

# CommuniQUÉ

O C T O B E R 2 0 0 1



Photos by Bruce Cohen, Office of Financial Management

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## UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE TURNOUT HONORS VICTIMS OF TERRORISM AT WESTERN REGION CEREMONY

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# HEADQUARTERS *News*

*Ensuring access to a quality education for every child "is probably the most pro-Hispanic theme" any politician could embrace.*

- Reuben Barrales

## **HISPANIC CELEBRATION CITES SUCCESSES, HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR QUALITY EDUCATION**

Before he stepped into the world of elective politics, Ruben Barrales says he aspired to be the best-educated roofer on the San Francisco peninsula.

The son of Mexican immigrants, the first in his family to attend college, and now a White House official, Barrales is an advocate for improved educational opportunities that will enable more Hispanics and other minorities to achieve the American dream.

Ensuring access to a quality education for every child "is probably the most pro-Hispanic theme" any politician could embrace," Barrales said before the INS Hispanic Heritage Month observance on Oct. 2.

Too many Hispanic youth are not testing near their academic potential, Barrales said. "That has to change. There's nothing more important than closing that

education gap that many Hispanic, African American and other children have faced in America," he told a gathering of about 200 people in Headquarters' main conference room.

Working for his father, a roofing contractor, helped pay Barrales' way through the University of California, Riverside. Since last March, he has been busy at a very different type of occupation, serving as a deputy assistant to President George W. Bush and the White House director of intergovernmental relations.

### **Positive reinforcement**

Touching on the event's theme of "Paving the Way for Future Generations," Barrales urged all Hispanic adults to be role models to encourage the aspirations of Hispanic youth. He encouraged them



Commissioner James Ziglar presents an honorary Statue of Liberty to guest speaker Ruben Barrales as JoAn Taylor, chief of affirmative employment programs branch of EEOC looks on.

"to reach out to young Hispanic boys and girls and show them that they have options, they can be professionals."

"There are many role models, since the beginning of time, for young Hispanics to aspire to," he said. "As Hispanics, we've done fairly well in terms of the military, academics and science. ... Those are things to be conscious of for our children, and for young Hispanics."

Although Hispanics have scored sizable gains in recent years getting elected to public office, they remain under-represented in that category relative to their roughly 12 percent share of the nation's population.

Barrales was the first Latino elected to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, south of San Francisco. He served as a supervisor for six years before moving to Washington to join the White House staff.

While in California, Barrales also was president and chief executive officer of Joint Venture - Silicon Valley Network, a non-profit consortium of high-tech executives, educators and state and local political leaders. The network developed a \$20 million educational improvement program involving teams of educators and aimed at improving education in the Bay Area. Among other activities, Silicon Valley Network helped found a public charter school in Barrales' hometown of Redwood City.

### Hispanics at INS

In welcoming remarks at the observance, Commissioner James W. Ziglar noted that, "Hispanics are not very well represented in the federal workforce." However, he proudly noted that the INS is a very notable exception. It has one of the highest proportions of Hispanics on its payroll of all federal agencies, he said.

Hispanics hold slightly less than 7 percent of federal jobs, but account for about a quarter of the INS workforce. Within the INS, the Border Patrol has the highest percentage, with about 40 percent of its ranks filled by persons of Hispanic ancestry.

"We think that's a terrific accomplishment for the INS," Ziglar said.

Making his first appearance before a large gathering of INS staff since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, the commissioner took the opportunity to express his gratitude to INS staff.

"I have really been inspired and very grateful for the efforts and resilience that you've demonstrated during this crisis. The INS has done a remarkable job at responding to this crisis. I want to thank you and tell you just how impressed I am with this organization," Ziglar said.

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# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

## **ZIGLAR'S NEW YORK VISIT CONVEYS A MESSAGE OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF, HELP FOR IMMIGRANTS**

On a trip of the New York City area in early October, Commissioner James W. Ziglar carried a message of gratitude and support for INS employees and a pledge to immigrants that the INS stood ready to assist them with a full range of services, as New York struggled to recover from the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 on the World Trade Center.

Ziglar's visit spanned four days and took him from the New York District's offices in lower Manhattan, about a dozen blocks from the rubble of the Trade Center towers, to the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, where he met representatives of organizations and media from the city's ethnic communities.

He met with Newark District staff and 20 Border Patrol agents at Newark International Airport, where his commercial airline flight from Washington, D.C., touched down on the evening of Thursday, Oct. 4. Ziglar also spent much of Saturday meeting with New York District immigration inspectors and other personnel at New York's LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy airports. Included were 20 Border Patrol agents at LaGuardia and 50 at JFK who were assigned to airport security details.

### **A "renewed spirit"**

At a town hall meeting with the district's staff at the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building on Friday morning, the commissioner thanked employees and also spoke of the need for leadership at all levels of the organization.

"You've pulled together, you've helped the community," Ziglar said. "You've done everything that you could possibly do to be part of this recovery, to be part of this renewed spirit. I appreciate that very much."

"It's tough now, tough for everybody, but tough for you folks especially," Ziglar said. However, "the country, the political establishment understands just how important what we do is." Terrorists and others

seeking to harm the United States will be stopped, he said. "We're going to stop them."

At the same time, "we're going to welcome in those who want to work in this country, live in this country, who want their kids to grow up here," Ziglar said.

