



CONNECTIONS

Linking EEO, Diversity and Science

Volume 1, Issue 14

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

September 2011

Many Backgrounds, Many Stories: One American Spirit

September 15-October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month observance. In this newsletter we profile two of our Hispanic employees.

Vivian A. LeFebvre is an IT Specialist (Systems Administration) with ESRL/GSD. She is a Colorado native and grew up in Security, CO. She attended Colorado State University as a Chemistry major but transferred to Metro State College where she obtained her degree in Computer Science. Vivian said that she never thought she would end up working for NOAA and credits the student COOP program (now the SCEP), for opening the doors to full time employment. As a COOP student, she worked with Bill Neff in the Wave Propagation Lab. She said he was a life saver because he was a great mentor and took the time to help her succeed and obtain her degree. Although she was not formally trained in computers, she started working with operating systems and branched out from there. Twenty nine years later she works in the Technology Outreach Branch on two computer programs, FX Net and Science on a Sphere (SOS). Vivian enjoys working at NOAA because she is constantly learning and the contribution she makes to help the scientists do their work more efficiently is gratifying. The two programs she works on are also weather and education based. When asked what NOAA could do to reach out to Hispanic youth, she said to use the Federal student programs. She said they are necessary and should be advertised. "Because of the aging workforce at NOAA, youth are needed to learn the science and what better way than to use these student programs. The COOP program was a wonderful program that helped me gain employment." She also said scientists and all employees



need to take the time and serve as mentors. Vivian advised that Hispanic youth should not be intimidated by a government agency and they should always put their best effort forward. Vivian is a first generation college graduate. She pays tribute to her parents for emphasizing the value of education and the expectation that she go to college, even though they were not college educated themselves.

Ulises Rivero was born in Havana, Cuba. He attended elementary school (1st - 6th grade) in New York City and high school and college in South Florida. He graduated with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Florida Atlantic University and a B.S. in Computer Science from Florida International University (FIU). Ulises is the Head Engineer at AOML in the Instrumentation Development Group. He manages the personnel for his group in the preparation and execution of all field



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Special Emphasis

Hispanic Heritage Month - Ulises Rivero *(continued from page 1)*

work. Additionally, he leads his group in the design and development of new innovative oceanographic hardware and software. Ulises said he got interested in science and engineering when he was a child. "I was always interested in how things worked. In high school I enjoyed physics and mathematics but did not become interested in engineering until I got into college. I wanted a career in a field that was interesting and challenging and not mundane."

Ulises heard about NOAA for the first time during the 1989 Atlantic hurricane season. "That year NOAA was on the news a lot because it was an active season that produced fifteen tropical cyclones. Later that year, I found an internship at NOAA/AOML through FIU's Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services. The internship became a permanent position in 1990. I have been at AOML for 21 years." His main interest in NOAA's

programs is to aid NOAA in its mission to conduct basic and applied research in oceanography, tropical meteorology, atmospheric and oceanic chemistry and acoustics.

When asked about outreach to Hispanic youth, Ulises said that NOAA has an outreach program but finding the time to develop a presentation is sometimes difficult. "I believe that NOAA should encourage their Research Laboratories to have a canned presentation that can be used to inform the young Hispanics and youth in general about its science and about the rewarding opportunities that exist in science."

Outside of work, Ulises is a strong believer in physical fitness. He participates in all outdoor sports and enjoys hiking, kayaking and swimming.

Image de Denver, Blacks In Government (BIG) and Federally Employed Women (FEW) 2011 Training Conferences Inspire

Image - Competency Based Career Development: Are You Ready?"

The Image de Denver chapter held its 3rd Annual Training Seminar in Denver, CO on Sept. 7, 2011, as a prelude to Hispanic Heritage Month. Joe Garcia, Lt. Governor, State of Colorado opened up the ceremonies and stressed the need for Image members to instill the value of education to the youth. He said many Latino youth in 3rd grade are not reading at the level that they should, and many are leaving schools without the tools they need to succeed as future Federal employees. His words were echoed by Gabriel Tapia, Vice Chairperson, National Image, Inc. and Sandy Romero, Image de Denver Chapter President. They both challenged attendees to reach out to Latino youth and talk about the importance of education, as well as work with school officials and teachers to reduce the school dropout rates.

The plenary session included speakers Michael Maldonado, EEOC, and Mauro Morales, Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Michael said that while Hispanics are still underrepresented in the Federal government, he recommended that we continue to promote education to the youth because it is essential for career development; promote the hiring of Hispanic interns to get them interested in Federal government; and educate

agency leadership to embrace diversity and to value the recruitment and hiring of Hispanics.

