



# ITEMS

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*Newsletter of the Idaho Chapter of the International Association of Workforce Professionals*



## **Idaho Department of Labor Receives Pinnacle Award by Mark Whitworth, Assistant Deputy Director**

On Tuesday, October 23, during a luncheon at the NASWA UI Director's Conference in New Hampshire, Roger Madsen was presented the prestigious Pinnacle Award for the Idaho Department of Labor by the US Department of Labor. There were nearly 300 people in attendance representing most of the states and districts in our nation that make up the UI system.

The Pinnacle Award is given to the state that exceeds all other states in all of the following categories:

- Timely and Proper Benefit Payments
- Timely and High-Quality Eligibility Decisions
- Timely and High-Quality Appeals Decisions
- Timely New Employer Accounts and High-Quality Tax Operations

These represent the key areas of state UI operations. According to the US Department of Labor, Idaho was the top performing state across all (not just one or two) four categories during the year that just ended.

The Pinnacle Award represents the great service the Idaho Department of Labor provided to Idaho workers and businesses during the past year.

### **A Word from Our President Linda Castaneda, Idaho Chapter**

We have several things for which to be thankful; we just need to take time to notice them and reflect on them. This is the time of year when the State Charitable Programs are in effect. This is a great program in which to participate. I would like to remind everyone that IAWP members and the board are charitable throughout the entire year and donate to several needy causes. Our Director has whole-heartedly endorsed this campaign and would be pleased with our personal contributions.



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I would like to encourage all IAWP members and non-members to consider making a donation. Perhaps you can find room in your heart and pocketbook to make even a small donation. It can be a one time thing or you may choose to have it deducted from your payroll check.

IAWP is proud to make a donation on behalf of the IDAHO Chapter of IAWP in the amount of \$150.00. We have requested this donation be sent to the Idaho Education Association Children's Fund. The need is great to educate our children since they will be the workforce in the near future. Workforce development is what IAWP is all about.

We are all very proud to be members of the IAWP association, and we are also very proud to be employees of the Idaho Department of Labor.





## **IAWP Awards by Liz Ruiz**

Most people do like to be noticed, and they enjoy having their accomplishments and contributions recognized. Having someone, especially someone in a position of authority or a co-worker who truly understands the job at hand, notice and compliment one's performance enhances individual self-esteem and reinforces the desire to perform at a high standard. Adding an award as a future reminder of the accomplishment enhances the longevity of that positive feeling. Over a period of time, this process of acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors is a powerful means of developing the type of performance patterns that strongly contribute to organizational success. **YOU** have the opportunity to provide recognition through the IAWP awards. Here is a description of the awards:

**Citation Award** : To recognize outstanding contributions from individuals and/or groups in the private sector or from a non-governmental/non-profit organization to IAWP or to Workforce Development programs. Very important partners for Job Service are the business community and non-profit organizations. Without their support, it would be near impossible to serve the job-seeking customer. We rely upon their jobs, their training and their support of workforce programs to enable us to do our jobs effectively. The Citation Award is to recognize individuals and groups that have made an outstanding contribution to IAWP or Workforce Systems. (Individuals or groups of elected officials should be nominated through the Public Policy Award)

**Award of Merit**: To recognize an IAWP member and/or group for outstanding service or achievement in the workforce development field beyond normal job requirements. The Award of Merit is the highest honor IAWP bestows on a member. The award recognizes exceptional service or achievement in the field of workforce development or related programs based not only on job performance, but participation in professional, community and other organizations beyond normal job requirements and expectations.

**Specialized Customer Service Award**: To recognize individuals and/or groups for outstanding, innovative programs of awareness and furtherment of a specified segment of the workforce, including but not limited to Welfare-to-Work, People with Disabilities, UI/UC and youth programs. IAWP emphasizes service to special customers through many means. The association has a strong link with organizations serving people with disabilities, partnering with public assistance agencies to help welfare recipients enter the job market and job training providers serving disadvantaged and youth customers. This award is given annually to recognize outstanding assistance to these special population groups.

**Mary Upchurch Spirit of IAWP Award**: To recognize an IAWP member for outstanding contributions to the Idaho Chapter IAWP. Mary Upchurch was a member of IAWP for over 30 years. During that time she held many offices at the subchapter, State, District and International level. She had a passion for IAWP that was contagious to those around her. She was never shy of stating her opinions and considered IAWP her extended family. This award was established in 1990 to honor her and she was the first recipient. Mary passed away in November 1998, but her spirit will not be forgotten.

**Retiree of the Year Award**: To recognize a retired IAWP members' outstanding commitment to IAPES objectives following retirement. Retirees play a very important roll in the association. Having years of experience in Employment Security and Workforce Systems, retirees have been called upon for many things such as assisting with legislative issues important to our workforce system, to serve on important association committee's and return to the agencies they retired from to help out in an emergency. The purpose of the Retiree of the Year Award is to recognize outstanding accomplishments and commitment to IAWP of a retired IAWP member.

