



On the Bayou

AUGUST 2020



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Message from the Director

Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

I greatly appreciate the patience with which all of you have worked these last few months. It is the only way to stay safe. We are all grateful that we have the opportunity to continue our work and get paid for it. I acknowledge that we would like to get into the labs and continue our research. However, everyone's safety is of the utmost importance as we move forward in this worldwide pandemic. Some mission important work will now safely continue, in addition to the mission critical work that has been ongoing since we went into maximum telework. Hopefully we will move to Phase 1, in the near future, and additional staff will be permitted into the facility to conduct research.

My detail as the Acting Deputy Administrator for Crop Production and Protection has kept me very busy. The last few months are normally the busiest time of year for the Office of National Programs, and the impacts of COVID 19 has made further complications. I am learning a lot first-hand about the functioning of ARS, and how our Administration is constantly engaged in ensuring the success of our staff, both professionally and personally. I believe I have been able to contribute to the success of CPP, and the agency as a whole, in some small way. I am impressed with the diligence with which input is received and decision making is carried out at the highest levels. It gives me great faith that our agency is well positioned for the future success of our staff, and consequently US Agriculture.

While I have been away, the Center is functioning well. I am grateful to K. Rajasekaran, Brian Condon, David Fang and Mike Dowd for filling in during my detail. Dr. Klasson is the current Acting Center Director and has done a great job overseeing the increased research activity at the Center, as well as reviewing all the annual reports. Both these activities have gone very well. My thanks to all SRRC staff for your diligence in continuing your work using the resources available under the circumstances.

LGBTQA@SRRC Virtual Awareness Event

Submitted by: Geromy Moore

THE LGBTQA@SRRC Committee hosted a virtual Pride event on Friday, July 17th, 2020. The event theme was “Locating the Self: The Role of Language in Gender Identity and Expression”.

Our guest speaker, **sam goli**, is gender non-binary and sam’s pronouns are they/them/their. They are a writer in Los Angeles, California whose work focuses on various forms of identity, language, memory, and ancestral/familial trauma, especially as it pertains to people of color, black, and indigenous communities.

sam also teaches first year composition at California State University, Northridge. Their presentation on the expressions of gender identity was informative and interesting, and after their talk, sam answered questions from the virtual audience of 50 viewers. Many thanks to all who attended and interacted with sam!

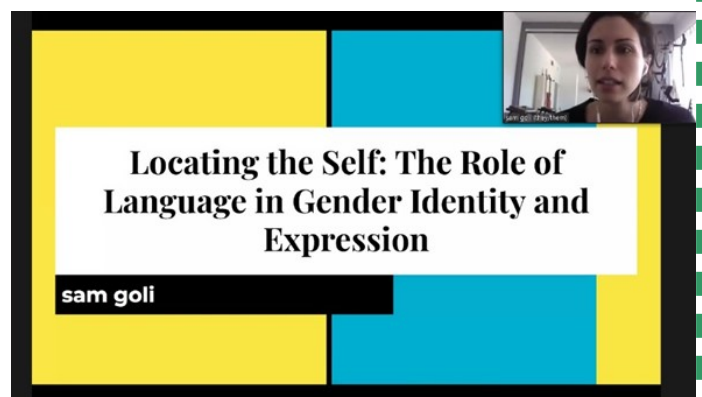


Some of the terms we learned from sam’s presentation, and examples of ways to be inclusive in the workplace included:

- ◆ Language is influenced by the culture that uses it; a culture’s values, customs, beliefs, identities, and feelings are inseparable with that culture’s language.
- ◆ Gender Revolution is a movement to question, challenge, and deconstruct the confines of the gender binary while working to redefine selfhood.
- ◆ Sex reflects one’s reproductive anatomical make-up; while gender reflects a social construct that varies across different cultures and over time.
- ◆ Gender identity reflects how a person sees themselves; gender expression includes all the ways a person communicates their gender; and sexual orientation describes who someone is attracted to based on gender.
- ◆ One’s gender identity does not necessarily determine which pronoun they use. This is why it’s important to ask.
- ◆ Things you should not say to/ask a trans person.
- ◆ Update applications forms used for new hires; make the physical space inclusive, provide gender neutral bathrooms; have a zero tolerance policy for harassment, bullying, and discrimination; inclusivity training and ongoing company enrichment meetings.