### **Technical challenges**

More than three weeks after the terrorist attacks, their effects were evident. Employees at the federal building were still relying on cell telephones for most of their calls. The office's fixed, or land-based, telephone lines were knocked out of service the morning of Sept. 11. Efforts by the local telephone company to restore full service to lower Manhattan were hampered by the destruction of a crucial call-switching hub that had been located under the Trade Center towers.

The Javits building is within the restricted zone set up by police after the disaster and closed to employees for two weeks following Sept. 11.

New York District employees overcame enormous technical challenges to keep several vital operations, including investigations, functioning at other sites in the crashes' aftermath. Immigration services were restored, starting with emergency cases during the week of Sept. 22. With help from other facilities, district employees managed to conduct naturalization ceremonies around the city as planned, even while their federal building offices were closed. The office re-opened to provide a full range of immigration services on Oct. 1.

### **Aid to immigrants**

On the Friday morning of the commissioner's visit, Ziglar met with representatives from about 15 community-based organizations (CBOs) that work with various ethnic communities and reporters from about 20 of the city's ethnic newspapers and broadcast outlets. He emphasized that the INS would try to assist immigrants with special needs



Photo by Michael Gilhooly, Eastern Region

Commissioner James Ziglar turns to New York District Director Edward McElroy during a meeting with community-based organizations and the media in Manhattan.

arising from the attacks, a message that he delivered consistently throughout the tour.

Ziglar made a special appeal to aliens who are out of legal status and reluctant to contact authorities about their problems. "We continue to be concerned that some people or employers whose loved ones or workers are missing have not come forward because of immigration issues," he said. "We cannot let this happen."

"I want to personally urge the immigrant community to come forward, and assure everyone that INS will not seek, and local authorities will not divulge, any information provided in the rescue and recovery effort."

### **"A better understanding"**

The hour-long meeting with the CBO representatives and reporters at the Franciscan Immigration Center in mid-town Manhattan had the desired effect, according to the Rev. Brian Jordan, who founded the center two years ago at the St. Francis of Assisi church.

"As a result of the meeting, the immigrant community has a better understanding of the position of the INS not to interfere with families who lost loved ones," said Father Jordan, who worked two years as an INS public affairs officer at Headquarters during the late 1990s. "The commissioner displayed great compassion and sincerity in this matter."

The reaction of the CBO representatives was one of "generalized surprise, but extreme pleasure" that the commissioner chose to meet with them, Father Jordan said.

Several questions raised by the media reflected concerns in the immigrant community that the terrorist attacks will provoke major changes in the nation's immigration laws and policies. Ziglar said that such issues would be considered by Congress and the President.

The two commandeered airliners that were steered into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11 devastated a portion of a city that is familiar ground to the commissioner. During most of his 23-year career in the financial services industry, Ziglar lived and worked in Manhattan.

"I spent my career right down here," he told the New York District staff. "I grew up in Mississippi, but I am a New Yorker. My heart has been here for many, many years."

## **FAMILIES OF VICTIMS TOLD COMPASSIONATE DISCRETION GUIDES INS DECISIONS**

Commissioner James W. Ziglar assured family members whose legal status in the United States was dependent on people who died or are missing from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that they would not be subject to immediate removal.

"The INS will exercise its discretion in a compassionate way toward families of victims during this time of mourning and readjustment," Ziglar said in a statement issued Oct. 10. The INS began on Sept. 19 notifying INS staff to exercise compassionate discretion in cases involving the families of victims of the attacks.

The Oct. 10 statement was prompted in part by reports of a British woman who feared removal from the United States due to the loss of her husband in the World Trade Center attack. The commissioner noted that the woman was told at a meeting with Newark District officials on Sept. 27 that she was not facing removal and was offered deferred action. This status allows her to remain in the United States and to receive work authorization.

The facts surrounding the woman's situation suggested a case of unfortunate timing. Her husband had been in the United States on an H1-B nonimmigrant work visa that had expired last August, based on the six-year statutory limitation for such visas. Last July, the husband applied for an "O" nonimmigrant visa.

On Sept. 13, the Vermont Service Center, unaware that the husband was missing, mailed a routine letter to the husband's attorney requesting information regarding the husband's eligibility for an "O" visa.

Upon learning of the situation's full facts, the INS immediately exercised its discretion and granted the woman deferred action on humanitarian grounds.

