



Big 8: The presenters!

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Clockwise: Arlene Watson, Susan Pawloski-Burke, Martin Anderson, Carol Wilson, Pam Libby, Diane Fitzpatrick, Deb Atkinson, Vin Lombardo



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March 5, Sadness and Celebration

By Donna Micklus

To know Janis Nome is to have a “Jan” story. Commissioner Barbara Waters opened the day’s celebration of Jan’s life with some of the well-known classics.

“Who,” she asked, could ever forget the now infamous pork-roast-down-the-drain-flooding-basement story?”

“And then there was the time Jan decided to branch out and take sailing lessons so she could meet really cool guys...the only problem was that the guys in the sailing class were all under the age of ten.”

The Commissioner’s remarks set the tone for Janis Nome Day at DAS on March 5... a day that together, employees lovingly remembered their good friend and shared those memories with her family...her parents, Grace and Harald, sister Diane, brother Gregg and special friend, Doug. While the morning was not without its poignant and tearful moments, smiles generally prevailed over sadness.

One of Waters’ favorite Jan stories was the Big Hair Inaugural Ball tale. “We all know that Jan hated to get all foo-fooed up,” Waters said. “But she decided that she would go the whole nine yards for the ball...the gown, the manicure, the make-up...and, well, the hair.” Waters recalls that it was piled so high on top of her head that Carlos Velez, Jan’s escort for the evening, took one look at her and said, “Jan, you look like Marge Simpson!” Velez piped in that he had to open his sunroof so she could fit her head in his front seat!

Waters said, “We also must remember how much she did for DAS and for the state taxpayers in her job as legislative liaison.”

“She was tireless in lobbying and getting major purchasing and personnel reforms. She also was the champion in starting up our diversity efforts in DAS.”

Waters then introduced Jan’s dear friend, Isabelle McKinney, who read an official statement by Governor John G. Rowland proclaiming March 5th *Janis Nome Day* in Connecticut.

Following a moment of silence, McKinney introduced Ray Bailey who touched on his experience as a recipient of an organ donated by his co-worker Jeanne Gray and the difference it has made in his life.

He then announced that on April 29, DAS, Capital Community Technical College, and the National Kidney Foundation will hold the “Janis Nome Organ Donation Drive.” Jan was awaiting a liver transplant when she passed away.

Jan’s mom, Grace, said she was “just overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of Janis’ friends here at DAS.” She went on to describe how difficult it was for her as a mother not to be able to help an ill child. Grace and Harald, visited her everyday despite repeated warnings from Grace’s doctor that contacting something in the hospital could prove fatal. “Then that’s the way it will have to be,” Grace replied.



Commissioner Barbara Waters presents a check representing employee donations to the Nome family.

Grace said Janis so looked forward to visits from her family and friends.

“Despite what her illness had done to her appearance, when most would have been scared off, all of her friends here (and you know who you

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are) would keep coming back again, and again to visit. The family truly appreciates all of you.”

Gregg Nome, who works in Procurement Services, thanked DAS folks for their support and said, “If Janis could see this room right now she would be smiling.” He then shared some of his own stories about his sister when they were growing up. Ever trusting in human nature, Jan would repeatedly fall for her brother’s antics.

He recalls the time he asked five-year old Janis to sit in a bucket so he could hoist a rope over a branch and play elevator. Of course the rope broke, causing Jan to land unceremoniously on her backside!

Then there was the day they were ice skating and Gregg asked her to lie down on the ice so he could jump over her. “The long way?” Jan asked. Down she went. Ever trusting.

The Commissioner thanked the Nome family for giving DAS both Jan and Gregg. She then presented a check to the family for \$1,475 in employee donations for the garden in Jan’s memory at the United Methodist Church of Simsbury.

“It is so like Jan,” she said, “for her to want to give nature’s beauty and serenity for others to enjoy.”



Commissioner Waters, Isabelle McKinney, Ray Bailey, and Gregg Nome address the overflow of employees gathered for Janis Nome Day in Connecticut.



