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# news in the OCIO

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Richard P.F. Lowe, of the Portfolio Management Division (PMD), shares his memories of his trip to Macchu Picchu (10-11, 13); Skip Keats, of the Information Services Division (ISD), reviews the Shakespeare play "Twelfth Night," which was held at the Sidney Harmon Hall (12-13); Joe Hennigan of the Network and Security Operations Division (NSOD) writes about his passion for scuba diving (16).

Front Cover image of the Unites States Capitol is provided by David Iliff, of Wikipedia.org

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## USPTO NAMES JOHN OWENS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER



The USPTO has named John B. Owens II as Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the agency, it was announced by former USPTO Director Jon Dudas. Since joining the USPTO in February 2008, Owens served as the director of the USPTO's System Development and Maintenance Group under the CIO, and has been serving as Acting CIO since October 2008.

As CIO, Owens is the principal advisor to the USPTO on the architectural design and acquisition

of supporting automated information systems and the underlying information technology infrastructure. Owens has led the recent initiatives at the USPTO to develop a roadmap to improve the USPTO's information systems infrastructure.

"I am pleased to welcome John to the USPTO's senior management team," noted former Director Dudas. "His skills and experience as an executive IT professional will be valuable assets in improving and enhancing our IT systems over the next several years. These efforts will be critical in ensuring that the agency's mission and goals continue to be met even as our reliance on technology and the size of our workforce continue to increase."

Owens has more than 16 years experience in the IT field including serving as technical director at AOL LLC from 1995 to 2008. Prior to joining AOL, he was a senior software engineer for e-Systems Melpar Division, GE Consulting for GE Aerospace, and Keane Inc. for Martin Marietta.

"Information Technology forms the underpinnings of work that is performed in any organization, and a strong IT system is especially crucial here at the USPTO," Owens said. "I am looking forward to working with our team to make the agency a premier example of the best technology standards in the federal government. We owe this to our employees, we owe this to our customers, and we owe this to our public users."

Originally from Rome, N.Y., Owens now lives in Gainesville, Va. with his wife and children. Owens holds a Bachelor of Science in computer science from Clarkson University and Master of Business Administration in Technology Innovation Management from the University of Phoenix.

## SARAH HAUT WINS OCIO TRANSFORMATION LOGO CONTEST

Sarah Haut claims that she does not have a creative bone in her body. The judges of the OCIO Transformation Logo Contest obviously think differently. The Senior IT Project Manager for the Program Management Group in OCIO submitted the winning design.

"I was totally shocked when they told me I won," Haut said.

CIO John Owens made the announcement at the OCIO Holiday Party on December 17, 2008. Haut's design was one of 21 entries.

"I would like to thank the other 20 employees who participated in the contest," Owens said. "We have quite a few talented and creative individuals in our organization! I appreciate your taking the time to think about what the transformation will mean to OCIO and how to depict that in a logo."

Acting Chief of Staff Scott Williams had a panel of five OCIO employees and managers select the top six designs, which were then forwarded to the USPTO Office of Public Affairs for the final selection. Williams ran the winning design by the Trademarks Office to ensure that the design did not infringe on any current marks.

"I was excited to learn that Sarah's design had been chosen for the OCIO Transformation Road Map logo, but not surprised," said Jonathan Bennett, Manager of the Project Management Division, who is also Haut's supervisor. "Project Management is as much an art as it is a science. As a Senior IT Project Manager who recently joined the Project Management Division, Sarah has demonstrated her creativity and initiative on a number of occasions. She is a constant source of great ideas and out of the box thinking and a valued member of the team."

Haut said her design represents the four goals of the OCIO Roadmap leading into USPTO and the impact that the Roadmap will have on USPTO once it is implemented. She said it took 10 minutes to design the logo, using online clip art. Owens and Williams have asked professional graphic artist Michael Walsh with CSSG to take Haut's concept and turn it into the final logo.

Although she has not been an OCIO employee for very long, Haut decided to enter the contest because she said she thought she had a good idea. She joined the staff of OCIO in October 2008 after working in the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer at the Department of Homeland Security. Haut has no formal training in art or graphics design. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in French from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., in 1990 and a Master of Science degree in Information Systems from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. in 1996.

"I took a pottery class last year in an attempt to get in touch with my creative side, but it didn't work," she joked. "I have several lopsided bowls and pots."



Sarah Haut created the concept for the winning OCIO Transformation Logo Contest, which was refined by graphic artist Michael Walsh.

RENEE CLEMENT, STAFF WRITER

## SCUBA DIVING IS MY PASSION

As we settle down for a long winter's nap, or at least that's how the poem goes, my thoughts turn to the warm waters of the Caribbean. I am an avid scuba diver and have been involved in the sport for 25 plus years. My appetite for diving began when I was barely ten years old. I used to watch an old TV show named "Sea Hunt" which featured the actor Lloyd Bridges. Lloyd's character was an ex-Navy frogman turned freelance diver by the name of Mike Nelson. I was glued to the TV set every week, watching the adventures of Mike Nelson. Since my family did not have a color TV set, all my images of diving were in black and white. I promised myself that someday I would be a scuba diver.

As chance would have it, during my sophomore year of college, I saw a flyer for scuba diving lessons. I knew that this would be my opportunity to dive in to the sport. I signed up for the classes and began my training a few weeks later. In the early days of scuba training, after World War II, the programs were based on how frogmen were trained. During my classes in the early 1970s, the training had not matured a great deal. Albeit I did not have to mine any beaches or look out for enemy submarines, the



A French Angel Fish swims along the rocks off the Benwood Wreck, Key Largo, Florida

training required a great deal of physical strength and stamina. Equipment was basic, wet suits were normally all black instead of the colorful suits seen today, the instructors were usually ex-military, and females were rarely involved in the sport.

My first adventures were not in the warm waters of the Caribbean but in a rock quarry in Northern Virginia. My certification dives were in water which was normally 50 degrees fahrenheit at 30 feet deep and had a visibility factor on a good day of approximately five to 10 feet. I survived the classes, certification dives, and received my Open Water diver certification. I did a few dives over the next four years but never got away from quarry diving. Unfortunately, life got in the way of my diving aspirations and I put the fins and mask away.