If anyone would like to have the slides from sam’s powerpoint presentation, with terms and definitions, please email Geromy Moore at:

geromy.moore@usda.gov



2020 Feds Feed Families Campaign

Submitted by: **Melissa Santos**

This year's 2020 Feds Feed Families Campaign is currently underway, and is operating virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment has soared and food insecurity is on the rise. In fact, in 2020 more than 54 million people may face hunger, including a potential 18 million children, because of coronavirus. COVID's effects, including reduced access to school lunches, high unemployment rates, and increased food costs, have greatly heightened our neighbors' nutritional needs.



New to the campaign this year is the nationwide launch of the Feds Feed Families (FFF) Hub, making it easier to participate. The FFF website and online Hub is a great way to learn about the many ways to donate food and time and record our participation. You can either enter the donation yourself or send me the information to record the donation. Please visit the FFF online Hub for further information: <https://fedsfeedfamilies-usfs.hub.arcgis.com/>

Some of the ways you can contribute:

- Monetary donations through food banks/pantries, charitable organizations
- Purchase food through your favorite "online grocer" and have it delivered to a local food bank/pantry
- Drop off food at a local pantry or food bank - make sure to record weight; most will usually weigh for you

Thank you for considering donations to feed our neighbors suffering from hunger. Your donations to this worthwhile cause are greatly appreciated!

Hatch Act

Submitted by: **Thomas Klasson**

This is reminder that Federal Employees must avoid violation of the Hatch Act. Recently, two ARS employees were put on leave without pay for 7 and 30 days for violating the Hatch Act using social media. Thus, violations are reasons for disciplinary actions.

In short, the Hatch Act has to do with engaging in any political activity using government property. Don't do it!

Especially during this time, when we are working at home and with government equipment in our personal space, we need to take extra care in the use of government equipment in politically related activities. This includes emailing/sharing political views with colleagues and social media (e.g. facebook); we cannot show using social media in any political activity in an official government capacity.

There are also limitations on what you can do, using your personal resources, that you need to know about. For a quick review, look at these short videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR0QQjCMLQo&list=PL8wgGeKVh_7fhd7xoGqSmd7HxwiJtgtCS&index=23

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCYVTYDmv0g&list=PL8wgGeKVh_7fhd7xoGqSmd7HxwiJtgtCS&index=27

Also consult Hatch Act information on the Ethics page on Axon at:

<https://axon.ars.usda.gov/Employee%20Tools/Pages/ethics.aspx>

Submitted by: Shannon Beltz

Safety Reminders:

Please remember to get approval from me for any outside contractor work done on site. I am required to track who is onsite, to ensure that we are under our required numbers and able to follow all of our pandemic guidelines.

If anyone is looking for some Safety tasks to do, I do have some things that I can share. These do not involve going on site. These are things that could be done from home. This could help you on your PAP. Please just reach out.

If you ever have any questions about COVID-19 testing, building access, or anything related to Safety or the Pandemic Plan, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Thanks and I hope you are all doing well and staying safe.
Shannon Beltz
504.376.9037

Coping with Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Submitted by: Shelia Parker

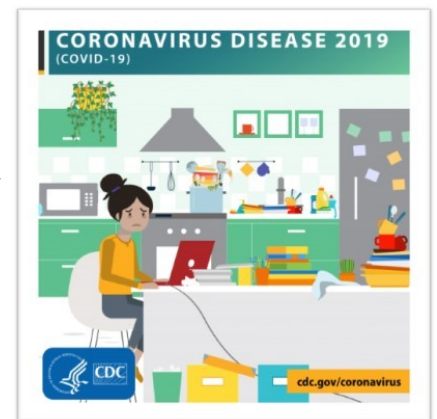
Whether you are going into work or working from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way you work. During this pandemic, it is critical that you recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build your resilience and manage job stress, and know where to go if you need help.