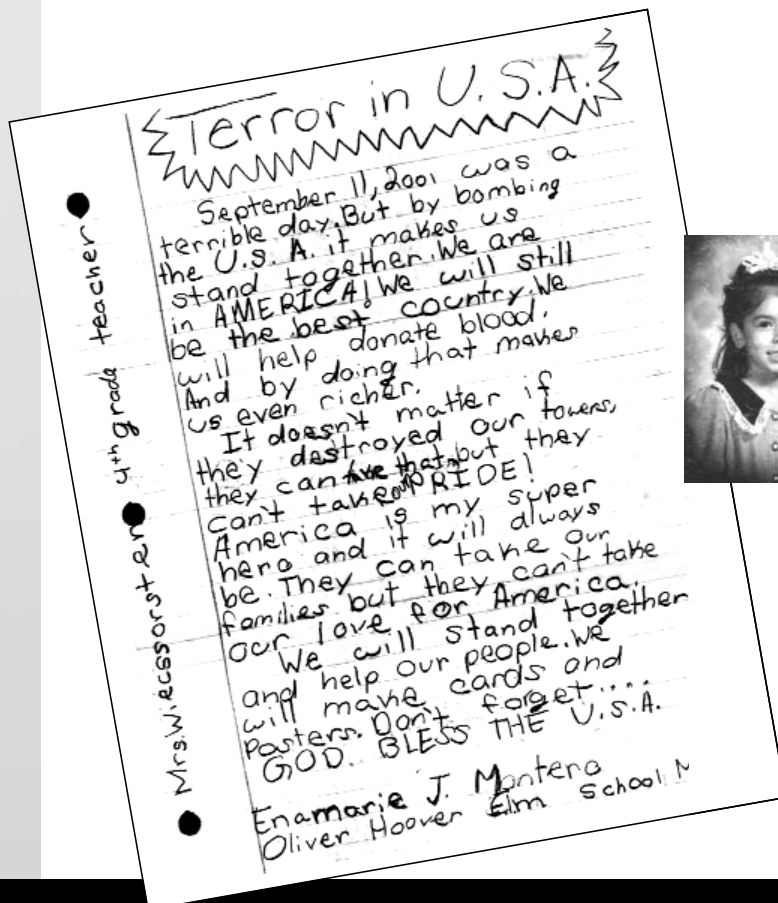
# INS NEWS of Note

## IN REMEMBRANCE

The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, on the Pentagon, and in western Pennsylvania have been tragic for our entire nation. Here in Washington, we did not know what to do. However, this tragedy has brought many nationalities together to work with one common goal, and that is keeping our freedom. We pay tribute to the lives lost and the grieving families. We thank all the rescue workers for their tireless efforts. We support the survivors who went into their offices without knowing the disaster awaiting them and who made it back out. We continue to raise money to assist our families in need.

We have seen America at its best and its worst. We here at the History Office & Library invite you to remember those lives by lifting up a song in your heart each day and whispering a prayer that things may go God's way. We need to pull together and pray for what is happening to our nation. We say "in God we trust" and sing "God bless America" to remind us who has control.

*Crystal Lloyd-Williams*  
INS History Office Library  
Information Specialist



This essay was written by nine year-old Enamarie Joy Montero, daughter of Xavier E. Montero, immigration adjudications officer of the Miami District. This piece was written shortly after the September 11th terrorist attacks and reflects the patriotism of today's children. In addition to this article, Enamarie has made several posters about the attacks, which are displayed in the waiting room on one of the floors of the INS building in Miami. Enamarie is a fourth grader at Oliver Hoover Elementary School in Miami. Her teacher is Mrs. Wieschhorster



Border Patrol Agent Chaplain Brian Henderson with upraised arms leads a prayer for the victims of Sept. 11. Behind Henderson at right is Senior Intelligence Agent Ted Stark.

## **A SMALL GROUP'S QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING DRAWS A HUGE CROWD FOR MEMORIAL CEREMONY**

On a sunny Southern California day like no other, a senior special agent at the Western Region office on Sept. 11 took a call from a friend, who also happens to be a minister and a volunteer chaplain for the FBI.

In the aftermath of that Tuesday morning's terrorist attacks, televisions throughout the Chet Holifield Federal Building in Laguna Niguel, Calif., were tuned to news reports of the destruction in New York City, at the Pentagon and in western Pennsylvania.

The minister, en route to comfort the staff of the FBI's Los Angeles office, asked Senior Special Agent Ted Stark if he was needed by anyone at the INS office. Stark said no, but that a visit later in the week would probably do some good, perhaps for a small gathering to mourn the victims of the Sept. 11 tragedies.

After hanging up with the Rev. Ralph Buchorn, Agent Stark sent an email message to five other federal employees, telling them of plans for a small ceremony during the lunch hour on Friday around the flagpoles in front of the Holifield building.

Stark, who serves with the Intelligence Division at the Western Region office, also called Border Patrol Agent Chaplain Brian T. Henderson with the San Diego sector, to ask if he could participate. The meeting might draw 20, maybe 30 people, Chaplain Henderson recalled Stark saying.

However, Stark's message apparently struck a receptive chord. By Thursday afternoon, his email message had been passed to hundreds of staff members in the building and copies could be found taped to elevator walls and in the cafeteria. More than 1,000 people work in the federal building, which houses the Western Region office and the California Service Center, as well as offices of the

IRS, Social Security Administration, GSA and the National Archives.

On Friday morning, Western Region Director Johnnie Williams gathered his staff to talk about INS operations and his pride in how employees had responded to the national crisis. Williams also reminded the staff that employee assistance programs (EAP) were available for those in need of support and noted the memorial ceremony at the flagpoles during the lunch hour.

Stopping by the cafeteria to get a soft drink before heading to the flagpoles, Chaplain Henderson noticed that the cash register clerk was telling every customer to attend. "That was our first indication that this might be a bigger gathering than we had planned," he said. A bigger surprise awaited him just outside the front doors where 150 people had already assembled at the flagpoles.

The start was delayed for five minutes, as people continued to flow from the building. By then, the crowd had swelled to an estimated 400 people during a week when many federal workers had chosen to take time off from work.

"It was confirmation to me that America is indeed a nation of faith," Chaplain Henderson said. "This was a moment for their faith to give them, if not an answer to the question 'why?,' then the reason to go on and not be paralyzed by fear."

Chaplain Henderson spoke of the importance and tenacity of faith in helping people cope and find strength during times of trouble. To underscore his message, he quoted from the second book of Corinthians: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

# HEADQUARTERS *News*

## **COMMISSIONER EXPLAINS TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN THE AGENCY'S INCREASINGLY COMPLEX MISSION**

During two appearances before Congressional subcommittees in early October, Commissioner James W. Ziglar outlined plans for applying the tools of technology to the agency's mission of securing America's borders.

