



Diversity@Work

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< WWW.DIVERSITY.HR.VA.GOV/CA/DAW.HTM >

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Coffey's Keynotes

As summer approaches, I encourage all of us to pause from our busy lives and “stop and smell the roses.” VA has indeed accomplished a great deal over the past year and we all deserve a moment to reflect on our achievements and enjoy the present. To that end, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has posted VA’s Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Report for FY 2010 and EEO Program Plan for FY 2011 on our Web site at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/annualreport/index.htm>.

The warm weather ushers in many celebrations including Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month in June. This year’s LGBT observance takes on special meaning with President Obama’s legislation ending the U.S. military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. The President eloquently conveyed the significance of this in his proclamation of LGBT Pride Month last year:

[Continued on page 2.]

Celebrate!

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH



VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (also often called Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month), when we pause to celebrate the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and recognize their contributions and accomplishments to our society and our Nation. This year’s theme for the observance is “Diversity, Leadership, Empowerment, and Beyond.”

According to the U.S. Library of Congress Web site (<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/index.html>), this observance originated in 1977 with “Asian-Pacific Week” celebrated during the first 10 days of the month of May. Then, in 1992, President George H. W. Bush designated the entire month of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. The month of May was

selected for this observance to commemorate the anniversary of the first Japanese immigrants to enter the United States and the completion of the transcontinental railroad that was primarily built by Chinese immigrants.

AAPIs are a diverse group comprising many ethnicities, nationalities, religions, cultures, and over 100 languages and dialects. However, in the United States and elsewhere around the world, people are often asked to identify themselves as belonging to a specific racial group. [Continued on page 7.]

BOOKMARKS

ADVANCE
<<http://vaww.va.gov/ADVANCE/>>

VA CHAPTER OF THE
FEDERAL ASIAN PACIFIC
AMERICAN COUNCIL
<www.vafapac.org>

VANTAGE POINT
(VA’S OFFICIAL BLOG)
<www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/>

WORKLIFE4YOU
<www.worklife4you.com/va>

Diversity organizations can be
found on the ODI Web site:
<www.diversity.hr.va.gov/>

Coffey's Keynotes (cont. from page 1)



Georgia Coffey

"As Americans, it is our birthright that all people are created equal and deserve the same rights, privileges, and opportunities. Since our earliest days of independence, our Nation has striven to fulfill that promise. An important chapter in our great, unfinished story is the movement for fairness and equality on behalf of the LGBT community. This month, as we recognize the immeasurable contributions of LGBT Americans, we renew our commitment to the struggle for equal rights for LGBT Americans and to ending prejudice and injustice wherever it exists."

In recognition of this, ODI is hosting an LGBT Pride Month event with a specific focus on recognizing our Nation's LGBT Veterans. Be sure to read more in the succeeding pages about this event and others being planned. We also invite you to share information about events being hosted by VA facilities around the Nation in recognition of these and other observances occurring this time of year.

Special thanks to the VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VA PSHCS) for sharing with us their recent event celebrating Women's History Month. In recognition of the theme, "Our History is our Strength," VA PSHCS and Washington Women in Trades co-hosted 15 Puget Sound Area Rosie the Riveters, who shared their experiences working in industrial jobs during World



Maude Liverpool

War II. I know there must have been, and continue to be, many creative programs held out there like this one. Through this newsletter we can share these ideas and, in doing so, build the incredible diversity and inclusion community I envision for VA.

Finally, it is with a heavy heart that I inform you of the passing of Maude A. Johnson (Liverpool), beloved friend and valued ODI staff member, this past March. Maude's work ethic, personal grace, and unending courage were—and remain—an inspiration to all of us. She will be sorely missed.

~Georgia Coffey, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Diversity and Inclusion



VA PSHCS Poster for Women's History Month

Field Notes

SECRETARY'S ADR EXCELLENCE AWARDS

VA is now accepting nominations for the Secretary's Annual Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Excellence Awards Program. These awards, coordinated by the Office of Resolution Management (ORM), Workplace ADR Office, are the highest recognition given to any VA employee or program who has made exemplary contributions to creating an environment where employees can effectively address conflict and resolve disputes in a manner that encourages communication, promotes understanding, enhances relationships, and engages employees in problem solving. Awards will be given in three categories: manager/supervisor, employee, and ADR program. Please note that all nomination materials must be cleared through proper channels within your organization and received by ORM, Workplace ADR Office, no later than Friday, May 20, 2011. For more information—including nomination eligibility, criteria, documentation and processing—visit <www.va.gov/adr/Awards.asp> or contact Rita L. Reese, Workplace ADR Office, ORM at <Rita.Reese@va.gov> or (202) 461-0291.

Field Notes (cont. from page 2)

ORM STANDS UP RESOLUTION SUPPORT CENTER

VA's Office of Resolution Management (ORM) is activating the Resolution Support Center (RSC), a new way to quickly obtain accurate information in answer to questions often faced by employees in the workplace. The RSC is a call center providing information and educating employees (management and staff) who are facing difficult issues which often lead to workplace disputes and EEO complaints. RSC staff can also refer employees and managers to appropriate resources to assist in resolving issues or obtaining information. Important aspect of RSC's operation is its independence from facility management and its neutrality in issues facing employees. RSC can assist employees with virtually any issue that may arise during the course of their employment. RSC will not advise employees, but can point employees in the right direction for issues related to employment which include:



- EEO complaint processes and procedures
- Administrative grievance processes
- Federal and VA regulations
- VA Policies and Procedures

RSC can assist with a variety of issues managers face on a daily basis and can point them in the right direction when they encounter issues that are more difficult to navigate. These include:

- Dealing with allegations of sexual harassment and hostile work environment,
- How to ensure you handle reasonable accommodation requests appropriately.

