

Sunburst:

A Horizon Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 1

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Horizon's Newest Members:

Chicago, IL

Robert Collins

Raymond Cubberly

Adam Hall

Blanca Haro

Michael McMahon

Marcy Nordahl

Rebecca Olson

Bridget Troy

Robert Tutag

Michael Tysor

Kimberly Willerth

Ohio Service Center

Stephanie Imperato

Daniel Snavelly

Ashley Snead

Anna Vanko

Southern Illinois / Indiana Service Center

Anthony Filipiak

Amanda Keith

Minnesota / Wisconsin Service Center

Nathan Asma

John Matthews

Horizon Holiday Hijinks



It's safe to say that everyone at GSA's Holiday Party on December 17 was filled to the brim with holiday spirits....er, spirit. Just ask the official Trainee Holiday Choir, pictured above leading a rousing rendition of "The Twelve Days As A Trainee." See pages 2-3 for all the hazy details.

(l-r: Carly Thompson, Andrew Daglas, Anna Bednarczyk, Lindsay Dault, Ashley Tracy, Frank Torres, Liz Madison, Eric Firestone, Ryan Beard, Kyle Van Someren, William Chapman, Edgar Delgado. Not pictured: Dignity. Photo courtesy of Bob Chesrow.)

Coordinator's Corner

Email Etiquette (Part 3 of 4 on Professionalism)

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have made it acceptable to write conversationally. Phrases like LOL, BRB, and TTYL have become a part of everyday language. However, when communicating professionally via email, it is better to follow the simple rules of elementary and high school English.

Be sure to spell out words instead of using abbreviations or acronyms (unless the in-

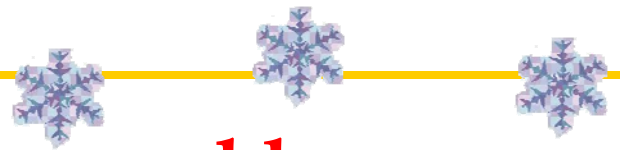
tended recipient will understand), and avoid using sentence fragments.

You should also be sure to address the intended recipient when sending the initial email (e.g., Good Morning, Hello, Greetings). If the email chain is continuous, using the intended recipient's first name as a greeting is sufficient.

Finally, practice the KISS method – Keep It Simple and Short. Get to the point of the email,

and ask or say what you need. If the email requires an immediate response, include RESPONSE REQUESTED in the subject line. If the email is asking the recipient to do something, include ACTION ITEM in the subject line. Including those few words in the subject could mean the difference between someone reading your email or deleting it.

-Teneshia Miller



Hitting the high notes - and low ones

The GSA Holiday Party was rife with holiday cheer and friendly competition. Hard-working employees enjoyed the chance to unwind with a full buffet, a raffle and live music by GSA's in-house rock band, InRoads. Jolly Old St. Nick even paid a visit to answer a few holiday wishes.

Amidst the merry dancing and revelry, old sports rivalries flared up between the trainees and mentors. In the spirit of competition, the Trainee/Mentor Cup was also invited to the party....although it might have snuck in without paying the \$4 cover charge.

The Cup made its appearance after the trainees decided to anoint themselves as the victors of an undeclared Holiday Caroling Competition for their muddled performance of "The Twelve Days As A Trainee." Although the performance was everything short of spectacular, it still managed to knock the wind out of the mentors' sails — and anything that they attempted to perform on stage didn't compare. (Does anyone even know what they performed?)

The party continued late into the evening, even spreading across the city. As for the trophy....well, the picture below sums up how it was found the next morning: on the side of Dearborn and Jackson, next to a puddle!



The ultimate wounded soldier.



Ryan Beard and Ken Kunnesh put on their best happy faces as they grapple over the coveted Trainee/Mentor Cup.



Kyle Van Someren and William Chapman get in tune as members of the Trainee Holiday Choir.

