



GIPSA News

A newsletter for the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

July 2002

On the Road

Donna Reifschneider

Last week, I had the opportunity to visit, for the first time, the Technical Center in Kansas City, two weeks before that the Des Moines Regional Office.

At the Technical Center, **Steve Tanner** and the staff rolled out the red carpet for a tour of our impressive research and development laboratories. My orientation briefings in Washington, DC, didn't prepare me for the range of technology, equipment, and exceptionally qualified staff that I saw during my visit. For example, we are on the cutting edge on the biotechnology front and are taking the lead in analyzing biotechnology-derived grains. At the Board of Appeals and Review, I saw, firsthand, some of our most experienced graders working on samples and providing guidance to inspection points throughout the United States.

In all areas, I saw the fine attention to detail — in grain quality assessment, equipment testing and verification, inspections, evaluations, and



*Administrator
Donna Reifschneider*

technology application — that makes GIPSA the agency that sets the standard for accuracy and consistency, and for putting the customer first and

foremost.

My visit to Des Moines in early June was equally rewarding. It was extremely valuable for me to get a firsthand look at our field professionals at work. I was pleased to join regional office staff at the GIPSA booth at the World Pork Expo.

Thanks to the staffs of the Technical Center and the Des Moines Regional Office, I now have a greater understanding of GIPSA's capabilities and the services we offer to the industry. I look forward to taking to the road again soon to visit with more of you in field locations.

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Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Melba Twitty was selected to fill the resident agent position in Carlisle, PA. **Melba** will begin working on July 1, 2002.

The Technical Services Division welcomes summer intern **Brooke Lange**. **Brooke** attends Cornell University and majors in Food Science.

Welcome to **Nancy Chasse**, administrative assistant, Atlanta.

AWARDS

Bart DiGiovanni, Angela Fore, Steve Mason, and Nancy Morris, legal instruments examiners, Atlanta, received extra effort awards for their dedication and professional attitude which greatly contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Atlanta regional office.

Troy Kramer, Roy Landry, Sr., Terry LeBouef, Tom Livings, Terry McDuffie, and Sarah Welch-

Hill, New Orleans, received a group spot award for their collaborative efforts in resolving a weight discrepancy and accurate certification of a shiplot.

Walter Harness, New Orleans, received a spot award for providing the correct service to our customer.

Charles Guidry, New Orleans, received a time-off award for correcting a problem on a rig that would have caused our customers lost time and money.

GIPSA Headquarters Summer Interns

Dawn Cowan, Washington, DC

GIPSA is pleased to welcome the Headquarters' summer interns who began their appointments on June 3, 2002.

Willander Charley is assigned to the Economic/Statistical Support Staff. He is from Chinie, Arizona, a small town within the four corners region. He is from the Navajo Nation, southwest portion of the United States. He is currently a sophomore at Dine College, a local tribal college, in Tsaile, AZ, majoring in Liberal Arts and Business Administration. He will be transferring to Arizona State University to get his Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration. It's been an honor for him to intern with GIPSA. He is pleased to say that he proudly represents his people of the Great Navajo Nation and his family in Arizona.

Doug Doerhoff is assigned to the Office of International Affairs. He will be a sophomore at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, NY, in the fall. **Doug** is an honor student majoring in business administration with a concentration on marketing.

LaVita Hannah is also a returning summer intern under the 1890 National Scholars Program. She is a junior majoring in Accounting at Tennessee State University in Nashville, TN. She is grateful to be working for the second year with GIPSA under the supervision of **Catherine Grasso**. She is ready to fulfill her duties as an intern and enjoy the opportunity. Her hometown is Charlotte, TN.

Eric Jabs is assigned to the Field Management Division, Market Analysis and Standards Branch. He received his undergraduate degree

from North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, in Agricultural Economics, and is currently in his second year of a Masters degree program in Agribusiness and Applied Economics at North Dakota State University. He is finding the work very rewarding, and looks forward to contributing to the organization in a positive manner.

Marisol King is a returning summer intern under the 1890 National Scholars Program. She is currently a senior majoring in Agricultural Sciences at Southern University in her home town of Baton Rouge, LA.

*Continued, see HQ Interns
on page 3.*

Traveling Display Booths

FGIS. We're proud to introduce FGIS' new, redesigned traveling display booths. Our professionally designed booth now has graphics as part of the backdrop -- making set up and tear-down a lot easier and faster. And, they look great!

