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Excellence is its own reward

Business Office, Collections, Fleet in the spotlight at ERP celebration

By Donna Micklus and John McKay

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

Aristotle said those words over two thousand years ago, but their meaning is timeless.

Employee excellence took center stage once again as ERP winners and colleagues gathered on January 30 at the Solomon Welles House in Old Wethersfield to celebrate their special achievements.

“These are rough times, but it’s still important to have these events, and it’s important that you take good memories away with you,” said ERP Chair Cheryl Sawina.

Following a hearty buffet luncheon befitting a winter’s day, Sawina opened the award ceremony and made the presentations.

The *Team Excellence Award* was presented to the Legal Representatives Team from FSC/Collections: Donna Purcell, Charlene Lindee, Kevin Nodwell, Catherine Butterworth, Susan Lopes and Tanya Grant.

“This group handles the probate matters, works to close estates and has to deal with a lot of unpleasant situations. They carry large caseloads, have to know legal statutes, and serve as resources for



ERP winners join Commissioner Waters at the January 30 awards presentation: LtoR: Charlene Lindee, Tanya Grant, Kevin Nodwell, Catherine Butterworth, Donna Purcell, Diane Preble, Jon Hykes, and Susan Lopes.

information requested by other agencies, hospitals, and courts,” explained Sawina.

The award for *Remarkable Innovation* went to Jon Hykes of Fleet Operations.

“Jon is extremely conversant in a number of different areas above and beyond his chosen field of automotive repair. Through the years, when Fleet has had issues from problem vehicles to MIS glitches, Jon has always taken a special interest in the situation and has always relayed his knowledge to help find a logical fix,” Sawina said.

The *Going the Extra Mile* was awarded to Diane Preble in FSC/ Business Office.

“Diane has been instrumental in working with the SEBAC Unit to

Stepping Up To The Plate

By John McKay

Norwich school gets a "backup" system

In early November a fire destroyed the Teachers' Memorial Middle School library in Norwich. The fire burned 10,000 books, and ruined the library's computers and other equipment.

What good could possibly come from this?

Property Management's Peter Varhol knew there had to be some way to help.

"Simply through my experiences with Property Management and the Property Distribution Center, I thought there might be a way to help out this school," said Varhol.

Varhol got the go-ahead from Commissioner Barbara Waters and quickly began networking between

the DAS Property Distribution Center and DAS' MIS office.

Through their combined efforts, Varhol was able to find 25 CPU's and 16 computer monitors to donate to the middle school.

Robert Hartz, the Manager of Information Services for Norwich Public Schools, was thrilled with the donation.

"This allows us a number of opportunities with our MIS system," said Hartz. "We can phase out some of our older computers, create a technology lab in the school and simply have some added flexibility that will help get us through this rough spot."

"I just knew there was something we could do," said Varhol. "We do a lot of good work here in the state. This is one of those stories."

DAS Donation Staves Off Winter's Chill

During an afternoon service at the Holy Trinity Church in Hartford, Father Jacobs said he was looking for clothing donations for several area shelters.

Attendee Reuben Lusack got an idea. "I consulted with Procurement Director Jim Passier and we agreed there was something we could do to help."



Commissioner Waters with Father Jacobs of the Holy Trinity Church in Hartford as he accepted the donation of clothes for local shelters.

Over the past year, Procurement had collected an enormous amount of clothes that vendors submitted as examples of the products they supply – coats, shirts, shoes, boots, etc.

"It just seemed like there had to be something we could use these extra clothes for," said Lusack. He, along with the rest of Procurement, organized the donation.

"Through Procurement's hard work and dedication we were able to give over 40 coats to the Open Hearth shelter, clothes and boots to the Immaculate Conception shelter, food to the Elizabeth House and South Park Inn, plus financial support as well," said Father Jacobs, the guest of honor at the Procurement staff meeting.