Mauro spoke about the Executive Order (EO) on Diversity and Inclusion issued by President Obama, the Student Pathways program, and the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment. He said that he is hopeful that the EO and new regulations and guidelines will have a positive impact on the hiring of Hispanics. He said that Federal agencies need to look at the services that we deliver to understand why diversity and inclusion is a business necessity. He encouraged the attendees to visit the OPM website and provide feedback on the Student Pathways program that will replace the SCEP/STEP programs. He said the role of the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment is to advise the OPM Director on ways to improve hiring and outreach to the Hispanic community.

The training also featured luncheon keynote speaker, Armando Rodriguez, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, and chair of the National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers (NCHEPM). He gave an overview of the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) since its beginning in 1970. National Image, Inc. was established in 1972, to address Latino concerns in employment, education, and civil rights.

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BIG - Explore and Navigate Your Leadership Journey Through Blacks In Government (BIG)

BIG held its 33rd Annual National Training Conference, August 22-25, 2011, in Boston, MA. The NOAA BIG Chapter sponsored the Dept. of Commerce (DOC) agency forum, "DOC Collaborating Efforts to Achieve Your Goals." The 2011 Student Oratorical and Information Superhighway competitions were also held and the Future Leaders in America's Government (FLAG) Youth Leadership Conference made its debut and will be an official program of BIG.

The Opening Plenary featured many inspirational speakers. Lt. Governor Tim Murray, Commonwealth of Massachusetts welcomed BIG to Boston, MA and was grateful that BIG decided to hold its conference in Boston. He said that despite the history of racial tensions in Boston



Joanne Caldwell, Associate Under Secretary of Communications, Economics & Statistics Administration (ESA) and Dennis Hansford, NOAA BIG chapter President at the DOC Forum. Photo by Ana Valentin.

and the struggles with school segregation, Boston was making a change to be more inclusive of all minorities. He mentioned the positive contributions and the history of African Americans to Boston. He noted that in the civil war, Black Bostonians were instrumental in the formation of the 1st all Black 54th Massachusetts Regiment. He also said Census 2010 data indicated a 26% increase of African Americans in Boston.

John Berry, Director, OPM, was happy to report to BIG that President Obama signed the Executive Order (EO) to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce. He thanked National BIG President J. David Reeves for his work in helping to get the EO signed. John mentioned that the EO was the first comprehensive initiative in the history of the Federal government. He also announced the Student Pathways program that will replace SCEP and STEP.

Rev. Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant received a standing ovation for his inspirational keynote address. He used the book and the film, *The Help*, to deliver his message. He mentioned that 200,000 people are expected to visit the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial dedication in Washington, DC but asked, "Would he be proud of us in the dream he desired for us?" He spoke about receiving his Master's degree from Duke University, the same place where his grandfather once worked as a head cook. He



Rev. Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant and J. David Reeves, BIG President. Photo Credit: Ken Cowan & Calvin Steven, BIG Photo Team.

said not to forget "the help" because they helped raise the children, they knew the seeds of sacrifice and they knew the ingredients of success. He attributed his educational success to his grandfather. He asked the BIG membership to provide opportunities for the young people today and to educate them on the great African American leaders who knocked down the walls of opportunity. He said that African Americans need to tell their story of how they overcame because, "we are one of the millions that made it."

FEW - Your Future - Let it Ring the Sound of Success

FEW's 42nd National Training Program (NTP) was held in Philadelphia, PA on July 18-22, 2011. OAR employees Becky Rios, EEO, Lillian Kamigaki, GMD, and Penny Granville, GSD, attended the training. They were all impressed with the classes, the instructors and the inspirational speakers.

For Becky, the highlight of the conference was the keynote speaker Roy Suarez, Jr., who spoke at the Update from the White House Luncheon. Roy is a young entrepreneur. At the age of 14, he was homeless and a high school dropout,

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Special Emphasis

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living from home to home in San Antonio, TX. With all the obstacles he faced, Roy never gave up or lost sight of his dreams. Today, he is “homeless by choice” as he travels by car throughout the U.S. on a tour to speak about his life experiences and motivate audiences to never give up when faced with life’s challenges. Perseverance, hope and education were the keys to his success. Roy credited the numerous mentors he had throughout his life to his success.

Lillian said that all the classes she attended were very



Lillian Kamigaki., GMD.

interactive but one class that interested her was the *Transitions to Retirement* course, because she is within 3-5 years to retirement. She said the trainer made it fun and the information was invaluable. She was also impressed with Laura Liswood, author of the book, *Loudest Duck: Moving Beyond Diversity While Embracing Differences to Achieve Success at Work*. Laura spoke at the Diversity Luncheon and provided practical guidance to putting



Lillian Kamigaki and Becky Rios at FEW

diversity in action in the workplace. Lillian also met new people and networked with other FEW attendees, which was helpful to her.