### **Promotions:**

**Debra A Taylor**  
UI Claims Investigator,  
UI Compliance Bureau

**Gabriela Santiago Castillo**  
Technical Records Specialist 2,  
UI Benefits Bureau

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**International Development Award:** To recognize an IAWP member or group for outstanding commitments and achievements in IAWP international development. Activities recognized could include hosting overseas members, conducting outreach to agencies in countries other than the US, establishing a "sister" program with agencies or chapters in other countries, establishing a pen-pal program, fundraising activities used to pay international memberships or any other activities that promote an exchange of ideas and information with other countries.

**W. Clyde Williams Membership Award:** To recognize an IAWP member for recruiting the most new Idaho Chapter members between March 1st and February 28th each year. Clyde Williams joined the National Reemployment Service (later to become the Idaho Department of Employment) on December 28, 1933 as Assistant Statistician. In the fall of 1937 he became local office manager at Twin Falls. During World War II he was transferred to the Central office where he served in a variety of capacities including Field Supervisor, Chief of Placement, USES Director and F & O Supervisor. He retired in 1964 and died in 1971. During his years at the National Reemployment Service / Department of Employment he was honored as the "Father of the Idaho Chapter" for his efforts in promoting membership in the association.

**Subchapter Activity Award:** To recognize a subchapter that had the most documented activities during the proceeding calendar year. Activities can include educational activities, social or sporting events and community service and other special projects. Activities at the subchapter level are the heart and soul of IAWP. The Subchapter Activity Award was initiated to recognize the subchapter who provided the most activities to its members during a calendar year. To encourage the sharing of information about subchapter activities, the activities must be documented in the ITEMS newsletter or announced in fliers, posters and/or electronic media to other members, to count towards this award.

**Art Rowe Service to Veterans Award:** To recognize an individual and/or a group for outstanding, innovative programs of awareness and furtherment of veterans' interests and rights in the workforce. This award is named after Arthur (Art) D. Rowe, a Local Veterans Employment Representative who worked in the Orofino local office. Art was known as a man who loved America's veterans and Idaho's beauty. Art died on June 17, 1998 in a tragic car accident while returning from an awards banquet where staff of the Orofino local office were honored for outstanding work.

**Gary Rahn Award:** To recognize an employee of the Idaho Department of Labor who best represents those unique and caring qualities, which we associate with Gary Rahn. Through exemplary one-on-one work with clients, the recipient must make a significant, positive difference in a client's life. The nominee should demonstrate a sense of humor, which facilitates positive changes, a non-judgmental approach to people, and a special insight into people and their needs. The Gary Rahn Award is named after a LVER who worked in the Coeur d'Alene Office and died 1987 at the age of 39. This award recognizes an employee who best represents those unique and caring qualities, which we associate with Gary.

**Unemployment Insurance Award:** The award was developed to recognize an outstanding, innovative unemployment program that features creativity, improved operational efficiency and improved customer service. (Can be individual and/or group nomination.) The program can be in any area of UI including, but not limited to, claims, tax, benefits, audit, quality control, etc. There are three criteria areas that the nominee should excel in:

A. Creativity/Innovation - The individual or group initiated a UI program idea or innovation that creatively solved a problem or challenge, or improved the state's UI system.

B. Improved Operational Efficiency - Performed outstanding work in improving the operational efficiency of the state's UI program. This could be in terms of improving Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals, reducing costs, improved use of technology, staff development, outstanding leadership/management, etc.

C. Improved Customer Service - The individual or group improved service delivery to UI customers through collaboration (with other units, agencies, employer/labor groups, private entities, etc.) and/or innovative use of technology or automation.

"If we are together,  
nothing is impossible. If we  
are divided, all will fail."

Winston Churchill

Nominees need not be an IAWP member if nominated by one, and each chapter may submit only one individual and one group nomination.

For assistance and standardization of award nominations please submit a nomination using the Award Nomination Form found on line at [www.iapes.org](http://www.iapes.org) or contact me at [liz.ruiz@cl.idaho.gov](mailto:liz.ruiz@cl.idaho.gov), and I will be more than happy to assist you. When submitting an award it must include: **1) Statement of Accomplishment** – This statement briefly describes the nominated individual's or group's accomplishment(s), the dates the accomplishment(s) occurred within the calendar year (January 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007), the manner in which the accomplishment(s) was achieved, and the results or benefits derived from the accomplishment. If the nominee is selected for an award, this statement will be used for various dissemination and shared-learning purposes. **2) Narrative** – This concise, precise, and descriptive narrative focuses on the details of the actual accomplishment and includes any necessary background information explaining why the accomplishment was exceptional to the association or agency. **3) Documentation** – The narrative is supported by documentation that relates directly to the accomplishment activities on which the nomination is based. The documentation may be articles, newspaper or other periodical clippings, endorsements, recommendations, testimonials, or original and/or digital photographs with a brief description of what each photograph is intended to show. The articles, newspaper and other periodical clippings must be identified by date and source - list by type and date, any published articles, books, research, as well as work products, audio-visual, or other materials representative of the contribution.

