



# GIPSA News

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

October 2000

## JoAnn Waterfield Named P&S Deputy Administrator



*JoAnn Waterfield*

**JoAnn Waterfield** has been selected to be deputy administrator for the agency's Packers and Stockyards Programs.

As deputy administrator, **JoAnn** will carry out GIPSA's responsibilities under the Packers and Stockyards Act. This includes providing payment protection to livestock and poultry producers; promoting fair and competitive marketing conditions in the livestock, live poultry, and meat packing industries by investigating practices that have the potential to limit or restrict competition

in violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act; and monitoring, investigating, and analyzing the livestock, meat, and poultry industries to guard against unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent marketing, merchandising, or weighing practices.

"Our Packers and Stockyards program helps to ensure the integrity of America's meat, poultry, and livestock markets," said GIPSA Administrator **James R. Baker**. "**JoAnn**'s experience and expertise in investigating and litigating cases under the Packers and Stockyards Act will ensure that GIPSA fulfills that critically important role. She will lead a strong and effective P&S program into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

From 1991 until joining GIPSA, **JoAnn** was an attorney with the Trade Practices Division of USDA's Office of the General Counsel, where she litigated proceedings to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

**JoAnn** received her B.A. from the American University and her J.D. from the University of Maryland Law School.

## Administrator's Awards

*Awards Committee*

The deadline to nominate someone for the 5th Annual Administrator's Awards is November 3, 2000 (nominations must be "postmarked" by this date -- U.S. post office, fax, or e-mail). Mail nominations to:

Incentive Awards Committee  
Office of the Administrator  
USDA/GIPSA  
STOP 3601  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601

Or fax your nomination to: 202-205-3941; or e-mail your nomination to: [jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov)

For a sample nomination, please see attachment 3-B of GIPSA directive 4451.1, Employee Recognition Program.

This is a great opportunity for you (regardless of your grade) to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of your coworkers -- **anyone may nominate anyone regardless of your grade.**

# Names in the News

## Personnel

Atlanta welcomes **Kevin Smith**, new senior economist.

**Stephanie McFadden**, auditor, joined the Atlanta office full time. **Stephanie** was previously in the 1890 Scholar Program and spent her summers in the Atlanta office.

**Pamela Lake** has been selected to fill the GS-11 Administrative Officer position in the Atlanta regional office.

## Awards

**Crystal Akins**, resident agent, Greensboro, North Carolina, received a time off award for her extra effort in discovering growers received bad feed resulting in recovery of over \$6,000 to poultry growers.

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**Stephen Bright**, senior marketing specialist, and **James Hood**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received extra effort awards for their dedication and effort in discovering that a poultry company had overcharged poultry growers for litter that resulted in recovering over \$30,000 to 85 poultry growers.

**Sue Ann Claudon**, resident agent, Ft. Worth, TX; **Elizabeth Hughes**, resident agent, Portland, OR; **Larry Werthmuller**, resident agent, Lincoln, NE; and **Kevin Hebenstriet**, resident agent, Emporia, KS, received spot awards for their consistent quality of work in performing resident agent responsibilities and investigations and for increased effort in meeting expectations for investigative and administrative reports.

**Gary Davis**, resident agent, Boise, ID, received a spot award for his notable individual effort in learning investigative methods and procedures to accomplish the duties and expectations of a resident agent.

**Brian Goodwin**, Montreal, received a spot award for successfully completing an unusually heavy workload and traveling back and forth from Port Cartier to Baie Comeau, Quebec.

**Tim Hansen**, marketing specialist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for training new employees allowing for a fast start to the P&S Programs under new structure.

**Durwood Helms**, marketing specialist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for exceptional effort in managing and coordinating the P&S Programs' extensive FY 2000 employee training sessions.

**Donna Hillard**, Toledo, received

a time-off award for exceptional performance of duties and initiative in developing methods for tracking financial transactions. After exhaustive auditing by the review team, the audit team may recommend these methods be used in other locations.

**Karen Johnson** and **Melba Twitty**, auditors, Atlanta, received time off awards in recognition of their initiative and special effort in preparing and coordinating materials and programs for newly hired employees.