"It just goes to show you what happens when people take a little time out of their busy lives to help others," said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

"Procurement is very busy with state contracts, Set-aside bids and all sorts of work, but they were able to take a few minutes and help their community. I'm very proud of their actions, but not surprised by their caring and generosity," Waters added.

DAS Times

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Contributions are welcome but may be
edited for space and clarity.

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The Governor's Southwest Office Director Frederick K. Biebel contacted Commissioner Barbara Waters expressing his "sincere thanks and appreciation to **Suzanne Liquerman** and **Kathleen Sullivan** for the amount of work that was done in organizing a very successful CTBLN Job Fair and banquet in Bridgeport on October 5. Also, thank you to **Phil Karas** for your participation and contribution toward making this such a successful event."

Communications Manager Pat Wynn from the State of Idaho's Department of Administration applauded Communications Director **Donna Micklus** stating, "I am so impressed with your DAS customer service campaign...love your new tagline! (*With us you're in business*). I love it so much that I'm wondering if Idaho can utilize it as a one-time theme for our annual report. I also patterned our department's first-ever Communication Plan after the one you so professionally prepared. Thanks for considering our request."

Dawn Uraco from the Department of Public Safety commended **Jim Gotta** and **Ruthie Hatten** for "moving a standard transaction along so quickly. Ruthie is great in getting them to us via fax. Thank you!"

Joann McAllister thanked **Mary Gugliemino** and **Dave Lynn** for researching the accuracy of her prior longevity payments and credit. "I was overwhelmed to find your spreadsheet and letter waiting for me when I returned to DAS! This agency and its staff are a true credit to state service. Thank you again."

Steve Dygus praised **Art Paulette** and **Patty Gallucci** for the "excellent printing service you provided for my national Fleet conference. Patty's ideas for sprucing up and editing the originals were terrific and well received by all of our attendees. Never once did you guys

flinch as our association's executive director kept sending items to be printed and the deadline closed in. Our association's executive board had numerous compliments for the quality and timeliness of your services. Thanks again!"

Roy Dion applauded **Fleet Operations** and **Document Management Services** for hosting the 26th Annual Conference for the National State Publishing Association and the 2002 Conference and Trade Show for the National Conference of State Fleet Administrators. "I want to express my appreciation to all who have poured their hearts and souls into these efforts. From my discussions with attendees, it is evident that your hard work was greatly appreciated. It made me truly proud to have such quality members on our team."

Kudos from Isabelle McKinney to the **Diversity Council Members, Cheryl Drolet, Chris Smith, and Linda Hubeny** for "all of your hard work and determination in getting the Diversity Calendar up and running. It is greatly appreciated. And thank you so much, **Commissioner Waters**, for sharing this great idea with the Council."

Anthony Ferreira and Reuben Jonathan-Lusack applauded **Isabelle McKinney** for her "dedication and commitment to the Diversity Council and for getting the Diversity Calendar up and running...very well-done, keep up the splendid work!"

Mark Carroza extended his thanks to **Maureen Friedman,**

Lydia Rosario, Rob Zalucki, Fred Ondevilla, and Alphonso Deramus for "dropping what they were doing to help me with an unexpected large number of vendors at the environmental emergency pre-bid meeting."

Hats Off

By Cindy Rusczyk

Roy Dion praised **Barbara Moser** for providing the Regional Council of Governments for Central Naugatuck with the SpaceFitters contract information for electronics recycling. "This organization is a regional planning agency whose board is made up of the chief elected officials of the 13 member municipalities. Hopefully, we can use it to open other doors as well. Thank you for being such an effective EPP advocate on behalf of DAS."

Director John Wiltsie from the Office of Emergency Management commended **Carol Wilson** and the **Procurement Staff** "for their tremendous help with so many of our important projects... especially the terrorism equipment purchases for the towns and the potassium iodide pills around Millstone. We could not do it without her...and we've had some real successes. She is a peach...thanks so much for your help!"

