



National Weather Service



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Diversity Matters

Winter 2014-2015

Volume 1, Issue 2

Welcome Message

By: Dave Rowell

On behalf of the NWS Diversity Council, and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, we hope you enjoy this 2nd issue of *Diversity Matters*.

Please also share this newsletter with others in your office and discuss content of interest. By doing so, you can help

turn diversity from a noun to a verb; from something simply taken for granted as an office fixture to activities that become living entities of office culture. Hopefully you will find ideas in these articles and the articles will serve as catalysts in making diversity lively to the benefit of the organization, its employees, and its customers.

NWS Austin/San Antonio Diversity Accomplishments

By: Orlando Bermudez



NWS Austin/San Antonio (Source: NWS Austin/San Antonio)

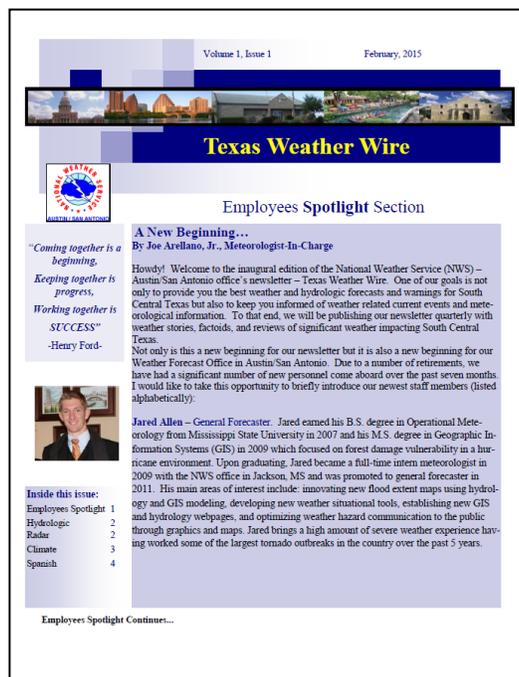
We accomplished a quite a few diversity milestones at the NWS Austin/San Antonio office recently.

For the first time in a long time, a Christmas Party was hosted at my house with three-quarters of the staff members showing up at my front door. We had a great time and all of the food items were cooked at home with love and dedication.

We also revived our office newsletter. We issued the new and improved newsletter on February 2. The NWS Austin/San Antonio office had 5 to 7 open vacancies at one point last year that are now filled. With that in mind, the newsletter was based on our new beginnings. The first several pages are dedicated to those new employees followed by weather topics such as climate, radar, and hydrology. The theme

of the newsletter was teamwork. Also, we introduced a Spanish section for the growing Hispanic population with a two-page write-up about hazardous weather that impact South Central Texas.

Lastly, as a team building exercise, most of the office staff and their families will be going to see the Spurs versus the Houston Rockets on April 8, 2015. It is going to be a great game and fun time.



NWS Austin/San Antonio Newsletter (Source: NWS Austin/San Antonio)

NWS Tallahassee Hosts Diversity Meetings

By: Katie Moore

Over the past few years, NWS Tallahassee had five diversity meetings.

We try to tie the theme of the meeting to the heritage or history month of the meeting date, or as close to it as possible. Our meetings generally start with a pot luck lunch, which is themed as well. The meetings themselves are usually pretty informal. We generally have a 3-6 guests or “panelists” who have a roundtable discussion with the office.

Instead of having formal presentations, we keep the meetings in conversation mode in the hopes that it will make people more comfortable actively discussing diversity. Our recent diversity meetings are detailed below.

June 2014 – Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May) Celebration

To celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, the office had a roundtable discussion with our ITO, Toan Tran, his wife Huyen Tran and son Alexander Tran; Hui Wang, a graduate student in meteorology at FSU; and Brian Nguyen, a student at Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine (ACOM).

The group discussed various aspects of Vietnamese and Chinese culture and how it has shaped some of their lives and viewpoints. Before the meeting, we had a pot luck lunch with Asian dishes.