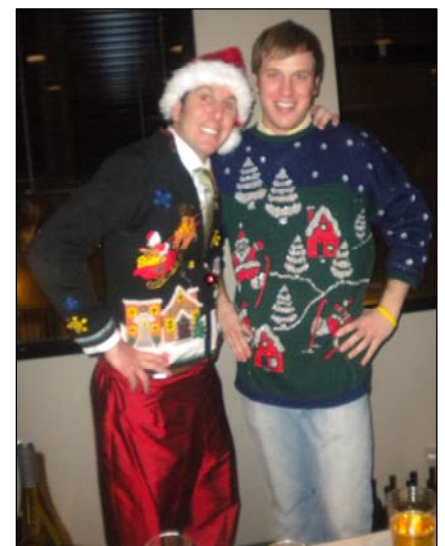
Spirit of

The trainees are still devastated that the mentors have such disrespect for the trophy.

Finally, to dispel the rumors about the man in the flashy red pants: No, it wasn't Santa Claus, MC Hammer, or Aladdin. It was Property Management's Ryan Beard, up to his usual no-good antics — spreading joy, mischief and high fashion in equal measure.

Many of you are just dying to know how you can get your hands on such a flashy pair of pants, so we have to give away the secret: they actually belong to Property Management's own Brian Bogucki. He likes to call them his "Friday Pants."

-Ryan Beard & Kristina Wallig



Ryan Beard, Mike Mitchell, and the famous pants.



The colorful carolers of the Indianapolis Field Office: Brittany Hess, Samuel McFadden, Amiee Ennis.

On December 17th, the Northern Ohio Service Center celebrated the holiday season with a potluck at Cleveland's Metzenbaum Courthouse. The event highlights included an Ugly Sweater Contest, where Building Management Specialist Evan Shooltz was announced as the winner.

-Leigh Rhodaberger



A stylish season (l-r): Maureen Michael, Bethany Gerard, Shawna Goldner, Kathy Lease, Leigh Rhodaberger, Evan Shooltz, Connie Bilek-Hammond, Angela Jayjack, Chris Yezbick.

the Season



Stephanie Flores and Marc Zitzer enjoy Chicago's holiday party at the Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal Building.



During the Ft. Snelling Field Office's gift exchange game, Nathan Asma displays the heated ice scraper he's always wanted. Clockwise from left: Judith Irby, James Feralin, Richard Conrad, John Matthews, Asma, Shirley McGee.



Trainees, mentors come out swinging

After weeks of preparation and some harmless trash talking between the trainees and the mentors, the zero hour of the Trainee-Mentor softball game arrived on September 24.

The two teams faced off at Lake Shore Park just before dusk. The trainee team brought an all-star lineup to the plate, with many players fresh out of their college careers.

The mentors on the other hand were shaking off some cobwebs during warm-ups, and first impressions had lead many observers to assume this wouldn't be much of a contest at all.

After both teams finished their pre-game practice, it was time for the first pitch. Umpire Frank Torres shouted "play ball," and after all the anticipation the game was finally underway.

Surprisingly, the mentors came out with bats swinging and took an early lead. Jeff Miller breathed early life into the squad with a home run that barely eluded the grasp of a diving Ryan Beard, whose valiant effort netted him only a faceful of fresh fruit upon landing in a strawberry patch.

After the first three innings, the score was 6-2 in favor of the mentors, and the sun was sinking fast. But the trainees weren't going down without a fight.

In the bottom of the fourth inning, the scrappy squad staged a formidable comeback. Key hits by Brian Bogucki and William Chapman put two on base for Bret Culen, who came through with a home run



Diamonds in the Rough: The determined trainee squad.

Back row (l-r): Jim Mulligan, Brian Bogucki, Ryan Beard, William Chapman, Carly Thompson, Caleb Hansen

Front row: Jim Guidos, Marc Zitzer, Bridget Egan, Frank Torres, Laura Husarek, Edgar Delgado, Bret Culen

that put the trainees right back in the game at 6-5.

The mentors began to sweat. With the momentum shifting the trainees' way heading into the sixth and final inning, it appeared the students would become the masters when all was said and done.

The mentors took to the plate at the top of the inning seeking an insurance run. They had one last chance to put some distance between themselves and the rejuvenated upstarts, who seemed all but certain to overcome the slimmest of deficits.

Surprising everyone — except perhaps themselves — the mentors didn't wear down late in the game, and managed to go out with a bang by scoring three runs off the bat of Jesse "Papa" Ozuna.

A four run hole proved to be too much for the trainees to overcome. With their hopes deflated, the trainees went quietly in the bottom half of the frame, and the final score remained 9-5: a mentor win.