Luck was on my side; in the early 1990s I had the opportunity to use my scuba diving skills professionally. I was working with a group of Security folks – ex-U.S. Secret Service, Navy SEALs, and Army Rangers – whose main responsibility was protecting a high-profile client. The client loved the water and this enabled me to provide some underwater safety dives for the client and family.

Since equipment and diving techniques had progressed, I decided to start my training from the beginning. I enrolled in an Open Water scuba class and quickly regained my skills. I did note that the instructors were less authoritarian. Although my luck failed me and I was soon introduced to my scuba instructor, who had just retired from the U.S. Navy. He was a former Navy SEAL.

I also noticed that equipment matured and a great number of females had entered the sport. After my certifications dives, in the same cold, dark, miserable quarry, I quickly drove to the Florida Keys and was finally diving in the warm waters of the Caribbean. What a difference!

After returning home, I quickly enrolled in the next several classes and began my journey to becoming an Open Water Scuba Instructor. I made frequent trips to the numerous islands in the Caribbean and to the Graveyard of the Atlantic to hone my diving skills. I became an instructor in 1995. I thoroughly enjoy teaching and working with new divers. I still teach diving today, but other underwater interests take up much of my time. These interests include photography, videography, wreck and cave diving.

The Florida Keys are still one of my favorites, but exotic locations in the Bahamas, Caymans, U.S. Virgin and British Virgin islands began to quickly fill my log book. Diving became a passion. On numerous trips to Europe and the Middle East, I was always on the look out for a dive opportunity. Some of them were better than others. The Red Sea off of Hurghda, Egypt was fantastic but dive sites off of France and Italy reminded me a little of the Northern Virginia quarry. Probably the best adventure I enjoyed was chartering a live-aboard dive boat to the Dry Tortugas for 14 fellow divers, two of whom were my wife and daughter.

A live-aboard charter is a cruise oriented for the diver community. The boat is fully equipped with food, water, adult beverages, and the all-important air compressor to refill your dive tanks. You sleep and eat aboard the dive boat and if you are lucky enough to have fair seas, you can normally do four or five dives a day. One of these dives is normally a night dive, when all the critters make an appearance. The week we spent cruising and diving in the waters around the Dry Tortugas and Ft. Jefferson were beyond description.

If you ever get the urge to scuba dive, visit one of the local dive shops and maybe you will dive into another sport to enjoy. You might even get the opportunity to experience that infamous Northern Virginia rock quarry. Safe diving!



A Sea turtle in the Atlantic Ocean, Molasses Reef, Key Largo, Florida

JOE HENNIGAN, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This Sand Tiger shark picture was taken on the wreck of the Proteus, which was sunk after a collision on August 18, 1918. The wreck lies in 125 feet of water and is 25 miles south of Hatteras Inlet.



# HOW TO USE THE FREE DASH BUS LUNCH LOOP

**Tired of eating the same old foods over and over again? Dash into Old Town for free**

**Y**ou've been at the USPTO for three hours. Your stomach starts to growl and your mouth starts to salivate in anticipation of the tasty lunch you have in mind. The only problem is, for the most part at least, if you're in the mood for such delectable cuisine from the likes of Chipotle, Cosi, Bertucci's or Austin Grill, you'll be disappointed as these restaurants aren't a block away from campus. Instead, what appears to be the lunch of the IT specialist, branch supervisor or art director is a sandwich of some sort. Don't get me wrong, eating a submarine sandwich once a week sounds great to me, but when it's the most popular entrée within two blocks, you and your stomach are in trouble.

That's where the DASH Bus comes into play. From 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, the bus picks up riders at the corner of Ballenger Avenue and Dulany Street. The loop runs every 10 minutes and is a straight shot to the final destination of South Columbus Street and King Street. It is at this same point where you will be picked up in route back to USPTO.

There are 10 bus stops on the round-trip route into Old Town, Alexandria. In the experiences I've had riding the DASH Bus Lunch Loop, the bus generally doesn't pick anyone up or let anyone off until the two main final destinations (Ballenger Avenue/Dulany Street and South Columbus Street/King Street). Most of the individuals who ride the Lunch Loop work at the USPTO so for the most part, it's not necessary for the bus to stop.