P&S. We're starting the process of updating the P&S booth as well. Any ideas, suggestions, or graphics are welcome.

To reserve either booth, contact **Terri Henry** at 202-720-0219, or via email to Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov or **Dana Stewart** at 202-720-5091 or via email to Dana.B.Stewart@usda.gov. Please send your ideas for the P&S booth to **Dana**.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help? Then let your voice be heard.

Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline

HQ Interns, *from page 2.*

Valerie Ly is assigned to the Compliance Division, Director's office. She is currently a junior at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with a major in Sociology and a minor in Economics. Her hometown is Gaithersburg, MD. Her interests are cars, cooking, and music.

Tiffani Paige is assigned to the Office of Policy/Litigation Support, Trade Practices Branch. She is a senior at Alabama A&M University, Huntsville, AL, with a major in Marketing. Her hometown is Toledo, OH.

Idealisse Rodriguez is assigned to the Compliance Division, Review Branch. She is a sophomore at Haverford College, Haverford, PA, where she is majoring in Economics and minoring in Spanish. Her hometown is San Juan, Puerto Rico. Her interests are traveling, reading, purple, and babies.

Stephanie J. Smith is assigned to the Field Management Division, Market Analysis and Standards Branch. She attends Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN, where she is studying Agricultural Economics. She realized that her interests went beyond the agriculture sector, so she also has a minor in Management and Political Science. She will be entering her senior year, but will graduate a semester early in December 2002. Her hometown is Elkhart/Granger, IN. After graduation, she may go back to get her MBA in finance.

FGIS Regulatory Management Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- United States Standards for Lentils - Published May 6, 2002
- Opportunity for Designation in the Alabama, California, Kankakee (IL), Springfield (IL), and Washington Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas - Published June 3, 2002
- Designation for the Georgia, Mid-Iowa (IA), Montana, Oregon, and Schneider (IN) Areas - Published June 3, 2002

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Bank of America Voice Response Unit. Bank of America has added another feature to its Voice Response Unit. You may now pay your VISA travel bill by phone. Call 800-472-1424 and press 2 for payment information or press 4 to make a payment by phone.

News from Asia

Ed Durgin, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

On Sunday, June 2, 2002, I traveled by train from Purwokerto, a community located in Indonesia's central Java region, to the capital city of Jakarta. During this 5-hour ride, I saw coconut and teakwood forests mixed with sugarcane fields and lush and incredibly picturesque terraced plots of land that accommodated rice paddies and vegetable fields.

I was making this journey with the other members of a US Wheat Associates (USWA) technical team that was visiting the three major flour millers in Indonesia. While the other team members focused on milling and laboratory activities at the facilities visited, I reviewed sampling and inspection procedures and discussed wheat quality issues with mill personnel. On two occasions, I delivered presentations explaining GIPSA's roles and responsibilities. I was also asked to recommend improvements to current sampling procedures.

This USWA activity is an integral part of my 3-month assignment in south Asia. To nurture and promote a more long-term presence in this area, GIPSA's Office of International Affairs (OIA) is establishing a collateral duty position in the region. I am serving in the first temporary overseas assignment; OIA will use the information I gain to evaluate the structure of future assignments.

My "home base" is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) staff at the American Embassy helped me locate suitable

housing, gave me an office at the Embassy, and has also been of invaluable help with many administrative matters.

The first few weeks of my assignment were devoted to addressing various issues related to living abroad



Ed Durgin sends greetings from Asia!

and working at an American Embassy. I needed to get a security badge to access Embassy facilities, negotiate USDA's requirements for traveling outside Malaysia, and learn local customs and modes of transportation. During this period, I also met with regional representatives from the USWA, US Grains Council (USGC) and the American Soybean Association (ASA) to discuss how I might work with their organizations. I also began to develop a calendar of activities to guide my actions for this assignment.

My overseas tour of duty is now nearly half completed. In addition to my work with USWA, I have traveled to China as GIPSA's representative during bilateral discussions

between APHIS and their Chinese counterparts, met with Malaysian flour millers to discuss quality issues related to the import of US wheat, and continued OIA's ongoing discussions about origin-destination dockage discrepancies with Sri Lanka, a major regional importer of US wheat.