**Vicki Lacefield**, Washington, D.C., earned a travel gainsharing award for saving GIPSA money while on official travel.

**Claudia McGrady**, secretary, Washington, DC, received a spot award for her outstanding support of litigation activities of the Competition Branch, especially for extra effort in handling travel arrangements for both P&S and OGC personnel.

**Bobby Smith**, marketing specialist, Washington, DC, received a spot award for his exceptional effort in handling the activities of the Trade Practices Branch during the extended absence of the branch chief.

**Patty Tolle**, legal instruments examiner, Denver, received a performance bonus award for performing the duties of a senior legal instruments examiner in an exemplary manner after a reorganization from March 1999 to August 2000.

## Condolences

**John Butler**, retired agency manager of Memphis Grain Inspection Service, passed away on August 31, 2000.

## GIPSA and ISU Merge NIR Databases

GIPSA and Iowa State University (ISU) have entered into a contract to merge the ISU corn and soybean databases for the Infratec 1200 series near-infrared transmittance analyzer with the GIPSA databases. The Infratec is used in the official inspection system to measure protein, oil, and starch in corn, and protein and oil in soybeans.

The merger will produce extensive databases that are geographically and genetically more diverse than either organization could generate acting independently.

GIPSA will use the combined databases to create improved official NIR calibrations. GIPSA retains exclusive responsibility for official calibration equations and procedures for official use.

GIPSA and ISU have agreed to collaborate on research to maximize the accuracy improvements possible with such large calibration databases. In addition ISU will be sharing information from their instrumentation testing program to assist GIPSA in keeping abreast of new technology.

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## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

### New Per Diem Rates Reminder.

Be sure to check:

[www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov)

if you haven't received a copy of the new per diem rates which become effective October 1, 2000.

## Jim Baker is Named WMZQ Radio's Hometown Hero for August 2000

*Duane Putnam, Washington, DC*

"Congratulations to **Jim Baker** and the crew at the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. They're the WMZQ Marco Polo Hometown Hero(es) for August!" This is the banner on WMZQ's homepage (<http://www.wmzq.com>) announcing the latest hometown hero.

WMZQ radio broadcasts country music in the Washington, D.C. area. Every month their staff honors an outstanding member of the community who has "gone out of their way to help others or make the community a better place to live".

**Mr. Baker** and the headquarters staff were honored for collecting money to help pay veterinary expenses incurred by **George Merriweather**. He works at USDA's Greenbelt, MD, facility. **Travis**, his seeing-eye dog, helps **Mr. Merriweather** to lead an active and independent life.

**Travis** was injured in an escalator accident when someone stepped on his foot, jamming it between the moving step and the side of the escalator. **Travis'** foot was severely injured in the accident and required surgery. Mr. Merriweather was left with a huge vet bill and no guide dog.

**Mr. Baker** learned about the situation and thought that collecting contributions to help **Mr. Merriweather** and **Travis** was a great idea. During the following week, 39 GIPSA employees and 1 private business contributed \$347.00 to the fund. We sent the money to **Mr. Merriweather** along with a letter (in Braille) from **Mr. Baker**, expressing our wish for a speedy recovery.

On August 25, **Jessica Cash**, WMZQ morning show host presented the award to Mr. Baker in a live interview. In addition to the "Hometown Hero" certificate, **Mr. Baker** won \$100 in cash, and an invitation to the "Hometown Hero" Awards Banquet. Predictably, **Mr. Baker** asked the station to forward the cash prize to **Mr. Merriweather**.

**Mr. Baker** extends his thanks to all the employees, who contributed and made this honor possible. Additionally, he extends a special thank you to the coordinators of the drive: **Duane Putnam**, Compliance Division; **Terri Henry**, Administrators Office; and **Louise Jones**, P&S Deputy Administrator's Office.

