



Cultural Diversity

National Weather Service
Alaska Region Newsletter
Volume 1, Issue 4 December 2006



Check out our Diversity Library at http://eoo.arh.nwsar.gov/library/Diversity_Library.xls

In This Issue

- ✓ Director's Corner
- ✓ Fishing Derby
- ✓ Hungarian Scholarship
- ✓ Island Life
- ✓ Years of Service
- ✓ New Employees
- ✓ EEO/Diversity Elections

Next EEO/Diversity Meeting will be Wednesday, January 17th at 8:30 a.m.



<http://eoo.arh.nwsar.gov>

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Laura Furgione

A Sense of Belonging

With the holidays rapidly approaching, it's enlightening to see the wide variety of holiday traditions celebrated throughout Alaska. One tradition brought to the Last Frontier by the Russian traders in the early 1700s is the celebration of the Russian Orthodox Christmas. The Russian Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas thirteen days after Western Christmas on January 7, in accordance with the old Julian calendar.

After the 1917 Revolution, Christmas was banned throughout Russia along with other religious celebrations. It was not until 75 years later, in 1992, that the holiday was openly observed again. Today, the celebration has been rekindled with fasts, feasts, dancing, singing, storytelling, and other festivities. A popular Russian custom referred to as "starring", an inspiration from the star the Wise Men followed and similar to caroling, comes from the Ukraine where groups of people go from house to house during Christmas while being led by an ornate star. Varying among the cultural regions of Alaska Native Villages, starring can last for three days beginning in the late afternoon and continuing through the night. In many villages, the singers follow the star as it travels from house to house and at each home food is offered to the singers and guests.



Nathan Foster

Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Kenai, Alaska

Regardless of your preferred holiday celebration, one tradition we can all share is the gift of giving. Holiday donations can come in many different forms. While money, clothing or food is often the type of donation that first comes to mind, volunteering time is often of greater need. Even the smallest give of giving can bring you and the recipient a sense of belonging -- especially to those of us far away from home. □

Reference: Alaska Native Heritage Center web site <http://www.alaskanative.net/18.asp?id=189>

Russell Creek Silver Salmon Derby

By Jim Smith

The outpost of Cold Bay held its annual silver salmon derby over Labor Day weekend. Events included a raft race - had to be hand made; a rubber duck race-down Russell Creek; polar bear swim - also in the creek; and a pig roast at the end of the derby to celebrate the festivities. A prize of \$350 was given for the biggest silver salmon weighing in at 13-1/2 lbs. The youth with the largest silver for that age bracket, 11-1/4 pounds, received \$100. There was also a \$50 prize for the smallest silver caught, which I tied as the winner in this category by reeling in a 2 pound 15 ounce. My wife and I worked in the snack shack on the 2nd cooking dogs/burgers and selling all kinds of homemade goodies - chilli, fishsoup, sweet rolls, corn and clam chowder, the list goes on and on. On the 4th I manned the weigh-in table to record the length and weight of any silvers entered into the derby. The weather for this event was absolutely great with three days of sun! All derby proceeds are used by the local EMS to purchase equipment and support their mission here in Cold Bay. □



Jorge Lopez & Jim Smith weighing Jorge's silver that came in just over 6 pounds.



**The Hungarian American Enterprise
SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Sam Albanese

Warning Coordination Meteorologist

The Hungarian-American Enterprise Scholarship Fund is a counsel on international education exchange. They perform individual projects in the US. Twenty-four (24) fellows in eighteen (18) different fields are represented in this group of award recipients. They have been selected because of their potential to build professional frameworks for long lasting impacts in Hungary. They are trying to have an effective exchange of professional competency and fresh prospective and promote cross cultural dialog. The program promotes knowledge and experiential sharing between Hungarian and American leaders while strengthening the ties between our nations.

Island Life

By Carol Cartier

We recently returned from the South Pacific Islands of Samoa and I thought I would share some of our experiences and a couple of pictures. Our trip's first stop was on the main island in American Samoa, Tutuila, where its most notable city, Pago Pago lies. American Samoa became an unorganized U.S. territory in 1900 and its people proudly serve in the US Armed Forces and have free access to the States. After spending three days in American Samoa exploring around the Island, we made the short flight over to the independent country of Samoa (formerly known as Western Samoa) arriving at their one airport, Faleolo near the capital city of Apia. Samoa was the first independent country in the South Pacific, receiving its peaceful independence from New Zealand over 50 years ago. Clean air, friendly people and ocean breezes - what more could a person ask for?



Carol's husband, Rich, hanging out by our island bungalow, in what is known as a fale (pron. Fall ay).