RSC can be reached at 1-888- 56-NEW VA (1-888-566-3982). Only supervisors, AFGE and non-bargaining unit employees may utilize the services of RSC at this time.



MENTOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

As part of VA's Succession Planning Model, ADVANCE is offering a mentor certification program for GS-12s and above who wish to serve as mentors in VA leadership development programs and/or enhance their overall leadership effectiveness in developing others. As a learning organization, mentoring is one way that VA employees demonstrate their commitment to the growth of individuals and sustaining a high-performance workforce dedicated to serving Veterans and their families.

The VA Learning University (VALU) will sponsor Mentor-the-Mentor (MTM), a two-day training program to help grow and develop effective mentors. Participants are not committed to a formal mentor role in a VALU leadership program; however, it is VALU's hope that participants will at some point commit to a formal mentoring role.

MTM is designed to enhance VA's formal leadership development programs and is required training to participate as a mentor in several VA leadership development programs. The hours earned from the two-day training are the core requirement for Apprentice Level VA Mentor Certification. If you have already gone through the VHA Mentor Certification Process, MTM will be optional and available as space permits.

Register on LMS (Item ID # NFED 1319028) for the one of the following course dates:

May 10–11, 2011

Concourse Conference Room

1725 I Street, NW

Washington, DC

June 8–9, 2011

Maritime Conference Center

Maritime Boulevard

Linthicum Heights, MD

For more information, including registration, contact Sabrina Clark, VALU, at <Sabrina.Clark@va.gov>.

Policy Alert

HIRING REFORM REPORTING FOR USA STAFFING

Human Resources Management Letter (HRML) No. 05-11-04, dated March 31, 2011, provides guidance on hiring reform reporting requirements and hiring reform satisfaction surveys.

In a memorandum dated May 11, 2010, President Obama directed Federal agencies to achieve several hiring reform goals. Part of the President's initiative requires Federal agencies to improve the speed and quality of hiring and increase the satisfaction of managers and applicants throughout the hiring process. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Office of Management and Budget have provided specific objectives regarding these hiring reform initiatives. VA will collect a variety of data to measure progress towards meeting the goals and objectives.

USA Staffing. To reduce the time needed to fill vacancies and improve the recruitment process for applicants and managers, VA is implementing USA Staffing, an automated web-based recruitment system, throughout the Department. The manual recruitment process will be replaced by the USA Staffing system in all Human Resources Offices (HROs). All Human Resources (HR) Managers must complete Attachment A to certify their HRO has fully implemented USA Staffing. This certification must be submitted to the Director, Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), no later than April 30, 2011.

- (1) Currently, the USA Staffing and Reports Team extracts Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) recruitment data from the system. The data captured is the elapse time between "Date of Request" and "Date of Tentative Offer." The resulting VA-wide figures determine the "Speed of Hiring" which is reported to the Deputy Secretary every month as part of the Monthly Performance Review (MPR). The MPR monthly reporting requirement includes the total number of hires within 60 days; goal number of hires within 60 days; and the actual number of hires within 60 days. For FY 2011, the "Speed of Hiring" annual goal is set at 51 percent within 60 days. For FY 2012, the target goal will be 55 percent within 60 days and in FY 2013, 60 percent within 60 days. On April 30, 2011, the USA Staffing and Report Team will begin extracting merit promotion recruitment data. To obtain accurate data for measuring the speed of hiring during the recruitment process, HROs must enter the required data into the USA Staffing system and provide exact dates. This data must be entered in an expeditious manner, which means every step of the hiring process as it takes place.
- (2) The HRO must enter exact dates in all data fields in USA Staffing systems to include: Background Investigations, Tentative Offer (job offer), Official Offer, and Effective Date. Please see Attachment B for clarification of each required field and the list of dates that must be completed in USA Staffing.
- (3) Completion of each identified field is mandatory.

Manager Satisfaction Survey. The Manager Satisfaction Survey provides data on the manager's satisfaction with the hiring process, the quality of applicants, and the interaction with the HRO. This information is essential to measure the success of hiring reform initiatives from the manager's perspective.

- (1) All hiring managers must complete the Manager Satisfaction Survey online at: <<http://survey.foreseeresults.com/survey/display?cid=J1R9NhcpVskE54MtVMhIFw==&sid=link-manager>> once the selection certification is automatically returned to the HRO. OPM will e-mail a follow-up survey six months after the date of selection if the manager elects to receive it. This follow-up survey will obtain feedback on the outcome and quality of the selection.
- (2) The survey measures the manager's satisfaction with the recruitment process with regard to:
 - A. The number of applicants referred to fill the vacancy;
 - B. The manager's perception of workforce planning;
 - C. Interaction with and quality of support from the servicing HRO;

[Continued on Page 10.]

Training Opportunities

SECTION 508 TRAINING COMING JUNE 2

Learn more about VA's Section 508 Program Office and how it works to ensure that Electronic Information Technology products developed, procured, maintained, or used by the VA are Section 508 conformant. The Office of Information and Technology class will provide an overview of the law and its application to Electronic Information Technology (EIT) including the technical, functional, and documentation/support standards surrounding Section 508 compliance. If you develop any of the following, supervise, procure, develop or administer policy relating to the following you should attend:

- Develop web pages
- Develop web-based applications
- Develop software
- Produce documents
- Develop or procure hardware
- Develop training materials
- Produce videos or other multimedia products
- Supervise activities above
- Develop or administer policy involving or relating to the above
- Have responsibility for the integration or maintenance of any of these items
- Are responsible for the procurement of any of these items
- Are involved in the contracting for the procurement of any of these items.