Topping the agenda at both hearings was the development of Enterprise Architecture, which was described as "our long-term, strategically oriented approach to accomplishing the information-driven aspects of the INS mission."

Planning for Enterprise Architecture, which was mandated by Congress, began in October 2000, Ziglar said. "I expect the final delivery of this project, the transition plan to our target architecture, to be ready at the beginning of the third quarter," or next spring.

Ziglar testified on Oct. 11 before the House subcommittee on immigration and claims on "the use of information technology in immigration enforcement." He appeared the next day before the Senate subcommittee on technology, terrorism and government information to address "technology's role in preventing the entry of terrorists into the United States."

In addition to Enterprise Architecture, two database improvement projects are also moving forward, as mandated by Congress, Ziglar said. The Student Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS, is designed to provide rapid access to information about foreign nationals who hold student visas.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, objections from some academic institutions that had delayed the plan have virtually disappeared, he said. "The INS, with your help, will meet, and intends to beat, the Congress' date of Dec. 20, 2003 to start implementation of SEVIS" for all holders of student visas.

Attention is also being focused on developing systems to provide immediate access to entry and exit data of foreign visitors to the United States, Ziglar said. Under the Data Management Improvement Act of 2000, the INS is required to develop a fully automated integrated entry-exit data

collection system, which would be deployed to airports and seaports by the end of 2004, and to all other ports of entry by the end of 2005.

Efforts are also underway to expand access by immigration inspectors to data of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). "Only recently have immigration inspectors been authorized to routinely use NCIC criminal history data (NCIC III) to identify criminal aliens in advance of their arrival," the commissioner said. "To expedite this process, we will require the assistance of Congress for additional communications and mainframe capacity so that we may obtain real-time NCIC III data."

He noted that President Bush's proposed budget called for an increase in Border Patrol agents and support staff along the northern border. The Border Patrol is also expected to receive expanded access to biometric identification systems, such as IDENT.

Also in the president's proposed budget was an increase in inspectors at ports of entry. One goal is to inspect all "in-transit," or international-to-international transit (ITI) passengers. The agency is working towards requiring all airlines to submit an advance passenger information list before their U.S.-bound flights depart an overseas airport. Most airlines already voluntarily submit such passenger lists in advance of the flight's arrival.

"Meeting deadlines set by Congress or the President is my top priority," Ziglar said. "If a deadline cannot be met because it is unrealistic or for another legitimate reason, then my policy will be to tell Congress or the President in advance."

But Ziglar warned against looking on technological solutions as a panacea to securing the nation's borders.

"Technology must be coupled with a strong intelligence and information-gathering and distribution system if we are to leverage our resources and maximize our capabilities," the commissioner testified before the Senate subcommittee. "That will require seamless cooperation among the many government agencies."



## BOB DOLE SPEAKS FROM EXPERIENCE, HIGHLIGHTING DISABILITY AWARENESS EVENT

By his own admission, Robert Dole "never paid much attention to people with disabilities" until 1945, "about the time that I joined the group. When it hits you, then it's different."

Dole, a former Senate majority leader and Republican presidential candidate, is now retired from public office, but not from the public eye. He remains active as a spokesman for several causes, including the effort to construct a memorial to World War II veterans in the nation's capital.

On Oct. 31, he spoke with humor and insight at an INS program marking Disability Employment Awareness Month, on two topics that he knows well: living with a disability and politics. Dole recounted his personal battle, lasting more than a year and involving several surgeries, to recover from wounds sustained as an Army platoon leader in Italy during World War II.

"If I've accomplished anything, probably the thing that I've done the best is to cope with a disability and to encourage others to cope with a disability," Dole said. "You've got to get over a lot of hurdles. But you always find another road to take."

For Dole, wartime injuries meant setting aside plans to become a doctor. He chose instead to study law and eventually run for elected office in Kansas. His wartime injuries having rendered his right arm useless for the needed political skill of shaking lots of hands, Dole learned to shake hands with his left. He clutches a pen in his right hand, which has little movement or feeling, to dissuade anyone from grabbing it out of habit.

Politics brought victories, and one that he fondly recalled was the bipartisan support that brought about passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark legislation that expanded opportunities for disabled Americans. "In 12 years we've come a long ways," Dole said of the law. "Other countries come to America now to see what we've done when it comes to dealing with people's disabilities."

As for the general goals of disabled Americans, he said: "We want to be treated just like anyone else. We want to operate independently. We want to have mobility and freedom to come and go as we choose and to use our abilities as contributing members of society."

Dole, who in retirement has penned two books on political humor, had plenty to say about politics and politicians, taking special note of his wife, Elizabeth Dole,

a likely candidate in 2002 for a U.S. Senate seat from her native North Carolina.

"If Elizabeth wins, I want to be a Senate spouse like President Clinton," he said, referring to his Democratic foe in the 1996 presidential race. "We've always had a good relationship," Dole said of the former president. "He just got more votes than I did."

Clinton and Dole recently appeared together for a campaign to raise \$100 million to provide college scholarships for the children of the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "I'm going to run for president of the Senate Spouses' Club," Dole said, sounding out his hopes that former President Clinton will step aside. "So, I'll finally get to be president of something."

Commissioner James W. Ziglar, who served as the Senate's sergeant at arms prior to joining the INS this year, introduced Dole by citing some of his many accomplishments, including his 27 years in the Senate. "One of the things I regret most about my service as sergeant at arms is that I didn't have the chance to serve when Senator Dole was there," he said.

