

- 3 Under Secretary's Column
- 3 Administrator's Column
- 4 COVID-19 Makes the Case for One Health
- 5 Which App to Use?
- 6 Snapshots
- 8 Faces of Food Safety
- 9 Recent Retirees
- 10 Policy Updates
- 10 Town Hall Roundup
- 11 Around the Agency
- 12 Recent Recalls
- 13 Employee Connections

Share Your FSIS Stories and Snapshots!

Send articles and photos to Beacon@usda.gov. Articles must be original works that have been cleared by your supervisor and contain the author's name and contact information. Submissions should not exceed 250 words. *The Beacon* editorial staff will edit submissions for content and length.

High-resolution photos must be submitted as a separate attachment in .jpg format. Provide a media release form for photos of individuals under 18 years of age.

The Beacon

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH FOOD SAFETY

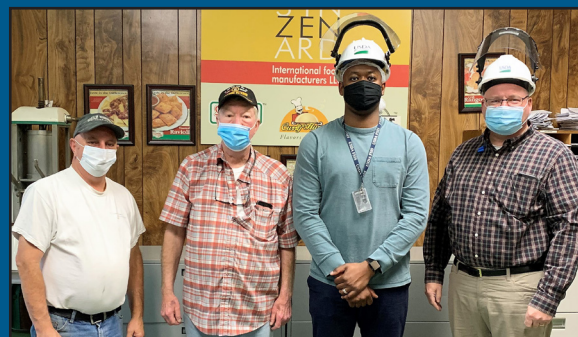
January 2021

SNIPPET OF CURRENT ISSUE

With the successful deployment of eDevices completed, *The Beacon* and *Connections* are no longer being distributed by mail. Modernization by providing all employees email access allows everyone to receive a copy via email beginning with this issue.

Pictured, from left: On Nov. 20, 2020, M-8691 General Manager Anthony Cannovo, Owner John Ard and FSIS Consumer Safety Inspector Michael Jackson welcomed Administrator Paul Kiecker to a meat and poultry processing establishment in St. Louis, Missouri.

Photo by Peter Duryea, OFO.



FY 2021 Annual Plan: Success Means Persisting, Adapting

By Laura Reiser, OPACE
Phone: (202) 720-7894

As we launch into a new year, still in the midst of a pandemic, the FSIS vision and mission of ensuring the safety of meat, poultry and egg products remain the same. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Plan continues to support the three goals in the [FSIS FY 2017-2021 Strategic Plan](#): Goal 1 — Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health; Goal 2 — Modernize Inspection Systems, Policies and the Use of Scientific Approaches; and Goal 3 — Achieve Operational Excellence.

In USDA's Department-wide [five-year strategic plan, FY 2018-2022](#), one of the objectives is to "Prevent Foodborne Illness and Protect Public Health" (Goal 7, Objective 7.1). As FSIS employees, our contribution to the work of the Department is to do just that. Our new [FSIS FY 2021 Annual Plan](#) builds upon the last four years of accomplishments from our Agency's five-year strategic plan while continuing to advance our strategic goals despite unprecedented challenges.

"Every one of our approximately 9,000 team members protects the public, no matter the location, work environment or duties," Administrator Paul Kiecker has said.

In Administrator Kiecker's column this month (page 3), he touches on some Agency initiatives in the FSIS FY 2021 Annual Plan. "I encourage you to look at the Annual Plan to learn more about how your work is tied to the FSIS vision and mission," said Kiecker. "We all have a part to play to ensure that we close out our current strategic plan successfully together." Learn more from the highlights below and by reading the full [FSIS FY 2021 Annual Plan](#) about the Agency's key areas of emphasis to help protect public health through modernization.

Keep up to date on Agency strategic and annual planning activities by listening to the monthly town hall meetings, reading the *Wednesday Newsline* and *The Beacon* and checking your email for all-employee messages.

Continued on page 2...



