



July 2017
Volume 1, Issue 3



Unity: Cultivating Diversity and Inclusion in PWA

Hilo, Hawaii LGBT Film Screening

Hilo, Hawaii recognized LGBT Month by holding a special screening of the film *Limited Partnership*.

Limited Partnership is the love story between Filipino-American Richard Adams and his Australian husband, Tony Sullivan. In 1975, thanks to a courageous county clerk in Boulder, CO, Richard and Tony were one of the first same-sex couples in the world to be legally married. Richard immediately filed for a green card for Tony based on their marriage. But unlike most heterosexual married couples who easily file petitions and obtain green cards, Richard received a harshly worded homophobic denial letter from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Outraged at the tone, tenor and politics of this letter and to prevent Tony's impending deportation, the couple sued the U.S. government. This became the first federal lawsuit seeking equal treatment for a same-sex marriage in U.S. history.

Over four decades of legal challenges, Richard and Tony figured out how to maintain their sense of humor, justice and whenever possible, their privacy. Their personal tale parallels the history of the LGBT marriage and immigration equality movements, from the couple signing their marriage license in Colorado, to the historic U.S. Supreme Court rulings on gay marriage in June 2013. *Limited Partnership* celebrates Richard and Tony's long path towards justice and citizenship as they challenge the traditional definitions of "spouse" and "family."

Richard and Tony's personal journey is set against 40 years of historical and political clashes. These critical moments in history are explored through the use of television news clips, newspaper headlines, radio announcements, Tony and Richard's personal photos and letters, interviews, and animated graphics. Through artful juxtaposition, these sequences dynamically contrast Richard and Tony's personal battle with the evolution of America's values, the LGBT and mainstream marriage equality movement, and modifications in U.S. immigration policy.



AREA DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

Maintaining a workplace that welcomes diversity in all forms is an important component of attracting highly-qualified applicants for our job vacancies. Celebrations of Special Emphasis Program months contribute to this effort by enhancing our appreciation of diversity in our communities and in the workplace. In this latest issue of *Unity*, we see highlights of events across PWA that promote an inclusive work environment critical to shaping our future workforce.

In addition to the highlighted events for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI) months in Hilo and Reno, I would like to call your attention to an on-line video recorded for the latest AAPI presentation in Albany. In this presentation, Dr. Hao Tran, Associate Director for PWA, recounts his journey from Vietnam, acquisition of US citizenship and experience as a researcher and administrator. In the spirit of using available technology to broadly share SEP events, we decided to test our IT capabilities for posting recordings for all to share. We have had excellent feedback from those who already have viewed the video, and want to make sure all are aware of where it can be viewed: [2017 USDA ARS PWA Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration](#). We thank Hao Tran for sharing his experiences and De Wood for recording and posting the video.



ASIAN-AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH-RENO, NEVADA

The Great Basin Rangelands Research Unit in Reno, NV, hosted a potluck to celebrate Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. We invited Dr. David Shintani, Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Nevada, Reno. He provided a short informative presentation about his Japanese family heritage from early 1900s to the present. Everyone loved the food and speaker!



*“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together .”
~~Malcolm Forbes*

2017 ANNUAL EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM PWA AREA-LEVEL AWARD WINNERS FOR OUTREACH, DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ **DR. JAMES THRONE,**
Center Director
San Joaquin Valley
Agricultural Sciences Center,
Parlier, CA

CITATION:

“For outstanding efforts in outreach and workforce diversity.”

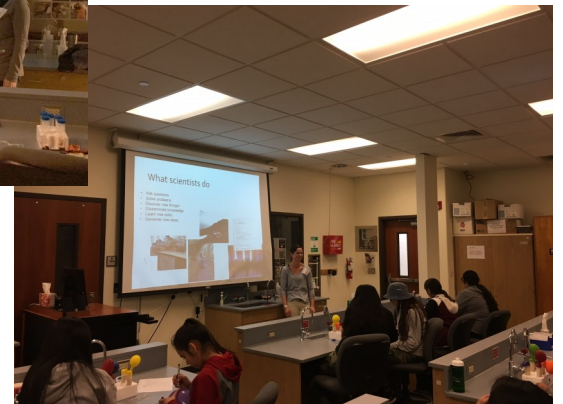
- ◆ **DR. CHANDRA
HOLIFIELD COLLINS,**
Soil Scientist
Southwest Watershed
Research Unit,
Tucson, AZ

CITATION:

“For sustained efforts to promote diversity in the University of Arizona and the Agricultural Research Service”.

OUTREACH-PENDLETON, OREGON

The Microbiology Program at the USDA-ARS unit in Pendleton, OR hosted two workshops at the Expanding your Horizons conference in Pasco, WA on March 25. Expanding your Horizons is a nationwide network introducing and engaging middle-school girls to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Ann Klein presented a workshop titled “*Taste Test: Can Microbes Tell the Difference?*” in which the girls determined whether baker’s yeast had a preference for different sweeteners (sugar, aspartame, stevia) by measuring carbon dioxide production. Kate Reardon and Caroline Melle presented a workshop titled “*Nematodes Alive!*” where the girls viewed nematodes under the microscope and tried to determine whether they feed on plants (plant pathogens) or microbes based on their mouths. Each workshop was attended by approximately 20 girls from the Mid-Columbia region.



CONGRATULATIONS!!

SPOTLIGHT-MARICOPA, ARIZONA

Employees from the U.S. Arid Land Agricultural Research Center (ALARC) held their annual Farm Science Day on February 18, 2017. This event brought in local farmers and families, as well as the greater Phoenix Metro area, Apache Junction, Glendale, and Casa Grande to learn about agriculture and how it affects our communities. Activities included: an insect zoo, insect sounds, cotton 101, auto-steer tractor-ride along, hayrides, farm village and cotton gin at MAC, cricket spitting, face painting, and lots more. ALARC Scientists and Technicians put together displays on Biofuel crops, Entomology, Photosynthesis, Irrigation, Remote sensing, Natural Rubber from guayule, and Farm Equipment. We also had various local food vendors at the event. The event was a success even with inclement weather throughout the day. The event was attended by about 500 people.



The employees of ALARC hosted the annual Summer Ag Institute (SAI) visit on June 5, 2017. The SAI is a group of K-12 teachers, who embark on a week-long tour throughout Arizona. This adventure is designed to teach them about food and fiber production, so they can incorporate that knowledge in the classroom curriculum. This experience is a great opportunity for the teachers to see the vital role agriculture plays in rural communities and the importance of the research being conducted at our center. The group had the opportunity to tour various labs in our three research units, learning about plant breeding, genomics, molecular biology, pest management, and water conservation. They also toured our Phenomic Field Scanner and Lateral Move Sprinkler Irrigation System. The tours were provided by scientist and technicians from all three units. This is a yearly event and the group always has a great time at our center.



PARLIER, CA DIVERSITY HOSTED EVENTS



The employees of the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Sciences Center (SJVASC), on January 23, 2017, invited guest speaker Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Director of the Center for Armenian Studies at California State University at Fresno, to give a presentation about Armenian History and Culture. SJVASC employees of Armenian descent shared their favorite Armenian food with the attendees. The audience had the unique opportunity to learn about Armenian history, and culture.



ARS SPECIAL EMPHASIS OBSERVANCES

September – National Hispanic Heritage Month
(September 15 – October 15)

October – National Disability Employment Awareness Month
(October)

November – National American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month
(November)