Life in Samoa is very communal and the extended family is held in the highest regard. Each village has a high chief and an elected mayor. The high chief runs the local council, called a Fono, and includes several talking chiefs (oldest male within the family) who represent the families of the village. The high chief has the final say and he tells the mayor who represents the village in the national government Fono (legislature)



Village women preparing sleeping mats.

and although the country has police, most laws are enforced and dictated by the local chief. Families live in what some would term as compounds. The elders are the heads of the household and even the married children still live within the extended family. Often they share a single fale or house, which like the smaller one pictured above could sleep many people. The idea of personal possessions is foreign to these people and what is one person's is also another's which is difficult for foreigners to understand. Families typically sleep on mats in their open air fale allowing breezes to flow through in the hot tropical

environment. In bad weather, drapes of woven coconut palms are lowered to prevent winds and rain from entering the structure. By the way, Samoa is free of snakes but plenty of kindly lizards keep the pesky insects at bay.



One of the tour guides, Samsoni, pictured next to the blow hole, was pitching coconuts into the hole to see how high they would go - beware of falling coconuts.

There are 10 islands in the group that make up the nation of Samoa. The two largest islands Savai'i and Upolu represent the majority of the land base. We spent our first days on the Island of Savai'i. This is the largest of the islands, but only has $\frac{1}{4}$ of the nation's population. It is close in size to the Big Island of Hawaii. The islands are volcanic in origin and we chose to tour some of the evidence of that volcanic activity. Here is a blow hole where the tide pushes the high pressure water through a lava hole.

an area where in 1906-1907 the Matavanu cinder cone erupted. The lava from the eruption reached the sea. Villages bordering the volcano were nearly wiped out. In one case we saw a church where the lava went right through the church.

On Savai'i evidence of volcanic activity was apparent. We visited

After a week spent exploring Savai'i, we took the inter-island ferry back to Upolu. Upolu is smaller than Savai'i but has $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population of the country. Most people leave Savai'i in order to find work in the largest city and capital of Apia. Upolu offered many things to see and do. We stayed at the Coconuts Beach Club, in a treehouse room. It certainly wasn't what we expected, we didn't have phones or television, just a completely relaxing environment on a crystal clear lagoon and a restaurant with a wonderful chef, from America of all things.....All said, Samoa is a beautiful pristine place, undisturbed by tourism and Polynesia as it once was, and the people are some of the friendliest unassuming folks around. □



Near this church was a grave of a virgin bride, according to local legend the lava flowed on both sides of the grave but did not disturb the actual grave site and it was considered a miracle.

Here is an up-to-date list of all the years in service recognition. This list alone has 595 years of experience on it. Way to go team!

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION			
<i>Since November 19, 2005</i>			
Employee	Position	Office	Years
Craig Bauer	Techniques Development Meteorologist	AAWU	40
David Angaiak	Meteorological Technician	WSO King Salmon	35
Ronald Stuvek	Observer Program Leader	WFO Fairbanks	35
Michael Kutz	Meteorological Technician	AFSU	30
Morgan Ballard	Senior Meteorological Technician	DATAAC	30
Robin Radlein	Hydrologist in Charge	APRFC	30
Jerome Painter	Official in Charge	WSO Kotzebue	25
Neil Murakami	Lead Forecaster	WFO Anchorage	25
Eric Holloway	Hydrologist	APRFC	20
Gregory Larson	Electronics Technician	EUA	20
James Partain	Chief ESSD	ARH	20
Jocelyn Perry	Electronics Technician	EUA	20
Linnae Neyman	Meteorologist	AAWU	20
Michael Burgy	Senior Electronics Technician	WC/ATWC	20
Ted Timmons	Facilities Program Manager	SIB	20
Amy Bedal	Meteorologist	WFO Anchorage	15
Brian Bezenek	Lead Forecaster	WFO Juneau	15
David Hale	Oceanographer	WC/ATWC	15
David White	Electronics Technician	EUA	15
Frank Hyatt	Meteorological Technician	WSO Annette	15
Michael Mitchell	Meteorologist	WFO Juneau	15
Robert Vandegraft	Meteorological Technician	WSO Valdez	15
Scott Lindsey	Senior Hydrologist	APRFC	15
Steven Grove	Electronics Technician	WFO Fairbanks	15
Tracy Magill	Electronics Technician	WFO Fairbanks	15
Wendy Zwickl	Meteorological Technician	WSO Valdez	15
Benjamin Balk	Hydrologist	APRFC	10
Craig Searcy	Information Technology Officer	WFO Anchorage	10
Rebecca Schwab	Secretary	ADMIN	10
Robert Ten Eyck	Meteorological Technician	WSO Nome	10

NEW EMPLOYEES NEW EMPLOYEES

A WARM WELCOME GOES OUT TO ALL NEW EMPLOYEES! HERE IS A LITTLE TIDBIT ABOUT SOME OF OUR LATEST ADDITIONS.