Please mail or e-mail all award nominations to Liz Ruiz, Awards Chairperson at 420 Falls Ave Twin Falls, Idaho 83301 or [liz.ruiz@cl.idaho.gov](mailto:liz.ruiz@cl.idaho.gov) by December 31, 2007.

**"The moment may be temporary, but the memory is forever."  
~Bud Meyer**

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### *International Development by Oscar Escobedo*

A short time ago I spoke with David L Washburn, Idaho IAWP President-Elect, and agreed to take on the challenge of being the Idaho Chapter of IAWP International Development Committee chairperson. This challenge is one that will allow me to learn from colleagues here in the US and our International counterparts on subjects concerning workforce development. I have to admit, it sounds like it will be a very exciting challenge and one that I believe that I am up for.

I would like to start by giving a quick introduction of myself. My name is Oscar Escobedo. I currently live in Buhl, Idaho and have lived in Idaho most of my life. I attended Boise State University where I graduated in 2004 with a BA in General Business Management and a BA in Business Management with a Human Resource option. I have been with Idaho Department of Labor for approximately 1 year and 9 months. I am currently working in the Magic Valley office in Twin Falls where I work with Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Employment Services. For the past seven years, my wife and I have hosted six exchange students from different parts of the world. We have hosted three students from Germany, one from Sweden, one from Ecuador and one from South Korea. This has given me an idea of how important it is to be understanding of other cultures and ideas that can bring countries together.

One aspect of International Development I would like to see is the expansion of the pen pal program. I believe the pen pal program would be very beneficial to all of us in that we would be able to share ideas and concerns that our colleagues and our International counterparts have. As David Washburn stated in the International Connections article, "Our ties to IAWP chapters in other nations broaden our horizons and give us access to more knowledge and more options. Our common goal of making lives better through workforce development provides us with many interesting programs, topics of discussion and ideas to share with each other." I hope that in the near future the pen pal program will become a huge success and that through this program we are able to recruit more IAWP members in many different countries. I am working with one of our former exchange students to



make contact with one of our counterparts in Emsdetten, Germany. Hopefully this will be an opportunity to learn new ideas and to recruit new members.

I hope that some of my experiences with International exchange students will be beneficial for this challenge I am facing. I look forward to working with all of you and look forward to any suggestions and ideas you may have. Please feel free to contact me at: (208) 735-2500 ext. 3405 or [oscar.escobedo@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:oscar.escobedo@labor.idaho.gov).

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***Veteran's Corner***  
***30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the DVOP***  
***by Cheryl Rose, IAWP Veteran Chairperson***

The Idaho Chapter of IAWP joined the nation in support of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DVOP when Chapter President, Linda Castaneda, signed a proclamation in October. Her signature supports the member's acknowledgement of the services provided by Idaho and the nation's veterans that have helped to inspire veteran services throughout the years.



The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) was implemented in 1977 as a national effort directed from the White House to address the high rate of unemployment among Vietnam-era veterans. The program began with the hiring of 2,000 disabled Vietnam-era veterans as DVOP Specialists who were assigned to the nation's 100 largest cities. The goal was to provide funding through state employment agencies to support staff positions to develop jobs and job training opportunities for disabled and other qualified veterans. Some of the opportunities the program offered, and continues to offer, include on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs in both the private sector and within Federal job training programs.

After thirty years, these workers continue to seek out veterans, wherever they might be, to help them secure employment, benefits and job training in gratitude for the services they have provided to our nation. Their services are very much in demand today in light of all of the veterans returning from conflicts that our nation is currently facing.

The Idaho Chapter of IAWP would like to recognize and commend the fabulous work that our DVOPs have done over the past thirty years.

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***Halloween in Magic Valley***  
***by Jan Roeser***



Halloween is highly anticipated at the Magic Valley local office. It could be due to the highly competitive pumpkin cook-off, or it could be due to the creativity that is unleashed and runs rampant for the pumpkin carving and costumes. IAWP was fortunate to have a benefactor by the name of Jami Whited who had contacts in the pumpkin patch. Jami managed to bring enough pumpkins to our office to decorate and to carve. There were almost 15 carved pumpkins entered in the contest this year and they were incredible. The photos really don't do justice to each pumpkin and giving only one prize was really difficult. The pumpkins were displayed at our front desk to make it more festive for our customers, and so they could join in the voting process. The winner was Teri Seal who carved a whopper of a hamburger, and a delicious looking one I might





add, out of a pumpkin. It was complete with pumpkin seeds on the bun replicating sesame seeds and all the trimmings. Good job, Teri! Honorable mention went to Betty Zwiener who created an evil cannibal pumpkin eating its young and a great poster "They eat their own...". Don Hansen, of Tech Help, also submitted an entry. Don specializes in processes and assisting companies in making their operations more efficient. Don's pumpkin display showed the raw good, a pumpkin, and then the finished products including: caramel corn in a carved pumpkin, a pumpkin desert and roasted pumpkins seeds. The display would not have been complete without Don's precise labeling. There were beautiful pumpkins and silly pumpkins—all in all it was a great time and everyone participated by carving, viewing or voting! The winner received a \$25 gift certificate to Tomatoes Restaurant. Check out the photos—which would you have voted for???

