



# GIPSA News

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

August 2009

## New Orleans Field Office Welcomes Secretary Vilsack

*Kerry Petit, New Orleans*

**Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack** was one of four Cabinet secretaries to host a rural health community forum on July 20, 2009, in Laplace, Louisiana. **Secretary Vilsack's** visit was part of a White House Rural Tour that deploys Cabinet secretaries across the United States to hold discussions on how communities, states, and the Federal Government can work together to help strengthen rural America.

The New Orleans Field Office is between Laplace and the New Or-

leans Airport and provided the Secretary the perfect opportunity to pay us a short visit. The Secretary arrived about 2:30 p.m. on Monday, July 20, 2009, and addressed about 35 employees gathered in our conference room. He spoke for about 25 minutes on various subjects ranging from healthcare to ethanol, fielded several questions from employees, and ended by thanking everyone for their service to the country. The Secretary paused to allow us to snap a group photo before we visited the nearby GIPSA laboratory at the Bunge North America export grain elevator.

Upon his arrival at our lab at Bunge, the Secretary asked agricultural commodity grader **Charlie Williams** to take him through the process of breaking down a sample. After observing and discussing the sampling process with **Charlie**, we began to discuss the speed of export operations, the massive amount of grain that goes out of the export facilities each year, and the sophistication of GIPSA's

export labs and the export elevators. We also explained the process of using closed-circuit television for monitoring, our automated weighing systems, the automated Cu-Sum, and the process that delivers the completed loading log to the field office for certification. The Secretary was clearly impressed and was gaining a deeper appreciation for the role GIPSA plays in the movement of grain throughout the country and the world.

*Continued, see Secretary, on page 3.*



*Charlie Williams, New Orleans, helps Secretary Tom Vilsack check a grain sample for insects.*



*Secretary Tom Vilsack learning the workings of GIPSA's Bunge Laboratory from field office manager Kerry Petit. Beth Vial, and Lezo Foley.*

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Jason Lopez**, formerly a resident agent in Kansas, is the new senior marketing specialist in the Western Regional Office. **Jason's** work in Kansas over the last 4½ years provided him with invaluable experience that he will use in his new position.

## RETIREMENTS

**Susan Kleinman**, Atlanta, retired on July 30, 2009. **Susan** joined P&SP in 2000 as an auditor and soon became a senior auditor. Before joining GIPSA, she had worked for the Internal Revenue Service and Department of Labor, and had taught college math. **Susan** has been an important asset to the Eastern Regional Office. Many outside the ERO have gotten to know **Susan** from her participation on committees on work modules, the PSAS system, and the new Annual

Report Forms. The ERO will miss **Susan's** talent and work ethic. **Susan** and her husband **Irv** will retire to Richmond, Virginia, to be close to their daughter and grandchild. **Susan** is looking forward to being a hands-on grandmother, traveling, and getting involved in their new community.

## AWARDS

**Bill Crutchfield**, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for his extra effort and leadership in developing the Packers and Stockyards Automation System.

**John Good**, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for providing outstanding support to the Field Management Division in developing and implementing a unique career ladder position for GIPSA's agricultural commodity technicians.

**Tyhisa Luckey**, Washington, DC, received a spot award for providing

exemplary service and leadership in the P&SP Office of the Deputy Administrator and working on the Paradigm project.

**Irene Omade**, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for serving on a detail with GIPSA's Management Support Staff as the acting supervisory management analyst, and her tireless dedication, exemplary customer service skills, and excellent work ethic contributed to the improved recognition of the staff.

## 35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Carla Cambre, New Orleans, LA  
 Milton Clayton, New Orleans, LA  
 Robert Evans, New Orleans, LA  
 Lezo Foley, New Orleans, LA  
 Merle Russelburg, New Orleans, LA

## 25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Diane Blunt, Washington, DC  
 Kevin Smith, Washington, DC  
 Lee Ainsworth, Atlanta, GA  
 Carla Thomas, Atlanta, GA  
 Sharon Lathrop, Kansas City, MO  
 Al Rupert, Chicago, IL  
 Michael Clem, Jonesboro, AR  
 Amy Newman, League City, TX  
 Byron School, Washington, DC

## 15-Year Service Award

Rhonda Williams, Oklahoma City, OK

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## Secretary, from page 1.