And your host for the Big 8 Presentations...

The Big 8 sees a sea of green!

By John McKay and Adam Liegeot

Just another status report meeting on DAS' Big 8? Hardly. This one was videotaped for the sole purpose of making the presenters nervous.

But the speakers kept their cool, and wowed the crowd with the big savings DAS has realized as the project draws to a close.

Core-CT got favorable marks from DAS' financial guru Vin Lombardo.

"DAS is the only agency that was 'green' all the way through the Core-CT project," said Lombardo. With a reduction in the use of SAS, APS, and Time and Attendance databases that charged for their services, DAS is looking to save \$300,000 in expenses. Lombardo also stated that additional savings have been found with courier services through a major reduction in postage costs.

"The goal was to save 20 percent, or about \$300,000 a year, and we are almost there!" Lombardo said.

Lombardo, who certainly had more than a cameo appearance, also reported that new probate, collections strategies enable FSC to once again surpass the \$7 million mark!

Martin Anderson gave an update on the Print Consolidation project. Following the submission of the RFP's, an evaluation team selected a vendor, and DAS is now in the final stages of fine-tuning the 'terms and conditions' of the contract award.

Anderson also reported for Steve Soklow on the progress of the Workforce Development website which will serve as a blueprint for all state agencies. The site has been built and is being reviewed by the project team.



Cheryl Sawina

Human Resources' Pam Libby highlighted the recent successes of SEBAC stating that 1600-1700 people on the SEBAC list have been reemployed since the beginning of the Big 8 project.

Diane Fitzpatrick continued the good word on HR by adding that staff has identified and is addressing state occupational shortages in the law enforcement field. DAS has since developed state police and correctional officers recruitment websites as marketing tools for these areas of recruitment. The site has received an impressive 14,000 hits to date. At one point, she said, this portion of the HR site was getting 500 hits a day!

Carla Kushin, reporting for Heather Tweeddale, announced that the 3rd annual Nurse of the Year award ceremony will be held on May 11th in Room 310 of the State Capitol. DAS has invited Lt. Governor Jodi Rell to once again host the event, which acknowledges the great contributions

of nurses in state government. Nominations are due by April 12th.

HR's Deb Atkinson talked about the effort to reduce the managerial job class specifications from 500 to just one. How are they going to do that? That one job class specification will have four different levels, each level having its own salary range. Much simpler! The Department of Consumer Protection has offered to be the pilot agency for this, and other agencies have shown interest in simplifying their lives as well.

Susan Pawloski-Burke of HR discussed a new aspect to state examinations. It's a self-assessment category that will allow agencies to "fine tune" their job candidates. She also mentioned a pilot program that's in the works that will be called "E-Recruit." Stay tuned!

Workers' Compensation's Arlene Watson proudly announced that their goal of a five percent reduction in costs would be met this year. The WC office staff was bolstered by the addition of four new loss control specialists (Maureen Bascom, Ray Primini, Doug Rinaldi, and Christine Sisbarro) who will be developing business plans and implementing loss control strategies.

Procurement's Carol Wilson stated that the Buy Smart, Buy Together program is working with the renegotiation of several contracts and finding additional savings. An instant result was the renegotiation of a contract that will save \$1.2 million annually for the next three years on the police cruiser contracts. Wilson also anticipated more items of saving to report on by the next report out session.

**More on Business Planning
on p. 6!**

Ramona Sablon from the Governor's Office wanted to "convey a HUGE thank you to **Dan Sadowski** and **Linda Hubeny** who helped to get our two new workstations together in what was virtually two days! ...Thank you again for the professionalism and expediency provided. It is greatly, greatly appreciated!"

Commissioner Barbara Waters sent a message to **Donna Wadhams** regarding a phone call that she received: "I just received a terrific phone call from a woman named Shirley who literally gushed about all the help that you have been to her. She could not have given you more compliments! I was bowled over. I told her that I think you are terrific, too! Thanks so much for all that you do."

