

DAS

Newsletter of the Department of Administrative Services

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Accolades abound at year-end luncheon

By Mike Mansfield

From Broadway to Hollywood, the weeks from late December through February comprise what's known in social circles as "The Prize Season" - a time to bestow due reward upon those whose achievements stand head and shoulders above the rest. It is a time the glitterati come together at lavish ceremonies in grand old theaters to celebrate those whose efforts, by a vote of their peers, are deserving of recognition.

On a raw, late December morning in the stately Seaverns Room of The



Business Enterprises' Paul Greco proudly accepts his Customer Service Award from Committee members Jay Tulin, Karen Rakowski, Mike Felix, and Eric Bengston at the Employee Recognition Ceremony on December 21.

Bushnell in Hartford, DAS followed suit with its own Prize Season - the third and final round of Employee Recognition Awards for 1998. The ceremony was expanded to include not only the 12 new recipients from the last four months of

Please see Accolades, page 7

HAPPY 1999!

The keys to communication By Donna Micklus

Now in its third year, the Communication Coordinator Program has become an invaluable resource at DAS.

“It is interesting to see how the role of communication coordinator has evolved as our agency has gone through various stages of development,” said Commissioner Barbara Waters.

“What began as a more reactive mechanism for rumor control has turned into a very positive means of generating employee participation, soliciting feedback, and generally being proactive about maintaining the standards of our agency communication plan,” she added.

The current role of communica-

tion coordinator is a varied one and can involve writing and editing for newsletters, working on special events, seeking out and funneling employee suggestions, and contributing to the overall quality and content of agency communications on all levels.

“One of the significant additions to the program was the establishment of the account managers in the Communications Office to work closely with communication coordinators,” said Communications Director Donna Micklus. “This partnership really is the

catalyst in improving both internal communications and external public relations efforts as well.”

Waters said she has always made communications a high priority.

“I truly believe that communication is the cornerstone to developing a real DAS community, one where we learn to respect and care for our differences as well as our similarities,” Waters said.



New Communication Coordinator Committee, seated: Cheryl Welton, Anna Tara, and Sue Miller. Standing: Carol Wilson, Brian Halloran, and Mike Felix.

DAS Times

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

Santa's elves helped make the DAS Toy Drive bigger and better than ever...



Seated: Michelle Burns and Joann McAllister. Standing: Roger Mansfield, Eva Merriman, Robin Riddlesworth, Joan Moran, and Juanita Lentocho. Thanks to Procurement's John Pacholski, the DAS Toy Drive was featured on Fox 61 Student News.

Carlos Velez and **Meg Yetishefsky** were commended by Shirley A. Johnson from Business Solution Providers, Inc. for their professionalism and commitment in helping her company apply for Set-Aside status and "for making this office work for the small businesses in Connecticut."

Jose Baez, **Warren Ondevilla**, **Linda Hubeny**, and **Chris Smith** were commended by Michelle Burns for their continuous support and assistance and for setting up nine computers in a timely fashion to help make the typing exam run smoothly.

Kenn Stephenson extended a thank you to **Barry Graugard**, **Richard Yeske**, **Pat DeConti**, and **Ron Johnson** for assisting with the unloading of an overseas container and for solving a very difficult situation.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Dr. Henry Lee applauded **Sue Thomas** for her swift action in identifying and contracting with a skilled, service-oriented vendor for the successful initiation of the Sex Offender Registry Program.

Captain Peter F. Warren from the Statewide Narcotics Task Force extended his thanks to **Nina Ritson** for doing an excellent job on their annual report for FY 97/98 and "hopes that she is available to help them next year."

The IPMA recognized the HRBC website as having "the most useful and used features." Commissioner Barbara Waters congratulated **Bill Skyrme**, **Bill Gills**, **Joan Donahue**, **Christine Mansolf**, and all who worked as a team to get the initial information published and available.

Susan H. Hoover from the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women thanked **Meg Yetishefsky** for being a presenter at the PCSW Conference.

Kudos to **Sue Miller** and **Janet Knopf** from Ted Schilke and Jim Passier from Procurement for their prompt assistance revising the column headings on their crushed stone computer program.

Commissioner Barbara Waters thanked **Tom Yuh** from Fleet Operations for assisting Tony Smith with his career development. "Your caring and commitment to another employee is very much appreciated."

Special thanks to **Deb Atkinson** from Vin Lombardo for "working her magic helping with the hiring of two consultants and her extra work on the approval process."

Ertan Gunes from the Department of Public Works expressed her appreciation to **Maureen Costigan** for helping her meet her schedule in getting a contract item for the State Police Forensic Lab Phase II construction. "Her action benefited both DAS and DPW."

