



DAS Procurement Welcomes Chinese Delegation

By Nina Ritson

Located a half world away, it is hard to imagine what life in China must be like – but on Tuesday, October 10, DAS got a glimpse into the government of China through an interpreter and the voices of six visitors to the U.S.

“This is fascinating,” said Carol Wilson, Director of Procurement, “We are so honored by this visit.”

Each year, for more than twenty years, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) has sponsored a number of high-level government and non-government officials from Shandong Province, China, to come to Connecticut.

Shandong Province is Connecticut’s sister province in China. Once the home of the great philosopher Confucious, it is one of China’s wealthiest provinces on the east coast. However, unlike Connecticut, this region has a population of 90 million people.

The program exposes the Chinese people to American government, business and culture, and vice-versa, Connecticut citizens gain the opportunity to learn about China.

This year, DAS was honored to host six members of the delegation: Bingyu Chu, Vice Secretary General of Yantai City Government,



Top: Procurement Director Carol Wilson with the visiting Chinese delegation. Left: Wilson and Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco join their counterparts in Shandong government purchasing.

Hua Zhong, Chief General of Secretariat, General Office of Shandong Province Government, Shengkuo Zhou, Office Director of Radio and TV Bureau of Shandong Province and Changqing Zou, the Mayor of Haiyang City. The DAS visitors were part of a larger group of government officials who came to CCSU to do an “internship” at the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

Wilson presented a PowerPoint overview of DAS Procurement, the Contracting Portal, and a review of purchasing solicitation tools such as bids and RFPs.

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Time Flies When You're Having Fun

By Donna Micklus

October Ceremony recognizes 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30-year vets in state service

Deputy Commissioner and event emcee Brenda Sisco opened the program with an astonishing fact. She pointed out that when the years of service of the longevity honorees are added together, they total 2,240! Putting that in perspective, "That would take us back to around 414 B.C.!" she quipped.

Sisco congratulated all for their service, and added, "everyone told

me that I would love working at DAS...now I know why they said that." She then invited Division Directors to join her in presenting the awards to their respective honorees.

When it came time for the thirty-year folks to be announced, Commissioner Linda Yelmini did the honors. As she posed for the photos...which she is so fond of doing...she invoked her rule which has become known

simply as THE TURN.

"Trust me, it's good for at least 25 lbs.," she joked.

In a more serious vein, she shared with the employees assembled that "there isn't a day that goes by that I don't love being Commissioner here," and paid tribute to all who make DAS a such a special agency in which to work.

Congrats...Thirty years and counting!

Awardees pose with Commissioner Yelmini and their Division Directors: L to R: Albert Van Leuvan, Anil Antani, Kathy Bruni, Kathy Sobieski, Lionel Corbin, Nick Visone, Norman Townley, Robin Riddlesworth, Susan Thomas. Not present were: William Donnelly, Maureen Friedman, Dale Greenwood, Doreen Nadler, and Virgilio Santos



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Linda J. Yelmini
Commissioner

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You're Almost There!

Carol Biernacki, Jadwiga Bogacki, Nancy Bryant, Linda Canalia, Mark Carroza, Celeste Cashman, Lisa Chasse, Robert Chausse, Susan Cieniewicz, Catherine Daly, Stephen Dygus, James Gotta, Kimberly Johnston, Alina Kalisz, Carlos Kebe, Kerry Kudelchuk, Janet Lojzim, Juanita McLune-Hartfield, Rick Miarecki, Susan Pawloski-Burke, James Potyra, Anthony Smith

Few More To Go!



Patricia Antoniac, Debra Atkinson, Aaron Barksdale, Eric Bengtson, Julie Bernosky, Susan Bolduc, Michelle Burns, Mary Campbell, Thomas Caneschi, Susan Carlson, Juliet Colebrook, Lori Coleman, Leroy Davis, Patrick DeConti, Francine Dew, Yvonne Dillon-Terry, Lien Dong, Willie Durant, Francis Dwyer, Isaac Eze, Angela Fuggetta, Angel Garcia, Jr., Paul Greco, Shari Grzyb, Deborah Jeanfaivre, Gail Kenney, Tracie Knapsack, Shanta Kumar, Linda LoSchiavo, Pauline Mahoney, Martin Melanson, V. Jean Michael, Antonio Nunes, Wilfredo Ondevilla, Deborah Peterson, Audrey Pinette, Beverly Powers, Gail Robbins, Miriam G. Rodriguez, Salvina Romano, William Rubecka, Andrew Seegobin, Kimberly Shepard, Juanita Woolfolk, Richard Yeske



Momentum is Shifting Your Way!