Carla Martin commended **Jose Baez** "for restoring my folder for me. I had provided the copies I had to one of the unions knowing 'I could just print another copy when I needed one.' Without your help we would not have been able to duplicate what had been provided to the union. Thanks again for your help!"

hats off

By **Cindy Rusczyk**

Helen Giliberto from Charter Oak State College applauded **Diane Mazar-Roberts** and **Sandra Sharr** for their FMLA training to their senior team. "I have received so many positive comments today on your FMLA presentation to our managers and supervisors. You took this complex topic and made it understandable, and then presented it in a non-

boring way. It will definitely make our HR jobs easier. The State of Connecticut is very lucky to have you as our experts and so are we."

Carol Wilson announced that **Jim Gotta** is "now Vice Chairperson of the Connecticut Food Policy Council. A huge recognition of hard work and support to this council. Way to go Jim!" Commissioner Barbara Waters also commented, "This is a very important program...I am SO delighted that you were recognized for your talents. I am very impressed!"

Diane Fitzpatrick wrote a note to the Commissioner regarding the following: "I serve on a building committee for several projects in our town and an issue came up about industrial shelving for one of the projects and the high cost of it. Through a conversation with Carol, I was able to get our construction manager in touch with **Pam Anderson**. At our meeting last night, the construction manager had very high praise for Pam and the assistance that she offered our project, the net result was that through her assistance and information we were able to save approximately \$50,000 on this product. I just wanted to extend the thanks of the committee to Pam and let you all know about her contribution."

Accounts Payable Division Director Mark Aronowitz from the Office of the State Comptroller commended **Joann Bellamo** and Jeri Vandiver "for conducting yesterday's training session. The procurement function of Core-CT is one area that very few of us were familiar with. Your instruction, answers to questions, comments and suggestions went a long way in furthering our understanding in this area."

Maureen Blackburn and Joe Giliberto thanked **Laurie Melesko** for

updating the DAS Procurement website daily. "She's doing an awesome job and helping us tremendously! Thanks Laurie!"

Paul Felix, Team Leader in the Hospital Billing Unit for the Financial Services Center, praised **Tony Nunes** for all of the assistance he has offered to a new employee in our unit. "Tony has been the perfect example of a team player and deserves a lot of credit for his efforts."

Isabelle McKinney extended her thanks to the **Communications Staff** for always helping the Diversity Council. "**John McKay**, your patience, expediency, and expertise is always so much appreciated by the Council and me. **Nina Ritson** and **Cindy Rusczyk**, when we are in need, both of you are right there to pitch in and help us to look good as well. **Bill Skyrme**, when I show up at your desk with a travel website request, you're always helpful, you know exactly what to do and you do it in a timely fashion. Thanks for your help — you're terrific! All of you are so good at what you do. What a great staff!"

Sonji Fonseca applauded the **School Based Child Health Billing Unit** "for all of your hard work that is paying off. In this last cycle, we submitted 8,179 claims totaling \$3,072,050. Of that we were paid \$2,937,450. This brings the total paid for March 2004 to \$4,237,275. Keep up the good work you guys! Awesome job!" This revenue directly helps the budgets of 70+ towns, as well as the state's general fund.



Putting the “e” in ePartners

By John McKay

If you build it they will come. At least that’s the theory behind the new epartners website being designed by DAS Communications and DAS Procurement.

“It’s a tool that will make my job a lot easier,” said DAS’ newly appointed epartner Barbara Moser.

Her task – to visit Connecticut municipalities highlighting the benefits of doing business with DAS. Whether it’s saving money, accessing information or discovering other resources, the new epartners website will be their new source of information. “I envision myself being out in the field a lot visiting with municipality representatives,” said Moser.

“Having this website will be a great tool for me to show them all what we can do for them, plus it’s better than leaving behind my business card. Instead I can leave them the whole business of DAS to explore,” she added.