Future activities will include joining USGC representatives during meetings with importers and users of US feed grains, participating in joint ASA/USGC Importer Seminars, holding additional meetings with Malaysian grain importers, and touring Vietnam with FAS representatives to address questions related to the importing of US grains. At the conclusion of my assignment, I will have worked with each of the USDA Cooperators (USWA, USGC, ASA), and will have participated in activities involving six to eight different countries in the region. My assignment in south Asia has been rewarding at both the professional and personal levels. It has afforded opportunities to discuss and better understand the perspectives of those who import and use US grains in the region, and I will find ample opportunities to utilize this information when I resume my duties in Washington with GIPSA's Office of International Affairs. On a personal note, I have enjoyed the opportunities to experience the sights, sounds, smells, colors, and textures in the southern Asian countries I have visited. I look forward to similar experiences as my assignment continues.

2nd Annual Rice Conference

Phillip Meachem, Stuttgart

On May 15-16, 2002, the Stuttgart circuit held its second annual Rice Conference. Participants were from the California Federal/State office, Kansas City, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Crowley, League City, Jefferson City, New Madrid, Jonesboro, Greenville, and Stuttgart. Attendees included: George Banks, Richard Blew, Kenneth Carter, Eddie Clark, Michael Clem, Homer Formentera, Danny Harpole, Joe Hearn, Henry Jackson, Michael Johnson, Larry Kitchen, Vicki Lacefield, Phillip Meachem, Wayne Melvin, Sandy Newell, Albert Snelson, Clyde Steves, Bill Strickland, Skyla Walker, Eurvin Williams, and Gary Zella. The two-day event covered a wide range of topics.

Joe Hearn, League City, led a discussion on the Hard Milled Line Interpretation, and according to the U.S. Standards for Milled Rice, the degree of milling for milled rice. The degree of milling is based on the extent to which the bran layer is removed from the kernels of rice.

Bill Strickland, Jonesboro, discussed sealing barges at origin. He also pointed out that official personnel at origin must ensure that the lot is properly identified and the identity is maintained. Lastly, the barge must be appropriately sealed upon completion of loading.

Todd Russon, Anheuser Busch, Jonesboro, discussed automated rice

certificate programs. He said that before the 1990s, certificates were manually typed on forms, the 1990s saw printed forms, and 2002 brings electronic forms from databases. This new generation reduces form cost and errors, and enhances account-



ability and reporting.

Kevin McGilton, USA Rice, spoke on the needed changes to the Rice Standards, and about Hard Milled and Well Milled Rice, the Brown Rice market and Peck Damage.

Vicki Lacefield, Policies and Procedures Branch, Washington, D.C., briefed us on IP inspections and new rice changes.

Rich Blew, Board of Appeals and Review, talked about standardization of rice equipment, such as the dock-age tester.

George Banks, New Orleans, headed a discussion on IP inspection at destination. George noted that the origin certificate, application for service, and other pertinent documents should be checked very carefully.

Inspectors also must verify the identification, check that the seals were not broken and the seal numbers are correct, and witness the unloading/loading operation, and the condition of the lot.

Albert Snelson, Stuttgart, gave a progress report and discussed quarterly comparison of whole kernel results and total rice results.

Eddie Clark, Board of Appeals and Review, reported on the progress of the Grain Check 312, and that the monthly survey results show that the Quality Team and the Grain Check are picking closely together.

Sandy Newell, California, and Michael Clem, Jonesboro, shared reports on a study using the infrared thermometer analysis of TBK in Long Grain Brown Rice versus temperature. TBK was more consistent when the temperature in the milling cylinder reaches about 130 degrees.

Gary Zella, Stuttgart, explained the importance of the sheller time maintenance. He listed the primary wear items, such as the rubber roll, how it should be re-zeroed after 10 hours of use, and replaced at 150 hours or every 5,000 samples.

Eurvin Williams, Board of Appeals and Review, reported on the progress of the New Interpretative Line Prints on different grains, commodities, and rice.

*Continued, see **Rice** on page 11.*



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during June 2002. If you have questions about any ideas or the GIPSA Idea Hotline, please call me at (202) 720-1017.