The Beacon

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH FOOD SAFETY

The Beacon Mission Statement

The Beacon newsletter is prepared by the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education to provide relevant mission critical information to all FSIS employees. The Beacon provides employees information about the Agency's proposed regulations, policies and programs; training opportunities; and important employee welfare initiatives to connect employees to the mission and build a cohesive community. The Beacon enables employees to stay up-to-date with the latest events and see the Agency's mission executed in action.

Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education

Carol Blake, Assistant Administrator
Aaron Lavallee, Deputy Assistant Administrator
Shayla Mae Bailey, Director & Editor-in-Chief
Brandyi Phillips, Deputy Director
Laura Reiser, Managing Editor
Leo O'Drudy, Deputy Managing Editor
Felicia Thompson, Connections & Photo Editor
Megan Traylor, Designer

Editorial Board

Stephanie Fuller
Suzanne Hensell
Manal Ibrahim
Yolande Mitchell
Leo O'Drudy
Felicia Thompson
Megan Traylor

Deadline for submissions is the first day of the previous month.

Mar issue – due Feb. 1 Apr. issue – due Mar 1
May issue – due Apr 1 June issue – due May 1

Articles will be considered for publication in the order in which they are received. If your article is time sensitive, please indicate that in the subject line of your submission email. Due to the number of submissions received each month and the limited amount of space, we unfortunately cannot guarantee that your submission will be used.

The FSIS Management Council

Paul Kiecker
Terri Nintemann
Karen Hunter
Atiya Khan
Jeremy "Todd" Reed
Michelle Catlin
Carl Mayes
Elamin Osman
Cara LeConte
Michelle Garner
Janet Stevens
Nathan Greenwell
Phil Bronstein
Hany Sidrak
Soumaya Tohamy
Pete Bridgeman
Carol Blake
Aaron Lavallee
Robert Bane
Carlynn Cockrum
Frank Mays
C. Natalie Lui Duncan
Denise Eblen
Kis Robertson Hale
Rachel Edelstein
Roselyn Murphy-Jenkins*
*acting

FY 2021 Key Areas of Emphasis

Labeling

- Deploy innovative approaches to improve the label evaluation process.
- Make improvements to the Label Submission and Approval System, known as LSAS.
- Engage in rulemaking to expand the categories of labels that can be approved generically.

PHIS Import and Export Modules

- Include higher-volume countries.
- Enhance the export component's functionality for government-to-government electronic certification (eCert).
- Increase the number of countries that can electronically submit inspection certification data using PHIS government-to-government eCert functionality for import reinspection.

Laboratories and Sampling

- Upgrade the IT infrastructure at FSIS field laboratories.
- Modernize both sample collection processes and laboratory methods and procedures; expand pathogen testing programs in FSIS-regulated products.

Pathogen Performance Standards

- Implement new pathogen-reduction performance standards for *Salmonella* in beef.
- Propose new pathogen-reduction performance standards for *Salmonella* in pork.
- Propose new pathogen-reduction performance standards for *Campylobacter* in poultry.

Information Technology

- Complete deployment of laptops to employees without access to one, continuing efforts for all employees to gain online access to FSIS-approved systems. *Completed. FSIS is now deploying more eDevices to reduce the ratio of devices to personnel.*

Training

- Transform the Agency's mission-critical, classroom-based, scientific and technical training into a virtual format for entry-level employees and those promoted into inspection and enforcement occupations.

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Finalize a new website design that centralizes FSIS public data sets to improve customer experience and continue to publish new and update existing establishment-specific datasets.
- Continue to use and develop data visualizations that improve FSIS' analysis and assessment of establishment performance, as well as strengthen data-driven decision making and response to emerging public health and food safety concerns.

Continued on page 4...

Under Secretary's Column

This is my last month with the Agency and the highlight of my experience has been working with all of you. I have had the privilege to meet many of you while visiting establishments and labs and at stakeholder meetings. These interactions showed me



Dr. Mindy Brashears

the breadth of our mission and the immense impact it makes. I want to thank you for making my time as Under Secretary for Food Safety so memorable.