The training session, "General Section 508 Training," is scheduled for 2 to 4 p.m. EST, Thursday, June 2, at VA Central Office in Conference Room 730. Seating is limited; however, the class will also be available via VANTS and Live Meeting. Live Meeting Training will be captioned. Contact Vicki Leon at <Vicki.Leon@va.gov> or (202) 461-5237 to register.

INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT STUDIES

VA's Learning University (VALU) offers management training through the Institute for Management Studies (IMS). For 37 years, IMS has brought a depth and breadth of dynamic management training courses to hundreds of organizations, including many Fortune 500 companies and government agencies. IMS courses are available in 19 cities across the U.S., and incorporate faculty consisting of some of the most leading-edge thinkers from universities and consulting firms around the world. VA has been a member of IMS for a number of years, which allows VA employees to learn from these world-renown authors, speakers, professors, and leaders. VALU has covered the cost of registration for these 1-day sessions, allowing employees in and around those identified regions to select programs close to where they live and work. To find IMS training in a city near you, visit <www.ims-online.com>. Once you have identified a course, e-mail the IMS chairperson in your region. Identify yourself as a VA employee and provide the date and title of the program you wish to attend. Please note that these programs are intended for supervisors and managers, but may be appropriate for aspiring leaders with supervisor recommendation. Travel is not authorized. For more information on IMS training, contact Sabrina Clark at <Sabrina.Clark@va.gov>.



ADVANCE OFFERS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

ADVANCE Your Knowledge and Skill in Managing Conflict and Resolving Disputes through Mediation by taking classes at the Justice Center of Atlanta sponsored by the Office of Resolution Management Workplace ADR Office. The Managing Conflict and Resolving Disputes through Mediation training is a three-day course, that provides an opportunity to examine the factors that contribute to workplace conflict. It offers tools that managers can use to prevent these situations from escalating and diverting valuable time, resources, and energy from our mission. The course is balanced to include information on how to better manage conflict (i.e., asking effective questions, dealing with difficult people, negotiation skills), and understanding the mediation process. While not asking you to become a professional mediator among your many other responsibilities at VA, it is hoped that by spending in-depth time studying, discussing, and trying the myriad of techniques and communication skills related to the mediation process, you will adopt new approaches, ideas, and skills in dealing with disputes. Managing Conflict and Resolving Disputes Training is conducted by the Justice Center of Atlanta; which has led the field of training and practice in conflict resolution for over 30 years and is a nationally recognized as a provider of top quality practice and instruction in mediation by the U.S. Government Accounting Office. The target audience for this training is Senior Executives, GS-14-15s and Title-38 Equivalents who are in Supervisory Positions. To register in LMS, visit <<http://vaww.va.gov/ADVANCE/docs/justicecenter.pdf>>. All questions regarding these classes may be directed to Rita Reese, ADR Manager, at <Rita.Reese@va.gov>. [Continued on page 12.]

Recruitment

MILITARY CAREER FAIRS

VA is committed to ensuring our workforce is the most talented, dedicated and diverse possible, reflecting the Veterans we serve. Below is a list of careers fairs targeting Veterans and transitioning military for careers after military service. Each facility is encouraged to review these events for opportunities to recruit some of the best and brightest our nation has to offer. All facilities are encouraged to participate in recruiting/outreach events taking place in their geographical area, supporting the Secretary's desire to increase Veterans throughout our workforce and in keeping with the President's Veterans Employment Initiative to all Federal agencies. If your facility would like to participate in this type of event targeting Veterans or for a complete list of upcoming events, contact Robert Forney, Program Support Assistant, Veterans Employment Coordination Service, at (202) 461-5061.

May 3 Cherry Hill, NJ www.Military.com	May 12 Irvine, CA JobZone Online.com	May 20 Ft. Belvoir, VA JobZone Online.com	June 2 Tampa, FL www.CivilianJobs.com
May 3 Philadelphia, PA www.Military.com	May 12 Norfolk, VA www.recruitmilitary.com	May 24 Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs, CO www.Military.com	June 2 Charlotte, NC www.recruitmilitary.com
May 5 Baltimore, MD www.Military.com	May 17 Ft. Bragg, NC www.Military.com	May 26 New York, NY www.recruitmilitary.com	June 7 Houston, TX www.Military.com
May 5 Las Vegas, NV www.recruitmilitary.com	May 19 Raleigh, NC www.Military.com	May 26 Nashville, TN www.recruitmilitary.com	June 9 San Antonio, TX www.Military.com
May 5 Seattle/Tacoma, WA www.recruitmilitary.com	May 19 Chicago, IL www.recruitmilitary.com	May 26 Ft. Dix, NJ www.CivilianJobs.com	June 14 Wright Patterson AFB, OH www.Military.com

MARKETING & RECRUITMENT OUTREACH

VA's Office of Human Resources Management's Marketing & Recruitment Outreach Team, in support of the Hiring Reform initiative related to strengthening recruitment outreach outlined in the Hiring Reform Implementation 2010 Human Resources Management Letter (HRML), dated October 8, 2010, is committed to reaching out to a diverse pool of colleges and universities around the country to present employment opportunities to top talent.

All HR facilities are invited to participate, at the expense of the Marketing & Recruitment Outreach Team, in future recruiting/outreach events taking place in your geographical area where you will have the opportunity to showcase your positions. For more information, please contact Joseph Campbell, Marketing and Recruitment Outreach Consultant, at (202) 461-6021 or you may reach any member of the team at <vaco059recruitment@va.gov>.

In addition to university and college recruitment, this team is also prepared to assist your organization with developing recruitment strategies and developing marketing plans. For recruitment outreach assistance, email <vaco059recruitment@va.gov> and for marketing assistance email <vaco059marketing@va.gov>.