Bunge's Manager Jerry Gibson also met with the Secretary and escorted the Secretary from our lab to Bunge's logistics and control rooms. During his discussions with the Secretary, Mr. Gibson was very complimentary about GIPSA, citing the work we do and the value we add to the grain trade. In particular, he mentioned GIPSA's national system of standards that exists nowhere else in the world, a key factor in the grain industry's ability to rapidly move grain from farm to export.

For those GIPSA employees interested in the Rural Tour, you can follow the Rural Tour's progress online at [www.RuralTour.gov](http://www.RuralTour.gov).



*The New Orleans Field Office hosts the Secretary: (left to right) Terrell Bailey, Kerry Petit, Secretary Vilsack, and Gerald Raymond*

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## John Mott Honored for Service

On July 17, 2009, **John Mott**, economist, Western Regional Office, was one of 33 members of the 2007-2009 Deployment Group honored by **Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack** at the second annual USDA Afghanistan and Iraq Service Recognition Ceremony.

USDA agricultural experts began serving in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003. Their goal has been to help Afghanistan and Iraq rebuild their agricultural sectors by planning and implementing reconstruction and agricultural development projects. Projects vary depending on the agricultural needs of the area, but can range from improving food and animal production and marketing systems to veterinary infrastructure, soil and water conservation, and reclamation programs. Experts working with the national government help to build the capacity of ministry officials and collaborate with ministry staff to develop long-term strategies for agricultural development.

"It is an honor for me to recognize these brave and devoted employees for their tremendous service to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the important role they played in furthering political and social stability throughout the world by building a foundation on which the economies of these countries will prosper," said **Vilsack**. "With **President Obama's** new strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, USDA's role in providing agricultural knowledge and expertise has become increasingly important. Whether in forestry, soil, and water conservation, food safety, agricultural extension, or veterinary services, I hope the example provided by these brave men and women will inspire others to volunteer."

To date, 117 men and women representing 13 different USDA agencies, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of the Secretary have been deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Collectively, these USDA employees have made numerous contributions to rebuilding and revitalizing the physical and institutional agricultural sectors in both countries.

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## Issuances

*Terri Henry, Washington, DC*

On July 6, 2009, P&SP launched the new P&SP Employee Library, a complete resource for P&SP policy. It supersedes the P&SP signed-approved directives that were located on the J:\ drive. The P&SP directives have been archived and removed from the shared drive.

- FGIS Directive 9180.80, "Procedures for Grading Feed Peas," dated July 6, 2009
- FGIS Directive 9180.71, "Fumonisin Testing Services," dated July 8, 2009
- FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 221, "Mycotoxin Testing Equipment," dated July 9, 2009
- FGIS Directive 9000.1, "Performance Appraisal System-Field Performance Elements and Standards," dated July 23, 2009

## CCWG = Continuous Improvement

*Alan Christian, Washington, DC*

The Change Control Working Group (CCWG) is working behind the scenes to give all P&SP employees a voice in the program's direction and decision-making. The CCWG is your direct conduit to management for your recommendations for improvements in standard operating procedures and sub-process modules, as well as changes and enhancements to PSAS and our Employee Library.

All P&SP employees are able to submit Change Requests (CRs) to the CCWG via an automated process accessible to all employees. The CCWG then uses a structured procedure to evaluate CRs, present them to management, and facilitate implementation of those changes to enhance P&SP's operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The members of the CCWG are tremendously dedicated to the improvement of our organization. **Amy Blechinger, Bart Di Giovanni, Tina Dillard, Adam Fast, Jared Koch, Nilsa Ramos Taylor, Kevin Studer, Patricia Tolle, and Regina Ware** take on the role of improvement facilitators – vetting issues and seeking support from their supervisors, managers, and coworkers as they work to improve our organization – all in addition to their regular duties. P&SP is grateful for the team members' commitment and perseverance.