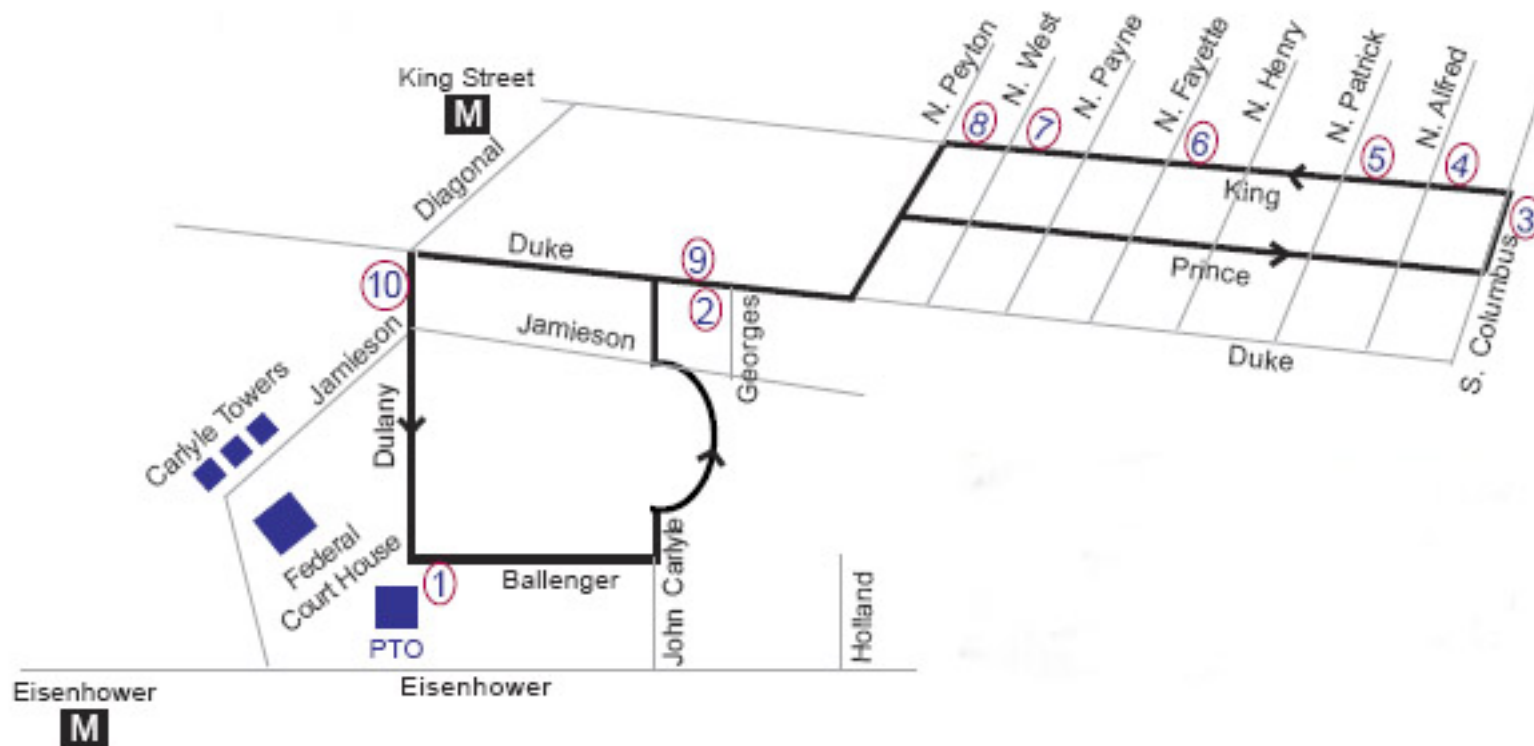
I ride the DASH Bus into work every day and I would estimate that the total seating capacity the bus can hold is roughly 36 people at a time (not counting standing room). Seeing as the loop runs every 10 minutes, the likelihood that you would be crammed in with other people is low.

The DASH Bus Lunch Loop offers a fantastic alternative to employees. Being absolutely free, you get to enjoy the scenic drive into Old Town that's followed by a delicious lunch. There really is no better way to spend your lunch hour than riding the DASH Bus free of charge and enjoying a meal only a few blocks away from the office.

For additional information, please visit [http://dashbus.com/s02\\_readnewschedule.html](http://dashbus.com/s02_readnewschedule.html).

CHRIS BARTNEK, STAFF WRITER

Map courtesy of [www.dashbus.com](http://www.dashbus.com)



## SUSAN FAWCETT RECOGNIZED BY NARA

Susan Fawcett, USPTO Records Officer, has had her efforts recognized in the National Archives and Records Administration 2008 Performance and Accountability Report, "Preserving the Past to Protect the Future." On page 97 of the report, it states, "PTO's records management program has been very active in FY 2008. The agency is one of the four pilot agencies for NARA's Electronic Records Archives (ERA) and has been working closely with NARA to schedule and transfer records to NARA electronically."

"Additionally, the agency has been a leader in developing flexible records schedules,

allowing the agency to schedule more records effectively. Using this approach, PTO has scheduled 63 electronic systems since FY 2006 and continues to work towards scheduling all their electronic records to comply with the E-Government Act deadline in 2009.

We congratulate Susan Fawcett on this recognition," said John Owens, CIO.

To view the entire report, visit <http://www.archives.gov/about/plans-reports/performance-accountability/2008/index.pdf>



MARTHA SNEED, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Susan Fawcett, Records Management Officer

Image of the National Archives and Records Administration seal is provided by the U.S. Government National Archives and Records Administration, courtesy of Wikipedia

## 2008-2009 NHL MIDSEASON REPORT

We've just about reached the halfway point of the 2008-2009 National Hockey League (NHL) campaign, with all teams having played at least 37 games. While there's still plenty of hockey left, some teams have made a pretty serious impact and are looking like serious contenders, while others have fallen far enough off the pace that it's hard to see them making a serious run at the postseason. Here's a look at how things stack up now compared to my preseason predictions.

### EASTERN CONFERENCE



**Boston Bruins:** The mighty B's have been the cream of the Eastern Conference and are presently trailing only the San Jose Sharks for the best record in the NHL. If the Bruins can keep up this pace, they'll win the Northeast going away and could possibly challenge for the President's Trophy (awarded to the team with the most standings points in the league at season's end).

[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Northeast Division, 1<sup>st</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Northeast Division, 11<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Washington Capitals:** The Capitals have been absolutely unstoppable of late. They've managed an incredible home record of 18-1-1. Perhaps most impressive is the fact that they've done so well despite a series of injuries to key players requiring call-ups of many inexperienced players. Expect Ovechkin to repeat as MVP and keep an eye on rookie defenseman Karl Alzner!



[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Southeast Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Southeast Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Philadelphia Flyers:** The rough-and-tumble Flyers have done an excellent job of gutting out close games, and have clawed their way to the top of the Atlantic Division. Their high-octane attack, along with one of the better young defenses in the league, has helped to make up for some rather shaky goaltending.

[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Atlantic Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Atlantic Division, 5<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**New York Rangers:** Despite having only a +3 differential in goals scored vs. goals allowed, the Rags are playing very impressive hockey. It looks like it'll be a dogfight for top honors in the Eastern Conference, but with a healthy "King Henry" between the pipes, I like their chances.



[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Atlantic Division, 4<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Atlantic Division, 4<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Montreal Canadiens:** The Habs have fallen off the pace of last year's outstanding numbers, but are still looking very sharp. Only four teams in the NHL have given up fewer goals thus far, so it is the defense and goaltending that are keeping them strong, despite the lag in offensive production.

