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Western Region Diversity

Director's Corner

Thanks to the hard work provided by Western Region's Diversity Action Committee and Manager's insightful comments and suggestions on how to include Diversity principles into our daily work. At the Regional Labor Council meeting in June, the WR Diversity Strategic Plan for FY 2011-2014 was approved. The DAC will continue to work together to execute the plan's goals and will soon provide a webinar for Focal Points and Managers as we begin implementation. Let us continue to recognize and address the needs of our diverse employees and customers by fostering an adaptive, inclusive and innovative workforce.

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a celebration of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The character of celebration has undergone a change in recent years, especially in large industrial centers where mass displays and huge parades have proved a problem. This change, however, is a shift in emphasis and expression. Labor Day addresses by leading union officials, industrialists, educators, clerics and government officials are given wide coverage in newspapers, radio, and television. The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has even known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pay tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership - the American worker!

Our diversity celebration observance will also soon recognize Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15). During this period people recognize the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States, it is also a time to celebrate their rich cultural tradition. September 15th was chosen as the starting point because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador,

Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. They all declared independence in 1821. Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on the 16th, 18th, and 21st respectively.

The Hispanic-American community has made a remarkable impact on American society. The diverse background of Hispanic Americans and their



NWS Western Region Director Vickie Nadolski

dedication to family have become an integral part of America. With a deep commitment to faith and a strong desire to live the American dream, these citizens are realizing the full blessings of liberty. We also honor Hispanic Americans for their strong tradition of service in the Armed Forces. These proud patriots have fought in every war since our founding, and many have earned the Medal of Honor for their courage. These brave men and women have shown their love for the United States by answering the call to serve. We owe them and their families tremendous debt of appreciation. Their patriotism and loyalty have added to the character of our Nation.

Other observances in the coming months include National Disability Awareness, American Indian Heritage and National Veteran's Day. Please take time to learn more about these celebrations and enjoy the beauty of Fall !

Vickie

Diversity Focal Point Spotlight

Diversity Shots from Around Western Region



From left to right: Christine Gilchrist, Don Simonsen, and Amy Schnetzler at the Glasgow, MT Turkey Trot



Standing, Vincent Papol, Senior Forecaster at NWS Pendleton; while participating this year in Washington State University's "Expanding Your Horizons" workshop.



The Natural Disasters softball team in Salt Lake City, UT NWS employees: Monica Traphagan, top left. Eric Schoening top right. Linda Cheng bottom left. Ken Pomeroy middle top row.

John Blank Diversity Focal Point WFO Great Falls, MT



John, tell us a little bit about yourself.

I joined the National Weather Service way back in 1974 as a summer trainee at WSFO Cleveland. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1975 I worked as an intern at WSO Newark and later at WSFO Washington, DC. In late 1978 I transferred to Western Region. I first worked as a forecaster at WSO Riverside, CA, and then briefly as a fire-weather forecaster at WSO Billings.

In September of 1981 I transferred to WSFO Great Falls and have worked here ever since. My wife owns a child care center and we have one grown daughter. On a week-end off you can usually find us in Billings visiting our daughter, son-in-law, and 3 grandchildren.

What does diversity mean to you?

It means respecting differences; whether it be race, creed, gender, personality, etc...

What is the most rewarding thing about being the Diversity Focal Point?

Seeing the staff become enthused about diversity activities, having the activities spark discussion within the office and to be able to experience the resulting changes within the workplace.

What is your biggest challenge as Diversity Focal Point and how do you handle it?

The biggest challenge is getting staff to participate in diversity activities. I try to make them fun and also try to choose activities that accommodate rotating shifts.

How do you encourage diversity in the workplace?

This is done primarily through different diversity activities. Our office has a bulletin board where I post articles for all to read.

How do you think an effective diversity program could help the National Weather Service improve?

Effective diversity programs help us to understand peoples' differences, leading to improved communication, which promotes inclusiveness. This makes everyone feel part of the team, be it at the local or national level.

Diversity Certification Plan in NWS Learning Center! <http://learning.doc.gov/index.htm>

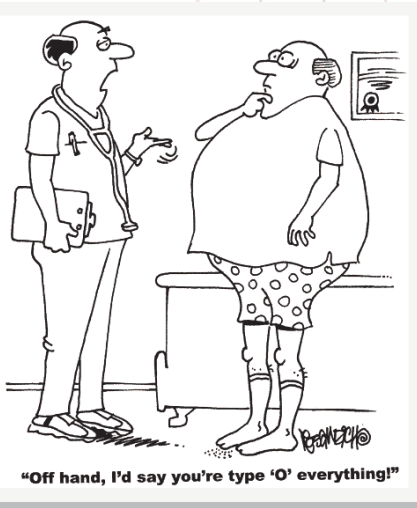


There is now a "Diversity Management Curriculum (DMC) FY2012" Development Plan in the NWS Learning Center that includes certification after completion.