I know that FSIS was faithfully fulfilling its food safety mission long before I arrived and will continue to protect the American people's food supply in the years ahead. I look forward to continuing my work in food safety and to future interactions with USDA and this amazing team. You are all in good hands with Administrator Paul Kiecker and Deputy Administrator Terri Nintemann; they have the experience and drive to guide the Agency.

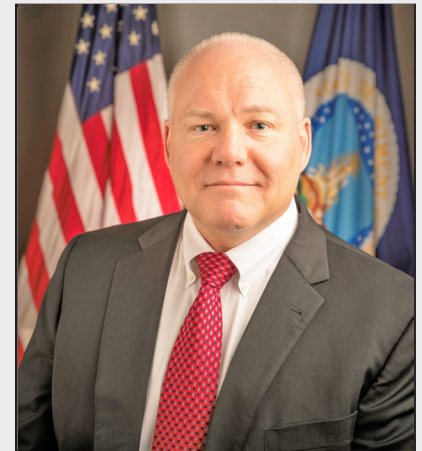
I had a vision for 2020, and though the year had many unforeseen hurdles, I am proud of what we accomplished together. During difficult moments, I saw the Agency leading with science, building relationships and influencing behavior change. While our work is never done, I feel that we made incredible strides in each of those areas. We led with science through our *Salmonella* Roadmap and public meeting. We developed effective working relationships with our stakeholders through frequent town halls and stakeholder meetings. We released consumer studies and hosted a consumer public meeting to find innovative ways to influence behavior change.

Additionally, despite the challenges of the pandemic, you all worked tirelessly to ensure there was a continuous supply of safe meat, poultry and egg products to the American people and for that I will forever be thankful.

I will certainly miss working with all of you. Please continue to "Do Right and Feed Everyone...Safely!"

Administrator's Column

This is Dr. Mindy Brashears' last month with the Agency, and I want to thank her for her service and for the food safety knowledge and passion she brought to her role as Under Secretary. We wish her well on her future food safety journey. As with every administration transition, we have a team prepared to ensure we continually execute our regulatory duties.



Paul Kiecker

I am excited to discuss the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2021 Annual Plan](#). While FY 2020 brought unprecedented challenges with your resiliency, we continued to advance our strategic goals while ensuring the safety of meat, poultry and egg products.

I want to provide you some insights into this year's key areas of emphasis. These include improvements to the Label Submission and Approval System, expansion of the Public Health Information System export component and upgrades to the lab IT infrastructure. We will modernize both sample collection processes and laboratory methods and procedures, while expanding pathogen testing programs in FSIS-regulated products. We will implement targeted outreach programs to our stakeholders. The Agency will fully utilize hiring and incentive authorities and programs for certain hard-to-fill positions and improve training opportunities.

Finally, I want to reflect upon my past year as FSIS Administrator. Last year also illustrated the dedication of FSIS personnel. I am proud of our continued efforts to modernize our inspection systems, including finalizing the Egg HACCP rule, and for providing uninterrupted inspection services during the pandemic. We began town halls for our employees and calls for our stakeholders to ensure they understood our COVID-19 response, and we continue to utilize the calls to encourage an open dialogue. We also held numerous public meetings in a new virtual format, including the *Salmonella* and consumer outreach and education public meetings.

Thank you all for your dedication. I look forward to working together in 2021.

Continued on page 4...

Human Resources

- Implement a consistent new employee orientation process focused on FSIS program areas.
- Fully utilize hiring programs, authorities and incentive programs for certain hard-to-fill positions.
- Implement retention incentive programs for certain hard-to-fill in-plant positions.

Outreach Activities

- Inform small and very small establishments and other domestic stakeholders about food safety requirements through enhanced outreach.
- Continue to deploy innovative approaches to develop and deliver outreach regarding technical, scientific and regulatory

compliance information to small and very small establishments.