Still, Ziglar couldn't resist referring to perhaps the best-known of the few commercial product endorsements that Dole has made since leaving elected office in 1996. The former senator has appeared in television commercials for Viagra, a treatment for male impotence. In the ads, Dole encourages men to regularly see a doctor and be tested for prostate cancer.

"He is now endorsing products that are near and dear to the hearts of men my age," Ziglar said, as the audience started laughing. "You know, Pepsi-Cola and credit cards."

Stepping to the podium, Dole acknowledged the commissioner's remarks by saying, "I just gave Jim a lifetime supply. (pause) One tablet." Attesting to Dole's effectiveness as a product spokesman, both men managed to provoke howls of knowing laughter without ever mentioning the product's name.



Bob Dole with "The Wild Zappers," a dance troupe comprised of persons who are hearing impaired. The group performed during the program.

Photo by Bruce Cohen, Systems Division

After the Baltimore conference, Commissioner James Ziglar, at right, congratulates Bangkok Assistant District Director for Investigations Brian Vaillancourt.



## MIAMI DISTRICT CUTS CHINA-TO-CARIBBEAN SMUGGLING CHAIN

Special Agents of the Miami District wrapped up a seven-month undercover investigation of immigrant smuggling from China with the arrests in early September of four suspected smugglers.

Operation Salty Dog started in late 2000, based on information from other federal agencies, the Miami District said in a Sept. 10 statement.

According to an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Miami, the suspects were allegedly responsible for smuggling citizens from the People's Republic of China (PRC) into Miami, via Cuba and other Caribbean countries.

To gain entry into the United States, the smugglers and their clients used fraudulent documents and other forms of illegal entry. The final destination for most of the smuggled individuals was New York City.

Operation Salty Dog uncovered information indicating that the ring smuggled approximately 20 people per month at a fee of about \$60,000 for each.

If convicted, the four arrested individuals, all residents of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., face a minimum penalty of three years' imprisonment. One of the four individuals was taken into custody in the Cayman Islands and also faces charges by authorities there.

A fifth person named in the indictment remains at large and is being pursued by federal authorities, according to the Miami District's statement.

## BANGKOK DISTRICT WINS AWARD FOR DISRUPTING SMUGGLING OPERATION

The Bangkok District Enforcement unit last year joined forces with Bangkok police to disrupt one of Thailand's largest migrant-smuggling operations and distributors of fraudulent passport documents.

Commissioner James W. Ziglar presented the "Innovative Investigative Techniques" award to the Bangkok enforcement unit on Aug. 27 at the national conference of district investigators meeting in Baltimore.

The award was given to the entire Bangkok enforcement team and other staff members who were instrumental in assisting with the one-year investigation. Bangkok District Assistant District Director for Investigations Brian Vaillancourt accepted the award on behalf of the enforcement unit.

Operation Best House, as the investigation was called, led to the arrests and convictions of five people who supplied documents and attempted to smuggle aliens from the People's Republic of China to the United States, Japan, and countries in Western Europe and elsewhere. Those convicted included three Thai nationals and two people from China.

Attesting to the size of the operation, the minimum acceptable order from a vendor was for 3,000 fraudulent passports and a going rate of up to \$150,000 for each order, according to investigators.

Besides the arrests, investigators also seized thousands of bogus passports and a printing press. The printing machine was found in the house of the document vendor, who not only manufactured

counterfeit passports, but also supplied passport data for his clients. Investigators also found 33 metal plates that were used to produce counterfeit Malaysian passports.

Other evidence suggested that the individuals may have tried to pass themselves off as nationals of Japan and Germany. Counterfeit Japanese visitor visas believed to be manufactured by the document vendor and counterfeit laminates for German passports were found at the house. These laminates were believed to have been produced for clients wishing to enter Europe and ultimately the United States, under the privilege accorded German citizens by the U.S. visa-waiver program.

Portrayed as involving one of the country's largest passport counterfeit rings, the investigation and arrests received widespread news coverage in Thailand.



In Thailand, Bangkok District Director Jean Christiansen, at center right, presents the award to the entire Bangkok enforcement unit. From left are: Jarat Kheereesantikul, an investigator with the embassy; Immigration Officer Doug Vincent; Supervisory Special Agent Earl Turner; Assistant District Director for Investigations Brian Vaillancourt; Christiansen; Chadaporn Wanadit, embassy investigator; George Michalakakis of the IRS; and, Wanadit Andrews, computer management assistant.

## JOINT WATER-RESCUE TRAINING IN EL PASO AIMS TO REDUCE DROWNINGS ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER

By Doug Mosier

In some parts of the country, the words "water rescue" may conjure up images of a pleasure boat capsized on a lake, or the televised version of lifeguards patrolling ocean beaches in "Baywatch" reruns.

Water rescue for Border Patrol agents of the El Paso Sector shares a similar objective: saving lives. However, it is taught and carried out in a different and sometimes more difficult setting - the fast-flowing currents of irrigation canals.

The Franklin, or "American," Canal is one of several man-made irrigation and flood-control channels around El Paso. Typically, it looks placid on the surface, but that surface appearance disguises a 10- to 15-mile-per-hour underlying current. In fact, it's swift enough to sweep adults off their feet and tire out even the most experienced swimmers.

In an effort to reduce the number of deaths due to accidental drowning, the El Paso Sector began training its agents in swift-water rescue techniques in 1999, using the fast-flowing Franklin as one of its classrooms.