The plan contains 13 courses in the curriculum. Your training officer (SOO or DOH) can assign the plan to you.



Are YOU guilty of weight bias?



"Off hand, I'd say you're type 'O' everything!"



WFO "Weighs" the Issues

By Bill Ash: Diversity Focal Point, WFO Elko, NV

The Diversity Team at WFO Elko recently held an interactive diversity exercise as an addendum to their staff meeting on June 22, 2011. It was attended by 73% of the office personnel.

The staff was asked to anonymously write down their first impressions of pictures of 12 individuals of various size, stature, dress, and general appearance. The pictures were posted on the office diversity board for several months, with the question, "How would you describe these people?" Most of the pictures showed large or heavy people. Common terminology refers to them as "obese."

After all the staff finished writing down their impressions, the responses were read aloud. Under the guise of anonymity, I felt we received honest and sometimes surprising feedback.

Some were humorous, some were direct or literal descriptions, and some responses were demeaning or hurtful. The point of the exercise was to show that first impressions of large or heavy people are often quite different than those of "normal-sized" people.

Following the interactive portion of the exercise, literature was passed out that

showed data from several studies concerning weight discrimination.

This data reflected how heavier people often earn less money than thinner co-workers.

The studies also showed how society views and treats persons of size differently. Some employers or potential employers had pre-determined negative ideas about large people and made judgments based on their size alone; some without ever having spoken to them.

This information about weight discrimination was not discussed in depth, as the purpose for the exercise was to inform, rather than to chastise.

The exercise was a success on three levels:

- 1) The curiosity and participation of the personnel made the exercise fun,
- 2) The anonymity of the exercise provided the avenue for some honest responses, and
- 3) The researched data that was handed out and discussed put weight discrimination on the forefront of everyone's mind. We left with the hope that people will treat everyone, regardless of size, the same way they would like to be treated themselves.

Incorporating Diversity in the Workplace

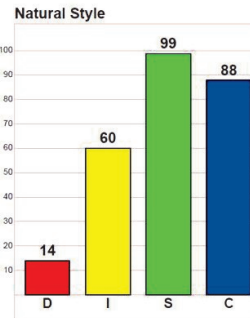
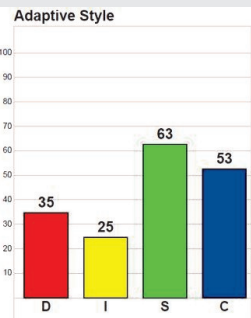
By Kevin Baker: MIC, WFO Elko, NV

WFO Elko has had a proactive local LIFT (Leadership and Innovation for Tomorrow) program for the past couple years with large participation by the staff. The local LIFT team has been working on building teamwork through understanding and respecting personality differences.

This summer the team has held sessions for the WFO on DISC (decisiveness, interaction, stability, and control) and 360 feedback assessments. The DISC is similar to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, and is a simple and quick way to determine characteristics of our personalities.

The DISC was introduced to the staff by Pam Szatanek, based on her experience from the DOC Careers in Motion program. Delyne Kirkham (WR Disabilities SEPM) and Pam gave excellent presentations on how to obtain DISC assessments, and learn from the results. From their presentations we were able to share some of our personality traits and learn more about our differences. The biggest gain from this experience was learning and sharing the dos and don'ts about communicating with each person based on their personality type. Another eye-opener from the assessment was the examination of our natural and adaptive personality traits.

Another avenue we are pursuing for personal growth and understanding is the 360 assessments. These voluntary assessments will be ongoing for the next month, and our ITO (Erik Youngquist) has written computer code to make the process anonymous and secure. From this experience, our staff will learn more about people's perceptions, and gain further insight into how our behaviors and actions impact others.



Sample personal DISC Behavioral Assessment Graphs

Free DISC assessment available at:

<http://www.tonyrobbins.com/ue/disc-profile.php>

NWS Disclaimer — <http://www.weather.gov/disclaimer.php>

Have You Thanked A Vet Today? Veteran's Day is Nov 11th!

By Steven Leedy: ESA, WFO Elko, NV (USCG 1982-2006)

Veterans are a diverse group of people to begin with and adding them to your team is a great resource to draw from. Generally, veterans are a loyal, dedicated, and a resourceful group of people who are goal oriented and are looking for the end result that is both positive and productive. Adding a veteran to your team takes diversity to the maximum level in that veterans have experienced worldwide conditions and can bring a well-rounded look from outside of the box to your team's diversified vision. A large part of today's work force is made-up of veterans and family members of a veteran.