Upcoming events include Rutgers University Collegiate Career Day on May 25, 2011, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and the Diversity Career Fair on June 22, 2011, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Celebrate! (cont.)

The following list represents many of the origins that are typically associated with the term “Asian” or “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” as found on the 2005 U.S. Office of Personnel Management Ethnicity and Race Identification Form (Standard Form 181) available at www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/sf181.pdf:

Countries of Asia	Hawaii and Other Pacific Islands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Brunei • Burma • Cambodia • East Timor • Hong Kong • India • Indonesia • Japan • Laos • Macau • Malaysia • Maldives • Mongolia • Nepal • North Korea • Pakistan • People's Republic of China • Philippines • Republic of China • Singapore • South Korea • Sri Lanka • Thailand • Vietnam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Samoa • Cook Islands • Easter Island • Federated States of Micronesia • Fiji • French Polynesia • Guam • Hawaiian Islands • Kiribati • Marianas • Marshall Islands • Midway Islands • Nauru • New Caledonia • New Guinea • New Zealand • Palau • Rotuma • Samoa • Solomon Islands • Tonga • Tuvalu • Vanuatu • Wake Island

Early AAPIs endured great oppression. Chinese miners, for example, were subjected to back-breaking work in strenuous conditions and treated poorly. But with their contributions, the U.S. was able to complete the transcontinental railroad connecting the Nation from east to west. The AAPI community overcame other major obstacles throughout American history. During World War II, thousands of Japanese Americans were imprisoned based solely on their race, yet still remained loyal to our Nation and today continue to be an integral part of our military.

Today, there are over 300,000 AAPI Veterans, representing 1.24 percent of the total Veteran population. To assist all Veterans, with a focus on minority Veterans, VA established the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV), which “assists eligible Veterans in their efforts to receive benefits and services from VA...and is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans are aware of benefits, services, and programs offered by VA.” To find out more information, please visit the CMV website at www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans.

Even today, AAPIs face certain challenges to attaining employment, career development, career advancement, language barriers, and health care. For this reason, in October 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order (E.O.) 13515, renewing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This E.O. requires all Federal Agencies to develop plans to improve recruitment, career development, research, community involvement, health awareness, advancement, and well-being of AAPIs in Federal programs. VA’s final plan is expected to be published in mid-May 2011 and will be posted on ODI’s Web site at www.diversity.hr.va.gov/spi/programs/aapi.htm.

According to the 2000 Census (www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf), the AAPI population was over 25 million; however, recent estimates of 2010 Census data suggests that AAPIs are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States. As such, it is more important than ever to have a multicultural and inclusive workforce and society.

VA continues to monitor its efforts to ensure all employees, including AAPIs, are included in all occupations, at all levels in the Department. As of September 30, 2010, AAPI employees represented 6.88 percent of VA’s total workforce (permanent and temporary). AAPIs represent approximately 5.04 percent of VA’s leadership pipeline (GS/GM 12, 13, and 14) and 3.31 percent of the senior leadership ranks (GS-15 and Senior Executive Service). The top five occupations for permanent AAPI employees are Nurses, Medical Officers, Pharmacists, Practical Nurses, and Medical Technologists.

In addition to employing AAPIs, VA also provides service to and recognizes the military service and contributions of AAPI Veterans. To learn more about VA’s National AAPI Program, contact Nanese Loza, National AAPI Program Manager, ODI, at Nanese.Loza@va.gov.

VA Central Office will hold a kick-off event on Thursday, May 12, and a cultural fair on Thursday, May 26, in the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Conference Center, Room 230 at noon.

Celebrate! (cont.)

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

VA joins the Nation in celebrating Older Americans Month, celebrated during the month of May. The theme of this year's celebration is "Older Americans: Connecting the Community," which pays homage to the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. Their shared histories, diverse experiences, and wealth of knowledge have made our culture, economy, and local character what they are today. The theme also highlights the many ways technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier and more engaged lives.

When Older Americans Month was established in 1963, only 17 million living Americans had reached their 65th birthdays. Today—thanks in part to advances in health care, education, and financial stability—there are over 39 million older Americans. The U.S. Census projections indicate that by 2018, 11.1 million people 65 and older will be in the workplace.

Older Americans are more active in community life than ever before and are out and about giving back and making a difference in their community. Help us celebrate Older Americans Month! Join your neighbors not only to recognize what older citizens bring to our communities, but also to help them continue playing a vital role in weaving a unique and lasting community fabric.

VA urges all staff to work collaboratively to strengthen the services our VA hospitals provide to older Veterans and employees, in ways that recognize the changing nature of their needs, and provide the older adults with more opportunities to make informed choices about their lives. Our efforts can improve the lives of older citizens and help pave the way for future generations. VA reaffirms our country's commitment to older Americans during the month of May and throughout the year.

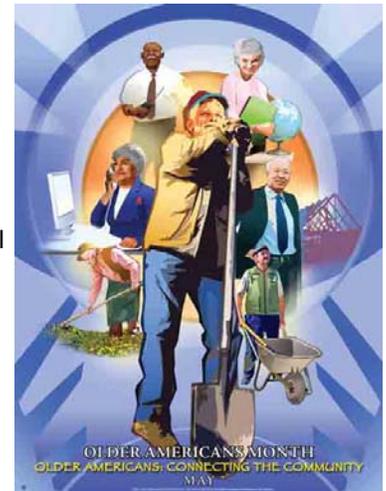
JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

VA also joins the Nation in celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), during the month of May. JAHM acknowledges the achievements and contributions of Jewish Americans in American history and society. This observance originated with a week-long celebration in 1980, authorized by President Carter. Following the May 2004 celebration of the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America, the Jewish Museum of Florida initiated legislation to establish Jewish American Heritage Month. On April 20, 2006, President George W. Bush first proclaimed the month of May as JAHM.