**Travis** is recovering quickly and has returned to work, guiding **Mr. Merriweather** safely in his daily travels.

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October 2000

Disability Awareness Month

# GIPSA Seeking Public Comment on Proposed Swine Contract Regulation

On September 5, 2000, GIPSA published a new proposed regulation in the Federal Register seeking public comment on the proposed regulation that implements the legislative requirements of the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 (LMRA). A copy of the proposed regulation may be found on GIPSA's web site at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/strulreg/fedreg/fr00/fr00.htm>.

The Packers and Stockyards Act was amended by the LMRA which created a new subtitle called Swine Packer Marketing Contracts. The new regulation, which is needed to implement the new subtitle, would require certain packers to file swine marketing or purchase contracts with GIPSA and would require GIPSA to publish monthly reports about available swine marketing contracts.

The objective of the LMRA is to establish a program of information regarding the marketing of cattle, swine, lambs, and products of such livestock by: providing information that will be readily understood by producers, packers, and other market participants, including information with respect to price, purchase contracts, supply and demand conditions for livestock, livestock production, and livestock products; improving the price and supply reporting services of the Department of Agriculture; and, encouraging competition in the marketplace for livestock and livestock products.

The comment period on the new proposed GIPSA regulation closed October 5, 2000,

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## September Issuances

*Charlie Turner,  
Washington, DC*

- Policy Bulletin, Ref# 188, Soybean Portion Size, dated 9/22/00.

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## Employee Assistance Program

For confidential assistance,  
call your Employee  
Assistance Program

Washington, DC personnel,  
please call...  
301-570-3900  
or 1-800-222-0364

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

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Ed Stallman, quality assurance specialist, Grand Forks, received this letter of appreciation from Brent Turnipseed, South Dakota State University.

Dear Ed:

I would like to thank you for coming and lecturing and presenting a hands-on lab with barley grading in my "Grain Grading" course. The knowledge and expertise you brought was very valuable to both the students and myself. Every year you have come has been a great learning experience. Feedback from the students has been very positive each time. The students enjoy the opportunity to interact with an FGIS expert.

Thanks also for the grain/field bean samples you provide periodically -- they help greatly in class and the Collegiate Crops Judging Contests. I hope you will be able to come again next spring and present a lecture/lab on barley grading or wheat grading again.

Thanks again!

E. Brent Turnipseed  
Associate Professor/Manager, Seed Testing Lab  
South Dakota State University

# WEL Program

Congratulations to **Nilsa Ramos**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, and **Ellie Speelman**, grain marketing specialist, International Monitoring Staff (IMS), Washington, DC, who graduated from the Women's Executive Leadership (WEL) Program on August 25, 2000. The 1999-2000 Program had more than 250 graduates representing over 35 agencies.

The WEL program is designed to encourage Federal agencies to prepare talented employees for leadership/managerial positions and to provide the opportunity to assess their potential and interest as future supervisors, managers, and executives. The program provides job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance the employees' success.

**Ellie Speelman** shares this account of her experiences in the program:

I will be experiencing the impact of the Women's Executive Leadership Program (WEL) program on my life, both professionally and personally, for a long time.

Program requirements include 5 weeks of off-site training, 30-day and a 60-day developmental assignments (preferably outside own agency), reading and reporting on at least three management books from a prescribed list, a 1-week shadowing assignment, and writing a paper on each developmental and shadowing assignment, and an impact paper at the end of the program. In addition, I conducted and wrote reports on

three executive interviews, was a team leader for 6-weeks and wrote a report on my experience, and helped prepare



*Nilsa Ramos*



*Ellie Speelman*

and participated in a 1-hour leadership development presentation.

At the Orientation Session in Charlottesville, VA, we were assigned to teams, received an overview of what to expect during the year and what was expected from us, and then got down to work. The team assignments were made by random selection, and we couldn't have been much more diverse in age, ethnicity, and background.

In December, we went to 2 weeks of Core Training in Norfolk, VA. This training included how to deal with stress and stay healthy. We also received the results from our Meyers Briggs tests and discovered things about ourselves that we had not known before, including some of the reasons that we do the things we do.

Some teams encountered differences that seemed insurmountable, but we all put to use our

newly learned leadership skills whenever problems arose and they worked.