February 2014 – African American History Month Celebration

Last February, we had a roundtable discussion to celebrate African American History month. The roundtable had six panelists (right) who attend or work at Florida State University; three were raised in Florida and three in Africa. The group participated in a very spirited debate on the unique challenges, opportunities and limitations these groups face in life and in academia. The event was preceded by a tasty Creole lunch.

June 2013 – Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month Celebration

The meeting celebrating LGBT Pride Month was led by senior forecaster, Mark Wool (below left) who began the activity by highlighting the history of this movement. The office then engaged in a lively and, given recent Supreme Court rulings, relevant roundtable discussions led by local LGBT leaders. Jerry Edwards (below right) is longtime president of the Tallahassee Prime Timers, a social club geared toward middle aged and older gay men. Stephen Hall (at center) is Chairman of the Board of The Family Tree organization, which provides service and support for the local LGBT community. For lunch before the start of the meeting, we had a Middle Eastern feast to celebrate Jewish Heritage Month (May).



Panelists for LGBT Pride Month
(Source: NWS Tallahassee)



Panelists for African American Heritage Month
(Source: NWS Tallahassee)

March 2013 – Women’s History Month Celebration

The meeting began with a St Patrick’s Day feast where the staff and guests enjoyed many Irish dishes. After lunch, we celebrated Women’s History Month with a roundtable discussion on “Women Making Great Strides in Science”. This was led by professors from the meteorology, physics, and computer science/IT departments who discussed their unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities for women in the STEM fields. During the second half of the meeting, the team led a discussion on cooperation in the workplace with an emphasis on do’s and don’ts in local office interactions.

December 2012 – American Indian Heritage Month (November) Celebration

We had an international pot luck lunch before our inaugural diversity meeting. Then, representatives of four Native American tribes and the faculty advisor for the Native American club at Florida State University participated in a lively roundtable, enlightening the staff on their unique heritage and challenges. During the second half of the meeting, the team discussed conflict resolution techniques with an emphasis on improving local office interactions.

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 of 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.

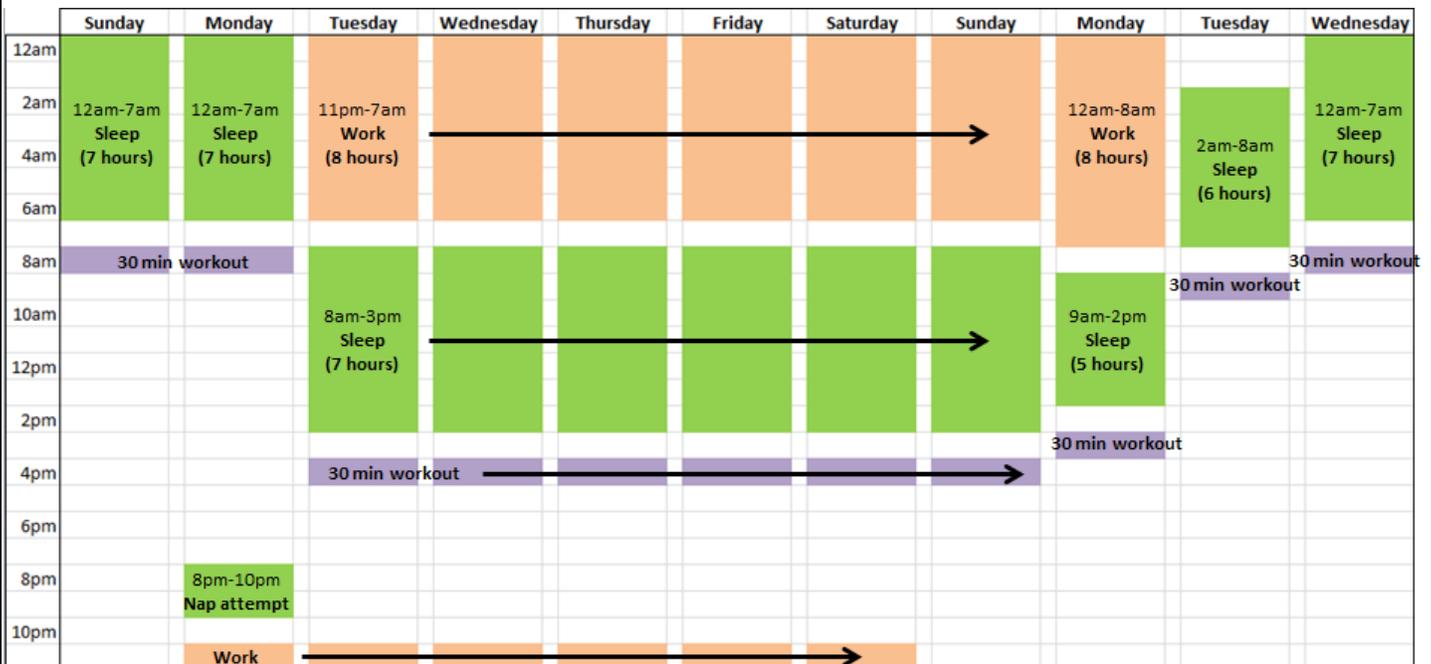
Right after I get home from work, I try to sleep for seven hours during the day. I sleep in our guest bedroom in the basement with a box fan to drown out noise. The cool environment and white noise (and blackout curtains) are a great help at getting plenty of restful sleep. Don’t get me wrong, it’s not 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 share with the Diversity Council what works best for you during your midnight shifts.