[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northeast Division, 5<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Northeast Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**New Jersey Devils:** The injury to goalie Martin Brodeur was seen by many to be the death knell for the Devils, but Scott Clemmensen has been lights-out in his place. As usual, the Devils are getting contributions from all corners, and while their defense isn't quite as impenetrable as it used to be, it is still among the most formidable in the league.



[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Atlantic Division, 6<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic Division, 6<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Carolina Hurricanes:** Quietly chugging along in the wake of the SE-dominant Capitals, the Canes have managed an impressive number of standings points [47] despite having a -10 differential in goals scored vs. goals surrendered. They're a very balanced team that could be a dark horse in the postseason.

[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Southeast Division, 7<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Southeast Division, 8<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Buffalo Sabres:** The Sabres have been a disappointment this season, but they're still well situated to make the playoffs. Thomas Vanek is among the league leaders in goals thus far, and Derek Roy and Jason Pominville have been scoring at a decent pace, but there's not a whole lot else.



[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Northeast Division, 8<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northeast Division, 7<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Pittsburgh Penguins:** The Pens were among the favorites to repeat their easy run to the playoffs and many picked them to dominate the Eastern Conference (blush). Defense and goaltending have been atrocious, and they've only managed a .500 record on home ice thus far and a record that isn't even good enough for a playoff spot at this point.

[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic Division, 9<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Atlantic Division, 1<sup>st</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Florida Panthers:** Benefiting from an improving young defense and pretty sharp goaltending (despite a recent flap), the Panthers are exceeding expectations. Despite an unremarkable record, they're not out of it.



[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Southeast Division, 10<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Southeast Division, 12<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Toronto Maple Leafs:** The Leafs are having a rough time making ends meet without long-time Captain Mats Sundin. They're putting up a decent number of goals into opponents' nets, but defensive struggles have led to them surrendering the third most of any team.

[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Northeast Division, 11<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Northeast Division, 14<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Ottawa Senators:** As predicted, the Senators are having a rough time of it but incredibly, it's not their goaltending that is to blame. They have only managed 89 goals thus far, which is the least of any team in the entire NHL.



[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Northeast Division, 12<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Northeast Division, 9<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**Tampa Bay Lightning:** The Bolts are simply rotten this year. Despite a stacked lineup, they've managed the third fewest goals in the NHL and have managed only 32 points thus far.

[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Southeast Division, 13<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Southeast Division, 10<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Atlanta Thrashers:** Utterly deplorable start for the Thrash, who have the distinction of having racked up the most home losses of any team in the league. Aside from Ilya Kovalchuk and the surprising Bryan Little, there's really nothing much going on here.



[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Southeast Division, 14<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Southeast Division, 13<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]



**New York Islanders:** The Isles have one of the most anemic offenses in the NHL and are tied for last place in goals allowed with 149. They stand alone in the cellar with only a measly 28 points in the standings, and I'm not the least bit surprised that this prediction was dead-on.

[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic Division, 15<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Atlantic Division, 15<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

## WESTERN CONFERENCE

**San Jose Sharks:** Break up the Sharks! It was a no-brainer they'd be strong this year, but who knew they'd be the top team in the NHL at the midway point?! They have yet to lose in regulation at home this year and have lost only five games in regulation all season long. If this team has a weakness, I'm not sure what it is.



[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Pacific Division, 1<sup>st</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Pacific Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Western Conference]



**Detroit Red Wings:** It is no surprise that the perennially dominant Red Wings are leading the NHL in goals scored. It's a little surprising that they're only the third best team in the league at present. Barring something unforeseeable, the defending Stanley Cup champs will be tough to knock off in the post-season.

[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Central Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Central Division, 1<sup>st</sup> in Western Conference]

**Calgary Flames:** Despite all of the personnel changes that took place in the off-season, the Flames have adapted well and are playing top-notch hockey with the look of a team that has years of chemistry. Unless Mats Sundin can propel the Canucks to the top of the Northwest Division, Calgary will likely remain on top.



[Currently: 1<sup>st</sup> in Northwest Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northwest Division, 5<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]



**Chicago Blackhawks:** The Hawks youth movement rolls on, with Kane and Toews being joined by Kris Versteeg and Patrick Sharp as primary scoring threats. Chicago's goal differential of +44 is the best in the West and second only to Boston in the NHL.

[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Central Division, 4<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Central Division, 6<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

**Vancouver Canucks:** A very strong team in the middle of a pretty rough spot. The loss of Roberto Luongo to injury was a huge setback but the addition of super-vet Mats Sundin should help to right the ship. The Sedin twins continue to amaze, but they can't do it all by themselves.



[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Northwest Division, 5<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 1<sup>st</sup> in Northwest Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Western Conference]



**Anaheim Ducks:** The Ducks have stumbled a little on defense, but no matter as Ryan Getzlaf has exploded on offense and led a team of impressive young forwards in putting up some fierce numbers. Ageless wonder Teemu Selanne continues to rack up power play goals, and provide the kind of experience that should help his younger mates grow

[Currently: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Pacific Division, 6<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Pacific Division, 7<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

**Minnesota Wild:** Absolutely terrific netminding – the NHL's best as of this update – has been thwarted by the fourth-lowest goals-scored total in the league. The Wild lost a lot of their scoring punch in the off-season, but they should not be this far off pace. Look for them to make the playoffs, but unless they start scoring more, the excellent goaltending will go shamefully to waste.



[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Northwest Division, 7<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Northwest Division, 9<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]



**Phoenix Coyotes:** Shane Doan, and NOT Olli Jokinen, has been the big impact player thus far for the Coyotes. Poor results on the road have been a problem for Phoenix this year – if they can shape up their out-of-town play, they'll likely hang onto a playoff spot.

[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Pacific Division, 8<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Pacific Division, 8<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

**Edmonton Oilers:** As predicted, the Oilers are pretty much a middling team whose playoff aspirations only exist by virtue of being amid a clutch of mediocre squads who'll fight it out for the bottom three or four spots in the post-season. Souray and Visnovsky have brought new life to the blue line, but the underperforming forwards and goalies are likely to be their undoing.