Recognize The Symptoms of Stress You May Be Experiencing:

- Feeling irritation, anger, or in denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Know The Common Work-Related Factors That Can Add To Stress During A Pandemic:

- Concern about the risk of being exposed to the virus at work
- Taking care of personal and family needs while working
- Managing a different workload
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform your job
- Feelings that you are not contributing enough to work or guilt about not being on the frontline
- Uncertainty about the future of your workplace and/or employment
- Learning new communication tools and dealing with technical difficulties
- Adapting to a different workspace and/or work schedule



Coping with Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic (cont.)

Follow These Tips To Build Resilience and Manage Job Stress :

- Communicate with your coworkers, supervisors, and employees about job stress while maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet).
 - Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
 - Talk openly with employers and employees about how the pandemic is affecting work. Expectations should be communicated clearly by everyone.
 - Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible — ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.
 - Keep a regular sleep schedule.
 - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
 - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
 - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
 - Practice meditation.
 - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
- Know the facts about COVID-19. Be informed about how to protect yourself and others. Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with others.
- Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic.
- Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you.
 - Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
 - Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as depression and anxiety.
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
- If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms.

If counseling is needed, don't hesitate to contact the Employee Assistance Program. These services are available, and you are able to speak with a counselor 24-7-365.

**EAP: 1-800-222-0364
(TTY 1-888-262-7848)**

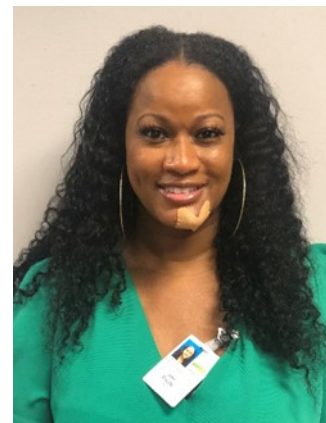
<http://www.foh4you.com/>

New Employees

Submitted by: Janell Becker

Please welcome two new employees to SRRC:

Charise Harper has joined the Administrative Staff as our new Human Resources Assistant. Charise is a retired Active Duty Air Force Sgt. and is originally from Jackson, MS. Charise has 16 combined years' experience in Personnel/Human Resources, International Education and Mortuary Affairs. Charise spends her time volunteering at the VA, the Salvation Army and the Ronald McDonald House.



Stephen Rogers is a new Physical Science Technician working with Dr. Zhongqi He in the Commodity Utilization Research Unit. After graduating with a Chemistry degree in December 2016, Stephen first began working at SRRC with Dr. Soheila Maleki as a Biological Science Technician. He primarily helped with the characterization of antibodies of major allergens found in peanuts, walnuts, and tree nuts through immunoassays. Through the course of four years, he went from student internship to L/A appointment to ORISE contractor while working in FPSQ. We now welcome Stephen as a permanent federal employee.



New Orleans' Michoud plant builds rockets for Artemis missions to the Moon and Mars

Submitted by: Shannon Beltz

NASA has been working for more than a decade on a program that will send astronauts back to the Moon and — after that — Mars. In 2019, they gave that program a name: Artemis — named after the goddess of the Moon and the twin sister of Apollo.

Tens of thousands of employees around the country are working on realizing these missions, but few New Orleanians realize our city is playing an essential role in America's return to outer space. "When people think of NASA, they think of the (Lyndon B.) Johnson Space Center in Houston or the launches from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. But they don't realize we couldn't have gone to the Moon in the 1960s without New Orleans. We couldn't have constructed the International Space Station without New Orleans. And NASA's Artemis missions certainly won't be possible without New Orleans," says Robert Champion, director of NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility.

The first of those missions (Artemis I) is expected to launch late next year and will test an uncrewed spacecraft as it circles the Moon and returns to Earth. Artemis II will accomplish a similar objective with humans aboard, while Artemis III in 2024 will return man (and deliver the first woman) to the lunar surface in 50 years.

The structure of the spacecraft that will carry those astronauts on the days-long mission to the Moon (and eventually on the months-long trip to Mars) is built in New Orleans, as is nearly all of the enormous rocket — the most powerful in history — that will launch them from Earth.

"The large majority of what you'll see on launch day was built in New Orleans," Champion says.

