



# DNN Sentinel

➤ ADDENDUM

**VOL. 1, No. 3**

The NNSA Graduate Fellowship Program is a full-time, salaried fellowship program that places graduate-level students interested in nuclear security careers in offices across NNSA. In June 2015, 15 Fellows joined DNN for one year. Read more about the program in the **DNN Sentinel, Volume I, No. 2**, page 10.

## DNN FELLOWS

*June 2015–June 2016*

### DNN Front Office

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- Thomas Gray

### Office of Global Material Security

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- Benjamin Briese
- Emily Eng
- Elizabeth Lostracco
- Sarah Norris
- Kaitlin Oujo

### Office of Material Management and Minimization

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- Jessica Jagmin Brookins
- Andrew Brown
- Andrew Cartas

### Office of Nonproliferation and Arms Control

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- Robert (Ty) Otto
- Jason Portner
- Tracey-Ann Wellington

### Office of Research and Development

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- Bonnie Canion
- Lance Garrison
- Jessica Paul

## More about the NGFP Class of 2015



NGFP Fellows (left to right) Tracey-Ann Wellington, Tom Gray, Jessica Jagmin Brookins, and Kaitlin Oujo participated in mock hearings during their orientation at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in June. Teams of Fellows were tasked to defend funding for different NNSA offices whose budgets were being reviewed by a panel representing Congress.

Cornelia Brim and Maren Disney of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory caught up with several NNSA Graduate Fellowship Program (NGFP) Fellows assigned to DNN after their first month on the job. The Fellows answered questions about why they had chosen to enter the field of nonproliferation and activities so far at DNN.

See the main article in the *DNN Sentinel*, Volume I, No. 3, online at <http://nnsa.energy.gov/aboutus/ourprograms/nonproliferation-0>. Additional excerpts from the interview are below.

### What has been a character-building experience for you?

For NGFP Fellows, it can take strong character to grow as future leaders for the NNSA enterprise. When asked what experiences have helped

**DNN Expert Profile – Continued**

build their character, some Fellows cited previous experiences while others cited NGFP itself.

For several Fellows, traveling abroad has been an eye-opening experience. For example, Sarah Norris was a Boren Fellow who went to Russia by herself. “I immersed myself in the culture and had to make my own connections and get the work done. Now I am more comfortable navigating international travel and international spaces.”

Tracey-Ann Wellington reported a similar experience, but in Asia. “I was conducting research under the National Science Foundation and at one of the institutes at the University of Tokyo. I had to navigate the Japanese scientific infrastructure to get data for my master’s thesis. I also worked for Samsung in Austin for a few years, and as a part of that job, I went to South Korea for training. I now feel very confident traveling because of those experiences,” she said.

Jason Portner also found living in Beijing after graduating from Northeastern University to be character-building. “Finding my way in a new country was a big experience for me,” he said.

Ben Briese reported that his time abroad helped shape his perspective on nonproliferation, “Before going to grad school, my previous professional life was working for a French-based humanitarian nongovernment organization that provided for refugee shelters, water, sanitation, child-safe areas. I worked in the Middle East—Iraq for a year, Jordan, on the border of Syria and Turkey, and Yemen. That whole part of my life was character-building. I saw first-hand the difficult and challenging circumstances governments face. It helped me understand why radiation portal monitors are put up at border crossings and why we are trying to help countries secure their borders. Because of this experience, I have a very real image in my mind of the sorts of borders we’re talking about.”

Other Fellows shared that the NGFP orientation had its own impactful moments, exposing them to nonproliferation at the intersection of science and policy. Lance Garrison cited



During their orientation in summer, DNN Fellows Ben Briese and Tom Gray (middle) tour the B Reactor, the world’s first full-scale production reactor on the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State.

the mock Congressional hearings held at PNNL. “Teams of Fellows represented different NNSA offices whose budgets were being reviewed by ‘Congress’—a panel of subject matter experts acting this part. Fellows had to defend why their offices should be funded and why others should not. Fellows teamed to present and strategize presentations. This is completely out of the realm of what I’ve seen scientists do and what I have done in the past.”