Jewish Americans have been an integral part of the Nation since soon after it was founded. They endured tremendous challenges, persecution, discrimination, and the horrors of the Holocaust to attain better lives and greater economic opportunities for themselves and their children. The Jewish culture values traditional religious and cultural practices, and place great emphasis on ensuring these values and heritage are passed to future generations. Jewish Americans are a wonderful example of how Americans can choose to maintain cultural traditions while honoring principles and beliefs that bind them together as Americans.

Jewish Americans have participated in every major war and campaign and continue to serve in today's military and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the late Seymour Body, the author of "Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America," there were approximately 8,500 Jews who fought in the Civil War, divided between the two sides; 250,000 in WWI, 600,000 in WWII; and a total of 150,000 divided among Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. Additionally, during World War II, Jewish American Veterans received more than 52,000 awards, including the coveted Medal of Honor. VA honors Jewish American Veterans who have made selfless sacrifices in our Armed Forces.

For more information on Jewish American History and events celebrating JAHM, please visit the JAHM Web site at www.jewishheritagemonth.gov.



Holocaust Remembrance Program



Wednesday, May 4, 2011, marked the U.S. Federal Government's 18th Annual Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program. The theme for this year's program was "Survival" and the program was moderated by Scott Thuman, award-winning White House and Capitol Hill reporter for ABC7 News and Washington's News Channel 8. Guest speakers included Sigmund Tobias, whose family escaped Nazi Germany through Shanghai; Bozena Urbanowicz Gilbride, whose family hid Jews during the early Soviet occupation and were then shipped to Germany where they were used as slave labor; and Irene Hasenberg Butter, a retired public health professor at the University of Michigan, whose family fled Germany, then occupied Holland before being sent to Westerbork, then Bergen-Belsen concentration camps.

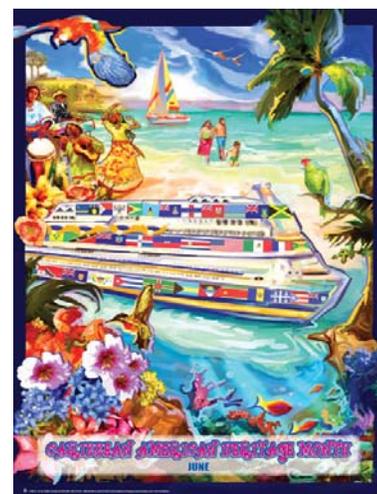
The observance program took place at the beautifully-restored Lincoln Theatre and was sponsored by 27 Federal agencies. See <<http://holocaustremembrance.org>> for more information. If you are interested in serving as a VA representative with this program in the

future, contact Robert Turtill at <Robert.Turtill@va.gov>.

Celebrate! (cont.)

CARIBBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

VA commemorates the lasting contributions Caribbean Americans have made to our Nation's culture and history. The month of June has been set aside to honor their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and social diversity. Generations of immigrants have preserved the traditions of their homelands, and these traditions have defined our Nation's identity. Among them, Caribbean Americans, who bring a unique and vibrant culture. This multilingual and multiethnic tradition has strengthened our social fabric and enriched the diversity of our Nation. In their pursuit of success, Caribbean Americans have exhibited the traits all Americans prize: determination, a devotion to community, and patriotism. They have made their mark in every facet of our society, from art to athletics and science to service. Caribbean Americans have also safeguarded our Nation in the United States Armed Forces. Let's celebrate the many contributions Caribbean Americans of all walks of life have made to the success and prosperity our country by learning more about their history and culture.



LGBT Pride Month: Welcome Home LGBT Veterans

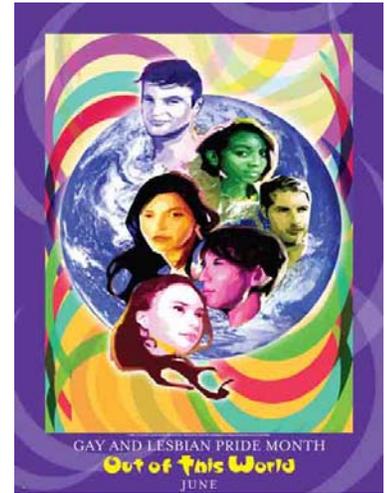
VA joins the Nation in observing June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month.

Forty one years ago, patrons of the Stonewall Inn in New York City resisted police harassment for members of the LGBT community. It marked a milestone in gay unity for civil rights, earning national attention and gaining a foothold in the struggle for equality.

During LGBT Pride Month, we commemorate these events of June 1969 and demonstrate our commitment to achieving equal opportunity for our LGBT employees, aligned with executive order 11478, and ensuring access to culturally competent services for our LGBT Veterans. As part of our demonstrated commitment, VA has recently engaged in sustained efforts to implement policies aimed at creating a non-discriminatory, inclusive workplace for LGBT employees by including sexual orientation in the Secretary's EEO, Diversity, and No FEAR Policy Statement. [**Continued on the next page.**]

LGBT Pride Month (cont.)

Additionally, to ensure we recognize the contributions of LGBT Veterans and increase awareness of opportunities to deliver quality services that address some of their unique needs, this month VA will honor LGBT Veterans with a special commemoration event. On June 22, 2011, VA Central Office will host a “Welcome Home LGBT Veterans” event in G. V. “Sonny” Montgomery Veterans Conference Center, Room 230, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Representatives from LGBT organizations, including the Human Rights Campaign, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, and the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, will be on hand to support this event. The event will help honor this Nation’s courageous LGBT servicemen and women who volunteered to serve this country during times of war and peace and who made selfless sacrifices and took risks to defend our country’s freedom, in spite of the realities of the circumstances under which many served, including being forced to remain silent about their personal life and family, while being subjected to hostile environments that were intolerant of LGBT members; and the possibility of not seeing a family member when wounded in battle for fear of being exposed as LGBT, which could have resulted in discharge.