From the first days of the Orientation Session, one constant I heard was "get out of the box." Being a grain marketing specialist, I could not have gotten more "out of the box" than selecting the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) for my first 30-day detail. I am very grateful for my time at the NTSB. There are lessons to be learned from every work experience whether it is a good one or a not-so-good one. I quickly found out that I didn't

have the types of skills needed to be as fully useful to the NTSB as I would liked. On the other hand, I observed management styles that do and do not work, and experienced first-hand some news breaking events.

My second 30-day developmental assignment was with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). I chose FSA because there is a lot of interaction between the IMS and FSA, and I did not have a clear picture of how the various food donation and loan programs operate and how they affected GIPSA. The Director of the Export Operations Division, Kansas City Commodity Office, welcomed me, recognizing the potential mutual benefit.

*Continued, see WEL on page 6. WEL, from page 5.*

— I could learn about FSA and the programs that involve GIPSA, and they in turn, could make use of my expertise. I established a great network of contacts while I was there, and developed a much greater sense of my own abilities.

My third developmental assignment was with the Director of the Office of Outreach (OO), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). This agency is responsible for USDA's overseas programs—market development, international trade agreements and negotiations, and the collection of statistics and market information. OO is a new office that evolved from the Office of Information, and this newness gave them a lot of leeway in establishing a very proactive approach to outreach. Though small in number, the reach of this office is powerful. I helped set up interviews for the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Services, and the FAS administrator with local reporters in agricultural areas. The interviews were intended to educate about the benefits of China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) and its effect on agriculture in their area.

I also helped arrange the logistics of a trip to the People's Republic of China for the Secretary of Agriculture and accompanying agricultural reporters. I was a contact person for reporters keeping abreast of the trip. During the trip preparations, I attended meetings with the Secretary's Press Corps, and at the conclusion of the trip, I helped compile a record of press coverage for the Secre-

tary to use when he briefed the President on his trip. Just before my detail ended, I was surprised with a spot award from FAS for "Outstanding Teamwork Towards Planning and Implementing the Secretary's Presidential Mission to China, April 2000."

At both FFAS and FAS staff meetings, I met senior staff members. I also attended a meeting of the Business Women's Network (BWN) to discuss women in agriculture and how they can help FAS distribute information on USDA export programs, and increase women's participation in agency programs and advisory boards. In a follow-up meeting with BWN, we discussed the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding with USDA with a concurrent signing with FAS of a MOU to promote women's participation in international trade.

For 3 days, I staffed the FAS booth at the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) 2000 Show in Chicago, IL. The FMI is the largest show of its kind in this country, and one of the largest in the world. The FAS booth showcased marketing programs and assistance, and helped educate international individuals and groups involved in or having the potential to export. Sponsored by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and FAS, the Showcase exhibits feature varieties of export-ready food and beverage products.

My major accomplishments during the program include seeking out, arranging, and completing developmental assignments. It was difficult to be away from family for the 6 weeks I was in

Kansas City, but I learned many things about a sister USDA agency that will benefit my work in my own office, met so many nice people, and developed self confidence that made it worthwhile.

In the beginning of the WEL Program, I was totally intimidated. There were so many women and men with such important careers and so much education—attorneys, nuclear scientists, every type of engineer imaginable, and people working on their doctorates, just to name a few. I questioned my participation.

The WEL Program provided me self-confidence, both personally and professionally. I learned that I can make valuable contributions to my office and my agency, and I can do most things I set my mind to do. I've also learned not to put constraints on myself. If I don't reach out for it, I certainly can't hope to achieve it.

My supervisor **John Pitchford** encouraged my application and supported me throughout the program. My absence from our office for 6 months imposed a hardship on our small office, where everyone else had to absorb a portion of my workload on top of the heavy workload they were already carrying. I am enormously grateful and thank them for that! Thank you, **John**, and thank you, GIPSA, for making such wonderful opportunities available to employees."