Initially the website will have mostly information instructing towns how to save money buying off of state contracts. Eventually, the site will grow to include a multitude of money-saving tools. “The idea is to make this page a necessary resource for towns and municipalities,” said Moser. “I think it will be ever-changing and growing to meet our customers needs, and keep them coming back to the site to find other ways we can save them money.”

Business Planning Enters Next Phase

By John McKay

Who needs a plan? Why do we need direction? Those were questions for the last century.

“Employees get it....without proper planning we’re like a ship without a rudder,” said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

“Our business planning gives us goals and directions as to where our agency is headed. It’s the most important event we do every year.”

Project 2003 is now nearing its final phase, following the third quarter report out this month.

In the past, DAS has conducted the planning process by the calendar year. However, in an effort to link the business planning with the budget planning, DAS is moving to a fiscal year cycle, so DAS will be referring to this year’s plan as Project ’04-’05.

The first step was a meeting with senior staff to lay out the timeline to wrap up Project 2003 and to review the agency vision, mission and values.

The second meeting involved the Core Managers doing a SWOT analysis - brainstorming our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats around four focus areas: *Being Ethical, Meeting and*

Beating Industry Standards, Everything On-line and Being a Policy Leader.

“The information gathered from this meeting will be used to define DAS’ themes and objectives for next year and develop a framework for initiative ideas,” said Waters.

“Employees from every business unit have been attending meetings to generate ideas within the focus areas that will be prioritized and developed into projects for the next cycle,” said Cheryl Sawina who heads up the business planning process.

Sawina added that the Commissioner will be sending a complete list of the information gathered within the next couple of weeks, giving employees that were not able to attend any meeting an opportunity to add their ideas.

“Additional business planning infograms will be sent keeping everyone apprised of our progress,” she explained.

As always, employee feedback and comments are welcomed.

Please send your comments and ideas to Cheryl Sawina via email or at X5246.

Loss Control Specialist brings private sector experience and pioneer spirit

DAS' newest member to the Workers' Comp Team, Christine Sisbarro, brings with her more than three decades of nursing experience, a private sector work ethic, and a genuine caring for people.

"I bring an optimistic view to safety in the workplace. I am always looking for ways to heighten awareness and avoid accidents," Sisbarro said.

She has worked in the private sector as a professional nurse for 32 years. Of those years, 12 have been spent in the corporate environment.

Now she is tasked with Loss Control, evaluating why agencies are having problems, why they are reporting losses, looking for hazards, and suggesting training or change.

When she is not out in the field analyzing workplace safety, she reads, takes long walks, and travels.

theme parks – just America. I have been to where Lewis and Clark began their trip to the west, I have been to the oldest drug-store in Colorado, Texas, Missouri ..." then she laughed, "who goes on vacation to Kansas City? I did. I went horseback riding on the Santa Fe Trail and saw where Jesse James hid out in the ground. I love to travel."

She attributes her buoyant nature and goodwill toward others to her church, the Worldwide Church of God.

Despite her travels, she manages to save one week per year of vacation time to spend as the camp nurse for children ages 8 to 17.

With her 27-year old daughter now grown, she was not excited when first asked by her church to volunteer at this camp. She thought *this was not going to be fun.*

But Sisbarro loved it so much she will be returning for her sixth year this summer.

"I do admit as the camp nurse I get to sleep in a cabin with a bathroom....but, I did take the challenge this year and climbed the ropes with the other kids!"

Sisbarro described the process of belaying and repelling with great



Christine Sisbarro

detail and thrill in her eyes.

"Camp is wonderful – I can't wait to go back this summer!"

They say hope heals, and if anyone abounds with good cheer and enthusiasm, it is Sisbarro.

Look out, folks...workplace safety is about to experience a whole new attitude!

up close

By Nina Ritson

"Years ago, we took trips with the church and that introduced me to travel." She delights as she names the places she has gone with her husband or her daughter, Alicia.