Accordingly, LGBT service members will need the help of VA employees more than ever to combat illnesses and disorders associated with service in silence. This event is an opportunity to hear LGBT Veterans' stories, honor and recognize their service to this Nation, and to learn how VA can demonstrate its commitment to providing quality health care, benefits, and services to LGBT Veterans--past, current, and future. For more information on VA’s “Welcome Home LGBT Veterans” event or on other related LGBT outreach and initiatives, contact Durodgio Peterson, VA National LGBT Program Manager, at <Durodgio.Peterson@va.gov> or (202) 461-4034.

Policy Alert (cont. from page 4)

- D. The manager’s involvement with reviewing applications, interviewing and selecting final candidates;
 - E. Applicant quality; and
 - F. The HRO’s knowledge and use of hiring flexibilities.
- (3) The Office of Human Resources Management will monitor, track and report completion rates of the Manager Satisfaction Survey.
- (4) Average manager satisfaction scores, by agency, are published quarterly at: <<http://hr.performance.gov/initiative/hire-best/home>>.

Applicant Satisfaction Survey. The Applicant Satisfaction Survey is available online and is sent randomly by OPM to a select percentage of the USAJOBS applicants.

- (1) The survey measures how satisfied applicants are with:
- A. The application process;
 - B. Whether the application questions appear relevant; and
 - C. Applicant’s ability to follow his or her application status in the USA Staffing system throughout the recruitment process.
- (2) Now that VA is implementing USA Staffing across the Department, the Applicant Satisfaction Survey is standardized and results are available at <<http://hr.performance.gov/initiative/hire-best/home>>. In the near future, OPM will administer the Applicant Satisfaction Survey to a larger sample of applicants to increase the statistical validity of the responses for all agencies.

USA Staffing questions should be sent to <vaustaffing@va.gov>. Staffing policy questions should be sent to the Staffing Policy/059/VACO mailbox.

This document will soon appear on the OHRM Library intranet Web site and the intranet OHRM Staffing webpage.

FAPAC Preconference Event

ODI is proud to present the Annual VA Preconference Forum during the Federal Asian Pacific American Council's (FAPAC) 26th Annual National Leadership Training Conference. This year's conference will be held May 9–13, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bellevue, Washington. The Agency Forum will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon on May 9. The theme for this year's conference is "Leadership, Diversity, Empowerment and Beyond."

This pre-conference event is a diversity training opportunity designed to provide information specific to VA's APA workforce, including demographics, employment and advancement initiatives and opportunities, Veteran employment issues, and an overview and update of initiatives focused on APAs. All VA employees in the local commuting area are encouraged to attend the Agency Forum, with supervisory approval, at no additional cost. All associated costs to attend the main conference must be authorized by your organization. If you have questions, contact Nanese Loza, VA's National Asian American and Pacific Islander Program Manager, ODI, at <Nanese.Loza@va.gov> or (202) 461-4049.

National Diversity Internship Program

VA's National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) offers internship opportunities during the spring, summer, and fall to college students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander and people with disabilities communities. This program enables students to supplement their academic course work with study-related work experiences at VA offices and facilities in the Washington, DC area and throughout the United States and its territories.

Students engage in Veteran-focused and other mission-related work projects, special assignments, or research by interning in a variety of fields including, but not limited to, medical-related disciplines, claims examining, cemetery administration, business or finance, contracting, human resources, information technology, communications, and other mission-related occupations. In addition to providing college students experience working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, NDIP enables VA offices to address immediate staffing needs, as well as meet workforce succession planning and diversity goals.

The program attracts diverse groups of individuals into VA careers where those groups have not traditionally participated at expected levels and where VA can benefit from their diverse perspectives. It is a good way for managers and supervisors to begin to attract and engage VA's future workforce to meet the challenges of supporting the next generation of Veterans and their families.

ODI has always advocated the use of NDIP. Under the ADVANCE initiative, the Office of Human Resources and Administration now offers Department-wide centralized funding to support increased participation in this program—specifically for those organizations that, without funding, would otherwise not participate. Offices interested in being considered for this fund must submit their requests by Friday, May 6. Through the program, VA offices request student interns from one of many of our non-profit affiliates. These organizations are viewed as partners in VA's efforts to develop a diverse, high-performing workforce.

In the past, VA has utilized the services of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society; National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; Washington Internships for Native Students; The Washington Center; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; International Leadership Foundation; the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies; and Minority Access to identify students from diverse background to ensure VA's pipeline reaches and includes all qualified groups for employment consideration.

For more information about these non-profit organizations or about NDIP, visit the ODI Web site at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/spi/internships.htm>. For more information about the NDIP centralized fund or to obtain the request form, contact Durodgio Peterson, ODI, at <Durodgio.Peterson@va.gov> or (202) 461-4034.

Training Opportunities (cont. from page 5)

VA ROLLS OUT CAMPUS CAREER CENTER

VA is excited to announce collaboration with Campus Career Center (CCC), a Web-based collegiate-focused employment recruitment service. More than 200,000 college and university students/graduates, who are members of the CCC Web site, will get a chance to connect with VA career opportunities. As a premier partner, VA is positioned as an employer of choice for qualified candidates. CCC users are drawn to VA's career Web site <www.vacareers.va.gov>. The marketing focus is to raise awareness about mission critical occupations within VA and attract well qualified college applicants. To see the advertisement, visit <www.campuscareercenter.com>. For additional information contact Raquel Thomas at <Raquel.Thomas@va.gov>.