The CCWG has received 20 CRs since its inception in April of this year. Four have been approved and two were "bug fixes" that were made; the remainder are in active phases of review by the CCWG, the management team, and subject matter experts.

Thanks to all who have submitted recommendations for improving P&SP; we are off to a great start. But, it's essential to remember that our continuous improvement process is ongoing, and that means the CR and CCWG processes must be robust and ongoing as well. Look around and take the time to make recommendations for improvement. There is an electronic content management (ECM – CCWG) link to the workflow located at the bottom of the ECM home page. CRs can address a variety of organizational areas, including:

- Processes and procedures such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Sub-Process Modules, Work Instructions (WIs), and Training Modules;
- Information systems such as Packers and Stockyards Automated System (PSAS), Employee Library website, etc.;
- Program policies, administrative directives, legislative initiatives, and regulations (including public requests and congressional actions);
- P&SP forms, standardized letter templates, and publications; and
- P&SP employee morale.

Thanks to the CCWG, and thanks to each of you, for your continuous commitment to the continuous improvement of the Packers and Stockyards Program.

## EEOAC Advisory Committee Meeting

*Linda Alston, Washington, DC*

The GIPSA Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) is planning a meeting for September 21-25, 2009. Our meeting agenda is determined by you. The Committee's goal is to address your EEO-related concerns and ideas. Please take this opportunity to suggest issues for the committee to address at the meeting. Feel free to drop me a note at USDA, GIPSA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3602 (Room 0623-S), Washington, D.C. 20250, or call me at 202-720-0216, fax number 202-690-0609, or email [linda.m.alston@usda.gov](mailto:linda.m.alston@usda.gov). I would appreciate receiving your comments by Friday, August 28, 2009, so that they may be included on the agenda. The agenda will be determined by the issues and concerns you provide. Also, please provide us with possible recommendations/solutions to the issues or concerns raised.

We will be covering a number of important issues during the week-long meeting and will conclude with a briefing session with the Administrator and his staff.

The Advisory Committee was established to address the EEO, civil rights, and related concerns of all Agency employees and to make recommendations to the Administrator and his/her management staff.

## **FGIS Matters ...!**

*Randall Jones, Washington, DC*

Before we delve into some of the events that transpired during July, first I must provide some clarification to last month's *FGIS Matters...!*, in which I mentioned that Mr. **John Giler**, former director, FMD; Mr. **John Good**, Management Support Staff; and I met with Union officials. As mentioned last month, **Ronald Hill**, president, National Council of Federal Grain Inspection Locals (NCFGIL), AFGE (New Orleans Field Office); **Niles Reed**, president, AFGE Local #3157 (New Orleans Field Office); **Kim Harper**, president, AFGE Local #3781 (Portland Field Office); and **Emad Ibrahim**, president, AFGE Local #3769 (League City Field Office) were present as well. Unfortunately, I failed to mention that **Robert Medley**, vice president, NCFGIL, AFGE, (New Orleans Field Office); **Allen Duplechin**, secretary/treasurer, AFGE Local 3769 (League City Field Office); and **Bob Baker**, vice president, AFGE Local 3781 (Portland Field Office) were in attendance. My sincere apologies to the Union officials for this oversight.

On June 30, we held a retirement celebration in Washington, DC, for Mr. **John Giler**. The celebration was well attended by a number of USDA officials, current and former GIPSA team members, as well as representatives of four official agencies. The fact that this many people took the time and made the effort to come to Washington, DC, is a testament to the high regard with which **Mr. Giler** was held.

Each day, I am reminded of the devotion and dedication of our FGIS team members, which is why I want to thank Mr. **Robb Hermanson**, Duluth, for 36 years of service and his dedication to FGIS. Effective July 31, **Mr. Hermanson** ended more than 3½ decades of service to FGIS and U.S. agriculture. His career with grain inspection began in 1973, which is before the 1976 law that created FGIS. **Mr. Hermanson's** commitment typifies the commitment of FGIS team members and is certainly inspirational for all of us.