Kudos to **Robin Riddlesworth** and **Michelle Burns** from Tony Lewis for their proficient and responsive customer service in answering multiple technical questions for several state agencies regarding pending examinations.

Lisa Chasse expressed her appreciation to **Deanna Howard** from the Print Shop for her conscientious effort in noticing a discrepancy on a large HRBC print job and for making the necessary changes before distribution.

Congratulations to **Maureen Costigan** and the **Procurement Team** from Commissioner Barbara Waters on the success of their vendor training session. "I have heard terrific things from vendors on how valuable the training was."

Hats Off

By Cindy Duberek

Jerry Lynn and **Diane Preble** were praised by Commissioner Barbara Waters for the great informational session on the new travel regulations. "I cannot believe that a training session on travel regulations could be fun."

Fran Caron from the Department of Correction and Jay Churchill were elated to have the assistance of **Maureen Blackburn** who came to their aid solving a computer program problem.

Jim Gotta applauded **Fleet Operations** for fixing his flat tire so quickly and getting him back on the road in no time!

Michelle Burns praised **Jose Baez** for the fabulous turnaround time on her request to relocate a printer.

Susan Kintmer from DMHAS extended her appreciation to **Shanta Kumar** for helping her understand the job search process and for "being wonderful, patient, and very informing."

Lotus Votes

What a hassle. Distributing ballots, collecting ballots, tallying ballots. Not anymore.

Patti Maneggia of HRBC's personnel office was asked to assist the Management Advisory Council (MAC) in electing a new representative for the upcoming term.

"I didn't want to do it the old fashioned way," said Maneggia. So she teamed up with Rick Bolduc of Management Information Solutions to come up with a plan.

Victories

By John McKay and Mike Mansfield

The result was electronic voting through Lotus Notes. Once the nominations were compiled, an email was sent out to the council members with a link to an electronic ballot. The recipient could simply click and vote for their candidate.

"It's going to be a very useful tool now and in future projects," said Bolduc. "All the information is tallied electronically, anonymously, and you can't vote twice."

"I'm really excited about all the time and paper this electronic ballot will save," said Maneggia. "I sent out the ballot and had the results as soon as everyone returned their votes. It's very cool."

Congratulations to Martin Anderson, the new MAC Representative and to Reuben Jonathan-Lusack who will serve as Alternate. Special thanks to Christine Mansolf for all her time and hard work as the '98 MAC Representative.

Toll Fee

It's not 1-800-COLLECT, but DAS has its own way of saving money on its phone bill.

Thanks to the new telecommunications network, DAS is saving approximately \$1,800 a month.

Kathy Valone of MIS explained where the savings are coming from.

"First, there are lower phone rates through our new carrier; also, we used to rent our voice mail boxes which was an additional charge and; finally, because we can now make a lot of the changes to the system in-house. I can change numbers and do basic maintenance on the system instead of having to call a technician every time there is a problem."

Valone also attributed the savings to better network management. She said the system is technologically superior to the former system; it is able to use less network resources, yet have better and faster performance.

A Historical Offering

Paul Greco, of State and Federal Property Distribution, helped recreate a bit of history.

He coordinated the transfer of \$34,500 worth of materials for use on a representation of the Amistad, the merchant vessel brought to international notoriety when the slaves it was carrying on an 1839 passage staged a deadly revolt.

Steven Spielberg's recent Oscar-nominated film brought such a wave of renewed attention to the "freedom schooner" and the following trials, many of which took place in Connecticut, that a representation is now being built on the Mystic shoreline.

"The transfer included 34,000 pounds of lead ballast and 12 containers of pitch," said Greco, "and it will all be used as a part of this construction project."

Historians and master craftsmen began the painstaking task of assembling a faithful representation this year for a group called Amistad America who received the grant to build the ship.

This type of construction often involves a time-consuming search for rare materials that are often priced sky-high due to their relative scarcity today.

Greco helped to locate the materials, saving both time and money.

The new Amistad is set for completion in time to sail into New York's harbor on July 4, 2000 for the tall ship regatta.

Up, up and away

By Heather Cavanaugh

Carlos Kebe is always reaching for the sky. His hobby is a lofty one - hot air ballooning in the Connecticut River Valley.

"Betsy to Heavens" is the name of his balloon that takes him to the friendly skies on a regular basis. But Kebe said that it is always Mother Nature who decides whether or not a flight can be taken.

"We are at the mercy of the wind," Kebe explained, adding that there must be less than a six mph surface wind. Blustery weather may blow the balloon too far off course, but light winds can trap the balloon in an unwelcome spot.

He recalled one instance when he was



Carlos Kebe

Before even thinking of flying, balloonists check local weather

briefings for wind and weather information.