Chris Mancini from Avon Schools applauded **Yvonne Groves, Tony Ferreira, and Mike Owsianko** for "all of the

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ERP, continued from page 1

help facilitate payment to many institutions providing training to our SEBAC clients. She has worked very closely with the unit to revamp processes, explain Business Office procedures and has gone outside of her normal scope of responsibility in time and effort to increase efficiency in the SEBAC Unit,” Sawina said.

“These are my favorite events,” said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters who was on hand to add her personal congratulations.

“And we all need some good news these days,” she added as she paid special tribute not only to the ERP winners but also to those committee members whose terms were expiring: Arlene Watson, Deanna Howard, Deb Hearl, Don Casella, Donna Camillone, Ed Kane, Eva Williams, Linda Shackett-Blue, Nancy Jones, Natalie Shipman, and Tracie Knapsack. **DAS**



Fleet’s Jon Hykes takes home the Remarkable Innovation Award



Above: Going the Extra Mile was awarded to FSC’s Diane Preble, a two-time ERP winner

Below: The Team Excellence honors go to the FSC/ Collections Legal Representatives: L to R: Donna Purcell, Catherine Butterworth, Susan Lopes, Kevin Nodwell, Charlene Lindee and Tanya Grant



Arlene Watson: a healthy balance

By Nina Ritson

Life is about recovery and balance at the Workers' Compensation Unit.

But for Arlene Watson, balance is reflected in her dedication to diet and exercise, her insatiable appetite for great style, and her devotion to her son, Dean.

"They nicknamed me 'The Princess' here at Workers' Comp, and I work with four grumpy old men," Arlene laughed as she spoke warmly about her coworkers.

A twelve-year state employee, Watson came to DAS from the Treasurer's office a couple years ago. Her position as executive assistant/office manager to the Treasurer required great organizational skills and a knack for presentation.

At DAS, she now reports to Joe Prevuznak, whom she describes as "an absolute sweetheart to work

Even as a young girl in Trinidad and Tobago, she remembers prioritizing exercise through high school sports, most notably basketball and an English sport called *netball*.

This love intensified after Dean was born. Now, she faithfully works out at least four days per week.

Watson speaks up, "I even taught the kickboxing class here at DAS for six weeks."

For Watson, "feeling good is looking good, and looking good is about yourself and what surrounds you."

describes her bedroom makeover in all white – from fabric and linen choices to window treatments and accessories.

"I look forward to taking many more classes in interior design, this is my true passion!"

Looking good should not go unrewarded. For Watson, travel is the best reward.

When not ruling the front office of WC, our 'Princess' enjoys reigning over the warm sands of Virginia Beach, sight-

seeing in Washington, D.C. or the Caribana Festival of Toronto, Canada.

Although she's never been to London, she travels *with* London.

"He is my best friend, the one who gives me the inspiration to fulfill my dreams," said Watson who credits her boyfriend for being her greatest motivator.

"My brother works for the airlines, too, so..." her eyes light up, "I am headed to the Bahamas for a weekend

and off to Orlando, Florida later this spring."

As the temperatures now hover around the six degree mark on this cold January day, who could think of anything more balancing?



Arlene Watson

Up Close

for (not grumpy at all). He is fair, honest and straightforward!"

Watson, a single mom, lives with her son, Dean, who she proclaims with pride, "is in the accelerated program at school. He excels in English, math and music and is reading at a fifth-grade level at the age of seven!"

The youngest of eight children, Watson moved to Connecticut with her mom in 1985 from the West Indies.

development Institute, she has recently been focusing her energies on interior decorating.

She piloted her talents on her sister's home, and with the help of her friends at Calico Corners (a high-end upholstery fabric store), is now renovating her own home. Watson's face glows when she

For Watson, "feeling good is looking good, and looking good is about yourself and what surrounds you."

and off to Orlando, Florida later this spring."