On July 20, I attended the U.S. Wheat Associates summer board meeting and met with the Wheat Quality Committee. The meeting was well attended and our discussion on the upcoming review of the wheat standard lasted for over 1½ hours. It is clear from the discussion that the board will likely submit recommendations for a number of changes to the wheat standards. Given the substantial interest shown by U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Grain and Feed Association, later this fall we plan to convene a meeting of the interested stakeholders to discuss any proposed changes to the standard.

On July 20, the **Secretary** visited our New Orleans Field Office where he met with staff and made a site visit to the Bunge facility. Our **New Orleans staff** did a superb job. A big "thank you" to the New Orleans team for making FGIS look good!

In the next few weeks, we will be working hard to finalize our preparations for the management and admin-

istrative training in Kansas City that is scheduled for September 14-17. I am looking forward to this meeting as an opportunity to interact on a personal level with many of our team members from around the country. We have an exciting agenda that I believe everyone will find interesting and very worthwhile.

As we approach the end of the 2009 fiscal year, we will be working closely with all FGIS managers and administrative officers, as well as our budget staff, to ensure that we effectively and efficiently use our 2009 funds while ensuring that we stay within our budget constraints.

Until next month, be safe and remember that each and every day we define FGIS by the service that we provide.

**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**

## P&SP Launches New Employee Library

On July 6, 2009, P&SP launched the new P&SP Employee Library, a complete resource for P&SP policy. The Library contains general information about P&SP, standard operating procedures, work instructions, sub-process modules, training modules, P&SP administrative instructions, and Change Control Working group documentation, including the Change Request form.

The Library is now posted on the inGIPSA web site at <http://ingipsa.usda.gov>. You can go to the inGIPSA web site from any computer, but you must be logged on to the GIPSA network to access the Library.

Effective immediately, the Library is the official document for all P&SP policy. It supersedes the P&SP Employee Manual and the P&SP signed-approved directives that are currently located on the J:\ drive. In the near future, the manual and directives will be removed from the shared drive.

Many thanks to the Employee Library Team (**Tim Hansen**, chair, **William Arce-Arana**, **Brian Burk**, **Robbie Obiekwe**, **Kraig Roesch**, and **Phillip Warren**) who helped bring this vision for an integrated policy and information center to reality.

We will strive to continuously improve the Library to provide clear, concise policy that meets your needs. Please send any comments or suggestions to improve the Library to the Change Control Working Group via the PSAS ECM or send comments about the inGIPSA website to the GIPSA webmaster.

## First Annual "Battle of the Paddle"

*Tim Hansen, Washington, DC*

July 14, 2009 – On the Mall, visitors turned and looked away from the Washington Monument. At the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, some strayed from the line at the Visitor Center. A feeling of history in the making, thicker than DC humidity, enveloped the Potomac. Beyond the shaded boulevards and rows of cherry trees, a battle raged, enthralling all who stood in witness to a conflict for the ages. Like the Monitor and the Merrimac, the Kearsarge and the Alabama, boats powered by the Packers and Stockyards Program and the Office of General Counsel dueled each other in the summer sun on the Tidal Basin. Future American history books will refer to it as the first annual "Battle of the Paddle."

The challenge: be the first to paddle a four-person paddle boat from the paddle boat dock to the Jefferson Memorial retaining wall and back. Each team consisted of three able-bodied sailors, two to paddle and one in relief. To the winner would go a three-foot engraved wooden paddle and a year's worth of bragging rights.

Team P&SP – **Cara McCarthy**, **Brett Offutt**, and **Tim Hansen** – jumped to a daunting three-boat lead, deftly maneuvering around tourist-driven paddle boats calmly traversing the same waters. Meanwhile, Team OGC – **Jonathan Gordy**, **Eric Paul**, and **Ciarra Toomey** – changed paddlers, providing them with a fresh pair of legs and greater momentum. Then Team P&SP changed paddlers and momentarily matched the pace of the OGC boat. Team OGC, with a sense of urgency, changed paddlers once again and began bearing down on the P&SP boat, shortening the lead with every turn of the paddle. With leg muscles aching, Team P&SP put their hands on their kneecaps and strained every fiber of their shoulder and leg muscles to hold on. Team OGC continued to close, but it was too late. Team P&SP edged out Team OGC by a boat length.