Within 12 months, the agents were joined by a contingent of enthusiastic municipal police, firefighters and emergency medical crews from Juárez, El Paso's neighboring city, located just across the Rio Grande and the international border in Mexico.

Cross-border training by Border Patrol agents received an important endorsement in July as part of a broader program of improved border safety measures announced by high-level delegations of U.S. and Mexican officials meeting in El Paso.

Similar talks aimed at improving border safety were held between U.S. and Mexican officials along the entire Southwest border.

During the first nine months of this year, 125 Mexican public safety officers and approximately 375 Border Patrol agents completed water-rescue training in El Paso, according to Sector Swift-Water Training Coordinator Wayne Webb. A sprinkling of personnel from the International Water & Boundary Commission and the Clint, Texas, Fire Department also took advantage of the eight-hour training program.

The increased training comes as a larger proportion of the illegal migrants, the smugglers who guide them and others attempting to evade detection by officials at the border appear to be using waterways and drainage tunnels in the El Paso Sector.

Last year, El Paso Sector agents performed 16 confirmed water rescues and assisted other agencies on countless other rescues.

Webb said the number of drowning deaths appears to be on the decline. At least six people drowned in waterways on the U.S. side of the border near El Paso during the first nine months of 2001. That number compares with 17 confirmed water-related deaths for all of 2000.

This welcome decline in deaths may be due, in part, to the impact from a binational safety campaign that is conducted annually along the southwestern border, Webb said. The campaign delivers public service announcements (PSAs) warning of the dangers of illegal border crossings.



▶ Border Patrol Agent and Water Rescue Instructor John Mennell, left, helps Agent Amanda Ramirez and Agent Manuel Donoso practice a potentially lifesaving tug during training.



▶ During a practice drill, a lifeline helps a "victim" escape the surging waters of the Franklin Canal in El Paso.

▶ Decked out in helmets and wet suits, Border Patrol Agent Instructor Luis Hinojosa, left, and fellow Agent Instructor Alan Zeitvogel take a breather after playing the roles of drowning victims.

Photos by Greg Leyva,  
El Paso Sector



# HEADQUARTERS *News*

## **NEW BIOMETRIC BORDER-CROSSING CARDS PACK A LOT OF DATA INTO A COMPACT SPACE**

The new biometric, or "laser," crossing cards issued to Mexican nationals who frequently cross the Southwest border carry an impressive load of information for their compact size.

By sliding the card's edge through a slot in an optical machine reader at a port of entry, an immigration inspector can gain immediate access to data about the person to whom the card was issued, ranging from his or her height to birth date. The cards also include their issuance and expiration dates and a unique identification number.

By encoding such information on a magnetic strip on the back of the card, the INS aims to tie the card to the specific individual to whom it was issued and reduce the opportunities for altering information or making other fraudulent use of the card. Crossing cards are issued to Mexican nationals who frequently cross the border to work and conduct business as a means to expedite cross-border traffic.

The new card functions both as a border crossing card (BCC) and B1 business visa and B2 visitor's visa, which is valid for 10 years. U.S. consulate offices in Mexico are now issuing the new plastic-sheathed cards, the DSP-150. It replaces previous versions of the crossing cards, the I-186 and I-586.

The new card uses holography to secure the photographs of cardholders on the front of the cards. On the flip side, a machine-readable hologram displays a smaller version of the photo on the front. The DSP-150 also contains the cardholder's fingerprint data.

As of September, INS and the Department of State had processed more than 4 million DSP-150

applications from Mexican citizens. While the switch to the biometric cards is largely complete along the Southwest border, a similar but smaller transition to the new cards has begun along the northern border with Canada. Most Canadians are not required under U.S. law to obtain a visa to travel to the United States. However, a biometric crossing card could prove helpful to many permanent residents of Canada who come from other countries where a visa is required for entry to the United States.

The additional security features of the biometric cards were mandated by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Procedures for applying in Mexico for the biometric BCC were put in place in 1998. U.S. consulates in Mexico photograph and fingerprint applicants, adjudicate their cases, and then electronically transmit their information to the INS.

Crossing cards for the approved applicants are returned to the U.S. consulate in Mexico where the applicant filed. While awaiting a crossing card, approved applicants are admitted under a temporary lawful waiver.

Applications for the crossing cards are accepted in: Mexico City, Ciudad Juarez, Hermosillo, Merida, Matamoros, Monterrey, Nogales, Nuevo Laredo, Tijuana, as well as the Tijuana and the Mexicali Temporary Processing Facilities. Visa information can be obtained on the website for the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City: [www.usembassy-mexico.gov](http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov). In Mexico, information is available by calling **01-900-849-4949**.

# INS NEWS *of Note*

## REPORT WRITING IN THE PRE-COMPUTER AGE

Learning how to prepare reports on manual typewriters was an essential part of the training at the Border Patrol Academy in Los Fresnos, Texas, back in 1965 when this photo was taken. Border Patrol training was expanded to 14 weeks in 1961. All of the academy's six classrooms were housed in a single three-story building. Starting in 1973, the Immigration Office Basic Training Course was offered at Los Fresnos, under the direction of Chief Patrol Agent Fred Blondel. The Border Patrol Academy was moved in 1977 from Los Fresnos to Glynco, Ga., as part of an effort to consolidate training for several federal agencies.



Photo from the Office of the INS Historian.