Suggestor

Suggestion

Ted Respet, Duluth, MN

Share Cu-Sum Problems and Solutions With Other Field Offices

Martin Davis,
New Orleans, LA

Under the Cu-Sum Plan, Use Canned Statements in the Remarks Section

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During June 2002

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

- 👍 Allow Purchasing Of Cloth From Companies Who Will Accommodate Special Sizes
- 👍 Add Belts and Heavyweight Shirts to the FGIS Clothing Program
- 👍 Share Cu-Sum Problems and Solutions With Other Field Offices

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov; FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Think Before You Drink - liquid calories add up. Are you trying to lose weight but not getting results? The answer may lie in not only what you eat, but also what you drink. A calorie is a calorie, whether it is in liquid or solid form. Sodas, fruit juices, and alcoholic beverages are high in calories and they can determine your weight-loss efforts. The trend toward larger portion sizes doesn't help either. "Supersize" drinks at restaurants, coffee shops, and movie theaters can more than double your liquid calorie intake in a single serving.

Standard drink sizes can fill you with unwanted calories too. One can of regular soda has about 150 calories, a can of beer has about 150 calories, and six ounces of juice has about 85 calories. So, if you drink soda every day at lunch and dinner, that adds up to 2,100 extra calories a week. Supersize those drinks and you will end the week with at least 4,200 extra calories.

To avoid added calories, have water or sparkling water with lemon or lime, or a splash of fruit juice. Light beer is about 50 calories less per can than regular beer. If you drink juice, have one six-ounce serving. Use low-fat milk in coffee instead of cream.

Decreasing the hidden calories in your diet can help you lose those extra pounds and feel great!

For more information: Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.com

GIPSA Approves DON and Fumonisin Test Kits

GIPSA has approved the DON FQ Test Kit, marketed by VICAM, for deoxynivalenol testing in the official grain inspection system.

Deoxynivalenol, or DON, is a toxin produced by a mold and can be present in wheat, barley, corn, and other grains. Approval of this test kit expands the choice of DON test kits available to the official inspection system.

GIPSA approved the official use of the DON FQ Test Kit to determine deoxynivalenol in wheat, barley, malted barley, oats, and corn.

GIPSA's evaluation of this test will help the grain markets make more informed decisions about the grain being bought and sold.

The Myco✓ Fumonisin Test Kit, manufactured by Strategic Diagnostics Inc, was approved for official fumonisin testing in the national grain inspection system.

GIPSA approved the official use of the Myco✓ Fumonisin Test Kit to determine fumonisin in corn, corn meal, and corn germ meal.

Fumonisin is a toxin produced by molds that commonly infect corn and rice. Approval of this test kit will allow quantitative fumonisin test kits to be made available to the official inspection system.

Savings Bonds Can Work for You

Leah Akbar, Washington, DC

In a government survey, investors were asked about the savings bond features they value. Here's what they said.

Safety: Savings bonds are as safe and secure as the U.S. Treasury. You never have to worry about the safety of your investment. You are paid the principal and interest due you when you cash your bond. Your bonds can be replaced if lost, stolen or destroyed.

Ease of Purchase: It's hard to find an easier, more affordable way to invest. All you need to do is decide how often to buy a bond. Bonds cost as little as \$25 for a \$50 bond. Your bonds are sent directly to you or the bond owner you choose.

Tax Advantages: The interest you earn on your Series EE bonds is exempt from State and local income taxes. You can defer Federal income tax until you redeem the bonds or when they stop earning interest after 30 years. This means you can plan ahead and choose when might be the best time to realize income for tax purposes. And, since your interest isn't taxed until you redeem a bond, your savings grow faster because interest compounds on the full value of the bond before taxes.

Financing Education: Savings bonds can help you save for education. Lower and middle-income investors may be eligible for special tax benefits. If you qualify, you can exclude all or part of the interest earned on Series EE bonds from income when you cash the bonds to pay for post-secondary tuition and fees.

Retirement: Savings bonds can be an excellent way to help build savings for retirement. The combination of a 30-year interest earning life and the other features of bonds make them attractive to many investors.

Improved Market-Based Rates: Series EE bonds now earn 90 percent of the average yield on 5-year Treasury securities. Bonds increase in value every month. The rate changes every six months ... so your investment always tracks Treasury market yields.

Liquidity: You can cash Series EE bonds any time after 6 months. Most investors plan to hold bonds for longer-term goals yet they know they can get their money with interest if they need it. There is a 3-month interest penalty if you redeem your bonds before 5 years.

The survey dealt primarily with EE bonds, but I bonds are also available and offer many of the same investment benefits. They are sold at their face value and offer a real rate of return over and above inflation for the life of the bond. I bonds can be redeemed anytime after 6 months and they too can earn interest for up to 30 years. You can buy either EE or I bonds on-line, any time, anywhere.