See the Battle on Youtube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7g2cApQT\\_A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7g2cApQT_A).



*To the Victors the Spoils: left to right, Team OGC (Jonathan Gordy, Eric Paul, and Ciarra Toomey, stand with victorious Team P&SP (Cara McCarthy, Brett Offutt, and Tim Hansen) after the Battle of the Paddle.*

## AgDiscovery 2009

*Melba Twitty, Atlanta*

On July 10, 2009, GIPSA helped with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's AgDiscovery 2009 at Delaware State University. AgDiscovery is an outreach program to help teenagers learn about careers in plant and animal science and wild-life management. During a 2-week summer boarding program, the students take part in character and team building activities and diversity workshops, and have the opportunity to gain a first-hand look at the many career paths open to them in the agricultural sciences. Delaware State University was founded in 1890 as the State College for Colored Students and began as a land-grant college for agriculture and mechanical arts.

My presentation topic was "Guess Your Weight" and was given at the University's 75-acre farm for forage and farm animal research. When the students arrived, it was apparent that they had not been in very many barns or on very many farms. They were a little taken aback by the smell and the flies. After it was explained that it was normal for a barn to smell that way and that flies came with the smell, they seemed to calm down and were very excited to hear my presentation even though this was late on a Friday afternoon and they had been in the classroom all day.

My first question of the students was "How many times do you think your hamburger is weighed before it gets to your plate?" There is no right or wrong answer – the question was meant to get the students thinking, which led to the presentation. The presentation was intended to guide the students through the life of an animal life that will eventually go into the food chain and when it is weighed. The students role played as farmers, livestock dealers, auction markets, and packers. The university provided a 500-pound capacity scale and a few sheep and goats that were used in the role play. Throughout the presentation, I explained what farmers, dealers, auction markets, and packers do as they weigh livestock. The students acted out the roles of each of these entities. Throughout the presentation the students were energetic and were asking lots of questions.

The presentation was wrapped up by talking a little bit about the fact that no matter what their backgrounds are, there is always a use for their talents with the government and within our Agency. According to Dr. Harry Thayer, DSU Program Coordinator, this was the same thing that he had been telling the students all week.

## League City/New Orleans EEO/CR Training

*Annie Trujillo, League City, and Kerry Petit, New Orleans*

**Dave Grady** and **Eugene Bass** recently coordinated the first in-person EEO/Civil Rights and Human Resource Training for Texas and Louisiana employees.

The training kicked off with all of the employees of the League City Field Office, and Corpus Christi, Harlingen, and Beaumont suboffices in attendance. **Eugene** started the conference with insight into the direction in which the Administration is headed and the importance of meeting the goals of the agency's civil rights mission statement. Kevin Smith presented an overview of the EEO/Civil Rights process and gave the results of the climate assessment that the Civil Rights Staff conducted earlier in the year. **Barbara Lutz** presented an overview of Human Resources Issues and the processes of applying for a Federal job.

This training provided employees the opportunity to ask questions and receive immediate answers. **Kevin** and **Barbara** gave valuable information and dispelled misconceptions about civil rights and human resources issues. This conference was made possible by the support and cooperation of everyone involved, including the participants.

The conference then moved to the New Orleans Field Office where, over 4 days, more than 100 employees attended five sessions of the EEO/CR and human resource training.

Each employee received feedback questionnaire for their opinions and comments to help improve or revise future training. The employee feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Employees reported that they not only gained new information, but were surprised to learn how much misinformation they had heard over the years.

Many thanks to **Eugene**, **Kevin**, and **Barbara** for taking time out of their busy schedules to present this valuable information to our employees.

# Internship Experience

*Tawny Crotty, WINS Intern*



*WINS Intern Tawny Crotty on the job at the Perdue Company in Chesapeake, Virginia.*

As interns with the USDA, Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS) are offered many opportunities, but my most memorable opportunity as an intern with GIPSA was accompanying **Virginia Roseberry**, Compliance Review Branch, on a trip to two different grain inspection sites.

