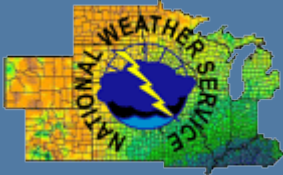




National Weather
Service Central Region



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Diversity Central

Fall 2014

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Message from the Director's Desk

By: Chris Strager



(Source: StormCenter)

I am writing this introduction while huddled in a chair in my Washington DC apartment while movers scurry around packing our household goods. I'm doing this because of the kind invitation I received to provide my thoughts on diversity for the Central Region Newsletter. This was an offer I simply could not refuse!

First, thanks to all for putting together this newsletter. I know it's often a thankless job, but we need these efforts to be able to communicate with everyone across our Region. 45 offices with nearly 1000 people spread across the central US - it's a difficult chore to keep everyone informed. This is a great forum to be able to discuss a topic as important as diversity.

When I think of diversity and what I want to bring to Central Region on this topic, the first thought that crosses

my mind is: Diversity is not just about race, religion, gender, or any other aspect of who we are. Diversity goes beyond these areas. Some examples include people working together to bridge generational diversity. How does the experienced lead forecaster who has been on station for over 20 years communicate and work effectively with the newly hired intern to share ideas? What about the diversity of having new people hired into the office from different regions (bringing diverse ideas and experiences with them)? Regarding diversity of opinions - I've actually seen people on shift have a difficult time communicating and working with each other due to diversity of political opinions. There are so many good, new ideas out there that sometimes never get aired due to the reluctance of others to accept diverse concepts.

The message I would like to put out is one of tolerance. Tolerance for new ideas. Tolerance for differences of opinions. Tolerance for varied backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures. Perhaps I'm just getting old, but I grow increasingly frustrated every time I turn on TV talk shows or read blogs. The bile and hatred that is poured out in these forums over differences in opinions - or lack of

tolerance for others' opinions - saddens me. It's fine to have personal beliefs and values. It's what makes us who we are. But understand that others have their own core beliefs and values. While we may not always agree with their viewpoints, tolerance and respect need to be displayed at all times.

I've put together a brief introductory video that will be shared with all of you. As I said earlier, I want to find different ways to communicate with you all. Included in that video is an e-mail address for communicating directly with me. I will keep all correspondence confidential. This is your opportunity to share your diverse opinions and comments with me in a "no risk" forum. All I ask is for common respect and courtesy when sharing your comments. I promise you will receive the same from me.

As I prepare to begin serving as your Regional Director, I plan to visit all of your offices over the next few years. I want to have an open and frank dialogue with you. I want to hear your diverse opinions...and I plan to share mine with you. Let's all work together to blend our diversity into one Region that helps move us towards a Weather-Ready Nation.

Using Local Sources for Native American History Presentations

By: Ernie Ostuno

The Grand Rapids office has been holding an annual Diversity Luncheon for many years. As the Diversity Focal Point, I integrated various themes into the event, including a detailed history of immigration into the area our office serves. The first people to arrive in Michigan followed not long after the retreat of the ice sheet 10,000 years ago and were the descendants of those that crossed the Bering Land Bridge. In more recent history, the "Council of the Three Fires", or Anishinabe consisting of the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomie were living in Michigan when European settlers began to arrive.

The Grand Rapids Public Museum has a display called "Anishinabe: The People of This Place" describing the history of the original people and includes hundreds of artifacts and several video interviews. This has been an excellent resource for putting together presentations. Local historical societies have published books that include details on the interaction between Native Americans and the early European explorers and settlers.

In addition to museums and local historical societies, Native American speakers can provide stories of their personal experience. In 2009, Ron

Yob, Tribal Chairman of the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians, gave a very illuminating presentation on the historical and present day life of Native Americans in Michigan.



Grand Rapids Public Museum display on Native American History (Source: Ernie Ostuno)

All-Hazards Approach to Emergency Management in Ethiopia

By: Greg Gust

Imagine arriving at a large urban airport as the only person *not* of color.

Imagine driving in a city (4+ million) with no functioning traffic lights.

Imagine goats (your next meal) being herded past your hotel in the city.

Imagine intermittent access to the internet or to electrical power.

Imagine visiting a countryside where all the homes are dirt floor huts.

Imagine experiencing an economy built by people working by hand - in the city streets and in the fields.