Catherine Abadom, Theresa Anderson, Steven Beaulieu, Douglas Belli, Peggy Benedetto, Alexis Caceres, Melissa Colonese-Scutt, Robin Dawkins-Khan, Shirley Drost, Ruthie Hatten, William Hickey, Lois Johnson, Patti Maneggia, Terry Mitchell, Raymond Primini, Cynthia Rivera, Daniel Roman, Samuel Thompson, Jr., David Tufano, Heather Tweeddale, Arlene Watson, Rosemary Woods



The Kids

Raymond Bailey, Cheryl Drolet, Tanya Grant, Sonji Harrington, Chanel Johnson, Allen Landry, Cynthia Mabry, Carla Martin, Devin Marquez, John McKay, Laurie Melesko, Eva Merriman, David Pellet, Mary Donna Purcell, Jennifer Reid-Williams, Brenda Sisco, Christopher Smith, Susan Turko, John Winschel, Robert Zalucki, Jr.

Special thanks to Sue Turko for coordinating arrangements for the event!

Congrats to All...Well Done!!

Director of Communications Dennis Schain from the Department of Environmental Protection sent the following message to Donna Micklus regarding **Nina Ritson**: “I just want to make sure that you know we all love Nina. She did a great job on a brochure for us...got it designed, printed and handled lots of bureaucratic insanity. And she put together some great artwork for the Governor’s press conference on Route 7 today. We truly appreciate her efforts.”

Procurement vendor Mary Doherty commended **Carol Wilson** on the portal notification system changes that were made. “As I told people in your offices when the email notifications were revamped, they are the best in the nation!”

Isabelle McKinney thanked **Jeffrey Lewis** from Property Management. “Jeff is absolutely a pleasure to work with! He went out of his way to help get the job done. ”

hats off

By Cindy Rusecyk

Linda Hubeny applauded the Property Management Team of **Fred Ondevilla, Peter Varhol, Jeffrey Lewis** and **Quincy Cole** for “finishing the PI and reconciliation in CoreCT. Fred single-handedly did the upload, the verifying, and the CO-59’s for DAS and all the agencies we support by the deadline. This was a HUGE undertaking and our team came through by working together and overcoming so many obstacles. I’m very proud of how hard they worked, and I thank each of them for going the extra mile. Great job guys!”

Isabelle McKinney praised **Martin Anderson** “for putting the Diversity

Council in touch with Dr. Michael Good. Dr. Good’s presentation was absolutely amazing and inspiring. He certainly left us with much to think about.”

Susan Turko thanked all who assisted in making the October 3rd Service Awards Ceremony a success: **Dave Lynn, Kathy Bruni, Eileen Morin, Mary Gugliemino, Heather Berte, Juliet Colebrook, Jeff Lewis, Quincy Cole, John McKay, and Nina Ritson.**

Steve Caliendo had words of praise for **Steve Soklow**: “I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the entire SMART unit to express our thanks for all the assistance and cooperation provided to us by Steve. He has helped us with Core-CT concerns and willingly generated reports that we have needed for our agencies. His assistance has allowed us to do our jobs better, and we sincerely appreciate all he has done. Steve is a credit to DAS, and state service as a whole. You (we) are lucky to have him.”

HR’s Diane Fitzpatrick thanked the **DAS Print Shop** for quick turnaround on her Multicultural Job Fair Posters. “Thanks for getting these done in record speed.”

Anil Antani received a call from Jane Klemba at Riverview Hospital to tell him that “**Mark Tandler** has been very helpful. Mark gets back to her whenever she calls with questions. She said that we usually don’t hear when things are going right and wanted to call us and let us know that she greatly appreciates Mark’s help.”