**Hal Crocker**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, is in the Mid-level Executive Leadership Program 2000-2001 class (formerly known as the WEL Program.) Congratulations, **Hal!**



# GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*



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

*Suggestor*

*Suggestion*

Viola Nathan, Denver, CO

Install Video Conferencing to Connect D.C. with Regional Offices

Margaret R. Cummings, Des Moines, IA

Put Video Tapes Requiring Mandatory Viewing on Intranet for P&S Resident Agents

September's tee-shirt winner: **Viola Nathan, Denver, CO!!**

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During September 2000**

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.



Develop Spreadsheet for Scoring 360 Feedback Assessments

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto: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.**

# EAP Renewed

*Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC*

GIPSA has renewed the Employee Assistance Program contract for FY 2001. The EAP has a number of objectives:

- A.** To empower employees to resolve personal problems in the quickest, least restrictive, and least costly manner possible.
- B.** To assist managers and supervisors to improve employee job performance by providing professional counseling to any employee whose work or conduct is or may be affected by personal problems.
- C.** To provide high quality assessment, short-term problem solving, referral, and follow-up services.

The range of problems addressed by the EAP include the following: stress related issues, family/ marital/ relationship crises, mental and emotional distress, problems with children, legal/financial issues, work related difficulties, alcohol/drug use and abuse, coping with elderly and infirm relatives, child or spouse abuse, Aids related issues, grief concerns, work and family life issues

Problems that begin at home don't always end there. Asking for help is a sign of courage not a sign of weakness. For confidential assistance, please call your EAP. Headquarter employees call (301) 570-3900 or 1-800-222-0364. Field offices employees, call 1-800-222-0364.

Please remember that the service is free, voluntary and confidential.

# Words from New Orleans' Summer Interns

♦ **From Ariane D. Watkins (Area II).** I am a senior at Louisiana State University majoring in animal science and will graduate in May 2001. It was an extreme delight to have taken part in the intern program. I joyfully accepted when I got the call from **Janet Walton**. This has been one of the most productive and exciting summers I have spent since graduating from high school and it is all thanks to the FGIS Summer Intern Program. I learned a lot about the grain industry and gained invaluable experience in all of the procedures involved in exporting grain, including sampling grain, alfatoxin and vomitoxin tests, and the NIRT machine. I also gained knowledge in the automated Cu-Sum system. I estimated grain spills on the ships being loaded and trained two of Area II's newly hired intermittents.

I enjoyed working with a highly professional group of people who added to my knowledge and skill level about the grain industry. Thank you to all who assisted in my training, took time to chat with me, or just waved or smiled at me to make me feel like a part of this organization. I would like to give special recognition to the employees who played integral roles in training me. ACT **Cherone Harness**, was instrumental in getting me online with submits, sampling, alfatoxin, and vomitoxin; ACT **Elsie Jones**, submits and the NIRT machine, and ACG **Charlie E. Williams**, automated Cu-Sum and submits. ACG/mycotoxin coordinator **Carl Jackson** gave me some crucial tips on running chemical tests and the NIRT machine. ACG/mycotoxin coordinator **Ben Cotton** gave me a detailed, up close and personal expla-

nation of the NIRT machine. I would also like to give special recognition to ACT/dispatcher **Wallace Martin** and ACG supervisor **Janet Walton** who took the time to show me all of their duties. **Janet** also gave me a detailed overview of her job as the training officer and the duties performed at the field office. This allowed me to clearly see how the field and office work are intertwined and are vital to the mission of GIPSA.

I thoroughly enjoyed this internship and the memories will forever be etched in my mind. Once again thanks to all, especially **Janet Walton** and **John Shropshire** for this great opportunity.

♦ **From Joyce Conner (Area IV, Jaguar 4 Life).** I am a senior at Southern University, majoring in agricultural education, and will graduate on December 15, 2000. In the summers of 1999 and 2000, I was an intern with FGIS. Again, it was another great summer. While working with FGIS, I learned how to sample and perform physical tests on corn, soybeans, and wheat. I also received experience in shiphold examination, and checking and recording weighing activities of ships and barges.