For more information, visit: https://www.nola.com/gambit/news/article_0830df50-c130-11ea-bf80-53eb0db98834.html



Crews transport the completed core stage for NASA's Space Launch System rocket from Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans.

SRRC Employees Busy at Work



A screenshot of one of the AO/DO weekly Zoom meetings.

Activities

Submitted by Terri von Hoven

Missed all the springtime music festivals around the city?

Check out the following:

Festival Circuit: New Orleans is a new narrative series focusing on the history and impact of festivals and cities around the world. The series sets out to answer the question: What is it about New Orleans that makes it such a special place for music? Is it the families of the city? Is it the centuries of unique history? Is it the rhythm? Or is it something more elemental, more spiritual? This five-part series will explore the history of music in the city, the creation and evolution of the jazz festival, memorable performances in the festival's 50 year history, the impact of the late night shows around the city, and the legacy and lasting appeal of New Orleans music.

Check it out at:

<https://www.osirispod.com/podcasts/festival-circuit-new-orleans/festival-circuit-new-orleans-trailer/>

The Origins of Quarantine

During the mid-fourteenth century, the bubonic plague, or black death, was decimating Europe's population, eventually taking one third of European lives. Initially, ships arriving from plague ridden areas were subjected to a 30-day isolation period when docking in Ragusa, a port city controlled by Venice. By law, no one from Ragusa was to visit the ships that were under trentino, the Italian word for 30, the 30 days of isolation. If anyone did break the law and visit the ships, that person would also have to isolate for a 30-day period. Over the next century, other cities adopted the isolation period, which was eventually extended to 40 days, or quarantino, in Italian. The extension of the trentino to quarantino was perhaps out of an abundance of caution to stop the spread of disease, or some believe, because of the Biblical importance of 40, the time of Moses on Mount Sinai, the time of Jesus and his desert fast, the time of Lent. Because of yellow fever outbreaks, the US passed the National Quarantine Act in 1878. Currently, the US has 20 quarantine stations across the country. (Meyer, J. 2020, Science Friday)

In Dialogue Series Continues

The Louisiana Children's Museum in conjunction with the Tulane University School of Medicine, Institute of Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health continues its In Dialogue series with two additional webinars:

"New Normal" in the time of COVID

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jNttDaVuYw&list=PLvDJW1nCXUckCBRDE66g03kWI9QAVbgZa&index=10>

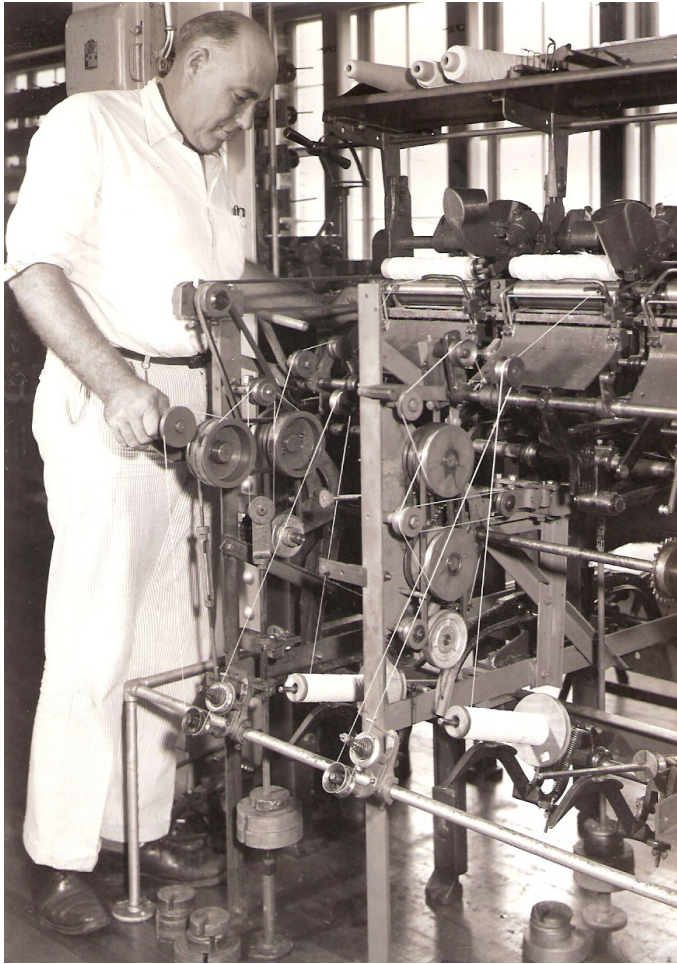
The ABCs of Trauma and Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr3qPjG3wnI&list=PLvDJW1nCXUckCBRDE66g03kWI9QAVbgZa&index=13>