Family members are just as important because they are the ones who have traveled around the world with the service member experiencing new and innovative ways of doing things. They have the ability to bring a diverse view to your team. The opening statement is true for the family as well as the veteran; diversity and thinking outside of the box is a daily routine for them. People from all over the world find each other, share their ideas and experiences, and in turn bring that diversity with them. There is no greater resource to draw from than the veteran pool and their families. If you are looking to diversify your team and resolve problems or increase productivity, these are the type of individuals you will want on your team.

What is a veteran you might ask? The most common answer is someone who has been in the military. That is correct but it is any man or woman that has served consecutively on active duty for 180 days or more. Meeting this criteria will make it possible to experience the benefits of being a veteran. Some of the benefits include education assistance through the GI Bill/ Post 911 GI Bill, military installation privileges, medical, recreational, federal job preference, and a whole host of more benefits that can be gained by being a veteran. There are many branches of the military to choose from, Coast Guard to the Marines, Navy to the Air National Guard. All branches work together on a worldwide team to accomplish goals and ensure a positive outcome for not only their organizations but America as a whole.

To summarize, I would say if you find yourself as the team leader and are looking for diversity throughout your team then look at the veteran that is most likely right next to you. Ask them to be a part of the solution. They will bring new and innovative ideas to light and be a positive asset in your management tool box. After all, the goal is to formulate a positive and innovative solution to any situation, and adding a veteran will open new possibilities and balance your team's diversity to its maximum level. To all fellow veteran reading this article;

"Thank you for your dedicated service to this country. You have sacrificed plenty to keep America strong."



Diversity Focal Points, Susan Jolliff of Boise, ID (BOI) and Karrie Schmidt of Pocatello, ID (PIH) collaborated on an interactive veteran's exhibition.

The exhibit honors those that have served and offers a "snapshot" of their life and military service experience. The exhibit creates a better understanding of the human condition for all of us.

The exhibition is available for other Diversity focal points to use. To schedule, contact: karrie.schmidt@moaa.gov



National WWI Museum in Kansas City

Visiting Kansas City or DC Soon?

By Pam Szatanek: Meteorologist, WFO Elko, NV (USMC 1995-2000)

In our line of work, it is not uncommon to find yourself in Kansas City or in Silver Spring. What better way to learn more about veterans or take a glimpse into a demographic moment in time, than by making a visit to a war memorial?

Top picks:

- The National WWI Museum in Kansas City
- The Marine Corps War Memorial (also called the *Iwo Jima Memorial*) near the Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia
- Arlington National Cemetery (which is also where JFK was interred and the Shuttle Challenger Memorial is located)
- The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, the Korean War Veterans National Memorial and the National World War II Memorial in DC (which are all within walking distance of each other)

National Hispanic Heritage Month: Sept 15th to Oct 15th

One diversity activity your office could consider is viewing the movie “Bordertown” with Jennifer Lopez. The movie is based on actual events concerning murders in Ciudad Juárez, a city in the Mexican state of Chihuahua near El Paso, Texas. While many may hold strong political opinions with regard to immigration matters, the purpose is to focus on the cultural and human impact of these issues within the context of the story, and use the discussion to better understand our own culture, emotions and those of others. A Facilitators Guide to use is available on the WR Diversity Sharepoint site.



Communication 101

By Erik Youngquist, ITO, WFO Elko, NV

What is communication? Is it chatting around the water cooler? Is it talking over finances with your significant other? Is it that subtle glance from someone you are interested in that gives you the strength to talk to them? Maybe it's getting that email from your boss telling you of a promotion. Where would we be without communication? Almost everything we do on a daily basis requires us to communicate in some way with another person or group of people. If we have the ability to express ourselves does that make us good communicators? Is it possible that we sometimes take communication for granted?

With that said, what are the consequences of bad communication or, potentially, a miscommunication? The consequences could be catastrophic. Miscommunications can get you the incorrect meal at a restaurant, break up marriages, make a tense situation explode, start wars...the list goes on. There are so many negative outcomes of poor communications or miscommunications. So, why don't we as individuals focus a bit less on "the what" and focus a bit more on "the how" of our communications?

One of the big "HOW's" we should focus on is our body language. Depending on the expert asked, 50-90 percent of communication is non-verbal. I would like to share a quick story where poor communication occurred.