"I have seen 31 states – I love this country. I especially loved South Dakota and the Badlands and Mt. Rushmore," she recalled.

"We usually focus our travel on historic places, no fancy hotels or

DAS News Release

State Improves Opportunities for Small and Minority-Owned Businesses with "Buy Smart" Initiative

March 24 - Governor John G. Rowland and DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters announced today that as part of the state's new "Buy Smart, Buy Together" initiative, DAS is taking a major step toward improving opportunities for Connecticut's small and minority-owned businesses (SBE/MBEs).

DAS is reviewing the state's major buying categories and examining ways in which buying can be improved. Categories under review include office supplies, advertising, document management services, and waste removal.

Prior to Buy Smart, the majority of the state's spending with SBE/MBEs was going to a very small number of vendors.

For example, under the state's current Document Management Services contract, there are 130 SBE/MBEs registered to do business with the state. Of those 130, 78 vendors (60 percent) received no business at all in fiscal year 2003, while just eight vendors were getting 68 percent of the state's business.

Under the new Buy Smart contracts, the prime vendor that gets selected by the state will be unable to steer subcontracting work to favored subcontractors. That prime vendor must get competitive quotes from a number of other companies when subcontracting out work.

"We are pleased to announce that the playing field has been leveled, and as a result, opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses to provide goods and services to the state will increase," Governor Rowland said. "In fixing this disparity, we are providing more opportunities for these businesses to compete for state work."

States that have implemented Buy Smart programs also have successfully created more opportunities for

SBE/MBEs. Delaware saw SBE/MBE participation increase by eight percent, while in Virginia, spending with SBE/MBEs increased from \$8 million to \$15 million.

"Under Buy Smart, there will be no possibility of prime vendor favoritism in the awarding of subcontracts," Waters said. "All subcontracting will be open, transparent, and recorded. For all subcontracting work, competitive bidding is now required. This is great news for the small and minority-owned business community."

While Buy Smart, Buy Together will expand opportunities for SME/MBEs, it will also save taxpayers money. Waters estimates that the initiative, which leverages Connecticut state agencies' purchasing power, will create \$3.75 million in savings for taxpayers in fiscal year 2005 and save millions more over the next several years. For example, the state is already saving over \$742,000 annually on its purchase of police cruisers. The cost per cruiser has dropped by about \$3000 per cruiser, without sacrificing cruiser quality.

- Adam Liegeot



...our strength is in our differences

Happenings

Diversity Presentation Draws Rave Reviews

By Maureen Friedman

On February 26, the Diversity Council Sponsored an interactive presentation and discussion called "Cultural Competence for Communities of the Future."

William A. Howe, Ed.D, Consultant for Multicultural Education and Gender Equality, Connecticut State Department of Education, facilitated a workshop that focused on practical applications required for personnel who work with customers and colleagues from a variety of diverse backgrounds. The interactive diversity session covered key skills in

becoming a culturally competent employee. This program was part of a continuing series of diversity-related presentations sponsored by DAS' Diversity Council. All of the evaluations were great but we wish to share just one of them because the message is so important.

"This was an excellent presentation/discussion, heartfelt, educational and needed. Hopefully, this film can be shown again with many more attendees. This is a must see to strengthen our knowledge of diversity."

Please remember this: the next time you get a Diversitygram and are considering if you should attend the program offered. Attend! You may be surprised at how much you will learn and how much you may grow as a person.

As DAS employee Mayme Casady likes to say, "you're only as big as the world you are interested in."

So expand your world!

See next page for more Diversity Happenings !

DIVERSITY

...our strength is in our differences

An Interview with Reuben Jonathan-Lusack

By Maureen Friedman

The first thing you notice about Reuben Jonathan-Lusack, Supplier Diversity Representative, is his broad smile and smooth resonant voice. His lilting accent makes you wonder where he was born. That was my very first question, to which he answered “Banjul, the capital city of The Gambia, West Africa,” an Atlantic coastal country surrounded by neighboring Senegal.