I would like to thank everyone in Area IV for training me. Everyone was very helpful, and made me feel free to ask any questions. They were eager to teach me about everything involved with grain inspection. Special thanks to **Shelton Buckley**, my mentor, **Alonzo Craighton**, **Wendal Dillon**, **Paul Fontaine**, **Walter Harness**, **Bernadine Turley**, and **Clarence Williams** for their assistance, advice, and for training me in

all aspects of the job. And, a special thank you to **Robert Moses** for his expertise and help. I would like to thank **Janet Walton** and **John Shropshire** for giving me the opportunity to work with GIPSA and liaison officer **Orlando Phelps** of Southern for informing me about intern opportunities with GIPSA. Again, it has been a wonderful summer and a great experience that I will cherish for a lifetime.

♦ **From Monique A. Cobb (Area I).** I am a junior at Southern University majoring in agricultural science. I would like to thank the New Orleans Field Office for allowing me to return again as a summer intern. I knew what was expected of me and all of my goals were accomplished. I was briefed on the duties that I learned the past summer: sampling grain, aflatoxin, vomitoxin, weighing, protein and oil, and being the rover. I learned all about the Grain Quality Improvement Act from ACG supervisor **Lezo Foley**. ACGs **Robert Evans**, **Robert Medley**, and **James Winters** taught me the automated Cu-Sum. Thanks to Cargill, Westwego, for building a step for me which made it easier to reach the gamet and boerner dividers. Thanks to **Janet Walton** for giving an overview of the field office and the opportunity to work with her. She provided me with career information and guidance to improve my working skills and competencies. Finally, thanks to all Area I employees who made this a great learning experience for me - one which I will never forget. Upon my return I will share this valuable learning experience with other students at the University.

# Best Practices for Notebook Computers and Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's)

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

## 1) Physical Protection

- a) To prevent physical damage or theft, use a sturdy, weatherproof, padded, adequately sized conservative bag which doesn't necessarily look like a computer bag.
- b) Use a locking device, which will secure the notebook PC to a desk, table, etc.  
Note: These devices can be found in any PC supply catalog or local computer store.
- c) Do not leave notebook PC's unattended, particularly overnight on desktops. If notebook is located in a high traffic area, use a notebook PC locking device. Secure notebook anytime it is unattended.
- d) Do not position notebook near exterior windows where they are subject to a smash and grab type theft.
- e) Airports:
  - Never leave equipment unattended or out of sight.
  - Never check a notebook PC as baggage.
  - Let the notebook go through x-ray, never ask for hand inspection.
  - As the notebook PC goes through x-ray, keep your eyes on it.
  - If security wants to see it operate, you handle it. Try to never let them touch the computer.
- f) Storage in cars:
  - If a notebook PC must be left in a car keep it locked and out of sight.
  - While riding, place the case between the driver's seat and the rear seat so it won't slide around.
  - Avoid storage in very cold or very hot weather.

## 2) Data Protection

- a) Do not use any "short-cut" programs or script files that could allow direct access into any GIPSA system.
- b) **Do not** store phone numbers to **any** GIPSA system on Notebook computers or PDA's.
- c) Use encryption programs or file compression with encryption programs.
- d) Backup files and keep current copies readily accessible.
- e) Use password-locking programs.
- f) Keep anti-viral software and virus signatures current.
- g) Keep a copy of the following information at office location:  
(Separate from the notebook computer)
  - Serial number of notebook.
  - Current inventory of all software installed.
  - ALL system account names your have access to.
- h) **Notebook PC loss or theft:**
  - Contact Security Representative (Field Office) or ISSPM (DC) immediately!
  - Have the inventory information available for Security Representative or ISSPM.

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



# Fire Safety: Are Security Bars Too Secure?

*Duane Putnam, Washington, DC*

Although the fire department arrived within minutes, all four members of a local family died. The victims, all adults, were trapped behind their own security bars. (AP, 2/28/00) Another area man died in a house fire. According to the coroner's investigator, burglar bars on the windows prevented the 37-year-old man's escape from the burning home. (New Orleans Times-Picayune, 3/7/00)

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that in 1997, almost 75% of the reported structure fires and 83% of all deaths occurred in residential structures. Further, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that although total fire deaths are declining, deaths caused by blocked exits have increased significantly. Reports indicate that many of these deaths occurred when security bars prevented escape from the fire or entry by rescuers. Do you have security bars? Are you satisfied that your family can escape a fire in your home? Are you positive? If you have security bars on your home, how would you answer these questions?