Nancy Jones sends “big kudos to **Fred Ondevilla** for helping me out with the planning of the golf tournament for the CSEC. Without him, I wouldn’t have known what to do. He’s a real ‘pro’”!

Chinese guests, from p. 1

On hand was Chris LeMay, of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), to answer budget questions, Devin Marquez, for legal expertise, and Tony Deluca, DAS contract manager.

Of particular interest to the guests was how Connecticut purchases and manages the state fleet of vehicles, including police cars. Their inquiries ranged from purchasing to leasing, insuring and maintaining, purchasing of fuel, and recouping costs through the internal billing processes.

Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco and Tom Yuhas, Director of Fleet Operations, explained how DAS sets rates for customer agencies.

Through an interpreter from OPM, DAS learned that the two governments are mirrored in many ways, yet in countless others they are worlds apart. Managing procurement for a region of 90 million people is a highly complex operation; in China, government-issued vehicles are available for most employees!

Thankful for the insight into DAS’ procurement and fleet operations, the delegation presented Carol Wilson with a beautiful calligraphic painting on rice paper by an artist from Shandong Province.

“This painting was chosen because it speaks of wealth, luck and prosperity” the interpreter shared with Wilson “and they wish this for you.”

Wilson said she was proud to accept the gift on behalf of the entire agency. It will be framed and on display in the Office of the Commissioner as a reminder of our sister agency so far away.

Flu Planning Moves Forward

By Donna Micklus and John McKay

We've exhausted every play on words with COOP, so we'll just tell it like it is!

DAS hosted its first of four Continuity Of Operations Planning (COOP) sessions at the DEP auditorium on October 27 to address plans for a possible pandemic flu.

In her opening remarks, DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini spoke on the assignment given to the agency by the Governor.

"Governor Rell has asked DAS to lead the charge in administering and organizing Connecticut state agencies in preparing for an emergency so that we can keep government going."

Yelmini then read a letter from the Governor addressed to all in attendance. In it she said "Continuity of Operations planning is not merely an exercise. It is a way of preserving government services during some of the most challenging times we could experience....My goal is for state agencies to have viable and tested plans for how they would carry on their critical and essential functions in place by the end of the year," the Governor wrote.

Smack in the center of this organizational petri dish is Dr. Martin Anderson who coordinated the event.

"All of us face the possibility of an equal opportunity threat to employees. Our goal right now is to get today's participants to be key leaders in their organizations, because we have to maintain staff and services in the event there is a pandemic flu," Anderson said in his remarks. He also shared a frightening statistic.



DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini addresses over 300 employees at the training session

Surveying state employees, only 15 percent would be able to take a week off from work before running out of sick leave.

"With this particular strain of bird flu," Anderson said, "We're talking about *weeks* needed, not including the cases where people would have to take time off to care for family members. This only exacerbates the situation."

Before introducing the next speaker, Yelmini said, "a lot of us who were around for Y2K said it's never going to happen... and nothing happened. But even if nothing happens this time with the pandemic flu, it is not a wasted effort – all the work we do is transferable to any other emergency we might have to face. Because *something will happen at some point*, and that's why it is important to be prepared."

She went on to thank Anderson and his staff in typical Yelmini-esque fashion.

"Martin is annoying and he's from Oklahoma." (Martin visibly paled). But she quickly added, "If I tease my staff they know I like them." (The



Flumeister Martin Anderson directed the October 27 event

color began returning to his face). "Seriously, Martin has done a wonderful job. It's not everyday that you can hand something of this magnitude over to someone and it gets done, and done well. It's a tremendous amount of hard work."

Yelmini then introduced Dr. John Bigos from the Department of Public Health.

Bigos said that there have been 250 cases of human avian flu, none in North America, and of those, 152 have died. The concern, he explained, is when it becomes transferred from human to human.

"We need to view the pandemic flu as a prolonged event...it is not a fire or a hurricane. And we need to be looking at precautionary measures because each agency has unique roles in government."

Skip Thomas, Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security then stepped to the podium and stressed that this is truly a collaborative process that must take place. Then it is his agency's job to pull resources to-

cont. on next page

*Continued from
previous page*

gether and make things happen. “Coordinate. Collaborate. These are not just words.”