Ox and farmer plowing a field near the flood swollen Awash River in the Great Rift Valley (Source: Greg Gust)

Yet realize...I am in Africa! I am in Ethiopia!

Then meet, learn, and know some of these people and some of what they know.

See cell phone coverage, now virtually everywhere.

See politics, ministries, and agencies now remade, and

Feel the growth, the excitement, and the possibilities.

As a WCM, both capacity building and disaster risk reduction flow in my blood.

Disasters here, yes! ...but a National Incident Management System is in place.

Since 2010 I've had two trips into Ethiopia where I've been a part of such efforts there.

Plus I've been part of three visits from Ethiopia to the United States.



Goat herding along the street near downtown Addis Ababa, between the Serbian Embassy, the Hilton, and the Raddison Blu Hotel (Source: Greg Gust)

All U.S. State Department and USDA/ Forest Service funded projects... NWS approved.

Just imagine!

Mission Trip to Honduras

By: Tim Gross

During the last two weeks of July 2014, my wife and I traveled to Honduras on a mission trip with Lifeline Christian Mission located in Westerville, OH. During the trip, we participated in several activities with the Honduran natives. Some of these activities were Indian heritage day, a Quincenera (party for a girl turning 15), Vacation Bible School, men/women's bible studies, and several church services.

The first day, we went to Ocotillo Christian School, where the kids were celebrating Indian heritage day. They dressed up in their Indian clothes and did several dances and songs. I especially liked watching the littlest kids dance with their partners (see upper-right image). The language barrier was difficult for me

as all the Hondurans spoke Spanish. Luckily for me, my wife was fluent and was able to translate.

Our group attended a Quicenera, a special ceremony that a girl has when she turns 15. Daisy turned 15 and all of her family, friends, and church members came to the service. She was dressed in formal wear and was led to the front of the church for all to see (see lower-right image). There were songs, a sermon, and dancing during this ceremony and a dinner for everyone afterwards.



(Source: Tim Gross)



(Source: Tim Gross)



Group Photo (Source: Tim Gross)

Trip to Tanzania

By: Janine Vining

In May of 2010, my husband and I were invited by another couple to go on a small group tour of Tanzania, to include safaris at various national parks and cultural exchanges. There were 8 of us – 4 couples. We went on safaris, visiting Ngorongoro National Park, Tarangiri National Park, as well as Serengeti National Park. We stayed in various lodges within the parks as well as the Ngorongoro Farm House resort.

The safaris were wonderful, and our 2 guides throughout our Tanzania tour were very accommodating, knowledgeable, and first rate. Safari highlights included seeing part of the wildebeest migration, zebra, elephants, and lions. One guide was from the Masai Tribe, the other a Bantu.

We visited the Banjika Secondary School one morning. We talked with the middle school students and found out that they wanted to be teachers, doctors, nurses, and help their communities and their country advance. We each gave short talks explaining who we were, where in the US we were from, what kind of education we had, and what our professions were. Another day we visited a Masai village. The ladies of the village greeted us with singing and dancing. We were invited to the corralled barnyard, where we stood amongst the dirt and dung, where the men demonstrated how they take fresh blood from a cow and drink

it. Then it was back to the center of the village. The ladies of the village dressed the 4 of us ladies of our group in traditional dresses, and invited us to participate in a singing and dancing circle – which we did! How cool was that!? We sang and stepped in a circle, then were joined by some of the men in another dance/step song. This is where I had to show the Masai men that I could jump high (in case you don't know, the Masai are the tribe you may see in a National Geographic special jumping in place, very high). We kind of had a jumping contest – everyone was laughing! We stepped to song in procession to a boma (house). In Masai culture, the women build and own the houses. One of us ladies helped add to the siding of the hut with a mixture of mud and cow dung – by hand! Yes, they washed her hands thoroughly afterwards. I got to climb up a ladder to the roof of the boma and help place straw for the thatched roof.

We all were then invited inside one of the bomas, for a look inside their houses. It reminded me of Native American round houses of the Northern Plains where the house is sectioned off with a place for everything and everything in its place. We began with a question and answer exchange. The main topics regarded family, marriage, and roles of men and women. We learned that wives expected to be beaten by their husbands and we were told that if a

wife wasn't beaten, that she would probably beat her husband! We thought, "what kind of crazy society did they live in?" We told them that beating a spouse was against the law in America, and that you could go to jail because of it! They told us that a woman got married and was expected to have kids. They asked about our lives. One couple had been married for many years, it was their first and only marriage, and had 3 children. One couple had been married for many years but had no children and did not want kids. One couple was a man and woman whose previous spouses had both died, then met and married – with stepchildren. And the 4th couple consisted of two people who had been previously married and divorced, then met each other and live together but are not married. Our hosts thought, "what kind of crazy society do these people come from?"



