBT Awareness Month	1, 4
Updates from the Federal EEO Community	2
What is Sexting	2
FAPAC	3
Diversity Poster Contest	4,5
2010 Office of Education Scholarship Program	6
AISES	6
Diversity Luncheon Let's Play Diversity-Scrabble!	7
Yes You Can !	7
DMC New Leadership	7
ACT-SO	8

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Continued on Page 4



He Kumu Mea Hou

- New Beginnings -



Updates From the Federal EEO Community

By Nydria Humphries



In the 2010 June issue of the Federal EEO Advisor there was a front page article that addressed how the

Supreme Court will decide on which Cat's paw standard to go with when handling future EEO and employment cases.

The Cat's paw theory has been described as the use of someone else to achieve one's own objectives. For example, during a selection process, if an employer is influenced by information received from another manager, HR person or subordinate then the employer may become bias. When an employer becomes bias this can lead to a discriminatory employment decision or it could create a hostile working environment for the accused employee.

Although in employment law the Cat's paw theory is illegal, there are standards that each individual case must adhere to.

The Federal EEO Advisor states that, "the Supreme Court is about to weigh in on whether employers should be liable when a lower level manager influ-

ences --- but does not make --- a discriminatory employment decision."

There are three standards that some Circuit courts are adopting involving Cat's Paw litigations, and they are the functional decision-maker standard, causation standard, and influence standard.

As the Federal EEO Advisor notes, first, "under the functional decision-maker standard, the complainant must prove that the decision-maker routinely rubber stamped the biased manager's proposals, making the biased manager the functional decision-maker.

Secondly, under the causation standard, the complainant must prove that the biased manager caused the decision maker to go forward with the employment action. Adopted by four Circuit Courts, this standard favors neither party.

Lastly, under the influence standard, the complainant must prove that the biased manager influenced or played a role in the decision-making process.

The Federal EEO Advisor state, that employment law expert Mathew Tully "predicts that the Supreme Court will probably go with the causation standard because it is fair to both plaintiffs and respondents...most EEOC judges use the causation standard."

For information on how to subscribe to the Federal EEO Advisor you can call 1-800-341-7874 or order it online at www.shoplrp.com

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management (OEODM)

The OEODM Newsletter is posted to the National Weather Service Website on a quarterly basis.

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National Weather Service

What is Sexting?

By Nydria Humphries

Sexting is the act of sending, receiving or forwarding sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones. The word is derived from the words sexing and texting. If you get caught using your government issued communication device inappropriately, you may be terminated from your position. The Supreme Court admitted that employers have

the right to view your messages. "Before the U.S. Supreme Court wrapped up its latest term in June, it Unanimously held that an employer's search of a worker's text messages was reasonable and did not violate the employee's right," says Rich Meneghello of the Daily Journal of Commerce.



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- New Beginnings -



A Report on the FAPAC's 25th Annual National Leadership Training Conference

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council's (FAPAC) 25th Annual National Leadership Training Conference was held at Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, during the week of May 3 – May 7, 2010.

Notes from Jim Su:

I attended the conference and served as a facilitator of two workshops: one presented by Gazal Modhera and Veronica Villalobos of EEOC and the other presented by Dr. Percy Thomas of Successful Behavior Institute.

The conference featured seven pre-conference agency workshops, eight plenary sessions, 28 workshops, and one executive coaching (mentoring) session, and exhibits. In addition, there were two plenary sessions for the youth program. Among the 28 workshops, there were six for the youth program. Also, different from former FAPAC conferences, there were two plenary sessions that geared more towards women issues: AAPI Women Issues and Leadership Challenges for Women.

At the conference, there were speakers from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and Merit System Protection Board (MSPB). Deputy Director, Christine Griffin of OPM was the speaker of plenary session entitled "Federal Workforce Issues Forum". A workshop entitled "Aftermath of EEOC Report on AAPI" was presented jointly by Ms. Gazal Modhera and Veronica Villalobos of the EEOC. Ms. Villalobos was on detail to OPM as Special Counsel to Deputy Director Griffin at the time of the conference. Dr. Cynthia Ferentinos of MSPB was the invited speaker



to present a workshop entitled "Fair and Equitable Treatment: Progress Made and Challenges Remaining". These sessions are informative and educational for conference participants, regarding the understanding of the Federal Workforce, and the roles played by AAPI Federal employees.

The EEOC Report on AAPI was prepared by the EEOC's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Work Group established by former EEOC Chair, Naomi Earp. Ms. Modhera was the leader and I was a member of the Work Group. The Report was published on January 9, 2009. At the FAPAC conference, I served as the facilitator of the workshop presented by Ms. Modhera and Ms. Villalobos.