The trainees redeemed themselves somewhat in an abbreviated rematch immediately following the epic contest. But the rubber match in this rivalry will have to wait until the final event of the FY2010 Trainee/Mentor Cup season, scheduled for summer 2010.

Although the trainees initially came up short, one may argue that they were saving their energy for the post-game festivities at Exchequer.

-Brian Bogucki & Andrew Daglas



Heavy Hitters: The victorious mentors. Back row (l-r): Neil Omansky, Robert Higgins, David Tharp, Jesse Ozuna, Ken Kunnesh, Michael Bloom

Front row: Jason Bazarko, Bruce Hall, Jeff Miller, Michael Messerle, Frank Priore

A smashing good time for PMSC

Continuing a proud GSA tradition of mediocre volleyball that dates back nearly six months, the Property Management Service Center concluded a 2-6 indoor season in November. Despite many ups and downs, the experience was a tremendous character builder for the members of the Dirty Dozen, all of whom learned something about themselves, and about each other. Specifically, that almost everybody stinks at volleyball.

To be sure, there were bright spots. Carly Thompson's powerful "Overhand Smash" struck fear in the hearts of opponents, not to mention teammates whose heads were often in its deadly path. Even teammates who were Carly's supervisors were not spared her wrath, which may explain why she no longer works in the Property Management Service Center.

Josh Westhouse's aggression and hustle saved countless loose balls, and on one memorable occasion managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. And, as nobody who knows him will be surprised to learn, Edgar Delgado was exceptionally good at making passes.

Although victories were hard to come by, every member of the Dirty Dozen could find something to be proud of, especially after enough post-game beers.

Lindsay Dault organized the team from scratch and earned the Most Improved Player award. Eric Firestone's patented "Blooming Flower" setting technique exemplified the unique aesthetic of sport. Long-time volleyball powerhouse Bridget Egan deserves kudos not only for her competitive fire, but also for not once clonking her teammates' heads together whenever a ball landed on the floor between three motionless players (although you could see she wanted to).

Since trainees always appreciate the tutelage of mentors, it is important to recognize seasoned veterans



Bridget Egan sets up to return the ball for the Property Management Service Center's indoor volleyball team, while Lindsay Dault, Eric Firestone, Josh Westhouse and Liz Madison are poised and ready.

Don Kottl, Jeff Whelpley, Jermaine Wiley and "Coach" Diana Vaughan, whose spirited cries of "side out!" never failed to inspire and confuse.

As proud intramural college star Liz Madison noted, "The PMSC volleyball season was a learning experience in more than one way. For many, it was learning more about the game and art of volleyball, but the true learning came from getting to know the individuals you work with on another level, in a different environment. Who said learning can't be fun?!"

Stressing camaraderie over competition — and in no way alluding to a forfeit that may or may not have led to one of the team's two victories — Liz added, "It's like the other team wasn't even there!"

A sentiment opponents no doubt usually shared.

-Andrew Daglas

Horizon alum Kim Boeschen shares her experience

Kim Boeschen, a Regional Account Manager in the Customer Projects Service Center, spoke to trainees at Horizon's October meeting.

Formerly a trainee herself, Kim spoke about her career path at GSA and offered advice about successfully graduating from the trainee program.

Among the advice she shared was to spend time as a trainee networking and learning about other areas of GSA, to ask ques-



Regional Account Manager Kim Boeschen (third from left) spoke to Horizon trainees, including Kyle Van Someren, Carly Thompson, Marc Zitzer, Greg Rackow, and Richard Weller.

tions and learn others' best practices and to continually challenge yourself and your peers.

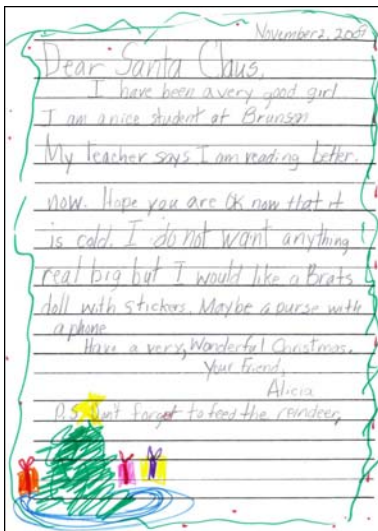
Kim joined GSA in 2000. After completing the trainee program, she served as a Project Director for the State of Indiana Project Team and the Department of Homeland Security/Department of Defense Client Delivery Team. She recently was promoted to her current position as Regional Account Manager.