## INS READIES THE "V" NONIMMIGRANT VISA FOR SPOUSES, CHILDREN OF PERMANENT RESIDENTS

The INS announced Sept. 7 that it is implementing the new "V" nonimmigrant visa status that would allow many spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents to reside and work in the United States while their applications to obtain immigrant status are reviewed.

This provision is one of the several immigration benefits provided by the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (the LIFE Act), which was enacted last December.

The interim rule was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 7 and is subject to a 60-day period of public comment. It is expected to take effect before the end of 2001.

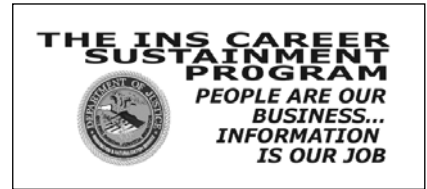
Under this new nonimmigrant visa classification, spouses or unmarried children (under 21 years of age) of a lawful permanent citizen are eligible for the V nonimmigrant classification if they meet certain

qualifications. Among those requirements is that the lawful permanent resident must have filed a petition for an alien relative (Form I-130) on behalf of the spouse or child before December 21, 2000, and the spouse or child must have been waiting at least three years after the Form I-130 was filed to be granted resident status. In addition, the spouse or child must have completed an application to extend or change nonimmigrant status (Form I-539) and provided information required on Supplement A of Form I-539, completed a medical examination (Form I-693) along with required documentation and paid application and fingerprint fees.

Additional information regarding V nonimmigrant visas and other LIFE Act benefits is available on the INS Web site [www.ins.gov](http://www.ins.gov) or by calling, toll-free, INS customer service: **1-800-375-5283.**



Elizabeth Vializ, right, a deportation aide of the New York district receives a Career Sustainment award from regional Career Sustainment Specialist Tamara Gabel.



## **JOINT SUMMIT BRINGS TOGETHER SPECIALISTS TO SHARE IDEAS FOR KEEPING THE BEST EMPLOYEES**

*By Doug Batson*

The first combined INS Recruitment and Sustainment Summit brought together recruitment and sustainment specialists from around the service in August to focus on ways to attract and keep the best employees for the INS. In the September edition, this column explored some of the proven approaches and fresh ideas for recruiting top employees.

This month we turn the spotlight on the second vital function discussed at the summit: retaining valuable INS employees for fulfilling and productive careers that will last 20 years, or more. The summit, held Aug. 8 to 10 at the INS Leadership Development Center in Dallas, drew 32 participants from Headquarters, administrative centers, human resources offices, the Border Patrol Academy, the Border Patrol's McAllen Sector in Texas, and the New York and Chicago Districts.

The participants shared success stories, discussed challenges, brainstormed, and crafted new strategies, all of which had a common aim of improving the service's ability to recruit and retain employees for long-term INS careers.

The summit also took special note of the dedication of three collateral-duty coordinators, who keep employees informed about Career Sustainment programs throughout the service, and the local managers who support their valued efforts.

The success of Career Sustainment to a large extent rests on the efforts of more than 400 volunteer INS employees, who take on the tasks of collateral-duty coordinators for Career Sustainment in addition to their regular jobs within districts, sectors and other INS facilities.

Star sustainment coordinators and stellar managers from the previous year were recognized at a special luncheon. Receiving awards were: Elizabeth Vializ of the New York District; Nicolas Prado, Jr., of the McAllen Sector; and William Mann of the Chicago District. A complete listing of recipients, presented by region, can be found in the Career Sustainment INTRANet site under Employee Programs.

One of the recipients, Supervisory Immigration Inspector Mann, explained how the many employee events sponsored by the O'Hare Airport Welfare and Recreation Association (WRA) in Chicago help to keep employee morale at high levels at that facility.

Discovering that others share similar goals and interests revitalizes his enthusiasm for his own job and his support of WRA events, Mann told the meeting. "Knowing that there are people in our immigration family who have genuine concern for their fellow employees is very exciting," he said.

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Michael Boone of Charleston, S.C., praised a summit presentation entitled, "The Leader's Role in Employee Retention," which was conducted by Steve Hance of the Center for Values Research Inc. in Dallas.

Offering the program in Charleston, "we will be able to maintain a focus on critical tasks, such as hiring the right people and fostering a positive work environment that will generate a loyal, productive, and dedicated workforce," Boone said.

The positive work environment that is the goal of the new Management Retention Education Program (MREP) is exemplified by the INS Leadership Development Center, the summit's host. The professionalism and attentiveness of the LDC staff contributed greatly to the summit's success.

As a result of the views exchanged at the summit, the Career Sustainment program assigned priorities to its development of career-enhancing products for 2002. Leading the list were two CD-ROM training modules expected to be available in early 2002. The first is entitled "Thriving in the INS," which is directed at all INS employees. The second title, "The Return-on-Investment for Employee Retention," was developed to help supervisors and managers develop strategies to assist employees in achieving satisfying long-term careers at INS.

Employee Relations Specialist Henrietta Bell of the New York District, summed up the summit's results as, "it was very informative and motivational. We have a lot of work to do."

# PEOPLE ON *the Move*



Steven George

## **AS A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER DURING HIS OFF-HOURS, DETENTION OFFICER GEORGE PROVES A LIFESAVER**

By Kerry Gill

As a detention enforcement officer, Steven A. George was trained to respond calmly and decisively to emergencies, such as breaking up disturbances that occasionally erupt between detainees.

On April 16, 1999, George's training and calm resolve didn't just quiet a scuffle. It helped save the lives of two people found in a burning building in Red Bank, N.J.