- Implement outreach activities in the Agency's international outreach and technical consultation plan to ensure the safety of imported FSIS-regulated products and facilitate effective foreign country equivalence.
- Develop outreach materials to encourage retail delicatessens (delis) to follow FSIS recommendations for mitigating contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*.
- Increase public awareness of recalls, foodborne illness, policies and safe food-handling practices through a broad range of communication channels to empower consumers to make safe decisions about handling, cooking and storing their food.

COVID-19 Makes the Case for One Health

By Dr. Kis Robertson Hale, DAA and Chief Public Health Veterinarian, OPHS
Phone: (202) 720-4819

January marks the start of a new year and [One Health Month](#) — a time for us to show appreciation for the wide range of professionals who work together and use their expertise to advance human, animal and environmental health.

At FSIS, we are a professionally diverse workforce united behind food safety. As such, we are no strangers to One Health because we apply it every day in our jobs and during a global pandemic.

The tremendous efforts taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the value of working together. Responding effectively to a threat as novel and complex as this has required unprecedented levels of inter-organizational communication and coordination in the public sector.

Since March 2020, FSIS has partnered with other federal agencies as part of the One Health Federal Interagency COVID-19 Coordination (OH-FICC) Group. Led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the group includes representatives from FSIS, USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Geologic Service and 11 other agencies. Through the OH-FICC Group, experts across the federal government have come together to discuss, evaluate and learn about the latest developments, findings and knowledge gaps regarding COVID-19. Being a part of this communication has enabled FSIS to keep abreast of issues that have implications to employee safety — a priority concern for Agency leadership — and the pandemic's effect on livestock producers.

In addition to its impacts on human health, COVID-19 is now affecting certain animal species, as seen in recent outbreaks among mink. Experts continue to monitor reports of illness

among animals to protect animal health and ensure public health guidance reflects the latest science on transmission.

Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 to people through food or from contact with food animals. We should take comfort in knowing that, with all the research being done to increase our understanding about the virus, our confidence in the food supply is supported by science. The sustained contributions of FSIS inspectors and other frontline personnel has also been vital to consumer confidence.

Staying informed is important during these challenging, fast-changing times. If you are interested in learning more about One Health topics relevant to FSIS' mission, be sure to visit FSIS One Health at usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/FSIS-One-Health/Blog/default.aspx. Here you will find a variety of blog posts on topics that include foodborne outbreak investigations, antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic disease and pathology trends. The One Health site also has information on COVID-19 and links to CDC guidance and other resources.

Hosting or Arranging a Virtual Meeting: Which App to Use?

By Leo O'Drudy, OPACE

Phone: (202) 720-8693

Virtual meeting apps have become a prominent part of our working environment. As more of us are tasked with not only joining but arranging and managing virtual meetings and events, it can seem daunting to sort through them and figure out which one meets your needs. The Agency understands this concern, so *The Beacon* staff has compiled background information on the virtual meeting apps available to the workforce.

Of the options available, Teams and Webex are your best choices for hosting a meeting. What do you need to know to choose between them?

Microsoft Teams is available to all FSIS users and can support events with up to 250 attendees. If all participants use the desktop app provided by the Agency and have a steady and fast internet connection, Teams is the better choice. It has robust capabilities to share team documents, present materials and track deadlines. It is also useful for those who need to connect with a few co-workers with everyday communication and collaboration tools such as text chat, video conversations and audio calls over the internet. An event can take advantage of high-bandwidth capabilities to show visuals, share screens and feature video conferencing for up to 250 people. Teams meetings also provide a simple link that can be shared with people outside the Agency, making it easy for them to join a meeting.

This desktop app requires a stable internet connection and does not provide a separate dial-in number for those without internet or a computer. It uses a lot of network resources, and, once there are more than 50 participants who are streaming video, there can be problems such as distorted audio or flickering video. The Agency also has available a Teams smartphone app. This app allows people to participate without using a laptop.

Webex supports more options than Teams and for larger meetings. It can accommodate up to 1,000 participants for streaming or live video conferences or up to 3,000 participants for audio participants with a PowerPoint or document presentation.