-Kristina Wallig

GSA gives back to Chicago's kids

Dozens of GSA employees embraced the season of giving this year, and helped brighten the holidays of nearly 200 children through the *Letters To Santa* program.

The program is an annual event in which children from low-income schools in the Chicagoland area write



Underprivileged children in Chicago send their holiday wishes to St. Nick, and local organizations including GSA helped make their seasons brighter through the *Letters to Santa* program.

Christmas letters to Santa Claus, which are collected by the Chicago Sun-Times. Those letters are re-routed from the North Pole to local participating organizations — including GSA — and volunteers make those wishes come true by purchasing gifts for the children.

This holiday season, GSA answered letters for 190 children at the Milton Brunson School on Chicago's West Side. Many employees generously answered multiple letters. In the end, the full contribution delivered to the school on December 9 filled four cars to capacity.

Trainees took part en masse, as the toy drive was coordinated with Horizon's always-active Service Committee.

All in all, this has been the most productive year yet — surpassing last year's total by 75 letters. Thanks

to everyone who helped make the holidays that much better for Chicago's kids.

Running on all cylinders

October 31 was not just a day for kids in Chicagoland to trick-or-treat and eat candy. It was also the Marathon Kids Kick-Off Event.

Marathon Kids is a free, six-month program for kids in grades K-5 that stresses physical fitness through running and walking, nutrition and schoolyard gardening.

Several GSA trainees, recruited by Property Management's Jeff Whelpley, volunteered their time on the chilly Halloween morning to help kick off the event. The volunteers were instrumental right from the outset, decorating the track at the West Side's Hanson Stadium with rows of colorful balloons and filling gift bags for proud participants to take home.

When the quarter-mile run was underway, volunteers showered the kids with cheers and motivation. Parents, teachers, and a live DJ also helped to celebrate and encourage their kids towards a healthy lifestyle.

Though the volunteers may not have been dressed in costumes, they showed their support for the event and sported Marathon Kids t-shirts. The morning was inspirational — filled with cheers, excited kids and dancing.

Marathon Kids encourages children to be strong, confident and healthy. If you are interested in becoming involved in the program, please visit www.marathonkids.org.

-Carly Thompson & Kristina Wallig

Training trip highlighted by an unexpected visitor

Kim Skaff and Carly Thompson got a pleasant surprise during their September trip to GSA headquarters in Washington, D.C. There to take part in a meeting for the Requirements Development Program, they were greeted by then-Acting GSA Administrator Paul Prouty, who made an impromptu appearance.

Prouty led a handful of his charges, including Kim and Carly (pictured to his left and right), on a tour of his office. He even spared a moment to snap a keepsake of the two lucky trainees in the corridors of power.

-Andrew Daglas



Horizon of Excellence

In every edition of the *Sunburst*, we like to shine the spotlight on a few top-performing trainees in **Horizon of Excellence**. In this edition, Bret Culen and Michelle Bies tackle difficult questions posed by *Sunburst* writer and fellow trainee Patrick J. McEleney.

Bret Culen

Where did you go to school? I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa.

When did you graduate? Major?

I graduated in May of 2007 majoring in Finance and Economics. I graduated with my Masters of Business Administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in May of 2009. My concentrations were Finance and General Management.

Who are your favorite sports teams?

Cubs, Bears, Blackhawks.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the office?

I enjoy playing and watching sports. I currently am active on softball and basketball teams. I also enjoy remodeling homes, and fixing automobiles.

If you knew that today was your last day on Earth, how would you spend it?

I would like to go sailing in the Caribbean with my family and friends. I can't think of a more peaceful way to spend my final day.

3 words your friends use to describe you?

Outgoing, caring, and enthusiastic.

What is your favorite movie?

The Usual Suspects.

What did you do before working at GSA?

I spent seven summers working at Central Credit Union of Illinois while on summer vacation from high school and college. I worked as a teller, loan officer and member services representative. Last summer I worked at AT&T in their customer satisfaction division.

If you could have lunch with anyone, alive or deceased, who would it be and why?