A Step Back in Time at SRRC

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Submitted by: Christine Sickler



August 24, 1948: Stretching tire cord by SRRL constant tension method, using a horizontal arrangement on the left and a vertical on the right. Ray Young, Cotton Processing Research Division, SRRL.

August 15, 1947: Sampling cotton for use in differential dye test. Cotton Chemical Finishing Division, SRRL.



Recent SRRC Publications

Submitted by: **Suhad Wojkowski**

Full text pdfs of SRRC publications are available in the Eprints database via “Library” link on the SRRC Intranet page: <http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmenf.htm>

Click on the article’s title below to launch the pdf from Eprints.

Chang, Perng-Kuang and Scharfenstein, Jr., Leslie L. and Abbas, H.K. and Bellaloui, N. and Accinelli, C. and Ebelhar, M.W. (2020) [Prevalence of NRRL21882-Like \(Afla-Guard®\) *Aspergillus flavus* on Sesame Seeds Grown in Research Fields in the Mississippi Delta](https://doi.org/10.1080/09583157.2020.1791798). *Biocontrol Science and Technology*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09583157.2020.1791798>. pp. 1-10.

Ge, Changfeng and Cheng, H.N. and Miri, Massoud J. and Hailstone, Richard K. and Francis, Johnathan B. and Demyttenaere, Shao M. and Alharbi, Najat A. (2020) [Preparation and Evaluation of Composites Containing Polypropylene and Cotton Gin Trash](#). *Journal of Applied Polymer Science*, 137 (e49151). pp. 1-13.

Gupta, B.S. and Edwards, J. Vincent (2019) [Textile Materials and Structures for Topical Management of Wounds](#). In: *Advanced Textiles for Wound Care*. Elsevier Ltd. pp. 1-50.

Kong, Qing and Chang, Perng-Kuang and Li, Chunjuan and Hu, Zhaorong and Zheng, Mei and Sun, Quanxi and Shan, Shihua (2020) [Identification of AflR Binding Sites in the Genome of *Aspergillus flavus* by ChIP-Seq](#). *Journal of Fungi*, 6 (52). pp. 1-7.

Lima, Isabel M. and Jimenez, Ana Maria and Eggleston, Gillian and Pabon, Benhur and Sarir, Emmanuel and Thompson, Jack (2020) [Scale Up Studies for the Simultaneous Removal of Colorants and Protein From a Refinery Sugar Liquor Using Powdered Activated Carbon – A Pilot Plant Study](#). *International Sugar Journal*, 122 (1459). pp. 488-495.

Uchimiya, Minori and Knoll, Joseph E. (2020) [Electroactivity of Polyphenols in Sweet Sorghum \(*Sorghum Bicolor* \(L.\) Moench\) Cultivars](#). *PLoS One*, 15 (7). pp. 1-16.

Wang, Yimin and Wang, Shao-wei and Wang, Cheng-qian and Zhang, Zhi-yuan and Zhang, Jia-qi and Meng, Meng and Li, Ming and Uchimiya, Minori and Yuan, Xu-yin (2020) [Simultaneous Immobilization of Soil Cd\(II\) and As\(V\) by Fe-Modified Biochar](#). *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17 (827). pp. 1-12.

Yuan, Xu-yin and Wang, Yimin and Tang, Li and Zhou, Huihua and Han, Nian and Zhu, Hai and Uchimiya, Minori (2020) [Spatial Distribution, Source Analysis, and Ecological Risk Assessment of Pbdes in River Sediment Around Taihu Lake, China](#). *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 192 (309). pp. 1-13.