Elizabeth Lostracco also found the social skills training Fellows completed in the orientation to be insightful. “These skills are transferable and interesting from a psychological point of view.”

**Strangest place you’ve had a cup of coffee?**

Not surprisingly, Fellows’ worldly travels have led them to coffee breaks in some interesting places—and there are probably many more to come.

Garrison has been attending meetings on behalf of his office and reports drinking coffee at the U.S. Congressional breakfast seminar. “There are lots of well-known people to present and listen to what is presented. It’s interesting to be in that audience and listen to those discussions.”

Ty Otto said, “I was on the U.S. Rowing team (Under 23 National), and we visited Belarus. We stayed in a former asylum that was converted to a resort. Having coffee in that restaurant in that location was strange!”



## DNN Expert Profile – Continued

Briese reported having coffee in Iraq. “It is a strange place now because the place I was having coffee is now part of the Islamic state.”

Kaitlin Oujo related the times she had coffee on the West Bank where she was helping women become more active in local politics. “I had coffee with women who ran for office in local government elections. Once they were elected, we worked with the women to help prepare them for their public service.”



But few can outdo Tom Gray’s coffee break location—aboard a U.S. Navy submarine underway beneath the ocean surface.

### Memorable read (or listen)?

While their free time as graduate students and Fellows may be scarce, Fellows still find time to read (or listen in) and shared the eclectic mix of titles on their nightstands or podcast playlist.



Sarah Norris read *Demons* by Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky. “It’s a late 1800s novel that shows duality of the Russian psyche.”

Jason Portner reads during his long commutes to work. *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck left a deep impression. “I hadn’t read much before on the human element during the Depression...it’s one of the most powerful pieces of American literature I’ve read.”

Wellington enjoyed *Yes, Please* by Amy Poehler. She also continues her read of a more substantial work, *Three Kingdoms*, a historical novel about a Chinese strategist by Luo Guanzhong. “The person who recommended the book thought I would relate because I was a strategist. I had an undergrad class on Chinese history class, so this is fascinating reading. I am working my way through the second of three volumes.”

Gray and Briese both read *Command and Control* by Eric Schlosser. Gray said, “This is about nuclear close calls. A good investigative journalist [like Schlosser] transforms a potentially dry topic to a page-turner.” Briese said the book “communicates the importance and not always rosy history of nuclear security. It helped me conceptualize the issue. It’s part of what made me want to be more involved in the field and apply for this fellowship.”

Andrew Cartas found a book from NGFP orientation particularly valuable, *Building Relationship Versatility: Social Styles at Work*. He also read *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, by Daniel Goleman, with great interest. “It’s eye-opening. It helps the reader think about intelligence differently.”

Garrison found the podcast series *Hardcore History* by Don Carlin impactful. He particularly noted the episode “Logical Insanity,” which discussed the context for dropping the bomb on Japan.

Bonnie Canion is also a fan of podcasts. One of the most impressive podcasts for her in the last year is “Invisibilia.” It reveals the invisible concepts we confront every day—gender, fear, power—that expectations have on a person. She also likes National Public Radio Radiolab—particularly the “Emergence episode,” which explores behaviors in nature and how order comes out of disordered situations.

### Looking forward

The Fellows will continue in their assignments through June 2016. A packed schedule lies ahead of them, filled with training, networking, and professional development as they grow as future leaders for the nuclear security and nonproliferation enterprise. The DNN Sentinel will continue to follow their progress and share the impactful contributions they make to DNN’s program offices.

### Other Favorite Pastimes

It’s not all reading and working for the Fellows; several also find time to indulge social media, following journalists and think tank experts on Twitter, and stream popular television shows such as “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” “Broad City,” “True Detective,” “Major Crimes,” “The Wire,” “The Daily Show,” “Darker than Black,” “My Strange Addiction,” and “West Wing.”