

June 23, 2008

Employee Profile: Bonita Blackaby

Bonita Blackaby is a field service supervisor in the Boyd County Family Support office. She has been with the state for 17 years.

How does your job allow you to impact the lives of your fellow Kentuckians? What's the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is definitely my staff. I am honored to supervise a hard-working, dedicated staff that genuinely cares about the clients they serve and the quality of work they produce while adhering to timeframes.

Tell us about your acting experience and what you are doing this summer at Greenbo State Park?

I have joined a community theater company called Red Lion Productions. Kory Helmick, of Raceland, started this company to provide entertaining productions at an affordable rate, by using local talent from Greenup and Boyd counties. The company will perform a comedy, "The Whole Town is Talking," June 26-29 and on July 3, 5 and 6. A musical, "Bye, Bye Birdie," will be performed July 10-13. All performances start at 8 p.m. at Greenbo Lake State Park Amphitheatre.

I am performing the role of Hattie Simmons in "The Whole Town is Talking." I participated in theatre in high school and college. I had always wanted to get involved with community theatre, but just never seemed to find the time. This has been so much fun, and I am working with my oldest daughter, who is performing the role of Lipping Lila Wilson. "The Whole Town is Talking" offers a hilarious lesson on how little white lies can create major problems and dire consequences. Directed by Jim Maggard of Fairview High School, the cast has worked well together, become very close and have had a

tremendous amount of fun preparing for the performances.

What are your interests outside of work?

I have been married nearly 24 years to Lee Blackaby. We have two daughters, Christina, 18, and Kelsey, 13. I plan to pursue a career in writing after retirement. I share the passions of writing and acting with my oldest daughter, Christina. Outside of work I enjoy writing, acting, shopping and surfing the Internet.

UK Offers Social Work Exam Prep Course, Integrative Medicine Workshop

By Anya Armes Weber

The University of Kentucky College of Social Work is offering a two-day class for those planning for social work clinical exams.

"Preparation for the Master's/Advanced/Clinical Level Exams in Social Work Practice" will be July 19 and 20 in Lexington.

Cost is \$200. The sessions are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day at the Hospice of the Bluegrass Center for Grief, 2312 Alexandria Drive. Directions to the location are online at <http://www.hospicebg.org/lexington.html>.

Lunch is provided both days, and students will receive a free workbook and practice exams. The class is quickly filling up.

Social workers will receive 15 continuing education credit hours.

Log on to <http://members.aol.com/SiriPro/Outline16.htm> for a course outline.

The social work college and the UK College of Nursing are also sponsoring a two-day symposium on integrated medicine called "Body,

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Mind, Heart and Environment: Making the Healing Connection.”

The class is Friday and Saturday, Oct. 17 and 18, at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park in Prestonsburg.

Cost is \$75, and there is a special room rate of \$59.95 a night. Call (800) 325-0142 to reserve a room.

Learn more about these courses or register at www.uksocialworkonline.com.

Fiscal War: Confessions

I have a confession. I love my savings account. Don't get the wrong idea: It's not like it's overflowing with money or equipped to support a lavish retirement that involves things like sailing and skiing the Swiss Alps. Really, I just love it because it's there, a nice little security blanket that gives me a sense of accomplishment every time I add money to it.

This is no doubt a trait I inherited from my grandfather, Harry, who loved to stress the importance of savings to my brother and me on family trips to breakfast on Saturdays. Whenever we'd visit his bank, he'd mention his savings account and how he'd been building it ever since he'd started working many years before. At the time, we just thought this was a source of pride for him – and it was – but I think it was a source of peace of mind too.

A few weeks ago, I asked my grandmother about Papaw Harry's theories on money management, and she said that he simply believed it was important to save. Whether it was \$10 or \$10,000, he thought you should put a little money away from each paycheck. Now, I'd love to tell you he eventually amassed an exorbitant fortune, and that my family owns a string of islands in the Caribbean. I can't. I do know that my grandfather's life was blessed with financial

security, and it's something we all can achieve with just a little bit of discipline and commitment to savings.

So, if you haven't added to your savings lately, or haven't even opened an account, there's no time like the present. I think you'll find that having a rainy day fund is surprisingly comforting, especially in times like these.

Focus Money Saving Tip of the Week: This tip comes from my aunt, Melinda “Meme” McKenzie of Tampa, Fla. To maximize savings, Meme recommends rethinking your savings versus checking mentality. She says, “With the days of direct deposit, most people have a set amount of money deposited in their savings. For example, \$100 each paycheck goes into savings, and the ‘net’ amount deposits in checking. I do the opposite. I have a set amount go to my checking account — for example \$1,000 each pay period - and have the ‘net’ amount go to my savings.”

Meme says with this method, annual raises automatically get funneled into savings, allowing her to build her nest egg more each year. The system is conservative enough that she's able to save more, but still allows her the flexibility to access funds in her savings whenever she needs them.

Living Well: Change is Good

I have been running for more than two years. My initial goal was to complete the Chicago Marathon in 2007, but I procrastinated, and the race registration closed. Someone must have been looking out for me because, if you can recall, the Chicago area experienced record high temperatures, and the event was officially stopped a few hours into the race.

Since that time, I have finished a marathon, but not in Chicago. This year, however, I did not procrastinate. I am registered to run the Bank of

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America Chicago Marathon on Oct. 12. But when the heat and humidity turned up in early June, I found it harder and harder to lace up my running shoes, and hit the road. Running became one of those repetitive household chores that I dreaded instead of an outlet that I looked forward to and enjoyed.

During that time, I found myself rolling out of bed before the sun came up to take two different friends to the airport. I live very close, so it was a quick trip and I could still fall back into bed and catch a few more minutes of sleep before my morning commute. I am not a morning person, so this was not a timeframe I was familiar with. But I was quick to take notice of how quiet and peaceful Lexington seemed that early in the morning. I made a mental note that this might be a good time to run – there was little to no traffic, the temperatures were still cool, and there was a calm, quiet feeling.

I am now out each morning as the sun comes up and happily waving good morning as I come in contact with other early birds. I no longer wonder what those people are doing out so early. Now I feel like I am a part of a secret early morning club. Also, I can drive home knowing that my hard work is over and that my evenings are free to spend time with my family and friends.

This article is not meant to stress the importance of running for physical fitness. It's more to remind you to venture outside your normal routine and comfort zone to find that extra motivation you might need to get started or keep going.

If you would like to share your source of motivation or a newfound motivation, please e-mail Kris Hayslett with your story at kris.hayslett@ky.gov.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

From the Web site dailymastery.com, business consultant Karen Vibe-Rheymer-Stewart offers these tips for saving time at work:

Curb the interruptions. When you are on deadline, ask your work friends not to stop by or call you until a certain time. Resist opportunities to join hallway conversations so you can concentrate on your tasks for an hour or two before taking a break.

Make your electronics work for you. Turn off your e-mail alert so you are not prone to checking it every time you get a message. Set your personal cell phone to voicemail and return calls on your break times.

Make a plan for every day. Your first task of the morning should be making a list of your assignments for the workday and setting your priorities. Or start your list for the next day before you leave the office at night. Lack of planning can make it easier for you to get caught up in interruptions, and let time slip away.