Trivia: On December 14, 2000, Steve carved a 27.5 pound pumpkin (displayed right) in a record 1:14.8 minutes, shaving 19 seconds off the old record held by Jerry Ayers of Baltimore, Ohio.

Almost as good as ours!!!



### *Halloween in Mini-Cassia by Linda Castaneda*



The winners in Mini-Cassia for the cooking contest and the pumpkin carving contest were as follows:

Cooking contest - 1<sup>st</sup> place-Leslie Orthman - \$25 gift certificate (She submitted a wonderful pumpkin dip.)

Pumpkin Carving Contest 1<sup>st</sup> place-Jennifer Souza-the most intricate - \$25 gift certificate.

Two tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place -Maggie Holm-Batman pumpkin and Lisa Michalek (the large pumpkin with "things" coming out of its mouth. They each received one ticket to the buffet at Guadalajara, which were donated to us after we purchased the two 1<sup>st</sup> prize gift certificates.

As you can see, we had fun dressing up also. Brent Tolman, was the big guy, Eric Gochner was the monster, Maggie Holm was superwoman, John Paskett, was the monster in the yellow costume, Leslie Orthman was Sponge Bob and me, I was just crazy.



Who are these hot chicks???

Please submit your article(s) for publication in  
the next issue of ITEMS by  
December 7, 2007

Please send to  
[chris.orders@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:chris.orders@labor.idaho.gov)

ITEMS Editor – Chris Orders

***BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS, WHAT YA GONNA DO WHEN THEY COME FOR YOU?????***  
***BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS!***  
***by Linda Castaneda***



On Tuesday, October 30, 2007, Minidoka County Sheriff Kevin Halverson made a presentation to a group of 22 people. The meeting was from 12:00-1:00 during the lunch hour. His presentation was on DRUGS. One thing that sticks in my mind vividly is that he said NEVER try to resolve the issue yourself when a meth user becomes unruly. He said to ALWAYS contact law enforcement during that type of situation. Sometimes we actually try to calm people down if they are a little unruly, so this was something I remembered. He spoke on the different types of drugs such as Depressants, Stimulants, Hallucinogens PCP, Narcotic Analgesics, Inhalants, and Cannabis. He provided information to the

group showing the duration of effects, usual methods of administration and overdose signs. It was a very educational-packed lunch hour, and everyone I spoke with said they really enjoyed it but wished it was a little longer. The Sheriff said meth is one of the most prevalent drugs in this area and also one of the most dangerous. We were very pleased and appreciative that eight of the people attending were from the Twin Falls Idaho Department of Labor. They took the time out of their busy day to take advantage of a great educational activity provided for us at no charge. Sheriff Halverson showed a PowerPoint presentation on the before and after effects of the use of meth and gave the group ideas on general things to look for. He cautioned us to remember there is a small percentage of people who twitch or shake or have red eyes due to allergies. We should NOT assume they are taking drugs. He said when several of the factors come in to play, we should take notice.



Those who missed the presentation would have really enjoyed it. The next IAWP educational meeting will be held in the Magic Valley office.

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***Retiree Corner –  
No Idle Hands Here!***

***David Washburn***

I have been keeping very busy since my retirement from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor on 12/15/06. The list of things to get accomplished was very large to start with but is getting smaller each week. I have been able to visit my children and grandchildren on several occasions and was able to take my first cruise on the Caribbean last February.

I have been dedicating many hours of my time working on various IAWP projects and committees. First of all it was the 2007 IAWP International Educational Conference held in Boise in June, and since that time, I have been very involved in IAWP as the IAWP International Development Committee Chairperson. This IAWP leadership appointment will go through June 2008. I attended the IAWP International Board of Directors meeting the first week of October in Richmond, Virginia. I combined this trip with a two-day visit to Washington, DC where I visited with diplomats from 8 different Embassies to discuss Workforce Development, IAWP and promote International involvement in IAWP. This was a very interesting and enjoyable experience for me and provided me with the opportunity to meet new people from around the world and establish new International friendships. The Embassy visits created new interest in IAWP from some new countries and resulted in 9 new IAWP members from around the world.