A former NOAA employee, Dr. Percy Thomas was also an invited guest speaker to present a workshop on "Power Step – Writing a Winning Resume". I also served as the facilitator of his workshop. For the service I provided at the conference, my name is listed in the FAPAC conference Program Book as a volunteer.

This year's FAPAC conference was educational and it provided great opportunities for networking. For instance, with the conference volunteers, they

were provided with hands-on training opportunities for leadership and management skills. Also, the Executive Coaching Session provided good opportunity for mentoring by Government SES employees and upper level managers, most of them were AAPIs. The exhibits provided the conference participants with opportunities to pursue various career goals. I was happy to see that NOAA had an exhibit booth at the conference. I have been encouraging NOAA employees to attend the FAPAC conferences in the past decade and I will keep my effort as usual.

OEODM Sponsors SCEP Student Trip



SCEP intern, Ashton Robinson Cook will be a presenter at the American Geophysical Union's Meeting of the Americas in August 2010. The National Weather Service's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management will be sponsoring his trip. The meeting will be held in Foz do Iguassu, Brazil.

Ashton works at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK. Also, he is working on his Ph.D at the University of Oklahoma.



He Kumu Mea Hou

- New Beginnings -

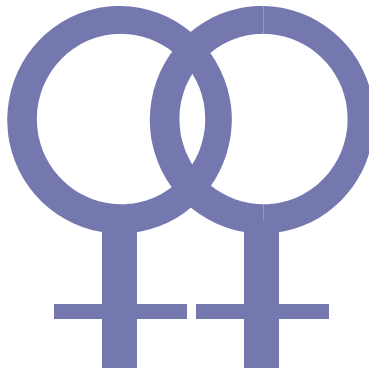


GLBT Awareness Month (Continued from Pg 1)

The National Weather Service will continue to be affected as acceptance of gay and lesbian people continues to grow. Recent surveys indicate that while about half of all people over the age of 40 support strong civil rights protections for gay and lesbian people, over two-thirds of those under 30 support stronger protections, and over half support gay marriage. New employees coming into the NWS are much more likely to have gay friends since the average age of coming out has dropped from about 27 in 1990 to as low as 17 in 2009. Those GLBT people we hire in the next few years are more likely to be “out” as a lesbian woman, gay man, bisexual, or transgendered, are more likely to have accepting friends -- both gay and straight, and are more likely to be in a long-term relationship. Thus the language we use, the policies we implement, and the way we interact with each other and our external customers will continue to become more inclusive for the people we serve, and the people who work with us.

The National Weather Service, through the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management

(OEODM), and the diversity program leaders in WFOs, RFCs, national centers, and regional headquarters, have been working together to raise awareness of sexual orientation differences in our workplace, and to encourage both gay and straight employees to work together more effectively to support our agency’s mission. Several resources are already available, with more on the way in the coming months. We encourage all NWS employees during this month to be more aware of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people they work with, and to value everyone’s contribution to our agency – regardless of sexual orientation.



Some valuable on-line resources:

Dept. of Commerce Sexual Orientation Policy page: <http://www.osec.doc.gov/ocr/publications/sodiscrimination/so.html>

Federal GLOBE: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Employees in the Federal Government: <http://www.fedglobe.org/home.html>

The 2009 Pew Research study: <http://pewforum.org.docs/?DocID=481>

The National Weather Service OEODM Website: <http://www.weather.gov/eo>

The NWS Western Region Diversity Sharepoint Page: <http://wr-s-sharepoint/diversity/default.aspx>

GLBT Awareness Month Resources from the NWS Western Region Diversity Action Committee (DAC) Video Library: The Laramie Project and Call Me Malcolm.

NWS Diversity Management Poster Contest

By Carolyn Willis

The National Weather Service Diversity Council Management Marketing Team recently conducted a poster contest, which was open to all NWS employees. Employees were asked to design and create a poster that “embodied and vividly portrayed the concept of Diversity Management” within the National Weather Service. Twenty one excellent entries were received from across the country, and the Poster Contest Team was tasked with selecting only one as the winner. Members of the Poster Contest Team were: Carolyn Willis, Hope Hasberry, Kari Fleegel, Vanessa Pearce, Kenneth.Podrazik, Steve Smart,

and Freddie.Zeigler. The poster designed by Ben Deubelbeiss and Bill Ash, was selected as the winner. Bill is a Hydrometeorological Technician at the NWS WFO in Elko, Nevada, and Ben was recently selected as a Journey Forecaster at the Chicago WFO. The two winners will split the \$500 prize, and each will receive a copy of their poster signed by the Assistant Administrator of the National Weather Services. A copy of the winning poster will be distributed to all NWS offices nationwide. Congratulations to Ben and Bill!