During his off-hours away from the INS Detention Facility in Elizabeth, N.J., a part of the Newark District, George volunteers with his hometown fire department. It was in this capacity, as a Red Bank Volunteer Fire Department lieutenant, that he found himself that April night at a fire in what was thought to be an abandoned building.

Firefighters arrived to find smoke pouring from the rear of the building. Lt. George and a partner entered the structure through a front window to search for possible victims. They didn't expect to find any and were startled to discover two men lying on the building's second floor, both in a semi-conscious state.

The firefighters picked up one man and carried him outside to safety. A second pair of rescuers went back to carry out the second man. By the time this second group emerged, flames had spread along the first floor to a front corner of the building.

A fire department report stated that had George and his partner "not risked their lives by entering the building, this rescue would have been a recovery mission." Both victims were squatters in the building, but were found to have had no connection to the fire. They were taken to a local hospital, treated for smoke inhalation and released.

The Red Bank Fire Department awarded Lt. George its Medal of Valor and subsequently promoted him to the rank of fire captain.

The Newark District became aware only last summer of the hero within its ranks when George requested annual leave to attend an awards ceremony. Pressed to explain, he revealed that he was the guest of honor for the annual awards ceremony of the Monmouth, N.J., chapter of the "200 Club," an organization that honors acts of bravery and valor on the part of firefighters and law enforcement officers.

George's interest in firefighting was sparked by the family of a high school friend. With encouragement from the friend's father and uncle, he became involved in the Red Bank department's activities as a teenager and joined as an adult volunteer in May 1992. George became an INS detention enforcement officer in August 1997 after working for the county corrections department.

George trains and responds to fire alarms only during his time away from the detention facility, where his work schedule can put him on duty at any time of day.

The two fields -- detention and firefighting -- do share some useful connections, he said. For example, his training in fighting fires and handling hazardous materials has helped in his job as the health and safety officer at the Elizabeth facility in which he functions as a liaison with local fire and emergency medical crews. Similarly, the Spanish language training that he received in the detention officer training course has helped in communicating with members of Red Bank's sizable Hispanic community.

These days, Detention Officer George responds to a very different set of emergencies on the homefront, following the birth of his first child on Sept. 19.

# INS NEWS FROM the Field

## SEN. BROWNBACK TOURS THE WICHITA OFFICE, SURVEYS IMMIGRATION ISSUES IN THE HEARTLAND

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, a member of the Senate's immigration subcommittee, on Aug. 29 visited the Wichita INS sub-office to take the pulse of immigration issues in his home state of Kansas.

The senator heard that the Wichita office has cut the processing time for citizenship applications (Form N400) to between three to seven months, close to the six-month goal set by the agency for processing such applications. It compares favorably with an average waiting time of nine to 10 months just two years ago. The Wichita office recorded a 27 percent increase in the number of applications it received last year.

On the enforcement side of the office, it handled 63 criminal prosecutions last year, which was more than double the number handled three years before. Prosecutions have more than doubled during the last three years to 63.

Opened as a legalization office in 1987, the Wichita office now also provides enforcement support for all of the state, but 14 counties near Kansas City. It has a 21-member staff.

Sen. Brownback was accompanied on the visit by Kansas City District Director Mike Heston and Assistant District Director for Management Hope Ortiz.



Senator Brownback (middle) is pictured with (from right) Assistant District Director for Management Hope Ortiz, District Director Mike Heston, Supervisory Special Agent Lynn Phetteplace and Assistant U.S. Attorney Mike Christensen.

## LOS ANGELES DISTRICT'S EXPLORERS POST PUTS YOUTH ON THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP

The Los Angeles District is helping to train tomorrow's leaders through its sponsorship of the Junior INS Explorers Post 1891.

Started in August 1998, the post's membership has grown from eight cadets to 12 cadets. Supported by the efforts of several of the district's inspectors and adjudications officers, it provides training and activities in various disciplines, such as character building, service and physical discipline.

Training for the cadets is conducted jointly with the U.S. Customs Explorers Post 2720 at Los Angeles International Airport. Cadets not only get an opportunity to explore potential careers, but to also soak up first-hand experience of what a specific job entails. Both posts provide youths with the opportunity to take part in federal enforcement-related activities within the Customs Service and the INS.

Field trips to the San Ysidro Port-of-Entry and the Imperial Beach Border Patrol station are used to acquaint the cadets with the lives and functions of INS staff. Cadets

experience how technology is used to spot illegal border crossing attempts and observe the use of specially trained dogs that detect illegal drugs in baggage and vehicles.

In addition, the cadets have taken on an array of community projects, such as organizing clean-ups of local beaches and roadsides through California's "Adopt-A-Highway" program. The post's color guard squad performs at citizenship ceremonies and other district-sponsored programs.

Cadets are required to participate in a 10-week course that focuses on a career, either with the INS, another law enforcement agency or in the private sector. The courses are designed to provide youth activities and training with emphasis on ethics, responsibility, leadership and community service.

The chief advisor to the post is District Adjudications Officer Cesar Baldemor, who is assisted by Immigration Inspectors Carmen Lee, Ana Castro and Rick Geolino.



U.S. Sen. Brownback (center) greets District Adjudications Officers Floyd Jennings and Trendel Sheffield in Wichita.



Color Guard participants Darina Vaquera, Rafael Campos, George Lopez, Luis De Leon, and Martha Cruz march and display their post's colors at a Multicultural Day celebration of the Los Angeles District.