[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Northwest Division, 9<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Northwest Division, 10<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]



**Colorado Avalanche:** Injuries to Joe Sakic and heir-apparent Paul Stastny along with low production from other key players and some very inconsistent goaltending have spelled disaster for this former powerhouse. Playoffs are still well within reach, astonishingly, but the Avs must step it up if they hope to get there.

[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Northwest Division, 10<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Northwest Division, 13<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

**Columbus Blue Jackets:** The Blue Jackets are chugging along at a .500 pace. Rick Nash is a one-man-show and Steve Mason has been an amazing surprise in goal, but they face an uphill climb if they're planning on making the post-season.



[Currently: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Central Division, 11<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup> in Central Division, 11<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

Continued on Page 9

## BOOK REVIEW: 'PLAYING FOR PIZZA,' WRITTEN BY JOHN GRISHAM

John Grisham is best known for writing novels geared toward legal thrillers. Some of his characters talk in the first person, which gives the reader a chance to really see the story unfold through the eyes of the protagonist. This particular novel is one of those rare occurrences where the author jumps outside his usual genre and writes a story that is rather opposite of what you are used to reading from them.

"Playing for Pizza" is a novel about a third-string National Football League (NFL) quarterback named Rick Dockery. Dockery has been a quarterback (QB) since his playing days in high school and has talent. However, in the NFL, there are varying levels of talent, and just because a QB was good in college hardly means that success will transfer over into the pro league. Dockery has been the third-string QB of several NFL teams. He is a member of the Cleveland Browns, who happens to be playing in the AFC Championship game against the Denver Broncos (not exactly the most thrilling match-up if this was reality). The Browns are up 17-0 late in the third quarter when the starting QB goes out with an injury. As you would imagine, the backup QB enters the game. However, a short time later, he gets injured and is out as well. The stage is set for Dockery to take the reins, with a little more than a quarter left in a game. The winner of the game will go to the Super Bowl. The set of events that occurs over the next 10 pages or so has Dockery completely blowing the game for the Browns, which ends with them losing to the Broncos in the final minutes of the game.

One of the aspects I liked most about the book was how the story began while in the middle of the football game. We dive right into the AFC Championship game, while needed background details are added in as the game goes on. With the result of the game, the Cleveland fans are out for blood. Dockery receives death threats, and the media takes every chance they can get to belittle him, and thus he's out of work. The Browns release him, which starts a chain reaction around the NFL that makes it appear Dockery will never get a job as an NFL quarterback again. Dockery's agent, Arnie, does his best to gauge any interest other teams might have in his client, but the end result is that no team wants or needs a QB who is one of the biggest choke artists the game has ever seen.

At this point it is only natural for Dockery to want to get out of Cleveland as fast as he can while he is still alive. Football really means something to the fans in the city of Cleveland. Dockery gets in his car with his bags packed and just starts to drive with no real destination in mind. There is an incident at a roadside diner involving a local truck driver and Dockery which I can imagine happening in real life. A few weeks after the now infamous last game Dockery played for the Browns, Arnie contacts his client with some news. There is an opportunity to play football and to even be the starting quarterback. The catch? The team is called the Parma Panthers, located in Italy.

Naturally Dockery is hesitant at first, mainly because he never even knew Italians played Americanized football. The ironic part is that most of the Italians in Italy were not aware of it either. Dockery will be offered \$80,000 to be the starting QB for the Panthers, in their eight-team little-known league in Italy. The fields they play on are in old soccer stadiums that are worn down and seat no more than a few thousand fans, not that that many would attend the games being played anyway. Games were played on Saturday or Sunday and practices were held usually three times a week, all at night. There are no TV deals, no endorsements, and no

scouts of any kind that you would normally find in the stands and on the sidelines in college and professional league games. The teams in the league are mostly average with one team, the Bergamo Lions, being the league's best (having won the Super Bowl for what seems like every year). There are some Americans scattered about each team who are mostly former college football players who are looking for their big break and a chance to play professional football. Some of them have decent talent that might enable them to play in a better setting down the line but the rest of them just like to enjoy hitting other players and running around the field.

Grisham hit the nail on the head in two respects in this book. One is how he describes each character's personality. The other is in the Italian setting. In Italian football, each team is allowed no more than three Americans on the roster. Coaching the Panthers is an American named Sam. He's known Dockery for a while and was the one who contacted Arnie the agent about bringing his client over to play. The team itself features men of all ages, ranging from two twenty-something African-American players (who in Italy are a rarity), Trey Colby and Sly Turner, who played college football back in the States, to 38-year-old Italians with little speed or real talent but lots of heart. The men on the team didn't get paid and held full-time jobs during the day. One of the characters in the book is Giuseppe Lazzarino, who happens to be a judge in the courts where Dockery ends up in several funny misadventures. The team's main talent is a young Italian named Fabrizio, a fellow who is immature and is only concerned about himself but is also very fast and has the best receiving hands on the team.

The team welcomes Dockery with open arms because they are enamored with the thought of playing with an NFL quarterback. Not many on the team know of his latest troubles playing football back home, which provides him with much-needed relief. Dockery's teammates are loud, ornery, and wild but they are thoughtful, dedicated to Italian culture, and all-around good guys. They like to cook, eat pasta, and drink lots of beer while being rowdy and loud the entire time. They bicker back and forth and cuss at each other in Italian while at the same time they have enduring friendships and seem to make up with each other right around the time beer and food is served.

Dinners in Italy seem to include eight different courses and they last for several hours *each* night. I would definitely recommend eating before reading the book because if you don't, you will find yourself salivating with hunger with every page you turn. The other charm of the book is Grisham's insights into the Italian culture. His crisp details of every course that gets served during dinner as well as the wine and beer consumed left a void in my stomach that made me want to have dinner with the Parma Panthers. Grisham also goes into great detail about the atmosphere in Italy, with detailed descriptions of the historic buildings all around to the cramped and small apartment Dockery is forced to sleep in over the course of the season. Grisham also pokes a little fun at how the transportation and parking in Italy is so drastically different than what we are used to in America. You really feel like you are there in Dockery's shoes.