Adding a mud/cow dung mix to the siding of a boma (Source: Janine Vining)



Banjika Secondary School Students (Source: Janine Vining)



Janine showing the Masai men how high she can jump (Source: Janine Vining)



Janine adding straw to a thatched roof of a boma (Source: Janine Vining)

A Strategy for Managing Sleep during Midnight Shifts

By: Tony Merriman

Your set of midnight shifts is coming up and you might be asking yourself, “Self, how can I get through this set with the least amount of pain?” There are many strategies for managing sleep during midnight shifts. This is one that I have found that works best for me and it does not require sleep aids or much caffeine.

At the NWS Bismarck office, we work seven midnight shifts in a row. The staff agreed that the first midnight shift is the worst and a seven-day stretch would provide the lowest frequency first midnight shifts through the year. With that said, the challenge becomes forcing your circadian rhythm to become nocturnal at the beginning.

I have found that if I sleep during my “normal” time (midnight-7am), I can nudge my circadian rhythm towards the nocturnal state by trying to take a 2-hour nap before I go in for my first midnight shift (see 2-hour nap attempt on the schedule below). I still struggle

through my first midnight shift, but I have enough rest in the bank to make it through. I also drink plenty of water on my mids. The key for me is to stay hydrated.

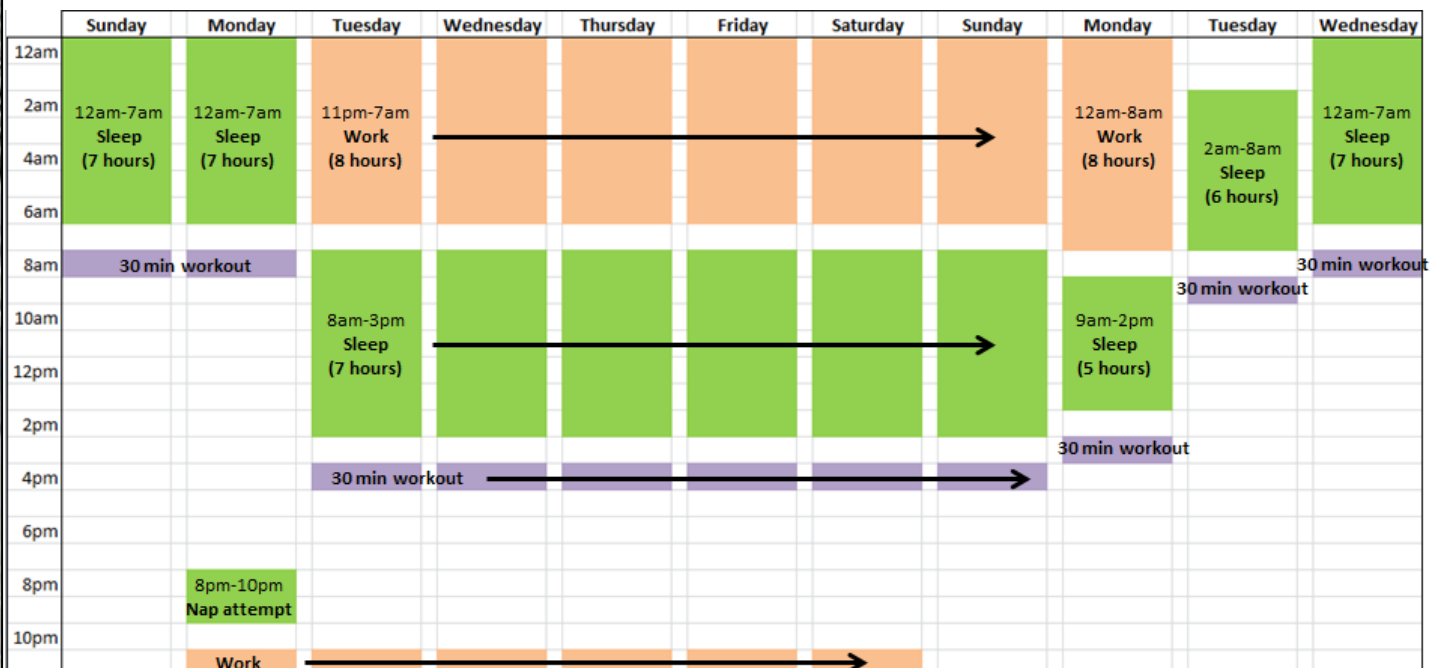
Right after I get home from work, I try to sleep for seven hours during the day. I sleep in our guest bedroom in the basement with a box fan to drown out noise. The cool environment and white noise (and blackout curtains) are a great help at getting plenty of restful sleep. Don’t get me wrong, it’s not a solid 7 hours of sleep. But I try to get up for the day around 3pm and stick to that schedule through my set of mids. Another key element for me is to exercise for 30 minutes right after I wake up. It helps get the blood flowing and keeps me awake, as does the one cup of coffee I have after my workout.