The final commissioner to speak was Gina McCarthy from the Department of Environmental Protection.

“DEP has and will continue to be an aggressive participant in COOP. As people who run agencies we have a job to do...we can no longer hide behind the federal government. They have told us that they can’t do it all. We have to take it seriously, and the time to plan is now.”

IBM representatives walked attendees through several exercises including an Agency Pandemic Risk Self-Assessment. The exercise generated a score that labeled each agency’s importance should staff and/or supplies be compromised. DAS was rated 270 (medium importance).

The agencies were also asked to fill out their emergency management team charts and assigned primary and alternate contacts.

One of the most important positions in this exercise was determining each agency’s Incident Commander. Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco will serve in this position and will be the central point of contact for the entire agency in case of emergency.

The planning continues in November at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, and then on through December and January in Manchester. Finally, in February there will be a simulation exercise to test the work done by agencies to see if their systems work and to address any gaps in service or function.

Governor Rell Announces New Avian and Pandemic Influenza Website

New site includes Online Wild Bird Mortality Reporting (excerpts from October 27 release)

Governor M. Jodi Rell today officially launched www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch, a new website dedicated to helping Connecticut prepare for the possibility of avian and pandemic influenza.

“Health officials here in Connecticut and across the globe are carefully watching avian influenza, also known as bird flu, because of concerns it may develop into a pandemic,” Governor Rell said. “While no one knows for sure if bird flu will lead to a pandemic, we can take steps now to prepare for a potential public health crisis. Being informed is an important first step.

“Preparedness for any type of disaster, whether natural or manmade, is a goal we all have a stake in – for our state, communities, families, and friends. Visiting this website frequently and arming yourself with knowledge is an important step toward achieving that goal.”

CTFluWatch includes important information and preparedness tools for the public, government and schools, health care providers, and the business community. There are also links to the Connecticut Influenza Pandemic Plan, the federal website www.pandemicflu.gov, and information from other state agencies.

The site also includes a link to important information about seasonal flu, where to get a flu shot, and how seasonal flu is different from avian and pandemic influenza.

The website includes an online system, developed by the Department of Information Technology, to report sightings of dead wild birds. The public is encouraged to report sightings of dead wild birds through this online reporting system.

An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. During an influenza pandemic, the flu virus spreads easily person to person, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in a very short time. The 20th century saw three pandemics of influenza, including the Spanish Flu of 1918, which caused at least 500,000 U.S. deaths and up to 40 million deaths worldwide.

Bird flu is not yet easily transmitted from human to human, and there are no bird or human cases in North America.

Last December, Governor Rell asked four state agencies, the Departments of Public Health, Environmental Protection, Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and Agriculture, to work together to make Connecticut as prepared as possible for a pandemic. This task force, along with other agencies and organizations across the state, has been developing, updating, and exercising plans and taking other steps to strengthen Connecticut’s level of preparedness.

CTFluWatch was created as part of Connecticut’s efforts to provide the public with up- to-date information about avian and pandemic influenza, worldwide developments, Connecticut’s preparedness efforts, and what individuals can do to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Where Are They Now?

Jim Passier

While Director of Procurement, overseeing millions of dollars in state contracts and 40 – 50 employees, Jim Passier accomplished many things, and always with few words. Never fond of gabbiness, Passier, now retired since June of 2005, sums up his life in the same succinct manner, “I’m truly enjoying myself!”

“I sold my house in July 2004 and we moved to a detached condo in an active adult community. It’s a great place to age – first floor master bedroom, all hardwood floors and 36” doors throughout the house.”

Passier’s wife, Nora, joined him in retirement this summer, but they certainly have not been ‘sit-around-the-house-watch-TV-all-day-folks.’ He says, “We are just now starting to fall into a pattern and think about the things we would like to do.”

But, Passier couldn’t just settle for your average sight-seeing, show them your AARP card and get 10% off your admission type of vacation. In fact, Passier and his brother, Jack, just returned from a trip to Yosemite National Park in California, by way of Reno, Nevada and Lake Tahoe. The two back-packed for nine days sleeping in Yosemite Village at night – sometimes traveling as many as 15 miles per day covering all sorts of terrain.