"We then make the decision whether to give it a go," he said.

The crew then spreads

out the fabric of the balloon or "envelope" and takes the necessary precautions in attaching the cables.

"Safety is our number one concern," said Kebe. "That's also why we call it inflating the balloon rather than blowing it up!" he joked.

Fans blow cold air into the balloon to stretch the fabric. "It fills up like a beach ball on the ground," explained Kebe.

Once the burners are fired, it becomes upright almost immediately and passengers board the

basket or "gondola" as it is called.

"Most flights are around an hour, but the time cannot be guaranteed."

He explained that balloonists could miss their landing destination, or might have to touch down before the landing site to ensure that they have enough fuel. Kebe said that balloons usually travel five to seven miles.

Interested in taking a flight? Kebe is always looking for crew members to help him. He has offered to repay any volunteers

with a flight when he is officially licensed.

He is currently in training to receive his pilot's license, which he plans to get this summer.

When Kebe is on ground, he is involved in numerous activities such as the Jaycees, driving players at the Pilot Pen tennis tournament, and ushering at the Bushnell and Shubert theaters.

"Driving for the tennis players is a change of pace," said Kebe. "It's very intense for the week or



Kebe's "Betsy to Heavens"

two of the tournament." He has chauffeured players such as Andre Agassi, Martina Navratilova, and Steffi Graf.

"It's a great way to meet people because volunteers are all from different backgrounds."

Kebe's background is interesting in itself. He is originally from Medellin, Colombia and moved to Long Island when he was 11 years old. He relocated to Connecticut 21 years ago, and has been a Collection Services investigator at DAS for the past 20 years.



on the "chase" crew, following the path of a friend's balloon. It was getting dark and the winds weren't strong enough to carry the balloon to a desirable landing spot - it was stuck over a reservoir.

"The pilot threw down a line and we pulled him away from the water, unfortunately onto the highway." Kebe and crew directed traffic while they quickly packed up the balloon to safety. "The police would not have been pleased," he joked.

To avoid such potential catastrophes, most flights are made right after sunrise or late afternoon when the winds are calmest.

Career power to life power

By John McKay

Do you have the right tools to help your career grow? What are the right tools and where do you get them?

Enter the Career Power training seminars that began this month.

Nina Davit of HR's Strategic Planning and Workforce Development Unit has introduced a unique opportunity for DAS employees.

"The phrase *Career Power* is limiting," said Davit, "It's really *Life Power*."

Davit explained that through a number of customized activities, discussions, assessment and feedback tools, employees can get a better picture of what is important to them not only in their career but in their

lives as well.

"The phrase Career Power is limiting...It's really Life Power."

Managers have been trained on both the Career Power techniques, plus coaching tips on helping employees address their Career Power questions.

"Work is such a big part of our everyday lives that the two quickly meld together. Sometimes I think my co-workers are my family and I treat my family like customers," joked Davit.

The activities and discussions are structured to evaluate and assess those things which are critical to an employee's professional success. An employee may have the desire to grow and advance in his/her career, but may not have the tools or know how to accomplish the task. Career Power is a tool designed to show the way.

In addition, Career Power is designed to help employees become more effective and versatile in the work that they currently perform, helping them develop an approach to their job that enhances professional satisfaction and productivity.

Career Power is a win-win for everyone involved; the individual, his/her manager, and DAS.

"Fifteen minutes out of training and I was using what I had learned," said Dr. Pam Libby.

"A co-worker had approached me with a question concerning her career, and I was able to coach her through with some positive feedback and suggest

some initiatives she might take."

Classes are being scheduled for January and February for DAS employees and additional follow-up sessions will be held this summer.

"This isn't something we're going to do and forget about," said Davit. "Our follow-up meetings are designed to reinforce and support employees progress and professional growth."

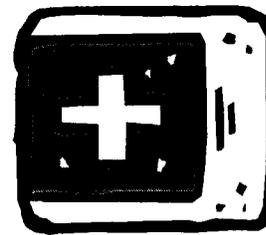
DAS - STAT!

By John McKay

Don't expect to see George Clooney running down the halls of the SOB any time soon, but just the same, medical help won't be far away.

The DAS Safety Committee has begun the initial stage of its First Responder Program. The program is part of the committee's overall mission of providing a safe workplace environment.

People who qualify for First Responder training will be given 10 hours of training in CPR, first aid, and the use of a defibrillator.



"The trainees will receive free professional training from the American Red Cross," said John Wilkerson, a committee member and volunteer emergency medical technician. "It's a very comprehensive course that covers everything they'll need to know on being

able to help."

When the training is complete in April, DAS will have 25 to 30 personnel trained in everything from attending to a paper cut to performing CPR.