Workforce Recruitment Program

As part of our continuing efforts to identify and employ qualified individuals with disabilities and meet the Secretary's two percent goal for hiring individuals with targeted disabilities, VA has established a goal to employ at least 20 college students and recent graduates with disabilities as summer interns through the Workforce Recruitment Program, or WRP, for College Students with Disabilities. Additionally, VA has set a goal to retain at least 20 percent of those who are ready for full-time employment.

The WRP is coordinated annually by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense and, in partnership with Federal agencies, provides job opportunities in the Federal government for college students with disabilities, some of whom are Veterans.

The WRP is an excellent recruitment and workforce succession tool that can be used to identify qualified candidates to fill temporary or permanent staffing needs in a variety of occupations. All students are pre-screened and in good academic standing and are enrolled in either a certificate or a degree program from the associate to the Ph. D. level.

Annually, trained recruiters from WRP's Federal agency partners conduct personal interviews with more than 2,000 students with disabilities at college and university campuses across the nation, and develop a database listing the qualifications of each student. Student applications are evaluated and those who receive a score indicating their employment readiness are referred for employment.

To encourage greater participation with the WRP, VA is pleased to announce that the Office of Human Resources and Administration, as a part of ADVANCE, has established a centralized fund that will be used to reimburse salary costs for 20 to 25 WRP students. The goal of the fund is to minimize funding barriers that may prevent full utilization of the WRP. ODI will administer the centralized fund and will approve reimbursement funding on a first come, first serve basis. However, priority consideration will be given to offices that have advised on the "Funding Reimbursement Request" form that they are actively recruiting and may have an identified position that can be used to convert an intern to a permanent position once the internship ends.

To improve your chances of receiving centralized funds for an intern, ODI recommends that you promptly request access to the WRP Web site and identify viable candidates. Detailed instructions and required forms are available on VA's Disability Program Web site at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/spi/programs/peopledisabilities.htm#WRP>.

Please note that organizations do not need to create a new position description (PD); they may use an existing PD. Also, funds (if available) will only be reimbursed to those organizations that hire WRP interns for the summer. It is highly recommended that you first contact ODI to confirm that funds are still available.

If you have any questions, and to ensure funding is still available, contact Aurelia Lopez, the WRP Coordinator in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, at <Aurelia.Lopez@va.gov> or (202) 461-4124. Finally, please review "Step Seven" on the "Request for Funding Instructions" available on the Web site above for pertinent reasonable accommodation information.

Disability Issues

RA CENTRALIZED FUND

VA Administrations and Central Staff Offices are encouraged to utilize the new centralized fund for reimbursement of reasonable accommodation (RA) for VA employees with disabilities, a new ADVANCE initiative administered by ODI. The fund, used to reimburse offices that have paid for any approved reasonable accommodation requests, significantly reduces potential barriers to equal opportunity for people with disabilities within the workforce. The fund operates on a reimbursable basis: offices purchase the accommodation and apply to ODI for reimbursement. Last year, for example, various accommodations were reimbursed including two amplified stethoscopes, an air purifier, several sign language interpreter service periods, and a wheelchair lift. The fund was also used to reimburse the cost of a scooter for an employee who has to walk long distances on the job and cab fare for an employee to attend training not being held on a VA campus.

ODI refunded over 85 thousand dollars for reasonable accommodations in fiscal year 2010, the inaugural year, and is expecting to receive a higher volume of requests this fiscal year. Additionally, the fund can be used to reimburse the cost of reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities to attend suitable training opportunities, including career development training such as Leadership VA and the LEAD programs. Although the employee's office must pay for the cost of the training, this fund will provide reimbursement for any disability accommodations needed to attend the training.

The fund will not be used to reimburse the cost of ramps and other physical facility modifications; the facility engineer should be contacted if the workplace is not accessible. The fund is meant to cover accommodations not provided by the Department of Defense's Computer Assistance Program (CAP). Examples of CAP accommodations include software that reads electronic text, allows people to speak instead of typing, predicts words, has text-to-speech capabilities, or registers only the key that is hit the hardest if more than one key is hit at the same time. CAP also provides hardware such as alternative keyboards, keyboard trays, monitor arms and risers, and document holders. In addition, CAP provides assistive listening devices, signal devices for the phone, amplifiers and headsets. For more information, visit the CAP Web site at <http://cap.tricare.mil>.

The memorandum on the centralized fund and the form for requesting reimbursement are available at www.diversity.hr.va.gov/spi/programs/peopledisabilities.htm#accommodation. It is important to note that funds will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis and approval will be determined at the VA headquarters level.

This initiative will help VA meet its obligation to advance, retain, and provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities, particularly those with targeted disabilities. Targeted disabilities (as defined by the Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) are: blindness, deafness, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, missing extremities, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and dwarfism.

To request reimbursement or for additional information about Centralized Funding for Reasonable Accommodations, contact Christy Compton, VA Disability Program Manager, ODI, at Christy.Compton@va.gov or (202) 461-4037.

RA TRACKING SYSTEM

ODI is currently working with the Administrations and a contractor to customize a reasonable accommodation (RA) tracking system that will allow VA to track and report various facets of the reasonable accommodation process. When completed, the system will allow ODI to track all information required by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), including the timeliness of decisions and provision of the reasonable accommodation. The VA Directive allows a maximum of 30 calendar days to process requests, and we must report annually to EEOC whether we met that time frame.

An additional tracking system feature currently in development will allow employees and applicants to enter their requests. This will ensure that reasonable accommodation requests are not lost or overlooked. This system feature is expected to be operational VA-wide before the end of fiscal year 2011. For more information, contact Christy Compton.