I would like to have lunch with Upton Sinclair. I was always fascinated with his work exposing poor working conditions and corruption in the early 1900's.

What is a random fact about yourself only a few people know about?

I share a birth date with my grandfather.

Mentors take Round One from trainees

The Trainee/Mentor Cup season kicked off in exciting fashion on November 5. When they met on the basketball court, what was supposed to be a showdown between the Tenacious Trainees and the Machiavelian Mentors turned into a rout of the Tiny Trainees by the Mighty Mentors!

Although the game started out slowly on both sides, the trainees soon raced ahead by solving their opponents' man-to-man coverage. Propelled by team speed, the three-point sniping of Property Management's Edgar Delgado, and the resurrecting rebounds of Design and Construction's Bret Culen, the trainees enjoyed a 14-point lead just after halftime.

But the mentors changed defensive strategies, adopting a suffocating zone defense lead by the extremely scrappy Kip "Smalls" Bordelon. The trainees couldn't adjust in time, and ultimately fell victim to the pressure.

While the trainees found their offense restricted, that of the mentors was resuscitated by Zack "The Muscle" Anderson and Josue "The Body" Flores. A few lucky shots by Bordelon finally put the mentors in front with less than two minutes left in the game.

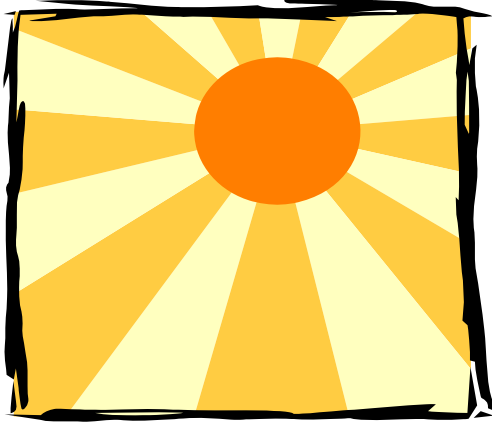
The trainees regained their bearings and made one last lunge for victory. But without the help of their biggest player, Bill "The Hacker" Winczer, who fouled out early in the second half, they didn't have quite enough left in the tank.

The mentors won by the tally of 43-39, possibly thanks to the Bobby Knight-style coaching efforts of Ken "The Punisher" Kunnesh. The trainees' coach, Ryan Beard, accepted full responsibility for the loss and promised to avenge it in a bumptious round of bowling....coming to an alley near you in early February 2010!

For those who are keeping score, the mentors jump out to a 1-0 record after the first in a five-part series of challenges throughout FY2010. The remaining events scheduled are bowling (February), trivia (April), sand volleyball (June/July), and softball (August/September). Stay posted for further details!

-Ryan Beard





HORIZON
U.S. General Services Administration
Public Buildings Service

We hope you enjoyed this issue of Sunburst: A Horizon Newsletter! If you have any ideas for articles, or would like to submit your own, please send an email to ashley.tracy@gsa.gov or kristina.wallig@gsa.gov. If you are interested in assisting Kristina with the Sunburst newsletter, please contact her.

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Horizon of Excellence

Michelle Bies

Where did you go to school? Ferris State University.

When did you graduate? Major? Graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in Facilities Management.

Who are your favorite sports teams? I don't really follow sports, but if I had to pick a few they would be: Detroit Red Wings, Detroit Tigers and Green Bay Packers.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the office? Anything outdoors (hiking, camping, gardening); hanging out with friends and family.

If you knew that today was your last day on Earth, how would you spend it? Relaxing in the sun surrounded by my loved ones.

3 words your friends use to describe you? Straight from one of my friend's mouth - smart, talented and motivated

What is your favorite movie? I know it's lame, but I do not really have one. There are many I could watch over and over again.

What did you do before working at GSA? I worked at a Cancer Research Facility on the Facilities Management team.

If you could have lunch with anyone, alive or deceased, who would it be and why? Both of my grandfathers. At the time they passed, I was too young to truly appreciate what they had experienced in their lives and who they really were. I have so many questions I would ask now that I hadn't even thought of asking when they were both here.

What is a random fact about yourself only a few people know about? I love to clean and do laundry.

When I know my coworker
is having a good day...



b Hoover