Being a sports novel, you definitely get your share of football vernacular. I would imagine you would need to have at least a beginner's knowledge of the rules of football and how they apply to the game. Though football in Italy is only slightly different than what is seen in the NFL (for example,

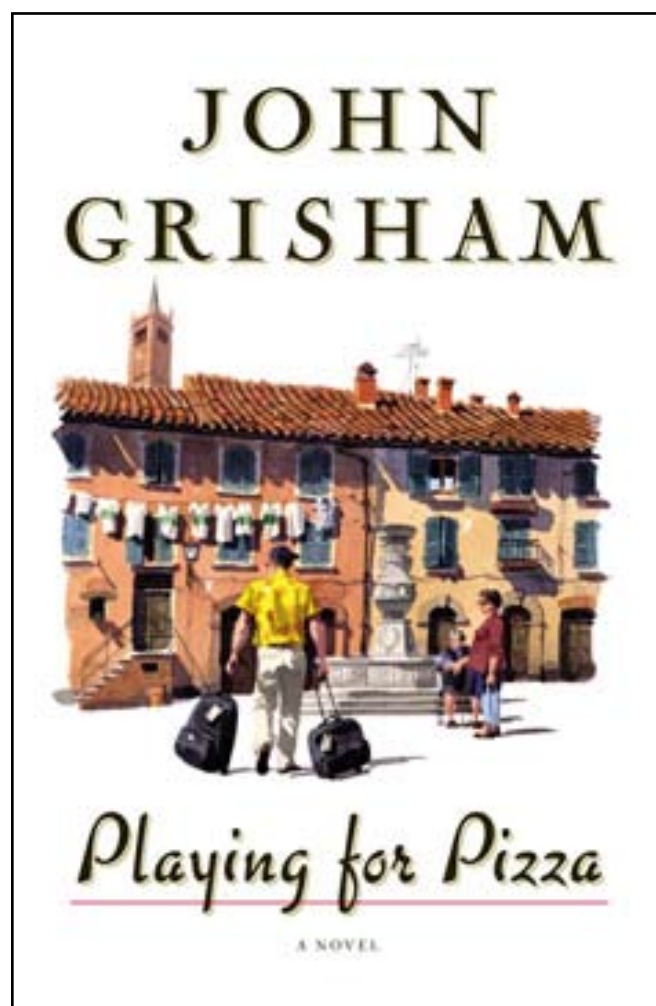


Image provided by [www.about.com/bestsellers](http://www.about.com/bestsellers)

Continued on Page 9

in Italy the field is 90 yards long as opposed to 100 in the United States), the same characteristics can be applied. Half of the novel takes you right into the middle of the games the Parma Panthers play and the other half allows the reader to dive into Dockery's personal life. Grisham paints him as an out-of-town resident who at first is only in Parma to play football and collect his salary. He's the only paid player on the team. As the book ventures on, Dockery takes the opportunity to explore Italy's roads, restaurants, and attractions so he can get a better feel of the culture. He starts to appreciate the Italians more and more for their hospitality and kindness and becomes less and less concerned with how he ended up in Italy and where his life might lead him down the line.

Dockery meets two different women while in Parma and ends up with one of them. She's a charming, college-aged girl who escaped her troubled family life back in the United States. He relates to her in ways he couldn't imagine and she certainly makes his stay in Italy worthwhile. The relationships in "Playing for Pizza" are detailed with respect and love. The characters are all likable except for a Cleveland newspaper sports section writer named Charles Cray, who rips Dockery in the Cleveland papers every chance he can get. Cray is so intent on burying Dockery with negative press he actually travels to Parma to watch several of the games that he plays in, bashing him on any level he can. This is so much

so that Rick takes time out to travel to Cleveland to find Cray and have a few words with him (we'll leave it at that). As a reader, I really enjoyed the character of Dockery. He is football-smart and knows how to play the game. He may not have all the talent in the world but he loves the game and appreciates those who play it. Though his dedication to playing football for the Parma Panthers gets tested in several incidents in the novel, Dockery demonstrates his commitment and loyalty to the team in ways the reader might not have imagined.

If you enjoy sports and/or John Grisham, "Playing for Pizza" certainly comes recommended. It's a lovely mix of sports and Italian culture that go very well together. I hope Grisham dabbles in writing more sports novels, even though this is not his normal genre. The feeling as if you're there at the stadium is enchanting and you're provided a view of the rich Italian history and dedication the men in the novel possess. The story itself moves at a fast enough pace that the reader shouldn't get bored. It only took me four days to read the novel and I was actually sad when it ended.

CHRIS BARTNEK, STAFF WRITER



**Dallas Stars:** The real surprise thus far has been ineffective goaltending. Marty Turco is usually a very reliable netminder, but he's played very poorly this season and hasn't received much in the way of offensive support. Perhaps there's time for them to turn it around, but it's going to take a major effort to secure a playoff spot.

[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Pacific Division, 12<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]  
[Prediction: 2<sup>nd</sup> in Pacific Division, 4<sup>th</sup> in Eastern Conference]

**Los Angeles Kings:** Plenty of young talent, but they're having a really hard time bringing it all together. With Jason LaBarbera off to Vancouver, Erik Ersberg is now the man in goal. Not much experience in the lineup to help him, and that spells trouble.

[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Pacific Division, 13<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Pacific Division, 15<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]



**Nashville Predators:** The Predators have struggled mightily to score goals this season, amassing the second worst total in the league in that category. Goaltending has been serviceable, but not enough to make up for the drought on offense.

[Currently: 4<sup>th</sup> in Central Division, 14<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 4<sup>th</sup> in Central Division, 12<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]

**St. Louis Blues:** A team name that is apropos of the songs its fans are singing – the Blues are 4<sup>th</sup> worst in the NHL in goals allowed and they have not found any real chemistry this season. They'll be lucky if they can finish better than last in their Conference.