Anderson Abroad Again

By Nina Ritson

A recent teaching vacation in Athens turned into a harrowing current events lesson for Dr. Martin Anderson.

An adjunct professor at the University of New Haven (UNH) Anderson returned to Greece in November to teach his class “Psychological Testing in Industry” in Athens. The 15 students in the class were working towards a Master’s Degree, and hoping to go through convocation in New Haven in June 2003.

“For many, this would be their first trip to the United States, and I was already planning the graduation party,” Anderson said.

The class met over the weekends of November 8-10 and 15-17, allowing Anderson the opportunity to travel the countryside from Monday through Thursday.

With temperatures in the mid to high 60’s, steel blue skies, and hillsides carpeted with olive gardens and ancient ruins –he was not about to waste a Kodak minute.

But his assignment in paradise was darkened by political storm clouds.

“Near the end of my stay, I learned that November 17 is a huge day of protest in Athens. It’s a twenty-nine year tradition that dates back to 1973, when students protesting the military regime took over the University of Athens in a four-day siege,” he explained.

Excerpting from Greek history, Anderson said, “that 1973 protest became violent; many people were injured and within six months the military government fell to a democratic leadership.”

“Since then,” he continued, “each year on November 17 the streets become filled with ‘*issue du jour*’ activists, anarchists and protesters.”

This year was no exception, but this time the issue was anti-American.

“It seems the post 9-11 sentiment and goodwill towards the U.S. has faded in the face of many Europeans,” Anderson said.

Athenians oppose the U.S. threat of war against Saddam Hussein, and are feeling destabilized and fearful of the consequences.

On that memorable weekend, Anderson experienced, first-hand, tens of thousands of demonstrators parading the streets that surrounded his hotel.

“It was a bit alarming,” he related. “Friday afternoon I noticed police appearing on the street corners, bands were playing, and younger students rallied outside.

“By Sunday at 3:00 p.m., all the streets of Athens were shut down, with no bus or train service. An immense mob of protesters swarmed by the hotel, turned by the palace, and headed toward the American embassy. They began throwing molotov cocktails and burning our president in effigy. Bus shelters were on fire and many windows were smashed by thrown bricks.”

Anderson said he was touched by the compassion of the hotel staff as they advised him to stay indoors and looked out for his safety.



Above: Dr. Martin Anderson with his students in their Athens classroom. Left: The pastoral Greek countryside is far different than the turmoil of protesting in the streets of Athens (below).



Oddly enough, as tumultuous as the disturbance was, it all came to an end about 10 p.m. that evening, and by Monday morning people returned to their daily routines as if nothing had happened.

“Athenians say they are not very proud of this, but nonetheless it happens each year and life goes on,” he reflected.

As for his possible return to Greece, Anderson would only say that he was very happy to be on a plane headed home the Monday after – airport delays, customs, jetlag and all.

DAS' Food Distribution Program's (FDP) Project 2002 lends a whole new meaning to the term "fast food!"

"It used to take six months of aggravating, cumbersome letters of collection mailed back and forth, and still some accounts went unpaid, said Doris Vieira.

But since DAS partnered with the State Department of Education (SDE) to streamline the Fed Foods invoicing, things have really changed.

"Now, any discrepancies are resolved expeditiously," Vieira said.

The new Paperless Billing System, piloted in July 2001, reduced the process from eight lengthy steps to four, saving money and delivering services better, cheaper and quicker to 234 schools in Connecticut. Fully implemented one year later, customers can now view their billing data online.

Resembling a payroll deduction, the amount is automatically withdrawn semiannually from the lunch reimbursement checks sent to the school system from the SDE.

What does this mean for DAS – 100% payment!

Commissioner Waters was ecstatic.

"This is fantastic! In 2000, FDP reported revenues of \$2 million for that school year. Of that, some \$500,000 went uncollected due to disputed invoices or sluggish administrative practices. Today, they boast 100% accounts receivable!" Waters said.