Small and very small establishments often have a slow internet connection, or none. Webex allows for a separate dial-in

via phone, enabling people who lack high-bandwidth internet connections or access to a computer to still participate in events. So, in these situations, Webex is a better choice because it not only provides an internet link for those to watch but also a call-in number.

Webex is available for hosts in two ways: a Webex-licensed solution or a contract-supported solution through AT&T Event Services. Events supported through AT&T contracted services include pre-registration to manage participation. To host Webex events without the need for Event Services, you'll need a USDA WebEx account and login information, but a note of caution: managing a large meeting without AT&T services can be more difficult and result in a less polished event as the number of attendees grows.

Specific offices and teams in FSIS — such as the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education (OPACE) — have support contracts with AT&T Event Services. Those interested in proceeding via OPACE can contact [Yolande Mitchell](#) and [Shayla Mae Bailey](#) in the Digital and Executive Communications Staff.

Zoom is familiar to many Americans these days, as its free version has been widely used for friends and family connections. It can also be used via a web browser instead of through an installed app, which allowing FSIS employees to participate in meetings hosted by other organizations. Because the widely available version of Zoom is not fully supported by federal policy, it is not as good of an option for hosting, and FSIS employees may encounter restrictions when attempting to install the app. However, Zoom Webinar is a more robust, enterprise-level solution that can accommodate up to 10,000 participants for live video, audio conferences and presentations. It also has options to add a separate call-in number, which would allow those without computers or internet access to still join.

Skype and Google Meet are not supported by the Agency. FSIS officially replaced **Skype** with Microsoft Teams on Nov. 27, 2020. **Google Meet** should not be used because much of the Google Suite is blocked at an agency or government-wide level.



SNAPSHOTS FROM

Hayward, Calif.

On Nov. 30, 2020, at Establishment M/P-44117, a meat and poultry processing plant, Administrator Paul Kiecker (pictured, second from left) and Office of Field Operations Assistant Administrator Dr. Philip Bronstein (pictured, far right) had a group discussion with employees about PHIS connectivity and the nature of processing operations.



Pictured, from left: Oakland Frontline Supervisor Dr. Muhammad Chaudary, Kiecker, Consumer Safety Inspector Hassan Siddiqui, Alameda Deputy District Manager Frank Gillis, retired Alameda District Manager (DM) Dr. Yudhbir Sharma, Alameda DM William Griffin and Dr. Bronstein. Photo by plant employee Brent Hood.



Pictured, from left: Supervisory Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Anatoly Kostinskiy and Consumer Safety Inspector Kendall Osborn led Kiecker and Duryea on the establishment's tour on Nov. 20, 2020.

St. Louis, Mo.

Administrator Paul Kiecker (pictured, second from right) and Peter Duryea, a frontline supervisor in the Springdale District (pictured, right), visited Establishment M-2365, a meat processing plant, and learned about the establishment's portion-cutter machine, including the number of cuts it can make per second.

St. Louis, Mo.

On Nov. 20, 2020, FSIS Administrator Paul Kiecker (pictured, second from left) and FSIS Frontline Supervisor Peter Duryea (pictured, far right) met with Missouri Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) personnel and the owner and manager of a local Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Program establishment.



Pictured, from left: David Dresner, owner of the gourmet dumpling establishment (Establishment M-184SEMO) participating in CIS, Kiecker, Missouri MPI Consumer Safety Inspector Gloria Meyer, manager of the establishment Jesse Stuart, Missouri MPI Program Director Dr. Marin DeBauch and Duryea. Photo courtesy of Peter Duryea, OFO.

THE FIELD



Pictured, from left: Oakland Circuit Frontline Supervisor Dr. Muhammad Chaudary, Alameda District Manager (DM) William Griffin, Kiecker, Consumer Safety Inspector Wayne Paul, retired Alameda DM Dr. Yudhbir Sharma and Dr. Bronstein. Photo by Frank Gillis, OFO.

Albany and San Leandro, Calif.