I am currently the Idaho IAWP Chapter President Elect and am in continuous communication with the other Idaho IAWP Board of Directors to provide productive leadership for the Idaho Chapter. For the past seven months, I have also been working part-time as an electronics assembler for a small company that makes

electronic emergency medical equipment that is marketed and sold around the world. This is something new for me and has provided me with new skills development opportunities.

The holiday seasons ahead will provide additional opportunities to be with family members and share the many blessings of life - one of the blessings being the arrival of my sixth grandchild in April 2008.

### ***Chuck Reynolds***

I am serving my second term as sheriff of Shoshone County. My health seems to be good and I am enjoying life. No complaints.....

### ***Larry Ludwig***

Well, Larry Ludwig is still at it... I teach English as a Second Language once a week at local community college, volunteer as a canoe-sweep and archival curator with the National Park Service at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, and am super active in Washington State Democratic Party (State Committeeman for my County and Secretary of the Statewide Agriculture and Rural Caucus...we just put on an all day conference on immigration's impact on Washington State Farmers and Farmworkers). I am IAWP-wise and still in there working to reactivate the Turks and Caicos Islands (the new head of that nation's civil service is the new TCI Chapter President) and Canada (Jan Pugsley of Ontario is moving full steam ahead to get Ontario Province Chapter back into the IAWP fold) Chapters, and assisting the Mexico IAWP "Calafia" Baja California Chapter. We - myself, Mario Posada and four others of the San Diego "Puerto del Sol" California SubChapter (Jan Cedona, Annie Toamilo, Joyce Reese, Veronica Martel-Rodriguez) along with Rocio Lopes, California IAWP International Development Chair, met with Lic. Miguel Valenzuela, current Chapter President, and the new Baja Chapter President Hector Molina on October 1 in Chula Vista, California (usually we Americanos would go to their office in Mexicali). We discussed possible "hands across the border" programs and projects,--both IAWP and workforce agencies and increased networking between Mexican and American workforce professionals. One interesting item is to put links on each other's agencies so workers in USA wanting work in Mexico can find it on the California EDD website and vice versa for Mexicans coming to work in the USA. Mexico, for instance, is doing a major big-time recruiting effort for sailors to join the Mexican Navy and wants USA expertise on recruiting efforts, which just may be of interest to many Mexican workers now in the USA. Bottom Line, the Life of the Retiree is definitely NOT dull. Take Care...Larry Ludwig



### ***Thanksgiving Traditional Celebrations***

On Thanksgiving, families and friends gather for a reunion, a day of thanks, and a festive meal. Some attend a religious service on the eve or day of Thanksgiving. In giving thanks, people are grateful for a wide variety of blessings in their lives and for events in which they felt God played a role in helping them. They appreciate the bountiful food of the harvest season, share food with guests, and donate food.

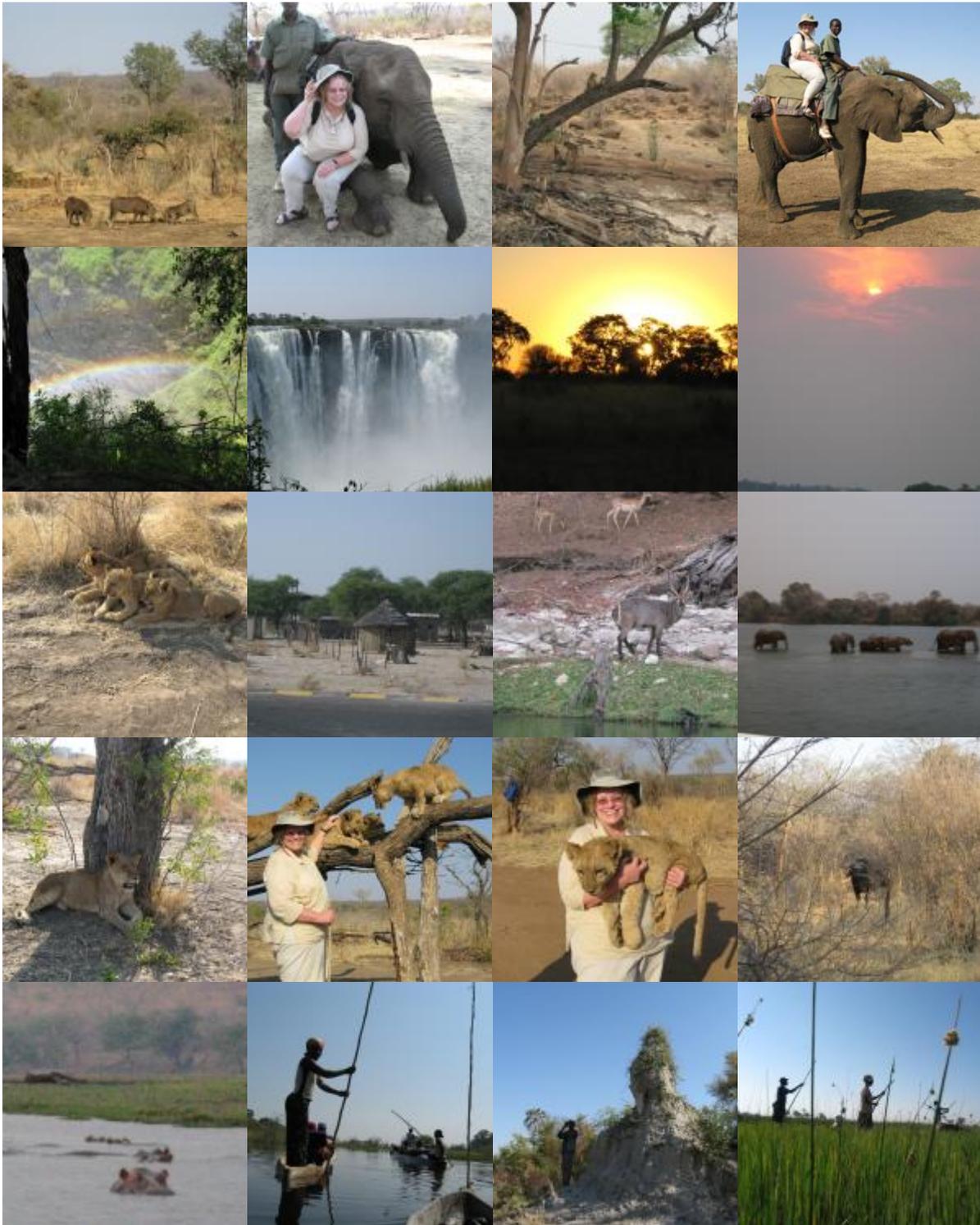
The Thanksgiving dinner is usually served during the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day. Often guests bring food or help cook. In keeping with the holiday theme of giving thanks, people talk about what they are thankful for or tell about experiences during the past year which have caused them to feel grateful.