Source: U.S. Treasury

8th Annual Agency Meeting

Phillip Meachem, Stuttgart

Our 8th Annual Agency Meeting was held April 30 - May 1, 2002, in Evansville, IN. The Stuttgart Field Office was hosting, but it was a joint effort between the Toledo and Stuttgart Field Offices, and our partner agencies. We had a full agenda.

Mack Manis, safety officer, Washington, DC, updated us on the use of fall protection equipment when working on railcars.

Larry Kitchen, program administrator, State of Missouri, reported on the new stowage exam.

John Sharpe, chief, Data and Information Analysis Branch, Washington, DC, briefed us on the QA/QC program, and the new revised tolerance, and data processing capabilities.

Colleen Sampson, Tri-State Grain Inspection Service, talked about waiving time limits for reinspections and appeals. She noted that requests for review inspections should be received before the grain has left the specific service point, no later than the closing of the second business day following the date of the last inspections, and before the identify of the grain has been lost.

Phil Tate, quality assurance specialist, Toledo, highlighted the new licensing changes, including: licensing technicians to perform interpretive factor analysis; increasing the "Passing Score" requirements from 70 percent to 80 percent; developing a "Limited Wheat License"; and eliminating the Examination for Mixed Grain.

Eurvin Williams, chairman, Board of Appeals and Review, brought new line prints and talked about new

fluorescent lamps for inspections. He brought an informational CD "Overview of Grain Grading, Wheat, Corn, Soybean, and Sorghum".

Tim Adams, Memphis Grain Inspection Service, discussed the e-mailing license applications and checktest progress. He also discussed AAGIWA projects.

Bob Crook and **Bob Krouse**, Compliance Division, elaborated on correction of problems found during reviews. They talked about: types of reviews, responding to reviews, follow-up on non-compliance items, and answering review reports.

Dave Shipman, Deputy Administrator, came and discussed new GIPSA programs and also took questions from the attendees. We at the Stuttgart Field Office, thank **Mr. Shipman** for his attendance. He was honored to pass out of the following awards.

There were several Certificates of Excellence Awards recognized in different areas of grading for the Toledo Field Office: **Art Millisor**, Michigan Grain Inspection, for "Outstanding Wheat DKT Grader"; **Neil**

Reynolds, Northeast Indiana Grain, was "Honorable Mention in Wheat DKT"; **Colleen Sampson**, Tri-State Grain Inspection, was recognized for "Outstanding Grader in Soybean DKT", "Honorable Mention" was **Kathy Carmen**, Tri-State. Also **Gary Sobek**, Michigan Grain, was recognized for "Corn DKT". **Mark Morningstar**, Detroit Grain Inspection, was "Honorable Mention".

Aaron Roberson, Missouri Department of Agriculture, was recognized for the "Outstanding Grader Award in Wheat DKT", and claimed the Outstanding Grader Award Overall DKT" in corn, yellow soybeans, and wheat.

Robert Fronabarger, Cairo Grain Inspection, was recognized for the Outstanding Grader Award in Corn DKT." "Honorable Mention" went to **Mark Elpers**, Ohio Valley Grain Inspection.

Ricky Hickman, Memphis Grain Inspection, was recognized for "Outstanding Grader in Yellow Soybean DKT". **Susan Moore**, Memphis Grain Inspection, was recognized with "Honorable Mention" in Yellow Soybean DKT". **Jimmie Nesselroad**, Memphis Grain Inspection, was recognized for the "Honorable Mention" in Wheat DKT".

Skylar Walker, Missouri Department of Agriculture, was recognized for "Outstanding Grader of the Year Award" and "Honorable Mention" in Overall DKT.

J.W. Barton, JW Barton Grain Inspection, was awarded for "The Largest Increase in Commercial Inspection".

Help is within reach.

For confidential assistance,
call your Employee
Assistance Program

Washington, DC personnel, call...

3 0 1 - 5 7 0 - 3 9 0 0

or 1 - 8 0 0 - 2 2 2 - 0 3 6 4

Field personnel, call...

1 - 8 0 0 - 2 2 2 - 0 3 6 4

Directives Info

Mack Manis, Washington, DC

ISSUANCES

☐ **GIPSA Directive 4790.3**, “Emergency Notification Policies and Procedures”, dated May 3, 2002.

☐ **GIPSA Directive 4810.1**, “Workers’ Compensation”, dated June 7, 2002.