The poster can be viewed on page 5.



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Interactive • Supportive

DIVERSITY

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Leadership • Responsibility • Participation

Innovation • Commitment • Accountability



CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES

Potential • Inclusion





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- New Beginnings -



NOAA Office of Education Student Scholarship Orientation Training Program

By Nydria Humphries

On June 1 - June 5, 2010, 150 scholarship recipients participated in an orientation program at the NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

The scholarship programs included the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate scholarship program, the Dr. Nancy Foster Graduate Scholarship program and the Educational Partnership Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship programs.

The awarded students were from all over the country. They participated in the four day orientation and training program to be exposed to the different student career programs and career opportunities that NOAA offers.

The goal of NOAA's Office of Education Educational Partnership Program is to increase the number of students from underrepresented communities who graduated in fields that directly support NOAA's mission. So, during the orientation the awarded students are able to gain knowledge about their field of study.

The students were educated by Fisheries Management specialist, Marine Habitat Resource Specialist, Oceanographers, Meteorologist, Hydrologist, and many other NOAA professionals. They also took field trips to many NOAA facilities, such as the Sterling Weather Forecast Office, the Satellite Operations Control Center & Joint Ice Center & NESDIS GOES Program Office, the GIS Demonstration, the Oxford Lab Oyster Hatch-

ery, Saint Ocean Hall Exhibit, the Baltimore Aquarium, the National Systematic Lab, and the Bay Hydro II.

The Student Scholarship Orientation Training program allowed students to see NOAA from a broad perspective. Some of the students were unsure of their future occupations, but others knew exactly which careers they wanted to pursue. They showed much interest at the Career Fair. The students, at the career fair were able to speak directly to scientist regarding their career goals.

Dozens of students crowded the National Weather Service career tables. They were asking questions about space weather, water resource management, hurricanes and tornadoes. The meteorologist and hydrologist were pleased to see so much enthusiasm and intelligence. They talked to the students about their careers and backgrounds, and they informed them that the National Weather Service offers equal employment opportunities to talented and diverse individuals.

The Students Scholarship and Training program ended with a Student alumni panel and a discussion on how to get an internship.

Many of the students will be interning at NOAA next summer, so look forward to seeing them on campus.

The Office of Education sponsors the Student Scholarship Orientation and Training Program every year. For more information on the Scholars programs, please visit ep.noaa.gov

AISES

By Nydria Humphries

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) hosted a meeting with the Government Relations Council at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on July 15, 2010.

The Goal of AISES is to increase partnerships among Federal agencies, American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and Non-Governmental Organizations around Science, Engineering, and Mathematics education, and career opportunities.

Several government agencies attended the meeting, and along with many American Indian student interns. The meeting allowed for student interns and government representatives to network and express ideas during a facilitated round table discussion.

Although, the representation of American Indians in the Federal sector is low, the CEO of AISES, Pam Silas said, "the Federal Sector is the largest employee of AISES members."

In 2009, the representation of American Indians at the National

Weather Service was below 10%. It is of great value to the National Weather Service that more American Indians take advantage of career opportunities in the field of science and engineering.

AISES encourages American Indians with a background in science and engineering to consider working for agencies, such as NOAA, EPA, NASA, the Department of Agriculture and other agencies. "The mission of AISES is Employ, Educate and Service," said the Co-chair, Nolan Herbert.



Fort Worth and West Gulf River Brown Bag Diversity Luncheon



WFO Fort Worth and WGRFC staff members participate in "Diversity Scrabble."

On April 29th 2010, WFO Fort Worth and the West Gulf RFC participated in a Brown Bag Diversity Luncheon. The staff viewed a diversity-related video called "Respect My Generation." The video discussed many cultures, such as generation X, the Baby Boomers, Millennials and much more. It highlighted the obstacles people encounter when working together in the workplace.

Employees also participated in a team building activity called "Diversity Scrabble." In playing Diversity Scrabble, players teamed up with people from various backgrounds, races and generational groups. The diverse players used words from the video they watched, *Respect my Generation*, the NOAA Civil Rights poster, and the Fort Worth local office diversity poster, in the Scrabble game. A member of the WFO/WGRFC Diversity Team served as a judge and kept score. The team with the highest points won the game.