- Do you have quick-release latches on at least one window in each room?
- Do you and every member of your family know how to operate the quick release devices?
- Do you have children too young or small to operate the quick release latch? Who will get them out of the house and how?
- Do you have a family evacuation plan?
- Have you ever practiced your evacuation plan?
- Do you have working smoke detectors?

If you have any doubts, call your local fire department. They will talk with you about fire safety and inspect your home for hazards. They will also review with you the operation of the quick release devices (if you have them) and suggest fire safe improvements to your home. More importantly, they will file a preplan, noting important details about family members (invalids, small children) and features of your home (window bars, quick-open latches, how they operate). If you ever need their help, everyone (E-911 dispatcher, fire, police, and medical) will have this information before they even get to your house.

Other sources of information include:

- Your home builder. He should be able to explain any devices installed during construction or retrofit new quick release devices to existing security bars.
- NFPA's Center for High-Risk Outreach. NFPA's community information packet includes general fire safety tips, illustrations of commonly used quick release mechanisms, and directions on how to operate them. Call (617) 984-7826.
- Underwriter's Laboratory (UL). UL has studied this problem and may decide to develop voluntary standards for residential window-bar releasing systems. To obtain a copy of their study Releasing Systems for Window Bars in Residential Occupancies call (408) 985-2400 and ask for subject 2326.

Concerns about your safety don't stop when you leave the office or inspection lab. Your safety off the job and that of your family is important to GIPSA too! Stay safe!

# New and Aspiring Reflections

*Rosemary Mayne, Employee Development Specialist, Washington, DC*

Application procedures and dates are now available for the FY 2001 Aspiring Leader and New Leader Programs! Dust off that resume and polish it up! If you are thinking about the programs, here are reflections from some of the FY2000 participants.

**Myron Hall, New Orleans Field Office:** “The New Leader Program by far has been one of the best programs I have participated in since joining FGIS. This program gave me the opportunity to work on team projects with people of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and personalities. I have also improved my individual skills in leadership for the year 2000. I strongly recommend this class to individuals who want to excel in the workforce and also in their personal life.”

**Dave Skallerud, Cedar Rapids Field Office:** “Top 10 Reasons to Attend the New Leader Program”:

10. Observing other fine organizations in action
9. Experiencing other cultures and regions
8. Working with a diverse cross-section of people
7. Traveling to different parts of our fine country
6. Learning team building, conflict management, leadership development, diversity awareness and other skills
5. Handling a variety of responsibilities
4. Observing various leadership styles
3. Discovering different methods of problem solving
2. Learning that FGIS (GIPSA) is better than most agencies
1. Becoming a better employee, spouse, parent, citizen.”

**Steven Burton, Technical Services Division:** “The Aspiring Leader Program has been a tremendous challenge and required a great investment of personal time. The program has provided me with tremendous returns on that investment. I have met and talked with many truly devoted Federal employees from a wide range of Federal agencies. ...I have gained from this opportunity to interact and discuss with this diverse workforce the ability to represent myself as a professional. I have been provided the opportunity to create a network of Federal employees to draw upon for my future professional growth. I have undoubtedly improved in my communication skills due to the numerous reports I have been called upon to produce. I am continuing to improve my public speaking skills due to the opportunities provided during the training sessions....

I applied for, was accepted into, and am completing the Aspiring Leader Program in hopes of what tomorrow may bring. I believe—that with the personal and professional experiences and growth opportunities provided me through the ALP program—that my tomorrows and thus those of my family will be improved.

Am I a better individual because of the program? I hope so!

Am I a better employee? I believe those who evaluate my performance will say yes!

Will I be a future leader? Only time and opportunity will tell!”

The New Leader Program (GS 7-11) and The Aspiring Leader Program (GS 5 - 7) are very beneficial to everyone. If this is an opportunity you are interested in pursuing, turn the page!