General Forecasters:

AAWU: Alberta Vieira, ETA December 24 from CWSU Albuquerque, NM
WFO Anchorage: Todd Foisy arrived April 30 from Billings, MT
WFO Anchorage: Jason Anderson arrived October 10 from Grand Forks, ND
WFO Fairbanks: Kenneth Simosko arrived April 16 from Chubbuck, ID

Met Techs:

WSO King Salmon: Paul Rockwood arrived May 15 from Bangor, ME
WSO Valdez: Robert Brooks arrived July 24, 2006 from Richland, WA
WSO Valdez: (Lawrence) Gordon May - Effective June 26, College Station, TX
WSO Cold Bay: Michael McLaurin "Andy", arrived August 21, 2006, Lafayette, LA
WSO St. Paul: Rex Morgan, arrived September 5, 2006, Peru, IN
WSO McGrath: Homer Lane, arrived September 18, 2006 from Bristol, TN

Met Interns:

WFO Juneau: Rick Fritsch arrived April 17 from Newport, RI
WSO Nome: Daniel Robinson arrived November 13 from Washington, MO

SOD: Valerie Flynn(Admin. Support Assist.) arrived September 23 from Marine Corps Community Service in Kansas City, MO

AAWU: Victor Proton(Techniques Development Meteorologist) arrived May 14 from Honolulu, HI
ATWC: Donald Bolton (ET) arrived April 2006 from Lajton, UT

ATWC: Janet Herr(Admin. Support Assist.) started October 16 coming from National Marine Fisheries Service in Anchorage

WFO Juneau: Joel Curtis(WCM) transferred from WFO Anchorage

Tim Ryman, Transfer from WSO Yakutat to DATA as MOBEU, arrived September 18, 2006

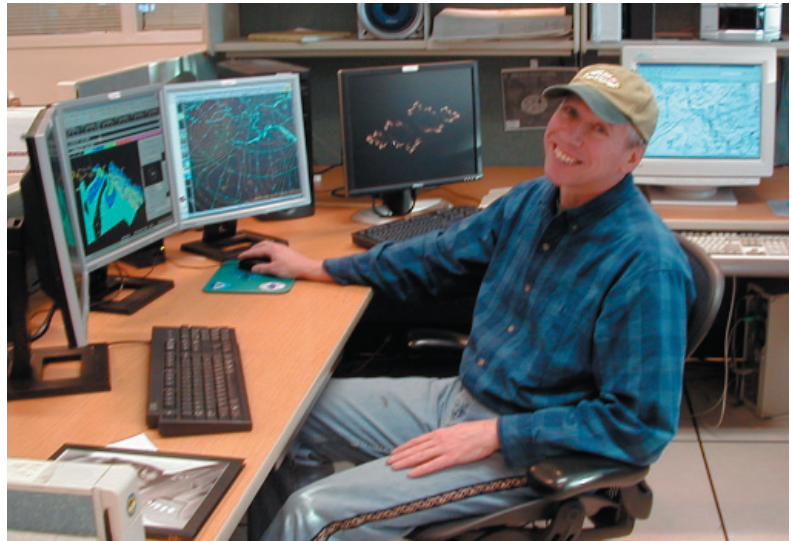
Facilities Shop: Jeff Swanstrum (Maintenance Mechanic) arrived May 28 from Boise, ID



Gordon May(right) & Robert Brooks



Rick Fritsch



Joel Curtis

EEO/Diversity Officers Elected

With the arrival of a new fiscal year, we also have EEO/Diversity Committee elections. Held every year, to replace employees who have other interests or their terms are up, elections are held to fill the ever present SEPM (special emphasis program manager) positions and the officer positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recorder), whose term expires after one year. This year the following individuals were elected:

- Chair - Nikole Gallegos
- Vice-Chair - Peggy Perales
- Recorder - Scott McKim
- Alternate - Kelly Songster
- Diversity Catalyst - Ursula Jones
- African American SEPM - Carlos Godfrey
- Alaska Native/Native American SEPM - Mike Burgy
- Asian/Pacific Islander SEPM - Nathan Foster
- Disabled Persons SEPM - Anne Barnes
- Hispanic American SEPM - VACANT
- Upward Mobility SEPM - Jeff Osiensky
- Women's SEPM - Peggy Perales

Welcome new and continuing members to a new year!

Check out the Field Manager's meeting presentation that was created and presented by Nikole Gallegos. <http://intranet.arh.nwsar.gov/2006FMM.php>

AS ALWAYS, MEETING MINUTES AND OTHER EEO/DIVERSITY INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND AT [HTTP://EEO.ARH.NWSAR.GOV/](http://EEO.ARH.NWSAR.GOV/).

NOVEMBER - NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
DECEMBER - UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH