



# Maryland



## *Voice of the Chesapeake*

**Volume 19**

**Issue 6**

**November – December 2008**

Baby, it's cold outside! As I write this, it's 21° and sunny in beautiful Hagerstown, Maryland.



Those of us who attended Maryland's Fall Educational Institute a few weeks ago were treated to a full day of interesting presentations on topics relevant to our life and work. If you couldn't make it (or if you were there and want to revisit the presentations), read the Institute summaries by our intrepid reporters, Cindy Quail and Sue Gallagher.

Be sure to read the article on IAWP's award program. This time of year, Maryland IAWP is preparing to nominate members and projects for outstanding workforce activities. Now is your chance to recognize noteworthy achievements among your peers. Contact Sue Gallagher, Awards Chair, ([sgallagher@aawdc.org](mailto:sgallagher@aawdc.org)), if you would like to submit a nomination.

On behalf of the Maryland IAWP Executive Board, I want to wish you a Happy New Year. We look forward to continuing to support the efforts of workforce professionals in Maryland through information, educational activities, and networking opportunities.

Stay warm!

Suzette Snyder, President

## **Keith Merkey – Maryland Commission on Human Relations**

The Maryland Commission on Human Relations enforces (MCHR) Article 49, Maryland's anti-discrimination law which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, State services, institutional health care, and the conduct of business by Licensees of the Department of Licensing and Regulation.

This protection includes race, age, color, disability, sexual orientation (including perception), genetic information (regarding employment only), gender, marital status, family status, ethnicity, and religion. Some statutes also prohibit discrimination based on political affiliation and appearance.

Kieth Merkey, Human Relations Specailist with MCHR, provided insight on the sources and effects of discrimination.

We make assumptions in the workplace based on all of the protected categories. We assume that specific characteristics make people totally different from us. In reality, people can be very different yet connect on individual commonalities.

A person's age, experience and general disposition affects how he/she perceives others.  
Keith Merkey (continued on page 2)

Keith Merkey (continued from page 1)

People who are generally negative are more likely to have a negative opinion based on generalities.

Biases can be based on speech patterns. There are regional differences in speech as well as in general approach to life. Often, people have a negative reaction to foreign accents and make assumptions based on ethnicity.

These types of general perceptions often affect persons with disabilities. When a person has an obvious disability, they may be treated as a child. People will talk down to them, or talk to his companion rather than directly to them.

Discrimination occurs because people see the external characteristic of a person— such as race, speech, disability – and not the person himself. We form perceptions based on general beliefs about that characteristic. We must look beyond the external features and focus on the person as an individual.

For more information on Maryland's anti-discrimination laws and the complaint process, go to <http://www.mchr.state.md.us>.

## **Division of Workforce Development Report**

Andrew Moser, Assistant Secretary for DLLR's Division of Workforce Development, shared the following:

- As of 7/1/09 DLLR will administer Adult Education for the State of Maryland. The transition process included a series of town hall meetings across the state to get local input. Final recommendations will be moved to the General Assembly to be addressed during the upcoming Legislative Session. Forty Adult Education administrators will move from the Maryland State Department of Education to DLLR's central office on 7/1. The change affects 280 field representatives as well. One recommendation resulting from the transition councils is the creation of a

quasi-governmental entity to receive foundation funds on behalf of DLLR.

- The local elected officials in Southern Maryland have agreed to recreate a local Workforce Investment Board there. It will be housed in the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland. Currently they are in the final stages of selecting Board members, and are beginning to recruit for staff.
- DLLR has received \$5M from the Department of Human Resources to fund local projects for TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) reemployment growth. These projects will provide reemployment skills, job fairs, recruitment events, job coaching, and retention assistance to TANF recipients, and are directed towards ensuring that these individuals become employed, stay employed and become contributing members of society.
- DISA is the premier employer coming to Maryland as the result of BRAC. DISA is the internet service provider for the military, maintaining the global information grid, which includes the Internet. DISA also provides White House communications. On November 1, DISA held a targeted recruitment event at the BWI Sheraton. Over 1000 people attended this event.
- Another BRAC initiative is the Transition Center at Fort Monmouth which opened in April in NJ. There are two MD One-Stops at Ft. Monmouth. These centers have been instrumental in increasing the number of Ft. Monmouth employees who say they intend to relocate to Maryland.
- Transition centers will be established in Northern Virginia to assist with the DISA move. These will be a combination of kiosks and staff at the three current DISA locations.
- The National Geospatial Agency in Montgomery County, which employs 6000 people, will move to Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.

Andrew Moser Update (continued on page 3)

Andrew Moser Update (continued from page 2)

- Most have indicated that they will not move from Virginia. We are looking at matching these individuals with open positions at DISA.
- There are issues regarding federal personnel policies – if DISA people are hired by the National Geospatial Agency they will lose the federal benefits that they have accrued - benefits don't transfer between the two agencies. Attempts are being made to correct this policy.

## Unemployment Insurance News

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Assistant Secretary Tom Wendel brought us up to date on developments related to UI.

- Debit cards will be the method of payment for new claims filed on or after 12/1/08. Debit cards will not be provided for existing claims. After the first batch was mailed out to claimants, \$4M was withdrawn within the first week. The claimant information packet has been revised to include debit card information.
- Maryland UI is currently paying out \$14M per week. During the same period last year, we paid out \$7.8M per week.
- Since Maryland was the first state to convert to Internet claims, Maryland's system is the oldest in use. Consequently, the program has been reworked; the new and improved program was activated on 10/1.
- Maryland claims for the year are up 35% over last year; claims during November were up 70% compared to last year.
- An additional seven weeks of extended benefits has been approved beginning the week ending 11/29.

- The increase in activity resulting from the general economic conditions and the extended benefits is expected to result in 50,000 additional phone calls to UI. Due to this anticipated increased volume, UI telephone claim hours will be expanded to 7:30-4:30 Monday through Friday, and may include some Saturday hours as well.
- The UI trust fund must equal at least 5% of taxable wages. Maryland's trust fund is now below this level, so employers' UI tax rate will increase ranging from .6% to 9%. 70% of employers have been paying the minimum amount - .3% - so their contribution rate will double.

## The Most Important Skills in the Workplace

***“My biggest moron has a Master's degree.”***

This quotable quote from an employer was shared by Marcia Hall to illustrate the employment downside of not having adequate “Soft Skills” all part of her presentation.

Hall, author of several books and founder of *Reputation COUNTS*, shared other statistics to back up the claim that “Soft Skills” rule on the job and with hiring managers. If you ever wondered how to get this point across to a job seeker, she provided a few choice stats to underscore her point:

- 70% of employers cite deficiencies among high school graduates in soft skills.
- Two-thirds of HR managers would *rather* hire for soft skills than technical ability (“I can't teach you to be a nice guy.”).
- The US DOL has previously estimated that the percentage of people who lose their jobs due to soft skills is 80%.

Skills in the Workplace (continued on page 4)

Skills in the Workplace (continued from page 3)

### **What's the problem here?**

While employers prize proactive, courteous, problem-solvers, these valuable personal qualities and traits may be underdeveloped in new entrants to the workforce. Instead, Hall said, many employers are faced with the “aspirin employee,” one who hangs out, waiting for something to happen, when in fact, what the employer wants is the “Alka-Seltzer” employee, one who makes things happen, takes initiative, and exceeds expectations. She demonstrated the point with 2 glasses of water--an aspirin in one, an Alka-Seltzer in the other. The latter fizzes, the former doesn't react at all.

### **How did it get this way?**

Hall cited the two decades long trend toward academic achievement and accountability--often overshadowing the skills agenda--and the increasing mandate for testing and the resultant “teaching to the test.” At the same time, young workers' social skills acumen may have been retarded by overachieving parents, new technology that oddly enough reduces personal communication, the phenomenon of multitasking, and an up tick in the “sense of entitlement.”

### **What do employers really want?**

This was demonstrated in part by small group discussions and group participants making lists of “what employers value most.” The same information showed up on each group's list and all had to do with character, being personable, integrity, productivity, accountability—none of the highly valued qualities were based on age, education, or experience.

Next, Hall provided some real-world examples of programs that are in place in Maryland to promote civility and positive behaviors. For more information on these, investigate “Choose Civility,” a program in Howard County, and Anne Arundel County's program “CONNECT!” Hall also cited a third program at Anne Arundel County's Southern High School is plotting a “CONNECT!” program for business students called “Career First Steps,” a partnership between Southern High School, South Anne

Arundel Rotary Club, and Hall's *Reputation COUNTS*.

Marcia Hall is author of *Navigating Newbie-ism* and *12 Simple Ways to Thrive in Your First Job and Career*. She is also founder of Reputation Counts. For more information visit Hall's web site [www.reputationcounts.com](http://www.reputationcounts.com).

## **Credit Smarts**

Another timely subject, “*Know Your Credit Rights*,” was presented by Steve Hannan and Madeleine Green of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, offered straight talk about credit reports, credit scores, and managing your financial life.

Under the category of “most helpful tips”: Know your credit report by accessing [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). Not only do you need to investigate what the report is listing, but you need to remember that 79% of credit reports contain some kind of error.

If your debt is out of control, the key advice is: be an informed consumer of credit and loans, know your rights under the law, get a reality check on where your money goes, prioritize your debt payments, have a debt reduction strategy, communicate with your creditors, and know the basics about your credit report and how to improve it. Another web site to be familiar with is <http://powerpay.org> for information about calculators and getting out of debt.

Here is a partial list of the information shared during this presentation on how to become credit healthy, wealthy and wise:

### **Credit Card Myths**

- A rolling credit card balance improves your credit score. *Just plain wrong.*
- Paying the minimum amount due on a credit card will help you retire that debt. *In fact, paying the minimum due increases your debt as it amounts to paying almost 100% in interest.*

Credit Smarts (continued on page 5)

Credit Smarts (continued from page 4)

- Using a debit card helps build your credit score. *False. Use credit responsibly.*
- Credit insurance is a good idea. *Wrong - it will probably only help make your minimum payment.*
- Credit reports never have any errors. *Wrong - 79% contain some kind of error.*

### ***Credit Rules to Live By***

- Know where you spend your money. *Most people don't know where 10% or more of their income goes.*
- Keep credit card debt below 25% of your credit limit. *Otherwise it lowers your credit score (as do late payments).*
- Get each of the 3 FREE credit reports annually. *Equifax - Experian - Trans-union*
- Notify credit bureaus in writing about errors and accounts that are not yours.
- Pay your bills and creditors on time.
- Identity theft is a reality. Know how to protect yourself.
- Create a plan to pay down debt and control spending.
- Beware of loan consolidation and credit repair clinics.
- Know about the Maryland Consumer Credit Counseling Service.

Madeleine Green is an Accredited Financial Counselor and a retired professor from the Finance Dept. at University of Maryland. Steve Hannan is Executive Director of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition. For more information, visit the organization's web site at [www.MDCONSUMERS.org](http://www.MDCONSUMERS.org).

## ***Medical Emergencies in the Workplace***

Do you ever worry about the “what ifs” of a medical emergency? In particular, do you understand and know the warning signs of heart failure? Do you know what steps to take to get a victim immediate assistance in addition to dialing 911?

This was the informational territory covered by Jeremy Gruber, founder of Rescue One, and an advocate for making the Automated External

Defibrillator (AED) as commonplace in the workplace, automobiles, and residences as a fire extinguisher.

What is an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)? In short, a device that can quickly and easily correct a heart that has stopped beating effectively, by delivering an electric shock. Fibrillation--or an interruption in the rhythmic beating of the heart, can occur for a variety of reasons and be related to age, diet, exercise--but not necessarily. Early “de-“fibrillation is considered crucial--and when combined with early advanced life support treatment--not only saves lives but prevents irreversible brain damage.

According to Gruber, 60% of premature deaths due to fibrillation are preventable--with early access to help and knowing what to do.

So two of the key messages from Jeremy Gruber's presentation on AEDs were: (1) be more aware of where these devices are located in an office building, restaurant, hotel, etc., and (2) know how to use one. It's right up there with knowing CPR or where the exit doors are in the event of a fire. The third key point was this is an incredibly simple device to use and can definitely save a life.

Luckily, Gruber's presentation provided several examples of how easy AEDs are to use, so there's no reason why you can't get trained on this important device. His presentation probably encouraged many of us to take the next step and get some hands-on training.

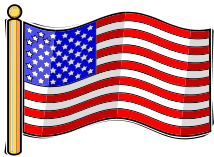
Fibrillation can occur without a heart attack, such as trauma to the neck, low electrolytes due to diet, illness, or running a marathon--or could be random. Other possible causes of an electrical system malfunction: electrocution, hypothermia, chest trauma, lightning, drug overdose, near drowning, arrhythmia, or a random event.

Medical Emergencies (continued on page 6)

Medical Emergencies (continued from page 5)

Regardless of the cause of defibrillation, the result is a lack of oxygen to the brain, which in turn will cause brain damage and biological death in 10-12 minutes. CPR will slow the clock down and temporarily get oxygen to the brain. Defibrillation reboots the heart. For every minute the patient is not defibrillated, their chance of survival decreases by 10%. AED is the only response to fibrillation--therefore, you can't make the person worse.

Jeremy Gruber is founder of Rescue One, a company that offers CPR, AED, First Aid and Fire Safety training as well as Emergency Preparedness consultations. For more information visit the web site [www.rescue-one.com](http://www.rescue-one.com) .



## Supporting the Employment Success of Veterans with TBI and PTSD

### DOL Launches Employer Educational Initiative - America's Heroes at Work

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently unveiled America's Heroes at Work, a unique program designed to help employers support veterans who are coping with two increasingly common battlefield injuries – Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Launched in August 2008, the initiative equips businesses and the workforce development system with the tools they need to help those affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace—particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. By many accounts, hundreds of thousands of brave men and women are expected to be coping with TBI and PTSD as they reenter civilian life. And although their injuries may not be visible, veterans experiencing combat stress

or a brain injury may face difficulties, especially with respect to employment. They may suffer from headaches, vertigo, balance problems, anxiety and sleep disturbance, among other symptoms. They also may have cognitive symptoms including short-term memory deficits, poor concentration and decision-making difficulties. All of these can interfere with everyday activities, inside and outside of the workplace.

However, DOL wants employers to know that often simple workplace supports can help individuals with TBI and/or PTSD succeed in their jobs, and that employment can play a major role in their recovery. It has launched a comprehensive Web site -- [www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov](http://www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov) – that offers support and education concerning ways to assist returning service members with TBI and PTSD in their transition and beyond into the work place. Specifically, it educates employers, human resources professionals, the workforce development system, and vocational rehabilitation professionals on accommodations they can make for employees living with a brain injury or combat stress. It also provides a toll-free phone number that employers can call for personalized assistance related to accommodations for veterans with disabilities (800-526-7234).

Examples of accommodations for people with TBI or PTSD include lighting adjustments to prevent headaches, tape recorders to help with memory, or a quiet workspace to support concentration. Other promising practices include job sharing, job coaching, flexible schedules and workplace mentoring.

The America's Heroes at Work Web site educates employers on these supports and offers additional resources such as easy-to-understand fact sheets, reference guides, training tools, and helpful links. It also highlights some real-life success stories of veteran employees with TBI or PTSD and the satisfied employers who hired them.

Veterans Corner (continued on page 7)

Veterans Corner (continued from page 6)

AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov is merely the centerpiece of a targeted, ongoing DOL outreach campaign that will help increase awareness of TBI and PTSD issues among the workforce system, and educate employers on how to help those with TBI and/or PTSD succeed—whether their employees are veterans, first-responders or any one of the millions of Americans experiencing a mental illness or the effects of a head injury.

Additionally, America's Heroes at Work aims to dispel some of the myths related to people with TBI and PTSD by stressing the facts—that 80% of TBIs are mild concussions that will heal fully, and that PTSD is nothing an employer should fear. After all, veteran employees, including those with disabilities, make exceptional employees who will bring bottom-line benefits to one's business.

America's Heroes at Work is managed by DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in collaboration with other federal agencies engaged in TBI and PTSD programs, including the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services and Education, the Small Business Administration, the Social Security Administration and others. Educational materials on the Web site were produced collaboratively with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and TBI; the Defense and Veterans' Brain Injury Center; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and the Job Accommodation Network.

For more information, visit [www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov](http://www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov).



## Cook's Corner

Here's another delicious and easy recipe to tuck into the back of your IAWP cookbook. Speaking of which, we still have a few copies left of **Munchies, Morsels and Main Courses**. It makes a great shower or anytime gift. Call any board member if you'd like to order one.

### RED RADISH DIP

For those of you who don't like the idea of radishes – don't worry! The radishes just add crunch and color, while the lemon and dill flavors do most of the work.

1 - 8 oz. pkg. Cream Cheese, softened  
1 T. lemon juice  
1 t. dill  
1/4 t. salt  
1 clove garlic, mashed  
1 c. radishes, diced very small  
Mix and serve with crackers.

Submitted by Sandra Chappell, AAWDC at Arundel Mills

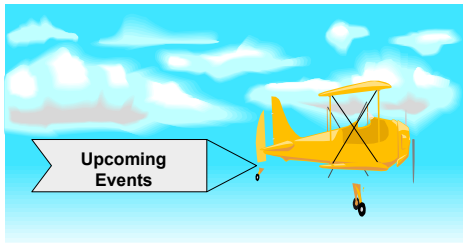
## Recognizing Excellence

Call for nominations! Maryland IAWP is soliciting nominations for the 2008 IAWP Awards Program, recognizing excellence for accomplishments achieved in 2008. At IAWP's annual International Educational Conference, held in June, individuals and groups from across the country are awarded for outstanding activities that promote or enhance workforce development or IAWP itself. The International's Awards Ceremony is the result of an ongoing process that begins locally, promoting excellence and identifying worthy candidates.

This is the time of year when Maryland IAWP opens the nomination process for the IAWP Awards Program. Nominees selected from Maryland will be recognized at the Maryland IAWP Educational Institute and will be submitted for nomination for the International awards. Recognizing Excellence (continued on page 8)

Recognizing Excellence (continued from page 7)

Look around your office, and look in the mirror: do you see an individual or group doing an outstanding, innovative job on behalf of workforce development and/or IAWP? Let us know about it. Specific award categories include Award of Merit, Services to Veterans, Specialized Customer Service, Unemployment Insurance, Retiree, and International Development. If you would like to suggest someone for a nomination, contact Sue Gallagher, Awards Chair, at 410-987-3890 x241, [sgallagher@aawdc.org](mailto:sgallagher@aawdc.org) as soon as possible, no later than January 15, 2009.




The IAWP International Conference will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota  
June 14 – 17, 2009

For information and updates:

[www.iawponline.org](http://www.iawponline.org)



\$5.00	\$5.00
<b>Maryland</b>	
 <small>International Association of Workforce Professionals</small>	
<b>2009 Early Bird Membership Drive Coupon</b>	
_____	
<b>Name</b>	
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<b>Office Location</b>	
<i>Expires: January 9, 2008</i> <b>Coupon may be applied to \$50 and \$30 membership rates only.</b>	
\$5.00	\$5.00

MARYLAND CHAPTER



**2009 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION**

**January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_ UI \_\_\_ JS \_\_\_ Admin \_\_\_ WIA Partner \_\_\_ Other

Dues: \_\_\_ \$30.00 (DLLR-Grade 12 & below) \_\_\_ \$50.00 (DLLR-Grade 13 & Up)

\_\_\_ \$21.00 (Retirees) \_\_\_ \$50.00 Partners (outside DLLR)

I've been a member of IAWP since \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION**

Attn: Faye Gossert

14 North Potomac Street, Suite 100

Hagerstown, MD 21740

\*\*\*Make check payable to: MARYLAND IAWP \*\*\*

Notice: Due to IRS section 6033 requirements, IAWP

Estimates the nondeductible portion of your membership dues allocable to lobbying is ten percent.