# Aspiring Leader and New Leader Programs

## **Aspiring Leader Program 2001**

*An Interagency Leadership Development Program for Federal Employees, GS 5/6/7*

A 6-month program designed for full-time GS-5/6/7 federal employees who are self-starters with a career plan that includes leading and working with teams. ALP prepares employees for leadership positions by strengthening basic competencies in managerial skills, such as oral and written communication, problem solving, leadership, self-direction, etc.

FGIS will select **two** full-time employees and P&S will select **one** for the ALP.

### **Program Components:**

- Leadership Effectiveness Inventory
- 3 separate weeks of residential classroom training
- One 30-day developmental work experience

### **Nominating Procedures (for either program):**

A competitive process will be used to select participants. Application packages for either program must include:

1. An SF-171, OF 612, or Federal Resume, signed and dated. (Include your home address.)
2. A written statement explaining your achievement goals for your participation in the program.
3. A written statement from the first-line supervisor assessing your potential and motivation to complete all requirements and fully participate in all components of the program.

Application packages for FGIS employees should be submitted to **Mary McCoy**, USDA GIPSA FGIS, Audiovisual & Training Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3649, Washington, DC 20250-3649; for P&S employees to **Peggy Smith**, USDA, GIPSA, P&S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3641, Washington, DC 20250-3641. Applications must be received no later than **November 10, 2000**. For more information, visit the Graduate School's Leadership Development Academy website at: <http://www.grad.usda.gov/lda> or call **Rosemary Mayne** at (202) 720-6242 (FGIS) or **Peggy Smith** at (202) 720-7045 (P&S).

## **New Leader Program 2001**

*An Interagency Leadership Development Program for Federal Employees, GS 7-11*

A 6-month program designed for full-time federal employees at the GS 7-11 levels who have just entered leadership positions or have a high potential for leadership. These positions may include first-line supervisors, team leaders, project managers, and administrative support members of self-directed work teams.

FGIS will select **six** full-time employees and P&S will select **one** for the NLP. For FGIS, two participants will be selected from New Orleans and four from the following groupings: (a) League City and Portland, (b) headquarters and Technical Services Division, and (c) domestic offices, Baltimore, and Toledo.

- Individual Development Plan
- Independent study

# For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

**Can you prevent arthritis?** Heredity and age do influence whether people will develop osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis. However, making healthy lifestyle choices just may help prevent or delay the disease.

Osteoarthritis involves the wearing away of cartilage that protects bones. To protect joints, try the following strategies:

**Y Loose excess weight.** In one study, overweight women who lost extra pounds significantly reduced their risk of developing osteoarthritis of the knees.

**Y Exercise regularly.** This helps keep bones, joints and muscles healthy. Swimming and walking are two especially joint-friendly exercises. But, many other activities can be safe for the joints. Just don't over do it.

**Y Weight train to strengthen muscles.** Researchers found that older people with weak quadriceps, or front thigh muscles, were more likely to have osteoarthritis of the knee. Even a relatively small increase in quadricep strength was found to lower the risk of osteoarthritis by 20 to 30%.

**Y Play it safe.** Joint problems caused by injuries or overuse increase the risk of osteoarthritis.

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## Guess Who....

Twenty of you thought you knew!

Evidently, **Bob Crook** hasn't changed a bit over the years! The first to correctly identify Bob were Norma Phelps, Washington, DC, and Sandra Metheny, Stuttgart.

Overall, eight people correctly identified Bob. **Administrator Jim Baker** ran a close second with 7 guesses!



*You guessed who he was then. Here's what Bob Crook looks like now!*

## Seeking Advisory Committee Members

GIPSA is seeking nominations for five new members and five new alternates to serve on the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee. Those selected by the Secretary will begin serving 3-year terms in March 2001.

The Committee is comprised of 15 members, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, who represent all facets of the grain industry. The Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the establishment of programs and services under the U.S. Grain Standards Act that meet the needs of the Agency's customers.

Committee members serve without compensation; they are reimbursed for travel expenses.

Nominations are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical handicap, marital status, or sexual orientation. Nominations must be received not later than October 16, 2000.

**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 3601  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 205-9237  
dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov

**by October 25, 1999!**

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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