In the United States, certain foods are traditionally served. First and foremost, turkey is usually the featured item (so much so that Thanksgiving is sometimes referred to as "Turkey Day"). Stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn (maize), other fall vegetables, and pumpkin pie are commonly associated with Thanksgiving dinner. All these primary dishes are actually native to the Americas or were introduced as a new food source to the Europeans when they arrived.

On Thanksgiving Day, families and friends usually gather for a large meal or dinner with the result being that the Thanksgiving holiday weekend is one of the busiest travel periods of the year.

U.S. tradition compares the holiday with a meal held in 1621 by the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This element continues in modern times with the Thanksgiving dinner. Some of the details of the American Thanksgiving story are myths that developed in the 1890s and early 1900s as part of the effort to forge a common national identity in the aftermath of the Civil War and in the melting pot of new immigrants.

*"Nona of the Jungle"  
Pictures Courtesy of Nona Rambo  
African Safari*



Thanks, Nora, for sharing a part of your adventure with us!

See next month's issue of ITEMS for more of "On Safari."

(The pictures are hyperlinked to a website with comments for the pictures. Check it out!)

## **Legislative Report: An Easy Way to Inform Your World by Gordon Graff**

Looking for good information about the complex public issues affecting your life? *Public Agenda Online* is a free public information service provided by the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, Public Agenda. The Web site at <http://www.publicagenda.org/> says its two-fold mission is to help:

- American leaders better understand the public's point of view.
- Citizens know more about critical policy issues so they can make thoughtful, informed decisions.

A menu on the left-hand side of the homepage links to some great resources. Clicking a topic (for example, Economy or Immigration) on the "Issue Guides" link takes you to a discussion area with each issue divided into two sections: Understanding the Issue (facts, trends and information) and Public Opinion (data on how the public defines the issue as well as cautionary notes where survey findings may be misleading). A further link to "Discussion Guides" pulls up three position statements with pros and cons to each approach. These can really give your mind a good workout as you consider the effects on your own lifestyle.

Other menu options link to newsletters and research studies for more in-depth analysis. Tabs across the top of the page access some of the same resources but also current news items and resources for more active involvement in forming public policy. The "Public Engagement" and "About Polling" areas are especially useful - from offering strategies to help promote public dialogue to advice from the experts on how to examine public opinion surveys.

*Public Agenda Online* is an easy-to-understand site with a good depth of resources. Both active public policy wonks and the average concerned citizen can find a wealth of information here.

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### **Cognitive Fitness by Roderick Gilkey and Clint Kilts This article is from the Harvard Business Review Submitted by Sue Polk**



New research in neuroscience shows how to stay sharp by exercising your brain.

*Roderick Gilkey* is an associate professor of organization and management at the Goizueta Business School at Emory University in Atlanta and an associate professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Emory University School of Medicine. *Clint Kilts* is the Dr. Paul Janssen Professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences.