On Nov. 30, 2020, Administrator Paul Kiecker (pictured, third from left) and Office of Field Operations Assistant Administrator Dr. Philip Bronstein (pictured, far right) were in the Alameda District Office in Albany with retired District Manager Dr. Yudhbir Sharma (pictured, far right) to thank inspection and district office personnel for their dedication to the Agency's mission and to stress the importance of wearing protective equipment to protect against COVID-19.

While in the Golden State, Kiecker and Dr. Bronstein toured FSIS-regulated establishments and snapped a photo with personnel assigned to M/P-19191A, a San Leandro, California, plant that processes meat and poultry.



St. Louis, Mo.

On Nov. 20, 2020, Consumer Safety Inspector Roger Shope (pictured, left) and Administrator Paul Kiecker (pictured, right) take a break from touring Establishment M-5841, a ham processing plant, to snap a photo. Photo by Peter Duryea, OFO.



St. Louis, Mo.

During his Nov. 20, 2020, visit to Establishment M-8665, a meat processing plant, Administrator Paul Kiecker met with Consumer Safety Inspector Heather Coon. The two discussed Coon's FSIS career.

Colette Mayfield Brings Passion to Food Safety Training

By Suzanne Hensell, OPACE
Phone: (202) 690-3626

Colette LaViolette Mayfield is one of 18 professionals within the Agency who teach FSIS technical training courses. She began her FSIS career with the Office of Employee Experience and Development's Center for Learning (CFL) as a regional public health training coordinator. Since her early days with FSIS, she has adapted the way she works to stay on top of changes in the Agency and other situations such as the current pandemic.

Role of Public Health Coordinator

Mayfield teaches FSIS employees the principles and concepts of food safety, including food microbiology; sanitation; product sampling and analysis; regulatory compliance and enforcement; and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point. She also teaches the principles and concepts of non-food safety consumer protection as it relates to FSIS-regulated product, including labeling, process familiarization, restricted ingredients and standards of identity.

Additionally, she teaches regulators how to verify the regulations to determine the establishment's compliance, what to do in noncompliance situations and how to document their actions in the Public Health Information System.

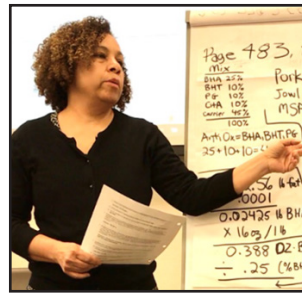
Mayfield's work involves teaching inspection program personnel how to do their jobs correctly and in a manner that is sound and consistent across the country. This approach supports regulatory and enforcement consistency in actions the Agency takes concerning establishments — not just in the United States. It also ensures consumers receive food that is safe and truthfully represented.

"I love the feeling of being able to break down complex concepts into simple concepts that can be easily understood, and ultimately help employees to perform their jobs, but to be able to do their job with confidence," Mayfield said.

Rolling with the Changes in 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all CFL training has been converted from an in-person format to a virtual platform. Mayfield and her team had to learn new ways to simulate the live classroom as much as possible while adapting to an array of collaborative tools.

In May of 2020, Mayfield successfully led the team converting the weeklong Further Processing and Labeling Inspection Course; it was presented virtually for the first time in July. Mayfield was also part of the team that converted the Inspection Methods and



Colette Mayfield conducting the Further Processing and Labeling Inspection Course, March 13, 2020, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Photo by Beth McKew, Staff Officer, OPPD.

Thermal Processing courses. CFL selected a platform for its virtual training that offers chat and other feedback tools. In addition to converting the material for the new platform, Mayfield and her team had to learn how to use all the virtual tools available.

FSIS empowers Mayfield to be successful through strong management support and — you guessed it — training. Over the years, she has learned to be proficient in teaching and developing highly scientific and technical training. Pre-COVID-19, FSIS districts, inspectors and establishments hosted Mayfield in onsite visits where she could learn firsthand what's new in the industry, observe how inspectors do their jobs and understand the logistics of what goes on in an establishment. These visits helped Mayfield stay informed with the work taking place at the field locations and develop effective training courses.