“The trails were better than I expected, but the elevation is high so you do get short-winded.” This sort of trip doesn’t just happen overnight. Planning began in December of last year – charting the trails to hike and getting the maps in order, then packing and preparing for all weather possibilities. “The crowds diminish after Labor Day, so that’s when we planned our trip. We just returned on September 18.” He did say it took a few days to reacclimate himself to suburban living.

Before he had time to get comfortable with the word “retired,” Passier found himself child-proofing his home once again as they were warming bottles and changing diapers. “We became grandparents on May 6 this year. I have a little granddaughter named Sophie, and we just love her!” Passier and his wife get to babysit little Sophie two days a week at their home. “This is our déjà vu as if we are parents once again.”

When not traveling on foot through rugged mountainside, Passier and Nora also enjoy hitting the asphalt and traveling to the Northwest corner of Connecticut and up into Massachusetts for day trips and lunch.

“We really have been enjoying ourselves! I do miss the folks in Procurement, and I read about things going on with DAS in the paper. But I really do not miss working!”

One last word, “Please say hi to everyone – the folks in Procurement were a good group - I miss them!”

By Nina Ritson

Here They Are Now!

Erin Choquette

Mums and pumpkins line pathways, and houses are dressed to celebrate a New England autumn. With Halloween at our doorstep, wouldn’t it be fun to decorate a Victorian-era house for the festivities?

Glastonbury native Erin Choquette, Legislative and Administrative Advisor for the Office of the Commissioner, recently returned to her hometown to do just that, and bought her dream house that she and her husband are restoring with a lot of labor, love, time and money.

This Kingswood-Oxford, Holy Cross and Columbia Law School graduate joined DAS in June, after nine years as an attorney with the law firm, Robinson & Cole, LLP.

“I used to work very long hours so I am still adjusting to the change of being able to leave before five p.m. I love being a lawyer and care very much about the work I do, but I am a private person and I adore my family. This is a perfect place to work.” Choquette is clearly happy with her four months so far as a member of the DAS team. Seated at a well-organized desk, she is never out of reach of a photo tree proudly showcasing photos of her beautiful little girl and her husband.

“I was married in 2003, bought our house in 2004, baby came in 2005 and I took a new job in 2006. It has been a very busy few years!”

The Choquettes recently purchased and are restoring a 102-year old home in Glastonbury.

“It needs so much work...we are trying to work our way inside from the outside. We just re-sided the house and the roof had a very bizarre “M” looking line to it that was a real water trap, so we reconstructed that and it looks so much better, with no leaks! I am very fortunate to be married to an engineer who wants to be a carpenter. A lot of the work we do ourselves– which saves money. Well, I’m not so sure I am doing a lot of the work. I am keeping Alicia out of the mess, though!”

Her home was built by the great nephew of one of the Williams brothers of the J.B. Williams Soap Factory – famous for inventing ‘Lectric Shave and Aqua Velva. It boasts hardwood floors, period moldings and four fireplaces. In the basement there is a Freddy Kruger-style furnace – a little scary. “I don’t go there much.”

Alicia may be a little young for Freddy Kruger – but not too young for Halloween! “We live pretty simply – but it is fun – and we are very happy here.”



It's that time of year again for state employees – the time to be thankful for what we have, and time to share with those who are less fortunate.

On Wednesday, October 11, DAS held an agency fair at the State Office Building for employees to visit with representatives from charitable organizations, helping those in need through the United Way's State Employees Campaign for Charitable Giving. Brochures were available from many groups like Community Works, 211 Child Care Infoline, and Feed the Children, a worldwide campaign.

Campaign for Charitable Giving: DAS is in the Swing of Things

By *Nina Ritson*

Locally, people may benefit from a program called Citizen's Oil Co-Op that can also be found at www.oilco-op.com. This program can potentially save hundreds of dollars for individuals who heat their homes with oil through the winter.

If you missed the fair, there is still time to pledge your assistance to the Campaign. Please review your pamphlet listing the organizations or contact Nancy Jones directly at 713-5044.