Compliance Corner

Reprisal is the most frequent basis for equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints filed by Federal employees and is also the most frequent basis of discrimination found when VA employees file complaints. Reprisal occurs when employees are treated differently because they are, or were involved in, protected EEO activity. Protected activity may include participating in the EEO process (e.g., filing a complaint, assisting a co-worker with her complaint, or providing testimony in an EEO investigation or hearing). Protected activity also includes opposing a discriminatory process or activity (e.g., reporting to management incidents of discrimination at your facility).

Promotion/non-selection is a common claim made by VA employees and outside applicants for employment. It is also the most frequent claim found by U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Administrative Judges (AJs) and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) to involve discriminatory conduct by VA managers and supervisors. It is illegal for VA supervisors and selecting officials to discuss, consider, or manipulate the selection process by considering a candidate's prior EEO activity.

A recent case adjudicated by an EEOC AJ and adopted by OEDCA found that the selection process was so "tainted" to give rise to an inference that the VA had discriminated against the complainant. For over 30 years, the complainant served in various capacities within a medical center's social work and mental health departments. She also had initiated numerous EEO complaints and was actively involved in union activities, including filing unfair labor practices on behalf of other employees.

The complainant was not selected for the Chief of Social Work even though she was well qualified and recommended by the previous Chief of Social Work for the position. The EEOC AJ found that the VA's deviation from several aspects of the selection process showed a covert effort to bypass the competitive process to select an individual other than the complainant. These deviations included allowing the selectee to serve as the Acting Chief of Social Work for over six months denying other employees the opportunity to serve in the position and initiating a personnel action to promote the selectee to the Chief of Social Work position prior to even posting the vacancy announcement.

The EEOC AJ further concluded that the selecting official viewed the complainant as a "troublemaker" because of her prior EEO activity and opposition to unfair/discriminatory practices. At the hearing, the selecting official was unable to articulate any performance based reasons or other job-related factors that contributed to his decision not to allow the complainant the opportunity to serve as the Acting Chief of Social Work.

Finally, the EEOC AJ determined that the complainant was disadvantaged because three of the four members of the selection panel were involved in her prior EEO complaints, including the medical center's EEO manager. The EEOC AJ wrote "Not only is it ill-advised for EEO managers to step out of their zone of neutrality in this capacity, but such participation has the potential of causing a chilling effect that could deter an employee from filing a claim of discrimination".

~Maxanne R. Witkin, Director, VA's Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication





ODI on the Internet

DIVERSITY@WORK

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Visit our **Web site**, <www.diversity.hr.va.gov> for additional staff e-mail addresses.

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

VA's Office of Human Resources & Administration
<www.va.gov/ofcadmin>

VA Learning University
<vaww.va.gov/valu>

VA's Office of Resolution Management
<www.va.gov/orm>

VA's Office of Human Resources Management
<www.va.gov/ohrm>

VHA Office of Diversity & Inclusion
<vaww.va.gov/vhadiversity>

GOT NEWS?

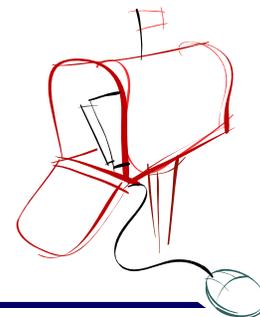
We want to hear from you! If you'd like to share your story ideas, comments, or suggestions, e-mail us at <odi@va.gov> with the words **DIVERSITY@WORK** in the subject line.

The mission of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is to foster a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity—through national policy development, workforce analysis, outreach, retention, and education—to best serve our Nation's Veterans. Here's a sampling of online tools available at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov> that can help leverage diversity and build inclusion:

- ▶ Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and other special observance resources.
- ▶ Training resources, guides, and reports.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.
- ▶ Best practices for diversity management.

ODI in Your E-mail Inbox

Once a week, ODI sends out *NewsLink*, an e-mail message with annotated links to current news items and other information related to leveraging diversity and building inclusion. For a FREE subscription to this weekly electronic news service, e-mail <odi@va.gov> with the words **SUBSCRIBE NEWSLINK** in the subject line. Find a sample of *NewsLink* at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/ca/newslink.htm>.



ODI on Your TV or PC

Diversity News is a monthly video program produced by the VACO Broadcasting Center for ODI. *Diversity News* follows *VA News* on the VA Knowledge Network (VAKN) channel 2 at <<http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov>>. Programs are also available at <www.diversity.hr.va.gov/ca/diversitynews.htm>.

From the 2011 Diversity Calendar

<www.diversity.hr.va.gov/calendar>

MAY

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month
Older Americans Month

Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program
May 4; Washington, DC
<<http://holocaustremembrance.org>>

Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) National Conference
May 9-13; Bellevue, WA
<www.fapac.org>

Armed Forces Day
May 21

NAACP Leadership 500 Summit
May 26-29; Hollywood, FL
<<http://l500.org>>

Memorial Day
May 30

JUNE

Caribbean American Heritage Month
Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) Conference and Banquet
June 9; Arlington, VA
<www.aagen.org>

Diversity and Inclusion Training & Development Preconference Workshop to the VHA EEO National Conference
June 13; Dallas, TX
<www.regonline.com/builder/site/tab1.aspx?EventID=966826>

Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Annual Conference
June 13-17; Tulsa, OK
<www.saige.org>

Science Technology Engineering Math (S.T.E.M.) Postdoc Conference & Career Fair
June 15; Rockville, MD
<www.postdocconference.org>

The Conference Board Corporate Diversity & Inclusion Conference
June 28-29; Chicago, IL
<www.conference-board.org/conferences/conferencedetail.cfm?conferenceid=2326>

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Convention & Exposition
June 28-July 2; Cincinnati, OH
<<http://lulac.org>>