Winston Churchill was outspoken on the sacred rites of smoking cigars and drinking alcohol before, after, and during meals—and in the intervals in between. But he was also exceptionally active mentally. As historians have duly noted, Churchill went on to live until 90. That speaks volumes for the information that is now coming to light about how the brain can affect the body.

Of course, few executives would be willing to follow Churchill's example in taking such poor care of their physical health. As life expectancy continues to rise, people are doing more and more to ensure that their lives, if long, are going to be healthy. The American Heart Association now recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. Not surprisingly, most large companies offer health club memberships as a perk; many provide gyms on-site. Find yourself on the road, and you're almost guaranteed to have a fitness center in your hotel. You may even have to get in line to use the equipment.

Until recently, however, there seemed to be no guidelines for active efforts you could make to stay *mentally* healthy. There were no brain exercises—no mental push-ups—you could do to stave off the loss of memory

and analytic acuity that comes as you grow older. In the worst-case scenario, you could end up with Alzheimer's disease, for which there are not proven treatments.

But a concentrated commitment of resources by the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Library of Congress during the 1990s—which the White House proclaimed the “decade of the brain” to heighten public awareness of the need for neuroscience research—yielded a broad front of research and training that has upended some deeply held beliefs about the brain. One such belief is that the brain necessarily diminishes with age. It turns out that neurons, the basic cells that allow information transfer to support the brain's computing power, do *not* have to die off as we get older. In fact, a number of regions of the brain important to functions such as motor behavior and memory can actually expand their complement of neurons as we age. This process, called neurogenesis, used to be unthinkable in mainstream neuroscience.

**What does all this have to do with you?** The process of neurogenesis is profoundly affected by the way you live your life. The brain's anatomy, neural networks, and cognitive abilities can all be strengthened and improved through your experiences and interactions with your environment. The health of your brain isn't just the product of negative and positive childhood experiences and genetic inheritance; it reflects your adult choices and experiences as well. That's extremely good news. Sigmund Freud and those who followed him both in the neurological sciences and in the psychoanalytic tradition thought for years that brain development ceased in childhood or early adolescence. Although these periods do hold the greatest potential for neural development, we now know there is a regimen you can follow to retain and even build mental capacity.

Brain-imaging studies indicate, for example, that acquired expertise in areas as diverse as playing a cello, juggling, speaking a foreign language, and driving a taxicab expands and makes more communicative the neural systems in the parts of the brain responsible for motor control and spatial navigation. In other words, you can make physical changes in your brain by learning new skills. You can even make changes in how your brain functions by exercising conscious will. In a recent experiment using real-time brain imaging, scientists demonstrated that individuals learned to mitigate the sensation of pain by consciously controlling the observable activity of the rostral anterior cingulate cortex, an area of the brain involved in pain processing. In theory, therefore, it's possible for people to alleviate pain through neurofeedback, without drugs.

These advances in neuroscience suggest that there is no reason why your brain at 60 can't be as competent as it was at 25. That would not have been news to thinkers such as Socrates, Copernicus, and Galileo, who were all still at the peak of their intellectual powers in their sixties and seventies. Nor would it surprise business leaders such as Alan Greenspan, Warren Buffett, and Sumner Redstone. These icons and others like them have intuitively understood that the brain's alertness is the result of what we call cognitive fitness—a state of optimized ability to reason, remember, learn, plan, and adapt that is enhanced by certain attitudes, lifestyle choices, and exercises. The more cognitively fit you are, the better you will be able to make decisions, solve problems, and deal with stress and change. Cognitive fitness will allow you to be more open to new ideas and alternative perspectives. It will give you the capacity to change your behaviors and forecast their outcomes in order to realize your goals. You can become the kind of person your company values most. Perhaps more important, you can delay senescence for years and even enjoy a second career.

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it. Life is a beauty, admire it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it. Life is a game, play it. Life is a promise, fulfill it. Life is sorrow, overcome it. Life is a song, sing it. Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it. Life is an adventure, dare it. Life is luck, make it. Life is life, fight for it!  
- Mother Teresa

### Exercising Your Brain: A Personal Program

Because the brain is an interactive system, any activities that stimulate one part of it can easily stimulate other parts. Therefore, our cognitive fitness categories need to be understood as approximations—this is particularly the case with hemispherically focused activity. Although some stimuli may initially create greater activations in the right hemisphere, both hemispheres will ultimately be involved in the process of mastering new challenges. While there is much to learn about the intricacies of cognitive enhancement, we believe that the following exercises are a good selection.

### Manage by walking about.

Leave the executive dining room and drop by the company cafeteria, production floor, or loading docks. This could put you in unfamiliar territory, which is a good thing for broadening your perspective. What's more, the very act of walking and moving about invigorates your brain. That's why when you have a mental block on some problem you are solving, getting up and changing your environment can lead to an "aha" moment.



### Read funny books.

Humor promotes insight and enhances our health—even the immune system seems to love a good joke, as it is strengthened by the use of humor and the perspective it offers.