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

Diversity Focal Point Support

By: Dave Rowell

The frontline for inclusiveness and diversity management resides in field offices. The benefits of diversity and inclusion principles may not as obvious as many activities in the NWS. However, the effect are as far-reaching as any other. To be fully realized, the principles of diversity demand passion, commitment, and support. This is where the true value of local Diversity Focal Points lies. It is the Diversity Focal Point who raises the banner and leads the charge. We know Focal Points have the passion and commitment; it is essential that the support is there as well – from the top down.

As Diversity Focal Points are truly our diversity management and inclusion partners in the field, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management and the NWS Diversity Council would like to let all Diversity Focal Points know that it is our goal to assist them in their efforts. We are certain that together, we can have a positive impact on the people of this organization. We know the more we can do for the Focal Points, the more they can do for our employees. To this end, we would like to let all Diversity Focal Points know about support and resources we have available.

Most of those resources are accessible at our OEODM Diversity Toolkit website (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/index.php>). Resources available are activity and how-to guides, online courses, articles, fact sheets, reading lists, and much more.

We also want our Focal Points to know that their commitment warrants not only support, but also recognition. To that end, we are nearing implementation of a certification program for Diversity Focal Points to

formally recognize the extra work done as a Focal Point. The certification would become part of employee records and serve as acknowledgement of their efforts.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management itself should also be considered a resource. This office, under its Director, directs and administers the NWS EEO and Diversity Management Program and sets national policy in regards to EEO and Diversity. You can get more information about OEODM and contacts at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/eo/index.php>.

The NWS Diversity Council (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/divcouncil.php>) exists to support the Diversity program, its field agents, and its users. Council volunteers from throughout the NWS identify diversity issues and initiatives throughout the agency. In conjunction with OEODM, the Council helps ensure Diversity

resources are available to Diversity Focal points and all NWS employees, and are a conduit through which employees can share ideas.

A cadre of ‘Diversity Ambassadors’ was created to provide direct support to Focal Points. The NWS Diversity Ambassadors actively keep abreast of diversity trends and are a national contact resource for diversity questions, guidance, and resources to all NWS employees. Volunteer Ambassadors may have specialized knowledge or experience in specific areas such as race/cultural issues, LGBT, gender issues, age/generations, family issues, etc. With this knowledge, the Diversity Ambassadors can advise and assist Diversity Focal Points with information and suggestions in planning local workshops and other local diversity activities. Check the following link for a list of NWS Diversity Ambassadors: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/ambassadors.php>.

The screenshot shows the website for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management. The page is titled "NWS Diversity Toolkit" and features a navigation menu with links for "Equal Employment Opportunity", "Diversity Management", "News", and "Organization". The main content area includes a "Definition of NWS Diversity" section, which states that it is the policy of NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) to manage the diversity of its employees by fostering an inclusive work force, building an environment that respects the individual, and offering opportunities for all employees to develop to their full potential. Below this, there are sections for "Training Resources", "Informational Resources", "People Resources", and "Forums". A sidebar on the left contains links for "Local forecast by City, ST", "OEODM Home", "Mentor Application", "NWS Policy Statement on Diversity Management", "Diversity Management", "Strategic Plan for Diversity Management", and "Related Links".