Growing up in Banjul, Reuben has fond memories of childhood friends, school, Boy Scouts and playing cricket and soccer. Western movies were popular, and as a child, Reuben played cowboys and Indians with friends just like most of us did growing up in the United States!

Banjul is a big city where the main cathedral is located and where Reuben’s deep Roman Catholic faith began. One thing you will not find in this city is a zoo. Who needs one when you can travel just 20 miles to a nature preserve to see zebras, giraffes and all the other wonderful animals native to Africa!

Surprised by the similarities of growing up in each of our countries, I asked what he saw as the differences between Africa and America. Reuben quickly responded, “The culture of each country is the only difference.”

With an adventurous spirit guiding him, Reuben chose not to go to a

university in Great Britain after high school, as most do. Instead, at age 17, he traveled to America to further his education, because he “wanted to be different.”

He attended The York School in California then New England College in New Hampshire, where he helped develop a foreign student program and earned a B.S. in Political Science and Economics. He spent another year taking graduate courses at the University of New Hampshire. During his time in New Hampshire, Reuben remembers experiencing snow for the first time, traveling with friends and how people looked out for him to make sure he was not alone during the holidays.

Then it was off to Washington, D.C. where Reuben earned his Masters Degree in International Affairs at Johns Hopkins University.

Eventually, Reuben settled down in Connecticut raising two sons, Christian and Brendan (now 18 and 14 respectively) and holding jobs at Aetna and Metropolitan Insurance.

Then he began his state career at the Office of Labor Relations where he spent ten years before coming to DAS. Initially, Reuben worked in the Grant Writing unit before becoming a member of the Supplier Diversity team five years ago under the direction of Meg Yetishefsky.

He serves as a liaison for small, women, minority and disabled-owned business enterprises seeking state

procurement opportunities by recruiting and certifying them to participate in the Set-Aside Program and assisting them to secure state contracts.

When asked what he liked about his job, Reuben referred to his Catholic background and said, “The worth of a person is how you help others and what you give of yourself.”

He enjoys working with people and finds satisfaction in helping others.

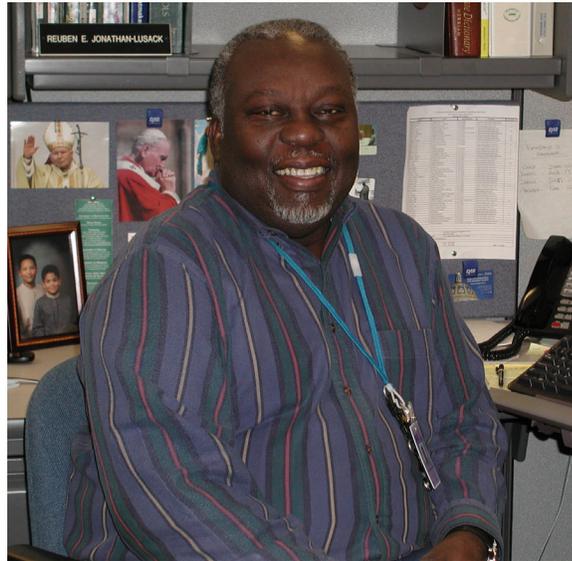
This attitude can be traced back to his mother, Sarah. While Reuben learned wisdom from his father, his mother was the main force in teaching him his beliefs and his sense of what is good.

Sadly, she passed away three years ago, but she lives on through her words of wisdom. Reuben shared an example of this wisdom and it is one that we all should ponder as we go through our daily lives.

“Human beings are not born prejudiced, it is how they are taught.”

It’s no wonder that Reuben was one of the first in DAS to volunteer for the Diversity Council, where he served for four years. He believes that the Diversity Council can do so much to celebrate diversity and help people realize that DAS is strengthened by the contributions of a diverse workforce.

“Participate in the Diversity Council activities, volunteer to serve, you’ll be glad you did”, said Reuben with a broad smile.



Reuben Jonathan-Lusack