☐ **MRP Administrative Notice 02-3**, “Frequent Flyer Benefits”, dated June 7, 2002.

CANCELLATIONS

☐ **GIPSA Directive 4790.1**, “Emergency Notification Policies and Procedures”, dated June 30, 1997. GIPSA Directive 4790.3, “Emergency Notification Policies and Procedures”, dated May 3, 2002, contains this information.

☐ **GIPSA Directive 2450.1**, “Application for and Monitoring of FGIS Research Grants”, dated 11/5/92. GIPSA Directive 2450.1, dated 5/17/02, contains this information.

☐ **FGIS Program Notice 01-08**, “Revised Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations-Crop Year 2001”, dated 7/24/01. FGIS Program Notice 02-05, dated 5/22/02, superseded this notice.

Please call (202-720-0244), fax (202-720-4628), or e-mail me (j.mack.manis@usda.gov) with concerns or suggestions.

“Juneteenth” Celebration

Deborah Shipman, Washington, DC

Juneteenth, June 19, 1865, is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery in America. Historically, it is a day to remember America’s victory against human cruelty.

Dr. Charles Taylor’s book, “The Black Church and Juneteenth,” explains that Juneteenth is a day that honors African-American’s ancestors who survived the inhumane institution of bondage. Juneteenth also demonstrates a proud legacy of resistance and perseverance.

All slaves in America were not freed until two and a half years after **President Abraham Lincoln**’s official Emancipation Proclamation in January 1, 1863. According to **Dr. Taylor**, the President notified the states, against the Union forces, that if they did not cease their rebellion, he would declare their slaves free. The proclamation was ignored by the states that seceded from the Union. It did not apply to the non-rebelling slave holding states.

Dr. Taylor continued to say that 8,000,00 slaves were unaffected by the provisions of the proclamation. Slavery continued in Texas during the Civil War. Many slave owners brought their slaves to Texas until the war was over. The high degree of influence of slave owners suppressed the news of emancipation.

Freedom came on June 19, 1865, when the Union Army’s Major General **Gordon Granger** announced the war had ended and that all slaves were free. Many freed men and women fled to neighboring Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma to search for family members. They entered into freedom in dire poverty. Many died in the quest for freedom.

In March 1865, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, known as “Freedmen’s Bureau” was established by Congress. It provided relief services. Some schools and lands were granted to some former slaves. Actually, there were no laws to protect the ex-slaves. Racism denied them the right to own land. In 1866, the Texas legislature passed new black codes to reverse the limited gains that blacks were granted.

By 1877, racial discrimination and the Jim Crow laws were introduced. This started years of oppression. During this period, the church was the only institution that gave blacks hope and assured them a measure of dignity. The church was very instrumental in the Underground Railroad movement. It raised money for many freedmen after the Civil War.

Today the church continues to give dignity to the African American community. Each year Juneteenth is gaining more popularity in many communities.

Social Engineering

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

As we have often said, information security assurance isn't only a technology issue. While attacks by youthful hackers or script kiddies (hacker wanna-be's) and tales of password cracking, and eavesdropping are fascinating to some, the fact is that plain old fraud and deceit remain a key method of success for attackers.

A polite term for these low tech methods is "social engineering." Others use more blunt language, call such activities scams and lies. Regardless of what we call them, those methods can be both surprisingly simple and effective. Attackers use our best motives and good intentions to trick us into giving them the means to break into systems. These attacks undermine our basic trusts, often with serious and immediate results.

Imagine that you got a call at home from someone claiming to be a college student doing work for a research project. She asks what appears to be mundane questions: How many people live in your home? What are their ages? Do they work? Days? Evening? What is the average household income?

That kind of information about your personal life could allow a potential burglar to ascertain whether your house is worth breaking into, what risks they might face, and when is the best time to attack. For many reasons, you would probably be reluctant to provide that information to an unidentifiable caller. However, are you doing virtually the same thing with GIPSA information while at work?

People attempting social engineering attacks against government or corporate resources often use tactics

similar to those just described. For example, a hacker can call the Help Desk and pretend to be a legitimate user having difficulty with new or unfamiliar software or procedures. The con artist says something like, "I can't log in today for some reason. Can you help me?" The Help Desk worker does what he or she is trained and expected to do: help. In some cases, though, the assistance goes too far, even to the point of giving unknown callers a user ID and password over the phone.