Although these organizations gratefully accept donations all year, in order to meet the payroll deduction deadline for this year's campaign please submit your forms to Nancy no later than November 13.

Splish Splash... Shoppers flocked once again to the ground floor of the State Office Building for a Bath and Body Sale held on Tuesday, October 17. On display was a wide selection of exclusive products at exceptional prices – like lotions and linen sprays, unique tote bags, children's bath toys, and my favorite - a battery-operated fuzz buster to beat that winter sweater fuzz. Thanks again to state employees for helping with this sale – proceeds helped raise money for the State Employee Campaign for Charitable Giving.

- *Nina Ritson*



Fore! Five, Six, Seven...



Charity begins in the home...or in this case, on the golf course. DAS organized a golf tournament for the State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving on, of all days, Friday the Thirteenth.

"There was good luck and bad luck," said Nancy Jones who organized the event. "The weather was brisk, and there were some unbelievably lucky shots made."

The tournament was held at Topstone Golf Club in South Windsor with many DAS employees in attendance including Commissioner Linda Yelmini and Deputy Commissioner Brenda Sisco. "Tiger Woods I'm not," Yelmini said. "I've never played before but was interested in learning. Plus it was for charity so it was a win-win for me and everyone who played." And what's a golf outing without a little competition?

Men's Longest Drive winner - Mark Grzymajlo

Women's Longest Drive winner- Nancy Jones

Men's Closest to the Pin winner - Tom Yuhas

Women's Closest to the Pin - no winner



The event raised \$362 for the campaign!

- *John McKay*



Profile

...our strength is in our differences

An occasional feature of the Diversity Council's Page will be a profile of Council members by Council members. Enjoy!

Meet Wayne Grant!

By Nancy Bryant

Wayne Grant, Accountant, comes to DAS from the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) to the newly formed SMART - Business Services Section.

He is of Scottish and Italian decent. Wayne's father immigrated to the United States from Scotland when he was six years old, served in World War II and was a prisoner of war in Germany (Stalag 4). His mother was born in the U.S.

Wayne was born in Connecticut and raised in the Hartford area. He graduated from Bulkeley High in 1970, where he lettered in cross-country and track. He earned his B.A. from Central Connecticut State University in 1975, and proudly boasted about making the Dean's List in his senior year.

The big brother to one sister, Wayne is married and has two children, a boy age 26 and a girl age 16. He jokingly refers to them as his "decade babies".

He has been married for 27 years and currently lives in Bristol with his

wife Doris, his children, and Fluffy the cat.

Wayne and Doris recently renewed their wedding vows, complete with a bagpipe ceremony.

Wayne began his career with State Government on November 5, 1976, with what was then the Department of Children and Youth Services (DCYS). He remarked that he easily remembers the date because it's his parents' wedding anniversary.

After 11 years at DCYS working on child abuse grants, he transferred to BESB to work on federal and state grants.

Wayne has been very active in his community, having served for many years on the Jaycees and received the Connecticut Jaycee Statemen's Award #712. He was also past president of the Bristol Jaycees. His most memorable project noted was "Balloons over Bristol", which took place over Memorial Day weekend in 1992.

Wayne has coached baseball and soccer in his community. He loves working with kids and encouraging them to do their best.

Wayne is an accomplished pianist and also plays the saxophone at family functions and parties. He loves

meeting new people and having fun. An avid sports fan, his favorite teams are the Red Sox,

Giants, and the Boston Celtics. Favorite foods are mac and cheese, apple pie, and Boston cream pie.

Since joining the DAS family, Wayne has chaired the Bring Your Kids to Work Day event and the Summer Picnic. He served on the Employee Recognition Committee and has recently become a member of the DAS Diversity Council.

Wayne states, "Since coming to DAS, I have met many people, all nice, professional, helpful and there for support when you need it."

Wayne looks forward to his work on the Diversity Council and learning more about the different cultural backgrounds of his new DAS family.



DON'T MISS The SWEET TASTE OF DAS
With a Holiday FLARE...some may be flambé

TOMORROW, November 1
 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
 South Mechanical Room