According to Vieira, transitioning to the new system was no small task.

"It took an enormous effort to educate and market to doubting purchasing staff to convince them that they would save time AND

money," Vieira said.

From the beginning Vieira said, reluctance was evident - only eight out of 234 schools participated in the pilot. Nevertheless, the project was customer driven – the customer actually helped design the billing screen with the help of the DAS MIS team. "Now every school in Connecticut is on board," Vieira said happily.

In addition to revolutionizing the billing process, DAS partnered with USDA to enable schools to order commodities online.

"Prior to this, the customer would submit orders by mail or fax to DAS. That frequently resulted in missed deadlines, data-entry errors, and other mail-related problems," explained Vieira.

Now, she said, customers simply enter their order electronically and the information is submitted directly to the vendor who delivers the following month.

In its test run, the new program did encounter some roadblocks; some customers had never placed an order electronically and many did not have online access at all.

"We quickly remedied that by teaming up with the Property Distribution Center and the MIS group. Together, we were able to furnish these schools with refurbished computers at a mere cost of \$50, and then we followed through with training and tech-support on the phone or at the site," Vieira said.

Not only are customers happier, but FDP's administrative fees have been reduced 15 percent.

Vieira credits the success to customer involvement, both in design and implementing phases of the new program, and "a wonderful team who worked very, very hard - everyone kept on top of it."

The Commissioner lauded the group's success.

"Federal Donated Foods, MIS, the Business Office and the Property Distribution staff were

Victories

By Nina Ritson

the key players on these projects. Together, they were a powerful team. Thanks to all their hard work the U.S. Department of Agriculture has coined Connecticut as an eGovernment leader," Waters said.

Help Fight Cancer... Buy Daffodils!



The American Cancer Society is sponsoring their annual Flower of Hope drive. The DAS co-chairs Kate McCabe and Juanita Lentocho will remind you when it's time to order the First Flower of Spring. Individual bouquets with 10 daffodils are \$6; 6" glass vases (holds one bunch) are \$6 each; and the Gift of Hope – a bouquet in a vase delivered as an anonymous gift to a cancer patient (or others in need) by American Cancer Society volunteers is \$15.

The last day to order is Wednesday, March 5. Flowers/vases delivered March 25 - 26.

Diversity Happenings

By Maureen Friedman



Celebrate & Share Your Diversity!

The New DAS Diversity Calendar Awaits Your Entries

Is there a particular day when you celebrate your heritage? Do you have information about a cultural event? How about a religious observance? Don't keep it to yourself! Share these events with the DAS family through our new Diversity Calendar.

Using the new Diversity Calendar is easy and very similar to using your own personal Lotus Notes calendar. You will find the Diversity Calendar on DAS Central. You do not need a password or ID to make an entry and it is very easy to use!

To view the calendar:
Click "*Diversity Calendar*" within DAS Central

To create an entry:
Click "*create new entry*" button
Enter *event name*
Choose *event type*
Choose *date*

Enter a complete description/history of the event so that everyone can learn about its significance.

To view a calendar event:
Double click on *event* to see details (There will be details if a description has been entered).

The Council is encouraging you to populate the calendar with your celebrations, cultural, religious, etc.

However, please keep in mind that entries should not include personal birthdays, anniversaries, etc., and cannot be submitted anonymously.

Take a look at the calendar today. You will find many entries there already. While you're there, enter your own events/holidays/observances and share your diversity with all of us in DAS!

The Council is always interested in your ideas, so if you have any that you feel will make the Diversity Calendar better, contact:

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Any of the Diversity Council members:

Deb Atkinson
Anthony Ferreira
Reuben Lusack
Doris Vieira
Joyce Chin
Maureen Friedman
Pamela Libby
Barbara Waters
Diane Donato
Belinda Hall
Vincent Lombardo
Cheryl Drolet
Tracie Knapsack
Isabelle McKinney

The Diversity Council is proud to unveil the new diversity logo. Of all the logos submitted for a contest that was held, the logo offered by Maureen Friedman of Procurement Services was chosen to represent the Diversity Council. Congratulations Maureen!