Sometimes the scammers are brazen enough to masquerade as security specialists. How would you respond if you received a phone call from someone you don't personally know, saying: "This is the security department. Your password has been compromised. I'll give you the new password we want you to change to immediately." Surprisingly, many users will change their password as directed. Then the hacker can simply log on, masquerading as the user just conned.

Or, what if someone called saying they were trying to troubleshoot a problem with your account and need to "verify" your password. Gee, you want the problem solved before it affects your PC or your ability to perform your work, right? But would you give them your password over the phone without verifying things first?

Some social engineering attacks take place over extended periods, not just a few phone calls. One hacker developed a phone friendship with an employee of a target company that lasted for more than 3 years. The

employee unwittingly provided a great deal of information that the hacker could use to mount a successful attack against the company.

Other social engineering attacks have involved hackers posing as students doing research or candidates seeking jobs. Or the attacker may actually take a job, using inside knowledge and privileges to leverage access to sensitive information for which they have legitimate business need or setting up conditions that will enable them to mount an attack from outside the organization.

So what should we do? Is the answer to put only Attila the Hun types on the Help Desk? Prohibit employees from talking to anyone? Don't trust anyone who claims to be from the security office? Of course not.

The best protection against social engineering is a combination of an identification and authentication process along with a prudent degree of watchfulness and caution.

 Don't give out sensitive information, even if the person seems sincere or authoritative, unless you first verify their credentials.

 Don't fall for tricks. While it is possible that someone from security or even customer service might call to inform you that your password has been compromised, at most we will request that you change it. We will never tell you *what* to change your password to.

*Continued, see **Engineering**,
on page 11 .*

☞ Verify the identity of callers. If you don't know them personally or can't immediately identify them, insist on calling them back to make sure they are who they claim to be.

☞ Don't give out information about other employees unless you are sure who you're talking to. This includes names, staff positions, telephone numbers, and locations. Social engineers can use this information to masquerade as those individuals.

If you feel you've been tricked, don't hide it. We all make mistakes. Report your suspicions immediately to your ISSM/ISSPM. Don't wait to see if something harmful happens as a result of the information you gave out. If you think you were the target of a social engineering attack but thwarted it through your diligence, report that, too. Not only will you get a pat on the back but you'll alert security personnel to further possible attacks.

It is impossible to be aware of every specific scam, so learn to recognize the signs: callers who refuse to identify themselves specifically; refusal to give information so you can verify the contact information; rushing you into providing information; name dropping; intimidation or coercion; small mistakes on terminology or odd questions; and requesting forbidden information, such as passwords.

We all want to be helpful. We also want to avoid appearing paranoid or foolish, especially to a caller who is jovial, friendly, or earnest. Care, but be aware. No one is encouraging you not to provide needed help or service. We just don't want you to be manipulated. When someone calls to ask for your help in some way that is unusual, take a moment or two to think about what going to say or do and what information you may be giving away.

Kevin Mitnick, possibly most notorious hacker in America, was released from prison in 2000, after serving 5 years. In March 2001 he told members of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee that the greatest security threat to networked Federal systems is **social engineering**. Mitnick said, "(You) spend millions of dollars on firewalls and secure access devices, and it's money wasted because none of these measures address the weakest link in the security chain: the people who use, administer, and operate computer systems." Or, as one Russian intelligence agent observed, "There is no firewall on a human mind."

Let's prove Mitnick wrong. We are confident that GIPSA employees, well-intentioned *and* well-trained, can be our best safeguard. We're counting on you.

We would like to recognize the recipients of the Certificate of Excellence Awards.

League City: Brown Rice Outstanding Grader Award: Red Rice and Damage - Andrew Kuykendall. Milled Rice Outstanding Grader Award - Cart Tutt. Rough Rice Outstanding Grader award - Chares Brown. Overall, in all three classes for Red Rice and Damage - Andrew Kuykendall.

Stuttgart Circuit: Outstanding Grader award in Brown Rice TBK - Carmen McKinley, Missouri Department of Agriculture;. Honorable Mention - Cathy Haskins, Stuttgart. Michael Clem also received Honorable Mention in Milled Rice, Red Rice, and Damage. Outstanding Grader award - Honorable Mention in Rough Rice, Red Rice and Damage - Sammie Lewis, Jonesboro. Outstanding Grader Award Honorable Mention in Brown Rice, Red Rice and Damage - Lynn Luster, Jonesboro.

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

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