Penny is the Vice President of the Rocky Mountain FEW Chapter. She said that the FEW conference, without exception, is the best training conference she has ever attended because of the networking and inspirational speakers. “The motivational speakers they had make you want to do more with your life.” The *Lean Six Sigma* and *Team Building* classes gave her information that she can use at the work place. Every year FEW selects a recipient for its fundraising “Walk for the Cause” event. This year they chose the Susan B. Komen foundation for Breast Cancer, and Penny found the Illumination to remember those that have fought cancer very inspirational. There were luminaries for purchase, “In Honor Of”, “In Memory Of” and “In Celebrating Life.”

FEW works to end sex and gender discrimination, to encourage diversity for inclusion and equity for the advancement and professional growth of women in Federal service.

Calendar of EEO/Diversity Related Events

October 27-30, 2011 - Society for the Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans (SACNAS) National Conference, San Jose, CA
www.sacnas.org

October 29-31, 2011 - Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX
www.hacu.org

October 30 – November 4, 2011 - National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention, Portland, OR - www.ncai.org

November 10-12, 2011 - American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference, Minneapolis, MN - www.aises.org

November 14, 2011 - NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE Traditional Knowledge of the Arctic - Dr. Shari Gearheard, Research Scientist, NSIDC, David Skaggs Research Center - NOAA – Boulder.
For more Information: Georgia.madrid@noaa.gov

December 7-9, 2011 - Perspectives on Employment with Disabilities Conference, Bethesda, MD
<http://silverstarconsulting.com/perspectives/>

ESRL/GSD Employee Volunteers for EXPAND Beyond

Jeff Van Buskirk volunteers for the City of Boulder EXPAND Beyond (Exciting Programs Adventures and New Dimensions) water ski program which is held each summer at the Boulder Reservoir for eight weeks. The program helps people of all ages who have physical disabilities improve and gain new recreation and leisure skills that will enhance their overall well being and quality of life. Volunteers provide boats, jet skis and their time to make this program successful. Jeff said that seeing the individuals water ski and have the time of their life is what is important. For further information, visit the web site at <http://expandbeyondinc.com>.

ESRL Hosts 44 Student Interns

Ann Thorne, ESRL Student Coordinator, said 44 students were placed at ESRL during the summer. The students were from various programs including the Hollings Scholars program. She said 67% of the students were male and 33% female. Sixty-six percent were from out of state.

Taylor Brownlee from Phoenix, AZ worked in CSD through the Hollings Scholar program. She is majoring in Chemical Engineering at Arizona State University (ASU). At CSD, she researched the characteristics and effects of aerosol extinction with Dr. Steven S. Brown. Taylor's future goals include obtaining her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering in 2012 and 2013. She also plans to continue her graduate studies, and atmospheric research, and acquire her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering. Outside of science, Taylor said she is fascinated with health and fitness and that she stays busy by serving as President of the ASU chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE).



Student interns at ESRL. Photo Credit: Will Von Dauster.

Robert Hart, a senior at Metropolitan State College of Denver expects to graduate in May 2012. His major is Fine Arts with a concentration in Communication Design. His future plans include working in the field of graphic or communication design. Robert helped design graphic print materials for the Boulder Outreach and Coordinating Council, including the 2012 and 2013 calendars featuring NOAA science being done in Boulder. Robert said he learned a lot about NOAA through his internship, "I have learned that NOAA is involved in a diverse set of environmental research. I have had the opportunity to take a tour including seeing Science on a Sphere and seeing a demonstration of Virtual Worlds." He said the internship has afforded him the opportunity to learn more about design and working with clients, and that graphic designers

can help communicate the science done at NOAA. Robert's hobbies include hanging out with friends, video games, movies, traveling, snowshoeing, and drawing. Robert will continue his internship through the fall semester. "I am looking forward to the additional experience. As a person with a disability, I appreciate the acceptance and accommodations that NOAA provides."

Kelvin Bates, a chemistry major at Davidson College in

North Carolina, worked at CSD with Chuck Brock, Research Physicist, through the Hollings Scholar program. He developed a Scanning Mobility Particle Sizer (SMPS), which measures the number of microscopic pollution particles in the air. He used the SMPS to measure Boulder's air, including smoke from the July 4th fireworks display. The SMPS will now be used for a variety of laboratory and field programs, and will be used to test optical instruments used for studying the climate effects of aerosol particles in the atmosphere. Kelvin was also a recipient of a monetary award in Silver Spring for the best presentation in the "climate" category.