The first location was where the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services sampled and weighed grain as it was being loaded onto an export ship. There were many people on hand to make sure the operation ran smoothly, and I found it interesting that so many people had an impact on such an important issue.

The second site we visited was Salmons, Inc. at Virginia Beach, Virginia. At this particular container loading site, one State of Virginia licensee obtained the samples from the grain being loaded onto a truck. I was able to get inside the container and inspect it for holes. I didn't know what it all entailed but I learned very quickly after they closed the doors and it was pitch black inside.

That job requires an attention to detail, unparallel concentration, and most importantly, honesty.

This opportunity helped me not only understand what GIPSA does as an agency in USDA, but how our mission is implemented for the benefit of consumers worldwide. Also, it showed USDA's dedication to protecting and preserving the trust and integrity of the Department and United States as a whole.

During my internship at USDA, I was able to participate in different events including: the WINS Welcoming Ceremony, Gay & Lesbian Pride Month Observance, Agriculture Intern Forums, movie sessions in the South Building, and the WINS Honor Dance Pow Wow at American University. Within GIPSA, I went to different meetings and group functions.

The WINS program allows the students from different parts of the United States to join together in Washington, DC, and make lifelong friendships while gaining experience for our futures. This internship showed me that the Agency has a wide range of opportunities for employees to expand their interests and knowledge.

The WINS internship program allows us to see the difference between Federal and private employment. With all the interns being placed in various agencies, we had opportunities to create connections between these agencies and examine what we find appealing about them and why we may want to work with the Federal Government. USDA and GIPSA have made it possible for me to experience the world outside of California, and I thank all of you for making my first internship and trip to Washington, DC, the best career and educational experience I have had to date.

## Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...  
1-800-222-0364

# GIPSA at the NAACP Convention

*Valerie Collins, SEPM African American Program, Kansas City*

On July 11, 2009, when my plane landed in New York City, little did I know that I would be participating in a history-making adventure. I was representing GIPSA at the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Even before I left the airport, I met a lady from Mississippi with whom I shared a shuttle ride to our hotels. She wanted to know who I was and where I came from. I handed her a business card informing her that I was from USDA-GIPSA and explained what FGIS does. She and her husband were farmers, and before we left the airport, I gave out most of the cards I had with me. People came from near and far to attend this monumental event. From the smallest hamlet to the biggest metropolis, they came to see the sights and hear where the NAACP is going.

The NAACP was formed partly in response to the horrific practice of lynching and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois. Appalled at the violence committed against Blacks, a group of people, including **Mary White Ovington** and **Oswald Garrison Villard**, both descendants of abolitionists, **William English Walling**, and **Dr. Henry Moscowitz** issued a call for a meeting to discuss racial justice. Some 60 people, 7 of whom were African American (including **W.E.B. Du Bois**, **Ida B. Wells-Barnett**, and **Mary Church Terrell**), signed the call, which was released on the centennial of Lincoln's birth.

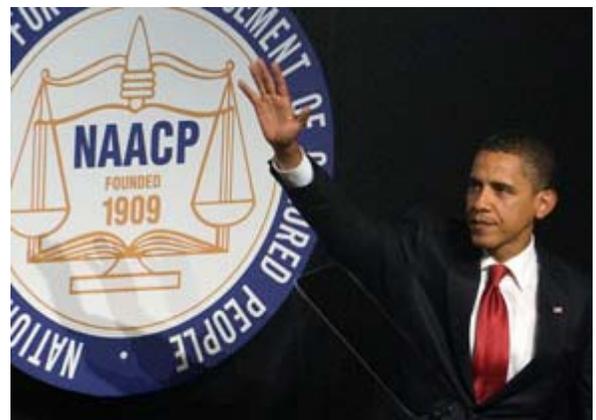
Since then, the NAACP has grown into the nation's oldest, largest, most widely recognized grassroots civil rights organization. "We have fought discrimination for 100 years and we are proud of our achievements to date," said NAACP national board chairman **Julian Bond**. He added, "We know our work is not done."

The NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of minority group citizens of the United States and eliminate race prejudice, and to remove the barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic process.