### Play games.

Activities like bridge, chess, sudoku, and the *New York Times* crossword puzzle all provide good neural workouts. There are ever more possibilities online, too, with the growing popularity of role-playing games. Try new games that challenge your left hemisphere, such as pool.

### Act out.

At its best, play is discovery—and what you discover through improvisation is your inner actor, who can try on many roles. (Believe it or not, a number of outstanding comedians started their careers as accountants.) You will be surprised to see that such play expands your behavioral repertoire—your brain has immense stored potential for enhancing your personality and leadership capacities. You can even experiment in meetings. Trying out different ways of interacting with colleagues, for example, increases cognitive fitness.

### Find what you're not learning.

If you're like most executives, you tend to ask very similar questions day to day in your professional and personal lives. So listen to yourself and figure out what you don't seek. Asking a promising young subordinate what she thinks is a good place to start. Or vary your reading list. If you normally throw yourself into history and biography, try literary fiction; if it's mostly thrillers, try science.

### Get the most out of business trips.

Travel provides excellent opportunities for jolting your brain. Your time investment need not be too intensive. Visit a museum; read a novel set in the city you are visiting; devote a couple of hours to talking with locals around town. These activities not only increase your cultural IQ—they are also a good form of cognitive exercise.

### Take notes—and then go back and read them.

One of the world's greatest entrepreneurs, Richard Branson, carries a bound book with blank pages wherever he goes. Every time he sees or hears something interesting and new, he jots it down. He says that many of these ideas have become new businesses.

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### Try new Technologies.

Playing with that new touch screen and downloading that goofy video from YouTube on your iGadget to display on your megascreen TV activates innumerable brain channels linking your auditory, visual, and tactile networks with your limbic system and your prefrontal cortex. Talking about it and sharing your emotional energy with your friends will extend the activity throughout the brain. Even your brain stem, which keeps you wakeful and engaged, will get a workout.

### Learn a new language or instrument.

Studying a new language puts you at the pinnacle of mental athleticism. Learning a musical instrument or playing that old clarinet in the closet gives your brain a big boost too. Take lessons.

### Exercise, exercise, exercise.

Your brain is not an island—it is part of a system that benefits from cardiovascular exercise, good diet, and proper sleep habits. One of the most consistently identified defenses against developing Alzheimer's disease is a good exercise regimen. Very specific beneficial biochemical changes, such as increases in endorphins and cortisol, result from both cardiovascular and strength training. Those benefits literally flow through your blood vessels and reach your muscles, your joints, your bones, and yes, your brain.

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### *More Halloween by Rita Hale*

The Meridian, Payette, and Canyon county offices had costume contests sponsored by the IAWP Treasure Valley Sub chapter.

We had a number of competitors for each office.

The winners for the Meridian office were Mike LeDuc 1<sup>st</sup>, Jude Jensen 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Cassandra Swanson 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The winners for the Payette office were Vickie Fuller 1<sup>st</sup>, Carol Campbell 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Virginia Rocha 3<sup>rd</sup>.



The winners for the Canyon County office were Linda Garman and Lu Lineberry 1<sup>st</sup>, Noelia Luna 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Leyla Rosillo 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Grand prize winners were Linda Garman and Lu Lineberry.





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**International Association of Workforce Professionals  
Idaho State Chapter**

**WHEREAS**, President Carter, following his swearing-in ceremony in 1977, put among his highest priorities the plight of hundreds of thousands of unemployed Disabled and Vietnam-Era veterans across the country, he implemented the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). The program hired 2000 Disabled Vietnam-Era Veterans and placed them in one hundred major cities across the country, as one of his initiatives to kick start the economy and to bring Disabled and Vietnam-Era Veterans back into the mainstream of the labor market; and

**WHEREAS**, the DVOP has continued to change over the past thirty years, with the focus still on Disabled Veterans with significant barriers to employment. In the 1990's the program helped to place thousands of veterans in jobs after the Desert Storm military downsizing; today, in 2007 the DVOP's are again helping our returning disabled, combat injured, and war time veterans to secure jobs and return to their normal lives; and

**WHEREAS**, 2007 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the DVOP; a program that has touched the lives of thousands of veterans across the country and has become an intricate part of the community by working with other veteran service providers to secure veteran benefits, training, and employment, saving tax payers millions of dollars each year, thus making a difference to veterans, their families, and the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Idaho State Chapter of the International Association of Workforce Professionals, and all its members, do recognize and support the efforts of the DVOP program and the staff during this 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. This program has had a tremendous impact on the lives of disabled veterans and their families across the country since 1977.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Linda Castaneda, Idaho State Chapter President, do hereby recognize and support November 2007, as

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program

I urge all members of the Idaho State Chapter and employees of the Idaho Department of Labor to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 31<sup>st</sup> day of October, 2007

*Linda Castaneda*