The luncheon was a success. Twenty staff members participated in the activity. Everyone enjoyed learning about generational challenges in the workplace and how to effectively work well with others.

YES YOU CAN!

Every summer the University of Maryland's Baltimore County (UMBC) hosts a summer enrichment program, called Yes You Can for underprivileged High School students. This year, the OEODM Director, Charly Wells assisted the program as the luncheon motivational speaker and mentor.

Yes You Can Motivational/Support is a program designed for youth interested in going to College. It was a two week program that started on June 29, 2010. Mr. Wells was one of 12 speakers who appeared during the 2 week period of the program. There were approximately 19 students representing high schools from the metropolitan area.

The students at the program represented the diversity of the communities we serve and are some of the best and brightest. Each year, the purpose of the Yes You Can programs, is to give students a taste of life on a college campus. Hopefully the experience will help them make the crucial decision to pursue a college degree.

Charly served as a mentor and shared his personal experiences and his desires to pursue college. Charly also discussed the many student programs available at the National Weather Service and what skills they need to pursue a career in science.

Diversity Management Council New Leadership

By Charly Wells

The National Weather Service Diversity Management Council welcomes the new Chair, Jose Garcia and Vice Chair, Ursula Jones to the team. They will be leading the council during FY11 through FY13.

Elaine Wilbur, past Chair and Gena Morrison, past Vice Chair positions ended in June. They have received plaques for their leadership roles and exceptional service.

If you or one of your colleagues are retiring or leaving soon, please e-mail the information to Sabrina Cook at sabrina.cook@noaa.gov



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- New Beginnings -



The NWS Celebrates the following Special Emphasis Observances:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Holiday — January (3rd Monday)

National African-American History Month — February

National Women’s History Month — March

National Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month — May

National Jewish Heritage Month ----May

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month --- June

National Hispanic Heritage Month — September 15 to October 15

National Disability Employment Awareness Month — October

National American Indian Heritage Month — November

National Veterans Day — November 11

ACT-SO

By Carl McCalla



The 2010 NAACP Afro-academic, Cultural, Technological, and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) of the Mind was recently held at the Kansas City Convention Center in Kansas City, Missouri, from July 8-12. The NAACP describes ACT-SO as, “A yearlong enrichment program designed to recruit, stimulate, and

encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students.” The national ACT-SO competition brings high school scholars from around the nation to compete in such categories such as Physics, Mathematics, Earth and Space Science, Computer Science, Engineering, Medicine and Health, Biology/Microbiology, and Chemistry/Biochemistry. The competition is held annually. NOAA supports this outreach activity by supplying in-kind services, such providing judges for the various science categories from

local NWS forecast offices and centers.

The concept of ACT-SO began with Vernon Jarrett (1918 – May 23, 2004). Mr. Jarrett was, according to Wikipedia, “an African American journalist who worked in newspaper, television and radio and was an influential commentator on race relations, politics and African American history.” Mr. Jarrett, together with Benjamin Hooks, a former executive director of the NAACP, championed ACT-SO and through the program they sought to further its ideals of scholarship.



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- New Beginnings -



Reminders:

Please mark your calendars:

Charly Wells, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management will visit the Memphis Weather Forecast Office (WFO) during August 2 - 3 to provide EEO/Diversity Management training.

April

Equal Employment Opportunity/ Human Resources (EEO/HR) - April 13 - Apr 14, 2010 - New York, NY

May

Northwest Indian College (NWIC) - May 4 - May 5, 2010 - Billingham, WA

July

Federally Employed Women (FEW) - July 12 - July 16, 2010 - New Orleans, LA

EEOC Examining Conflicts in Employment Laws (EXCEL) - July 12 - July 15, 2010 - Orlando, FL

August

Federal Dispute Resolution (FDR) Conference - August 9 - August 12, 2010 - Atlanta, GA

Blacks In Government (BIG) - August 16 - August 20, 2010 - Kansas City, MO

September

Society of Advancing Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) - September 30 - October 3, 2010 - Anaheim, CA

November

American Indian Science Engineering Society (AISES) - November 11 - November 13, 2010 - Albuquerque, NM

We want to hear from you! If you have stories or news articles to be featured in the Office of Equal Opportunity/ Diversity Management's (OEODM) Newsletter, please submit them to: Sabrina.cook@noaa.gov and Nydria.humphries@noaa.gov by the 15th of each month for the quarterly postings to OEODM's website. Please remember when submitting articles to have them edited and verified prior to submission.

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