I will preface this story by stating the following items:

- The story involves two co-workers
- The two co-workers have worked closely with one another on many projects
- They have gotten to know each other quite well
- The two consider each other friends



"What is it, boy? Want to go outside?"

The "not so" hero of the story is named...hmmm... Rik. The "distressed" employee is named Julie (the names have been changed to protect the guilty).

Anyway, one morning Rik is having an interpersonal conversation with Julie about a new project they are going to work on. Rik notices that Julie is wearing what he considers to be a hideous suit. Rik thinks he is being funny and states "nice suit...who shot the couch". Julie starts to cry. As time passes Julie will never be seen again wearing the suit in question. Unbeknownst to our "not so" hero, Julie has been having trouble with some items at home and was feeling very vulnerable.

While Rik was only joking with his friend, he hurt her feelings. She did not receive his joke as a joke. To Julie it seemed to be a "First Strike" in the war of the wardrobe. This simple joke had a lasting effect on Rik and Julie's working relationship. It took 6-12 months of work to get their relationship back to a proper working level. Rik should have acknowl-

edged what Julie was saying with her body language and known that something wasn't quite right. In retrospect, Rik did know something was amiss but ignored the signs. One simple line and their relationship was damaged forever.

Many people concentrate on using big words when speaking to their bosses, friends or authority figures. While the big words are nice and tend to make you seem smart...the majority of our communication is sent non-verbally. That is the main reason that emails are frequently misinterpreted. We as humans subject the written email to our own personal cultures for lack of the non-verbal cues. I believe this is the part of communication we take for granted.

As individuals, we know that everyone is different but still expect that people we have communication with will interpret our words and body language exactly as they are meant. This is rarely the case. Everything we have ever done or that has acted upon us (from our families to friends, from our job interactions to the government, from race to religion) form our singular personal culture. No two people are the same. Every one of us are individuals and diverse in our own special ways. Our diversity and our broad range of experiences make us strong and make us who we are. Just as English speaking individuals may know the meanings of the words they use...they cannot guarantee that, when stated, those words will be received with the same meaning we are trying to express. So, in short, communication is huge part of our everyday lives and should not be taken for granted.

Diversity should not be seen as something that separates us from each other...it should be the glue that holds us together.

November: National American Indian Heritage Month

Native America – Reaching Out Through Cooperation and Partnership

By Michael Fitzsimmons: WCM, WFO Elko, NV

The National Weather Service in Elko has provided a number of different programs to the residents of northern and central Nevada over the years.

Of these programs, one that has become significantly engrained in the office culture is that of cooperation and partnership with the Native American community.

ing in the annual Tribal Communities' Earth Day activities, certifying the Paiute Duck Valley Indian reservation as StormReady, and sharing in numerous educational and training programs such as HazMat tabletop exercises, Tribal Emergency Response Committee (TERC) meetings and Science and Safety preparedness education.



The Elko Forecast office began this cultural exchange through an initial introductory meeting which then expanded to our attending partnership meetings with the Te-Moak and Paiute Tribes. From these meetings, our trust and partnership continued to grow to the point of sharing and participat-

As part of the Science and Safety preparedness, the focus has been on the Tribal Community children, providing an educational awareness and foundation in science and math and supporting their educational growth. The Elko Forecast office takes pride in this relationship and is committed to working toward achieving the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Several Shoshone tribal community children with WFO Elko, NV WCM, Michael Fitzsimmons, standing far rear right.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

WFO Reno Hosts Disability Awareness Event

By Katie LaBelle: Meteorologist, WFO Reno, NV

The attitude that someone who is considered disabled is automatically rendered incapable is one that should be dispelled from today's society. With technological advances happening every day, a good attitude can go a long way. Everyone is faced with challenges to overcome every day, and those who have disabilities and those that don't are no different.

This past spring, WFO Reno gathered together to learn about several types of common disabilities present in today's workplace while investigating firsthand the various challenges faced in a given work day. Additionally, we covered considerations one should take when encountering an individual with a disability.

The goal was to achieve a greater understanding of the day to day challenges faced by those with intellectual, vision, hearing and physical disabilities. Volunteers participated in interactive exercises in the office where

each volunteer was assigned a physical disability and then asked to perform a routine task around the operations area. For instance, a blind fold was used to mimic blindness and the volunteer was instructed to check the Weather Radio to ensure the products were being played properly. This encouraged teamwork and detailed communication between the blind person and her "helpers". The deaf and immobilized volunteers performed similar tasks while being assisted as necessary by fellow employees.

Several lessons were learned during the interactive portion of the event. Each exercise demonstrated the importance of good, clear communication when offering help to those with a disability, while being aware of and respecting the abilities of the person. All involved took away the idea that even with the difficulties and challenges life presents, anything is possible, with a good attitude.



