

OFFICE OF ETHICS

QUARTERLEY ~ NEWSLETTER



JULY'S EDITION



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Well, the last couple of years in the USDA Ethics Program have been nothing if not unpredictable. In late 2000, the Office of Ethics (OE) was fully staffed and led superbly by John Surina. The Ethics

Program was blessed with personnel who possessed considerable ethics experience. Those of us in OE looked at the period of 1998-2000 as one of sheer working joy - camaraderie, creativity, and communal purpose -- both within OE and within the entire Ethics Program at USDA. Then came the Odyssey of 2001 (sorry). The Office went through extended personnel details and, ultimately, lost John as Director to the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration. The Ethics Program, in general, faced the Transition, an OGE audit, and numerous personnel changes of its own. This period could perhaps best be described, with appropriate credit to The Grateful Dead, as a "long, strange trip."

The temptation, as a new Director, is to say, rather officiously, that, since accepting the position, it has been my focus to regain that close, familial support relationship amongst the USDA ethics family. However, that would be grossly incorrect, because it has always been the focus of Dave Spradlin, Pat Tippet, Lolita Roberson, John Surina (who still serves as DAEO), myself, and so many of you who either were part of the family back then, or are floundering in the sea of ethics and needing familial support. Nothing has changed, other than a sense of organizational normalcy.

As Director of OE, I cannot replace John - no one can. The late Carl Sagan would use the term "singularity" correctly in describing Mr. Surina. Thankfully, I don't have to try. John is the DAEO

and will be an active one. He still is the head of the program, for which we can all feel grateful. As for yours truly, I hope to make sure that everyone gets fed, and that the dishes get washed and put away properly. Seriously, if you've known me for any length of time, you know how much this program and its people mean to me. But, then, that's kind of unnecessary to say, because if you are an "ethics" person, this program with its sometimes-incomprehensible two century-old rules, means at least as much to you, too.

As for the program, there have been numerous personnel changes, but in meeting many of you over the past six months, and especially at last month's training session, I have a "real good feeling." Many of the new folks have impressed me as having that certain "zest" for this program that will make working in this area fun and rewarding. As a result, it is our hope that ethics program leadership, ethics program ownership, will be broadly distributed throughout the ethics family. It is our hope that this newsletter will help that effort not only by keeping ethics folks informed of what their ethics mates are doing and of news in the ethics world, but also by providing a vehicle through which we can market this program, its services, and ourselves.

With that, I'll close out by welcoming you to the First edition of the Ethics Newsletter and by thanking Lolita Roberson for pulling this all together. I can't think of a position I'd rather have in the Federal government, OR a better group of human beings with whom to spend one's employed hours.

2ND OFFICE OF ETHICS RETREAT

The 2nd Office Ethics Retreat will be held on September 17 and 18, 2002, at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center 10300 Baltimore Boulevard (Route 1), Building 005, Room 21, and Beltsville, Maryland. We welcome all of our Ethics community employees to this retreat. Please send us e-mail message to

DAEO.Ethics.usda.gov by cob 9/1/02 if you are planning to attend.

OE COORDINATES TWO-DAY ORIENTATION FOR ETHICS ADVISORS

Office of Ethics (OE) and Office of Government Ethics (OGE) staffs presented two days of briefings and training to Agency Ethics Advisors on May 21 and 22, 2002.

Several supervisors of Advisors attended the 4-hour visit to OGE headquarters on the first day. OGE discussed the current audit, the issue of employee participation in an official capacity with outside organizations, and its view of the status of the Ethics Program at the Department. On the second day, Advisors participated in an 8-hour overview of political activity restriction, ethics statutes, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct. Advisors discussed the statutes and Standards in the context of reviewing a hypothetical Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE Form 450).

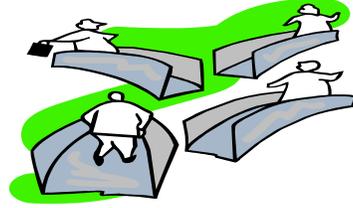
1ST INTERAGENCY ETHICS OFFICIAL MEETING

Our first meeting will be held on July 25, 2002, at 11 a.m. to Noon in room 4960 South Building. The topics at this meeting will be open communication and xxxxxxxxxxxx.

We would like to commend Anita Cunningham, Ethics Advisor, FNS, for coming forth and suggesting that we meet in a group setting such as this one in order to come together with our ideas, problems, issues, and working them out together as a **T-E-A-M**.

A FONT OF ETHICS TRAINING

Once again, USDA's landmark online ethics training is being adopted by another Federal agency for its use. This time, it's the giant U.S. Postal Service. After reviewing online training modules from a number of agencies, the Postal Service chief ethics counsel called USDA's "by far the most concise and user friendly," and asked and received approval to adapt the USDA modules for their use.



ETHICS COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

• *New Employees*

FFSA

Ellen Pearson, Ethics Advisor
Lovita Pollard, Ethics Assistant

FNCS

Anita Cunningham, Ethics Advisor

REE

Clarice Fleming, Ethics Advisor
Kate Muir, Ethics Liaison
Hank Parker, Designated Area Ethics Advisor
Kathy McCue, Ethics Assistant

RD

Ed Peterman, Ethics Advisor
Alice Green, Ethics Advisor

• *Departed Employees*

REE

Lora Tanner, Ethics Assistant

NRE

Pete Sepe, Ethics Advisor

MRP

Joan Carlson, Ethics Advisor (still in APHIS)

• *Job Opportunities*

MRP

APHIS Ethics Advisor position soon to be advertised.

OE

Ethics Program Specialist GS-301-11/13
Senior Ethics Program Specialist-GS-301-14



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