[Currently: 5<sup>th</sup> in Central Division, 15<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]  
[Prediction: 5<sup>th</sup> in Central Division, 14<sup>th</sup> in Western Conference]



ANDY HALL, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

## 2008-09 NHL Predictions Midseason Review Grades

30 teams total in National Hockey League (NHL)

15 of 30 of Andy's division picks were correct: 50%

6 of 30 of Andy's conference picks were correct: 20%

100% correct predictions (by conference):

Phoenix, New Jersey, New York Islanders, New York Rangers **Grade: B**

Missed predictions by 1 or 2 position standings:

Washington, Carolina, Florida, Atlanta, San Jose, Minnesota, Calgary, Chicago, Vancouver, Anaheim, Detroit, Edmonton, Los Angeles, St. Louis **Grade: A**

Predictions wrong by 3+ position standings:

Montreal, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Dallas, Colorado, Tampa Bay **Grade: B**

**Total Grade: 3.3 average = B+**

# DRIVING, TAKING THE BUS OR RIDING YOUR BIKE, WHICH ONE IS BEST?

There are numerous choices for transportation to the USPTO

Heading into the new year, we're all aware of the shape of our economy. It affects how folks spend their money on everything. Groceries, restaurants, entertainment and bills are a few of the constants folks spend their money on. One constant for everyone here at the USPTO for sure is transportation. There are some folks that live five minutes away (like me), and others who may live as far as an hour or more away. The longer the distance from USPTO of course, the more you'll spend on gas to get here. Those who live a short distance away have several alternatives in how they can transport to work. For the ones who have no other choice than to drive to work, rest assured there are options for you too.

The USPTO is in a prime location for transportation because of the many options that are available, but, which way is the best? Not everyone has a choice. For those that have no other option then to drive to work, which parking lot is most cost efficient? We'll take a look at the best options available and leave it up to you to decide.

**Option 1:** Taking Metro. Metro has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the best aspects of the metro is how far it stretches out across the vicinity. From the western and southern parts of Virginia through Washington, D.C. and into basically any direction in Maryland, Metro reaches people in all areas. Granted a lot of people take the metro everyday so the trip may not be as quiet or spacious as it would be if you drove to work, but at least you're able to read the newspaper or take a short nap on your way in. From opening to 9:30 a.m., the metro fares range anywhere between \$1.65 and \$4.50 one way. The farther away one is coming from, the more money and time it takes to arrive at the USPTO. Assuming you took off the federal holidays and other assigned holidays (Martin Luther King Day, the day after New Year's), you would've worked 19 days in January. The median price of a one-way ticket would be \$3.07 one way, which equals \$6.15 per day. Naturally, the daily price of your travel would vary based on where you lived and what time you left, but this gives us a good idea of what estimated fares a traveler would be facing. The sum total for the month of January amounts to \$116.66. There are months throughout the year where there are no holidays (August, for example) where you may work 21 or 22 days in total so the estimated fare would hinge on that factor. A big disadvantage for metro is delayed trains and track maintenance. It may just be coincidence but the red line always appears to have its share of troubles. Another disadvantage is that with metro, you aren't on your own schedule. Your day starts and ends depending on when the train is scheduled to arrive. Depending on where one is traveling from, the average trip into work in the morning ranges between five minutes and more than two hours. The problem with metro is that you never really know, as everyday brings a different outcome. **Grade: C**



**Option 2:** Taking the Metro Bus. The advantage the Metro Bus has over DASH is that it reaches far more people over a wider range of area. In Virginia, the Metro Bus runs anywhere from Burke, Chantilly, Herndon, Arlington and southern Alexandria. In Maryland, the Metro Bus runs anywhere from Beltsville, Rockville, Oxon Hill, Wheaton and Laurel. In Washington, D.C., the Metro Bus has access to most every street corner in the area. There is no bus pass but Metro Bus does accept SmarTrip cards and exact change. One other big plus with Metro Bus is that it runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week (for the most part anyway). A one-way trip using the SmarTrip card is \$1.25. Using the 19 workday example in the month of January, your monthly dollar amount for the Metro Bus is \$47.50. Just like the DASH Bus, taking Metro Bus takes more time than it would if you drove as it makes a bunch of stops letting people on and off. Since its route expands farther then DASH does, the timetable will vary depending on how far away you live. **Grade: B**

**Option 3:** Taking the DASH Bus. I speak from personal experience on the DASH Bus, as it's my choice of transportation to get to work. The biggest advantage of the DASH Bus is how much money is saved over the course of a month. DASH offers a monthly bus pass for \$30 that gives riders unlimited rides anywhere the service reaches. As listed on its Web site, you can purchase the DASH PASS at the Old Town Transit Shop; Alexandria City Hall; the SunTrust bank branches located in and around Alexandria and Old Town; the Ballston, Crystal City, Mobile and Rosslyn Commuter Stores and the Springfield Connector Store; or by mail. Saving money on gas and mileage on your car makes the DASH Bus a popular choice to use for transport. As an example, the route I take begins its service at 5:14 a.m. and runs every 30 minutes until 8:42 a.m. After that, the bus comes around every hour. The DASH Bus Pass is the best alternative for commuters who live in Alexandria. The biggest disadvantage for it though is that the bus *only* travels in and around Alexandria. It stretches from Old Town Alexandria to the western parts, near Landmark Mall and over to Seminary Road. The distance between where I live and USPTO is five miles, which results in about 10 minutes maximum for me to get home by car. The DASH on the other hand takes around 30-35 minutes due to the number of times it stops to let folks off. The DASH Bus isn't for everyone, especially those who live outside of Alexandria. In terms of traffic congestion or any other delays possibly making your trip longer then normal, I personally have never really experienced any issues with DASH. The DASH is more of a local advantage for the folks who live in the area. **Grade: B+**

**Option 4:** Driving to work. Driving to work is a great luxury because you decide when you come and go. Of course in rebuttal to that advantage is the cost of gas and mileage on your car that you accrue monthly. The more you drive, the more likely your car will need maintenance more often then those who drive less. Nonetheless, USPTO has several parking options throughout the campus. The main garages (Madison East, West) offer the closest option that's within walking distance. Madison East garage holds 1,765 self park spaces while Madison West holds a little more at 1,805.