Elko WFO's Diversity Focal Point Bill Ash tried a similar activity at a family reunion. This is a picture of his niece learning about the challenges of routine tasks while in a wheel chair.

Meet the DAC

WESTERN REGION DIVERSITY ACTION COMMITTEE



Chair: Todd Hall, Senior Forecaster, WFO Oxnard, CA
(Term date: October 2011)



Advisor: Diane McArthur, Workforce Program Manager, WRH AMD,
Salt Lake City, UT (Term date: Unlimited)



Management Rep: Tom Evans, WCM, WFO Monterey, CA
(Term date: October 2012)



NWSEO Rep: Kevin Durfee, Forecaster, WFO Hanford, CA
(Term date: Unlimited)



Non-Minority Male Rep: Dean Hazen, SOO, WFO Pocatello, ID
(Term date: October 2011)



Federal Women's SEPM: Karrie Schmidt, ASA, WFO Pocatello, ID
(Term date: October 2013)



Native American SEPM: Dan Valle, Senior Forecaster, WFO Pocatello, ID
(Term date: October 2011)



Hispanic SEPM: Carol Ciliberti, Forecaster, WFO Oxnard, CA
(Term date: October 2012)



African-American SEPM: Charles Shell, Electronic Technician, WFO Seattle, WA
(Term date: October 2013)



Asian-American/Pacific Islander SEPM: Brooke Bingaman, Forecaster,
WFO Sacramento, CA (Term date: October 2012)



Persons with Disabilities SEPM: Delyne Kirkham, HMT, WFO Elko, NV
(Term date: October 2013)



Gay/Lesbian Rep: Roger Lamoni, Fire Weather Program Manager, WRH SOD, Salt Lake City, UT
(Term date: October 2011)



Passing Thoughts on Title IX

By Pam Szataneck: Meteorologist, WFO Elko, NV

Over fifteen million viewers watched the Women's World Cup Final in Germany this past July. More than 13.4 million viewers per minute tuned in for ESPN's showdown between U.S. and Japan in Frankfurt, Germany, making it the most-watched soccer game in the network's history.

According to Time.com, there were more tweets per second than any event ever since the advent of Twitter, including the royal wedding. Now ask yourself this, do you know the name of the U.S. women's starting goalie? Can you also name the U.S. men's starting goal keeper?

For two decades, the U.S. women's soccer team has not just produced role models like Mia Hamm, Brandi Chastain & Hope Solo, it has also generated revenue and commanded worldwide respect. Prior to the start of the World Cup games in Germany the U.S. Women's team was ranked number one by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association).

Also noteworthy, the U.S. Women's Team has qualified for every World Cup since FIFA began a women's championship in 1991, and to date, they have finished either first, second or third in every World Cup tournament. In 1994, Pele was asked to name 125 of the greatest living soccer players. Only two Americans made that list: Michelle Akers and Mia Hamm. By the way, 123 of the players on Pele's list were males and only two females even made the list.

So how exactly did this soccer program evolve so successfully? Read

Getting in the Game (2010) by D.L. Brake or listen to veteran players' interviews and the importance Title IX becomes glaringly obvious. Long story short, Title IX was an amendment to a piece of education legislation that was signed into law during the Nixon Administration. It was designed to augment the Civil Rights Act of 1964, by codifying additional measures to protect against gender based discrimination. Title IX extends to all educational activities including sports programs.

NCAA Title IX compliance makes it so that women's teams have the same access as the men's teams to medical facilities, locker room space, per diem allowances and provision of equipment.

While Title IX generated some controversy and was even scrutinized by the Supreme Court, it also created a series of defacto farm systems for women's athletics including women's soccer that has never been replicated by any another democratic country with such magnitude. According to a 2010 survey of NCAA programs, the five most popular sports at the collegiate level for women are basketball, volleyball, soccer, cross country and softball in that order.

While there will always be naysayers and obstructionists to social reform, there will also be those of us that have the ability to see the value of change and can identify success stories when we see them. The next Women's Soccer World Cup will be hosted by Canada in 2015. But those of us that follow the sport expect a respectable showing from Abby Wambach & friends at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.



Mascot Karla Kick with people before the opening ceremony at the Women's World Cup in Berlin June 26, 2011

(Picture courtesy of www.fifa.com)



Alex Morgan is carried by Lauren Cheney in celebration after scoring the United States' 3rd goal during the semifinal match between France and the United States at the Women's Soccer World Cup in Moenchengladbach, Germany. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)

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