Diversity Toolkit Site (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/index.php>)
(Source: NWS OEODM website)

NOAA Nursing Mothers Program

By: Hope Hasberry

Support for the NOAA Nursing Mothers Program continues to increase. While the NOAA Nursing Mothers Program began as a grassroots effort to acquire an additional lactation room at Silver Spring Headquarters, the program has resulted in a comprehensive program that supports new parents across the entire agency. NOAA's Program helps parents prepare for and reach their infant feeding goals while successfully completing their work responsibilities. NOAA has joined the ranks of other federal agencies with robust, state-of-the-art lactation support programs, thanks to the dedicated effort of the NOAA Nursing Mothers Program's Steering Committee members.

The Program through the Worklife4You Working Mothers Lactation Program provides eligible employees and their families with the following benefits:

- 24/7 access to a lactation consultant via 1-877-WL4-NOAA.
- Working mothers lactation kit containing helpful products and information.
- Breastfeeding and Return-to-Work webinars offered approximately once per quarter, which are also recorded and available to view at other times.*
- Educational resources to help mothers prepare for and address challenges of balancing the requirements of breastfeeding with their jobs.*
- Counseling: Experienced, licensed and trained counselors are available through the Employee Assistance Program (<http://www.foh4you.com/>).

The benefits with the asterisk by them are also available to contractors. Feedback from NOAA employees who have taken advantage of some of the services has been great! If you have any questions regarding the NOAA program, please visit the programs website at:

http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/workplace/NursingMothersProgram_services.html

or contact Hope.Hasberry@noaa.gov.

For additional information on OPM's Guidance on Nursing Mothers in Federal Employment click the link below:

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/NMothersFederalEmploymnt.pdf>.



Breast Pump Kit (Source: Walgreens)



NOAA

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT OFFICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION










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NOAA Workforce Management Office

Serving NOAA's Most Valuable Asset - People

NOAA Nursing Mothers Program



National Weather Service



Winter 2014-2015
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Building a Weather-Ready Nation

The National Weather Service (NWS) fosters an inclusive work force, building an environment that respects the individual, and offering opportunities for all employees to develop to their full potential. Diversity is the mixture of differences and similarities each employee brings to the workplace to accomplish the goals of the NWS.

Diversity management is a long-term change strategy enabling the NWS to improve its culture to ensure all employees are making maximum contributions to the mission of the NWS. We will foster an inclusive, supportive, open, challenging and innovative work environment to enable employees to be positive, creative and reach their full potential.

Other Diversity Newsletters: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/diversity_material_field/commnewsletter.php

NWS Essay Contest on Generational Differences Announcement

By: Hope Hasberry



Contest Rules:

1. Participants must write on this topic - "What one characteristic about your generation is most misunderstood by those from other generations?"
2. Only one essay per participant.
3. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: the official topic, writer's name, office, and phone number.
4. Essays must contain at least 500 words but no more than 750 words. This does not include the title, bibliography, or footnotes.
5. Essays must be double-spaced.
6. Properly identify any quotation or copyrighted material. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
7. Submit completed essays to the NWS Diversity Council (email to hope.hasberry@noaa.gov) by April 30, 2015.

Are you a Traditionalists (69 – 89 years of age); a Baby Boomer (50 – 68 years of age), a Generation Xer (33 – 49 years of age), or a Millennial (14 – 32 years of age)? What one characteristic about your generation is most misunderstood by those from other generations?

The NWS Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management and the NWS Diversity Council are pleased to announce a diversity essay contest on generational differences.

All NWS employees are encouraged to participate in this new NWS diversity activity. The essay contest allows NWS employees to be creative and/or informative on the topic of generational diversity. The winner will be announced, and the winning essay printed, in an upcoming addition of *Diversity Matters*.