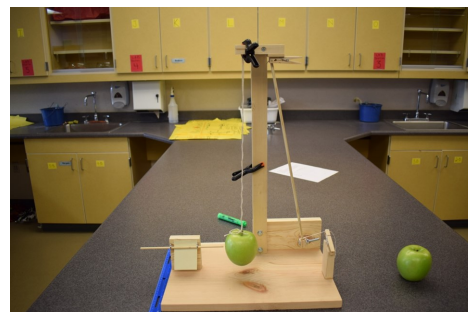
USDA soil microbiologist, Dr. Sadikshya Dangi organized a group of Nepalese community members to visit employees at SJVASC on April 21, 2017 to present an insight to Nepal and its culture. Guest Speaker Dr. Mohan Dangi from California State University at Fresno gave a presentation about Nepal and Nepalese Culture. Local Nepalese Community members attended the event wearing traditional clothes. A group of young Nepalese children sang the Nepalese National anthem and performed a traditional dance. The audience got to learn about the country of Nepal, Nepalese culture, traditional outfits and crafts, music, dance and got to taste Nepalese traditional food.



STUDENT OUTREACH-WENATCHEE, WASHINGTON

On May 31, 2017 Loren Honaas, Research Molecular Biologist and Heidi Hargarten, Biological Science Technician, presented to three classes of 8th grade students. Presentation covered topics of harvest supply chain, apple quality, tasting panel, post harvest disorder development, critical thinking, hypothesis formulation and experiment design. Students participated in collecting data using custom equipment designed by the Honaas Lab for post harvest disorder research. Presentation linked students current course work (Newtonian Laws of Motion) with current experiments and future research projects.

The data students collected will be used by ARS Researchers to calibrate equipment.



“Every snowflake is different; no two leaves are the same; similar, sure but not identical. Diversity is the biggest blessing of our existence.”
~Maggie Huffman

STUDENT OUTREACH-TUCSON, ARIZONA

Two high school students working with ARS researchers in Tucson, AZ are finalists in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair!

Drs. Williams Meikle and Vanessa Corby-Harris worked with Waris Anderson, a Junior at Tucson High Magnet School. Waris took first place in the cellular and molecular biology category.



Dr. Stephanie Gage worked with Natalia Jacobson who won top honors for her project: “The Effects of Nosema on the Honey Bee’s Brain.” Natalia also won the “Excellence in Inquiry” prize.

2ND GRADE FIELD TRIP-BURNS, OREGON

DIVERSITY NOTES: Did You Know??...

- ◆ The **rainbow flag**, commonly known as the **gay pride flag** or **LGBT pride flag**, is a symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) pride and LGBT social movements. (Other uses of rainbow flags include a symbol of peace.) The colors reflect the diversity of the LGBT community, and the flag is often used as a symbol of gay pride during LGBT rights marches. While it originated in Northern California, the flag is now used worldwide.
- ◆ In 1979 the flag was modified again. When hung vertically from the lamp posts of San Francisco's Market Street, the center stripe was obscured by the post itself. Changing the flag design to one with an even number of stripes was the easiest way to rectify this, so the turquoise stripe was dropped, which resulted in a six stripe version of the flag— red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet.
- ◆ In April 1993, USDA issued the Department's EEO and Civil Rights Policy Statement, which specifically prohibited discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation.



Coming Up Next Issue:

- ◆ Celebrating — National Hispanic Heritage Month
- ◆ **Microaggressions** — what does *that* mean?

On May 11th, scientists and staff from Oregon State University and the USDA-ARS spent the morning with 74 second grade students from Slater Elementary at the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center (EOARC). Later that afternoon, approximately 41 students from Silvies River Charter School, Suntext and Crane grades 2-3 visited as well. Student participated in hands on learning activities in six areas ; soil erosion, "Holey Cow", GPS treasure hunt, soil texture, tree rings, and plant parts and function.



OUTDOOR SCHOOL-PENDLETON, OREGON

Each year some of the USDA-ARS Pendleton unit staff participate in "Outdoor School" which provides local sixth graders the opportunity to venture into the wilderness and learn about the great outdoors and nature over the course of two days. This spring Pendleton unit presented a field study to about 100 local sixth graders called "Soil as a Natural Resource" which focused on the importance of soil health and protection. The students learned about some characteristics of healthy soil and approaches to preserve it as well as the significance of healthy soil in agriculture. They also participated in hands on soil infiltration experiments and performed soil erosion demonstrations.