I keep with the same routine through the six remaining midnight shifts. I have found that I typically adjust to the nocturnal schedule by the third

midnight shift. Therefore, the last half of my set is not so tough as long as I keep with the routine.

The last midnight shift is bitter-sweet. It’s my last mid (hooray!), but now I have to get back on a “normal” sleep schedule (challenge). After my last midnight shift, I only sleep for 5 hours and exercise after I wake up. That’s enough sleep for me to feel rested, but not too much so that I will be wide awake after midnight that night. I then go to bed around 2am Tuesday and sleep for six hours. I can then get back to my “normal” sleep schedule two days (Wednesday) after my last midnight shift.

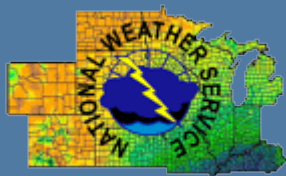
This method of managing sleep during midnight shifts is just one of many. Please feel free to email me what works best for you during your midnight shifts at Tony.Merriman@noaa.gov. We will likely feature it in the next edition of *Diversity Central*.



Sleep, work, and exercise schedule at the beginning, middle, and end of a set of midnight shifts (Source: Tony Merriman)



National Weather Service Central Region



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Weather-Ready Nation:
Saving Lives and Livelihoods

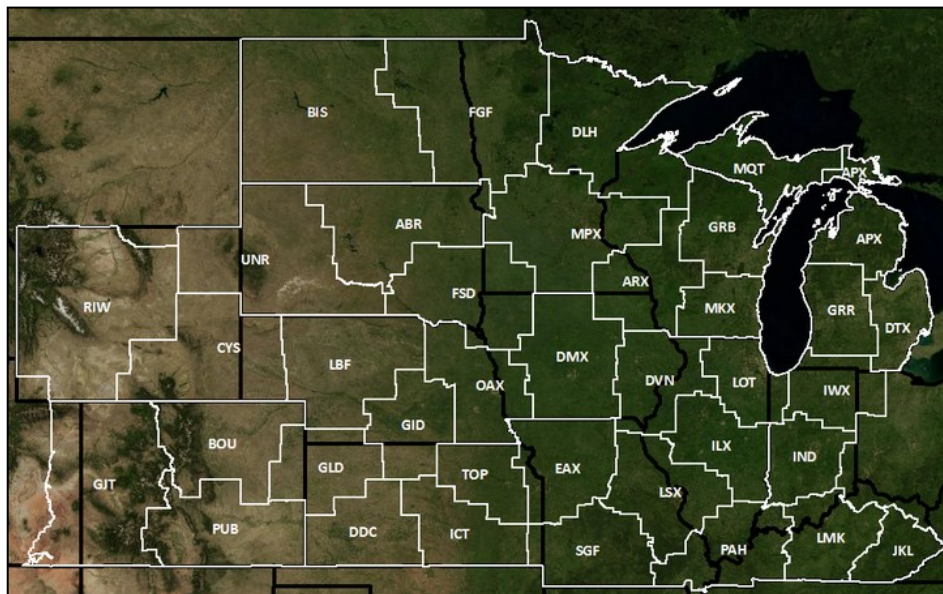
Building a Weather-Ready Nation

National Weather Service Mission Statement:

The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

Brief National Weather Service History:

The National Weather Service has its beginnings in the early history of the United States. Weather has always been important to the citizenry of this country, and this was especially true during the 17th and 18th centuries. The beginning of the National Weather Service we know today started on February 9th, 1870, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a national weather service.



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