"Ms. Mayfield is diligent and passionate about training and public health," said Dr. Hala Bessyoung, Mayfield's supervisor and Training Operation Branch Chief. Mayfield strives to continuously improve her effectiveness as a trainer. Before delivering her first Thermal Processing course, Mayfield visited two Philadelphia District thermal processing establishments — a glass container process and a metal can process — to improve her understanding of each. She has also participated in technical training, such as canning processes, ingredient safety and sausage formulation, and has shadowed other trainers to learn more about their expertise and experience.

Mayfield is constantly developing training, teaching or preparing to teach. Everything she does supports those tasks, including meetings with her team to figure out how to simplify the math calculations that are part of a course; studying new directives to present material more simply; preparing notes to teach; or engaging with students virtually while teaching a module. She also enjoys learning new topics, gaining new skills and navigating new ways of teaching, as well as the challenges of

Continued on page 9...

FSIS EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS



What's Your Hobby?

By Felicia Thompson, OPACE

Whether your hobby is collecting sports memorabilia, blogging about fashion, binge-watching TV shows or posting your dance moves online, these activities are a great way to de-stress, unwind and get your mind off the winter season and the COVID-19 pandemic. Hobbies can be healthy especially if the activities are not connected to work and other commitments, or if you suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression that occurs when the days get shorter in the fall and winter months. Hobbies can also increase your own personal happiness and satisfaction and offer new challenges and experiences.

Doing the same things day-in and day-out may be easy for some people, but it can be boring for others and worse when experiencing the “winter blues.” No matter where you fall, incorporating a hobby into your life can break the monotony and add some excitement. An increase in your overall happiness could flow into your work performance and ability to maintain healthy relationships. If you don’t have a hobby, try one or more of those listed below.

- Interview grandparents via phone or computer and create an audio story.
- Make a list of the restaurants, museums, parks, and countries you want to visit when things reopen.
- Buy gift cards from your favorite local businesses to help keep them afloat.
- Write letters and thank you notes on paper to family, friends and retail workers who provided exceptional customer service.
- Watch scary movies, the films that won the Oscars for best picture or the “Star Wars” movies in this order: Rogue One, IV, II,



Leo O'Drudy, an OPACE writer/editor, holds a space alien monster model he assembled from a variety of model body parts. O'Drudy collects, assembles and paints adventure-style miniatures in his free time. Image capture by Felicia Thompson, OPACE.

III, Solo, VI, VII, VIII and IX.

- Match kitchen containers and bowls with their lids.
- Organize the junk or sock drawer, the basement or the garage.
- Camp indoors.
- Try at-home aerobics or yoga videos.
- Write a short story or get started on that novel.
- Learn calligraphy, American Sign Language or a different language.
- Complete a jigsaw puzzle with 1,000 or more pieces.
- Enhance your palette by trying new ingredients or spices, such as anise, miso or tahini.
- Grind coffee beans or use tea leaves, different brew times and a variety of hot water temperatures.
- Host a virtual Scrabble tournament with family, friends or coworkers.
- Dust off that old musical instrument and practice.
- Memorize the periodic table of elements.
- Update or write your will and organize your affairs.
- Get some quality sleep.

Shoveling Snow Safely

By Kenneth Kennedy, OM, and Leo O'Drudy, OPACE

Shoveling snow can be a strenuous activity, particularly because cold weather can be taxing on an older or sedentary body. There is potential for exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries or heart attacks. Employees should visit their medical provider to ensure they are healthy enough to perform any strenuous activity.

In addition to snow removal, there are tips for avoiding cold

stress and other injuries. Be sure to warm up before outdoor activities and take frequent breaks in warm areas. When shoveling, follow the proper lifting technique to avoid injury: keep your back straight, lift with your legs, do not turn or twist your body, scoop small amounts of snow at a time, and where possible, push the snow instead of lifting it.

Continued on page 14...