ARL/ATDD Student Interns Gain Experience

ARL/ATDD hosted three student interns during the summer. John Sharpe, from Oak Ridge, TN, is a student at North Carolina State University majoring in meteorology. He was supervised by Tilden Meyers. John helped with installing a flux tower in Crossville and measured the Leaf Area index. Emily Payne is a business management major at Tennessee Technological University (TTU) in Cookeville, TN. She prepared installation and maintenance files for use by technicians in the field. She was supervised by Michael Potter. Jesse Roberts, an electrical engineering major at TTU, worked with technicians assembling parts, structures, and miscellaneous items for installation and maintenance of the Climate Reference and Regional Climate Reference Networks. He was supervised by Mark Hall.

GFDL Hollings Scholars Recognized for Outstanding Presentations

Three Hollings scholars interns hosted at GFDL this summer were recognized for outstanding presentations. Jacob Oberman, a student at the University of Wisconsin–



GFDL Holling Scholars: Jacob, Arlene and Alex take honors with their presentations.

Madison received first place in the category Weather-Ready Nation. Alex Turner, a student at the University of Colorado, received second place in the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation category. Both students were mentored by Arlene Fiore. Arielle Alpert, mentored by Rong Zhang and Gabriel Vecchi, received third in the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation category. Arlene Fiore said, "It has been a privilege to mentor these Hollings Scholars who are talented, dedicated and motivated." The Hollings program attracts top-notch students who are able to complete a scientific project within a nine week time-frame. Arlene was delighted to see their outstanding presentations recognized and expects that this sort of recognition sends a strong message of encouragement to the scholars to continue pursuing scientific research in the future.

GLERL observes Asian American Pacific Islander Month

On June 8, 2011, the video "Going for Broke" was screened in observance of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The film, narrated by Sen. Daniel Inouye, is about Japanese American soldiers who fought abroad while their families were in internment camps here. Ann Clites, GLERL EEO Advisory Committee representative, said that it was a great film that included a lot of original documentary footage. The purpose of the Asian Heritage observance is to honor the achievements of Asian/Pacific Americans, and to recognize their contributions to the United States.

NSSL employees volunteer with Terrific Kids

Bob Staples, Doug Kennedy, Suzane Van Cooten and Kevin Kelleher of NSSL work with the Terrific (Thoughtful, Enthusiastic, Respectful, Responsible, Inclusive, Friendly, Inquisitive, and Capable) KIDS program which is a KIWANIS International supported program. The program has been implemented in 11 elementary schools in Norman, OK to promote character development in young girls and boys. Every month a student is selected by a teacher that has exemplified the character attribute of a Terrific Kids award. For example, one of the attributes emphasized for September was Thoughtful. After the student is selected, they are recognized at the monthly school assembly and presented a certificate, pencil and KIWANIS Terrific Kids bumper sticker. Bob believes this program is an outstanding program for the development of young students' character, and is well received by the Kids, teachers and parents.

NOAA Research EEO/Diversity Program Office

CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

Connections is published quarterly by the OAR EEO Office. The purpose is to share accomplishments and to link Diversity, EEO and Science within all of OAR laboratories and programs.

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ABOUT US

The EEO Office provides services to OAR employees, managers and applicants for employment.

VISION OF EEO OFFICE

To assist the Agency in creating a diverse workforce that is inclusive and free of discriminatory and retaliatory actions.

EEO MISSION

To bring awareness to employees, applicants for employment and management about EEO through the following:

Empowerment: Consultation services to employees, managers and applicants for employment.

Exposure: Recruitment and outreach activities for short and long-term recruitment.

Education: Federal EEO Mandated training.

Evaluation: Monitor employment statistics to prepare reports for NOAA, DOC, EEOC and OPM.

WEBSITE:

www.eeo.oar.noaa.gov

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP:

If you believe you have been subject to discrimination on the basis of your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age (over 40), disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or retaliation for participating in activities protected by the civil rights statutes, you must contact an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discrimination to preserve your rights under the law.

Please contact the NOAA Civil Rights Office to initiate EEO counseling:

Voice: 301-713-0500
Toll Free: 1-800-452-6728
TDD: 301-713-0982
FAX: 301-713-0983
Website: www.eeo.noaa.gov

Mediation

NOAA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office provides mediation and other services and seeks early resolution.

Voice: 206-526-6171
Fax: 206-527-6928.
Website: www.adr.noaa.gov