DAS' Workers' Compensation office will run an evaluation of the program to see if it results in a reduction in claims.

"I've seen similar programs in other companies," said Mike Barletta, director of Workers' Compensation and a committee member. "First Responder and other safety awareness programs have led to a decrease in claims, and both a financial and personal increase in savings. It's a great program."

Accolades abound, continued from Page 1

balloting, but the entire year's previous winners as well. The result was a truly special event, befitting the individuals and teams whose extra efforts made them special in their own right.

The room's wood-paneled walls and ornate deco appointments made quite an impression on the 75-plus attendees as they noshed on an elaborate spread of sandwiches, wraps, salads, and holiday cookies.

"Just look at this place," exclaimed Employee Recognition Committee member Karen Rakowski, "it's beautiful!"

Business Enterprises swept this term's Employee Recognition Awards, with Paul Greco of State and Federal Property Distribution winning the *Customer Service Award* and Procurement Services personnel receiving the nod for both the *Going the Extra Mile Award* and *Team Excellence*. In fact, two Procurement employees - Maureen Costigan and Lydia Rosario - received accolades in both categories.

The completion of the award's first year also marks the end of the involvement of some on the committee that selects the winners.

Some, like Rakowski, Jay Tulin, and award co-founder Devin Marquez said they'll be returning



Procurement staff received awards for both *Going the Extra Mile* and *Team Excellence* in the third round of balloting. Jim Gotta and Meg Yetishfsky are shown accepting their awards from Committee members Jay Tulin, Karen Rakowski, and Mike Felix.



Emcee Devin Marquez greets attendees at the first annual Employee Recognition year-end ceremony.

next year.

Others, like FAR's Mike Felix, however, said he plans to step aside to let a new member onto the committee.

Finding replacements shouldn't be a problem. All involved seem to share a common feeling of accomplishment and pride as they watched their co-workers honor their own at the ceremony.

"This was a fun committee to be on," Felix said, "the people on it are just great."

The envelope please...

And the winners are:



Customer Service
Paul Greco

Going the Extra Mile
Maureen Costigan
Teresa Dupont
Betty Johnson
Linda Kobylenski
Lydia Rosario

Team Excellence
Maureen Costigan
Kerry DiMatteo
Jim Gotta
Shelby Jones-Crawford
Vince McMahon
Lydia Rosario
Carol Wilson
Meg Yetishfsky

All the news that fits, we print

By John McKay

Putting a little more "give" in Thanksgiving

Last month's Turkey Drive produced 118 turkeys and \$305 in donations for Foodshare of Greater Hartford who distributed the turkeys to kitchens, needy families, and shelters.

"It was great to see all the DAS employees and people from other agencies showing an interest in helping the less fortunate," said FAR's Mike Felix, coordinator of the drive in Hartford. Brian Halloran coordinated the effort for FAR staff in Newington.



But who *was* that dressed in a turkey costume? Give up? None other than Rob Zalucki from FAR and Felix who took turns dressing up in the attention-getting garb. "It was a lot of fun," laughed Zalucki. "You should have seen some the reactions I got."



Who's the turkey? Mike or Rob? Oh well, birds of a feather...

Managers' Day

On November 20, approximately 250 state managers got together at Manchester Community-Technical College to listen to colleagues share advice on management techniques and experiences. Jon Sandberg, spokesperson for the proposed Adriaen's Landing project in Hartford, who has worked for the state in the past, and Dr. Henry Lee, Commissioner of Public Safety, were keynote speakers. Lee gave a motivating and inspirational presentation explaining how he began his career and became the country's leading forensic expert.

Lead by example

DAS employees don't just join, they lead.

Steve Dygus of Fleet Operations was elected president of the National Conference of State Fleet Administrators. "Being chosen by an organization of your peers is a special honor," said Dygus, "and I will do everything I can to fulfill the group's goals."

Martin Anderson of SLC will chair the Professional/Scientific Affairs Committee for the International Personnel Management Associate Assessment Council for 1999. The 700-member council is actively engaged in the professional, academic, and practical field of personnel research and assessment. "I worked in personnel assessment since 1984 in Oklahoma and then in Connecticut before the formation of the Strategic Leadership Center. I'm excited about the opportunity to chair such an interesting organization."

'Tis the season

The Charitable Giving Campaign committee raised \$14,610 this year from fundraisers, payroll deductions, and contributions.

"Outstanding," said Commissioner Barbara Waters. "I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this wonderful achievement."

"We had a lot of fun with our fundraising events," said SLC's Nancy Jones who was the campaign organizer. "The tea cup auction and the putting contest were our biggest events. We'll be sure to have them for next year's campaign."