...our strength is in our differences

Just lovin' those kudos...

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assistance you have always provided to me. You have a good team, and I just wanted you to know that your efforts are appreciated. Thanks!"

Human Resources Director Pamela Morrison-Wolf from the Office of the Secretary of the State praised **Dave Lynn** for "the excellent job you did in presenting the State's Workplace Violence Prevention Training. It was a great combination of a powerful, timely subject and a polished, professional presentation."

Chief of Staff Raeanne Curtis from the Department of Consumer Protection expressed her appreciation to **Dan Sadowski** for "assisting us with the procurement of two desks through the state surplus program. He not only helped us with the physical move, but also assisted with the assembly, and has shared his expertise with us on other occasions. His assistance is greatly appreciated."

Larry Gore and Nancy Jones thanked **Peter Varhol**, **Jane Gore**, and **Karen Rakowski** "for all the effort they put into the Tea Cup Auction. Getting gift certificates or making gift baskets is no easy task. Thank you!"

Commissioner T.R. Anson thanked **Commissioner Barbara Waters** for including DPW in the Flu Shot Clinic. "Fifty of our employees participated. They appreciated the convenience and many participated who might not have otherwise had a flu shot. I would like to mention that **Cheryl Catania** was a great help in

organizing the event and answering any questions."

Maureen Friedman commended **Billy Skyrme**, **Nina Ritson**, and **John McKay**, for "all of the help that they gave to Procurement with the CT \$HOPS project. Bill set us up on our website, Nina worked feverishly to design and produce the CT \$HOPS program and a multitude of other printed materials, and John was also a great help especially with our special guest Lt. Governor Rell. It is really great to know that we can count on everyone in your office to help us!"

Deputy Commissioner Theresa C. Lantz from the Department of Correction congratulated the **Procurement Staff** for "all their efforts in organizing the successful CT \$HOPS day. Many of my fiscal staff attended and were able to meet vendors that they deal with on a daily basis. I also attended and I was impressed with the overall organization and presentation of the event. I hope there are plans to continue these kinds of events in the future."

Robert J. Hartz from Norwich Public Schools thanked **Commissioner Barbara Waters** and **Peter Varhol** for "the donation of personal computers to our school system. The teachers and staff will put them to good use and they are particularly appreciated in this time of expanding demands."

Michael L. Mullen from the Board of Parole commended "**DAS staff** and in particular, **Diane Donato** for collaborating with us on our Affirmative Action

Plan for the past three years. Diane is always available to assist us with any questions we may have and with her help we have been successful in reaching our Affirmative Action goals.

Bob D'Angelo from Admiral Moving and Storage thanked **Commissioner Barbara Waters** and the **Procurement staff** "particularly **Carol Wilson**, **Pam Anderson**, **Tina Costanzo**, **Linda LoSchiavo** and **Don Casella** for they have all been very willing to help provide guidance at any time and have always acted in a professional manner."

Dan Donahue commended **Janet Knopf** for her expertise with the software for the state's Employee Housing Program. "Whenever I call Janet she responds immediately and solves the problem without fail. She is a valuable resource and I appreciate her efforts."

Roy Dion and Doris Vieira both applauded **Joe Mikulski**, **Mike Felix**, **Tony Ferreira**, **Yvonne Groves**, and **Mike Owsianko** for "recovering approximately \$470,000 on delinquent accounts dating back to 1999-2001. With your commitment and hard work, we accomplished this task. You've demonstrated that with cross-sectional teamwork anything can be achieved. Great job!"

Rose Mary Lugo from the Department of Children and Families praised **Phil Karas** for "all of the kind words and encouragement that you gave to me via our telephone conversation."