Highlights of the event were: attending with more than 6,000 others; meeting the new NAACP president and CEO **Benjamin Todd Jealous**; hearing greetings from New York City Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** and Governor **David Paterson**; listening to **Secretary Vilsack**; and, hearing **President Obama**, who challenged the youth by saying, "No one has written your destiny for you. Your destiny is in your hands – and don't you forget that." I also attended an awesome forum that included representatives from the Little Rock 9: **Andrew J. Young**, **Benjamin Hooks**, **Jesse Jackson**, **Vernon Jordan**, and **Dorothy Height**, as well as **Colin Powell**, **Lawrence Wilder**, and **John Conyers**.

It was one the highlights of my lifetime to be in attendance with so many who have fought so hard for people to be treated fairly, and equitably.

Oh, by the way, the city was everything you see on television -- traffic, cabs, Central Park, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, plus a movie being filmed. I got to see it all.



*President Obama addresses the 100th NAACP Convention.*

# For Your Health

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*



To lessen disappointment in life, master your expectations. Life is filled with disappointments. Wouldn't it be great if there was a way to eliminate many of them or to at least lessen their impact? We can if we learn new ways to manage our expectations. Expectations are natural but they can sometimes get the better of us, such as when we expect too much from ourselves or from others. Or, when our expectations are unrealistic. Here are several ways to better manage expectations in our lives.

**Assess More, Wish Less.** There are two parts to an expectation — the assessment part which is the knowledge that something can happen, and the wish part, which is the desire for that something to happen. Unfortunately, we do not spend nearly as much time assessing as we do wishing, which is one of the reasons for the letdown. For example, if we considered the odds of winning the lottery, we probably wouldn't play. Yet, people continue to play wishing they would win. Spend more time assessing whether your expectations are achievable and you will be cutting back on future disappointments.

**Trim Your Expectations.** As a culture, we expect too much. Part of this can be traced to advertisements that tell us we deserve to be satisfied, which leads us to want the best, fastest, brightest, and biggest things imaginable. The trouble is, wanting and expecting so much leads to a sense of entitlement, which can lead to disappointment. We should trim our expectations to those that we can realistically attain and manage.

**Be Flexible.** Few expectations are matters of life and death. We should be prepared to change or give up expectations when it appears that what we want is impossible to have. Being flexible also means keeping perspective. While what we expect may be pleasurable – a new car or boat, a new addition to the house — we can't always get what we want.

**Eliminate Absolute Expectations.** To expect that your spouse will be happy to see you each time you come home from work or that an employee or co-worker will never make a mistake are examples of absolute expectations. Because things do not always happen as planned, this kind of expectation invites disappointment. We should do away with absolute expectations and invite more tolerant, less perfectionist expectations from ourselves and others.

**Be Realistic.** Above all, our expectations must be realistic. Research on high-achieving individuals shows that while they may achieve more than others, they do not bite off more than they can chew. They dream long-term, as everyone else does, but their everyday behavior reflects a practical assessment of their skills.

**Learn From Disappointment.** It is impossible to live disappointment-free. So expect to be let down once in a while. Ask yourself why you became upset. Did you expect someone to do something and the person didn't. Did you expect too much from yourself? Were you let down because you were being a perfectionist? Learning what caused your disappointment can help you adjust your expectations for similar situations in the future.

**Find Inspiration in Disappointment.** Numerous world leaders and other successful types say disappointment inspired them to do great things. If you can similarly benefit from life upsets, go for it and turn the negative energy of disappointment into positive gain.

**Get Help if You are Disappointment Prone.** If few things in life seem satisfying to you, if being happy or content seems like a dream, it may be a sign of something else. Talk to someone trained to assess and treat such conditions. Your Employee Assistance Program is a good place to start.

*Courtesy: Dr. David Brandt, author of "Is That All There Is? Balancing Expectation and Disappointment in Your Life."*

**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:

**Dana Stewart**  
USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3614  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3614  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 690-2333  
dana.b.stewart@usda.gov

**by August 25, 2009!**

**Retiring?** To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to [dana.b.stewart@usda.gov](mailto:dana.b.stewart@usda.gov).

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS  
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
STOP 3601  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601

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