Continued on next page

# GUIDANCE ON PERSONAL USE OF THE INTERNET

Government office equipment is for the conduct of official business. However, federal employees are permitted limited use of government office equipment for personal needs if this use does not interfere with the conduct of official business and results in only minimal additional expense to the government. The USPTO conforms to federal government policies concerning limited personal use of the computer network and limited Internet access is permitted provided the use is not for unauthorized purposes, and does not contribute to system degradation or slowed response times. The USPTO's flexible work schedules should minimize the necessity for this personal use during duty hours.

Routine monitoring of Internet/intranet usage is performed as part of the USPTO's normal procedures for oversight and management of the computer network, infrastructure and automated information systems. During this routine monitoring, some alarming trends were noted with respect to excessive use of the Internet by USPTO employees. Normal usage of the Internet (reasonable Web search and occasional streaming audio) by USPTO employees is less than 0.5 GB (one half of one gigabyte) per month.

All USPTO employees are cautioned that excessive use of the Internet will cause a detrimental impact on the performance of our systems and will contribute to bandwidth consumption that can negatively affect our ability to carry out mission critical functions. The use of Government equipment for personal needs is a privilege that may be limited or revoked at any time if the mission needs are at risk.

Examples of acceptable limited use of Internet resources include:

- Use of banking Web sites
- Access to employee benefits Web sites, e.g., the flexible spending account program (FSAFEDS), employee express, etc.
- Shopping or streaming music during lunch breaks
- Sending infrequent personal e-mail messages

Examples of unacceptable use of Internet resources include:

- Streaming entertainment broadcasts and videos, e.g., YouTube, or TV primetime shows, movies
- Gambling or online gaming

USPTO employees pay \$90 per month to park in either garage while USPTO contractors/general public pay \$125. Drivers can acquire what is called a "puck," which is similar to the Easy Pass device one uses to drive through tolls throughout the east coast. These "pucks" are available for purchase in both garages, 1<sup>st</sup> floor in East and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in West, at the Colonial Parking manager's office. The "puck" is free and will cost \$14 for a replacement. Parking is first come, first serve and hours are from 5:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily. Other parking garages include another Colonial Parking garage located at 1925 Ballenger Avenue. The monthly rate there is \$125 and the hours range anywhere between 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. depending on the day. Eisenhower Center III is located at 2321 Mill Road and offers monthly parking passes for \$100 (with a one time \$25 set-up fee). Access to this garage includes using Eisenhower Avenue, Elizabeth Lane and Mill Road. The garage is directly across the street from the Madison West garage and provides 24/7 access. Here you are given an access card that you scan when you arrive at the garage. The garage has six floors (top floor is reserved) with an estimated 25-30 spaces on each floor. **Grade: C+**

**Option 4b:** Carpooling. The best aspect of carpooling, or so you'd hope, is that all riders in a carpool would not only share turns driving but also split the cost of gas/monthly parking. This is an alternative for folks coming in from the farther suburbs outside the area. **Grade: B+**



Photo by npslibrarian of Flickr

- Use for commercial purposes, for financial gain, or in support of private business activities
- Downloading games, movies, videos
- All prohibited activities identified in the Rules of the Road

Specific policy concerning limited personal use of government equipment can be found in AAO 202-735, at this link: <http://ptoweb.uspto.gov/ptointranet/directives/>.

USPTO's Rules of the Road Services Guide provides additional information on the proper use of the computer network and automated information systems. The Rules of the Road can be found at this link: [http://ptoweb/ptointranet/cisd/pppd/approved\\_it\\_security\\_policies.htm](http://ptoweb/ptointranet/cisd/pppd/approved_it_security_policies.htm).

SHEILA PLATER, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Continued from previous page

**Option 5:** Bicycle/walking to work. Clearly the folks who can ride their bikes or walk to work live close to USPTO. The obvious advantage to cycling/walking is a combination of exercise and saving money on gas/monthly parking fees. The obvious disadvantage comes from living in an area of the country where in the summer it's really hot and in the winter it's really cold. The weather elements might deter most folks from riding their bicycle in the middle of winter but there are some folks out there brave and confident enough to "weather the storm." The USPTO has several places where bicycles are stored, with six racks outside the four major USPTO buildings (holds 24 bikes a rack). In each garage there is a "bike cage," which is a fenced in spot where you can store your bike indoors (comes with a \$50 charge for the whole year). **Grade: B**

Some may enjoy driving to work in their cars so they can listen to the radio at full blast or drive as fast as they want. Others may enjoy taking the bus so they don't have to focus on driving early in the morning. For those lucky enough to have the ability to walk or ride their bicycles into work, having the chance to save money on gas and monthly fees provide a cheaper and healthier alternative. Either way, the USPTO gives us all the chance to make the best choice for us to get to work. We're lucky, we could be working in the middle of Arizona where the only way to get to work is by camel or on a tumbling weed (kidding of course). Happy travels to all!

CHRIS BARTNEK, STAFF WRITER

# Peru — Land of the Incas, Macchu Picchu, and Cuy

For decades, Peru had been on my list of must-see places, and I finally decided it was time to make the trip. As part of the Inca Empire, Macchu Picchu was abandoned when the Spaniards advanced further into the Andes Mountains. How can you not want to go to visit the site of a lost culture?

I departed Washington, D.C. on December 18, transferred in Miami, Fla. and got to Lima, Peru around midnight. I spent the following day in Lima getting my bearings, waiting for my lost luggage to catch up with me, and taking a city tour before heading out to Cusco on December 20. It turns out that there's not much to see in Lima beyond the city plaza consisting of a few churches, a historic hotel, a bohemian arts district and the Changing of the Guards. This is due mainly to the Shining Path communist attacks from years ago that prevented Lima from becoming a tourist mecca and pushing much of the modernization efforts to the outer suburbs such as Miraflores, where I stayed.

Lima suffers from a minimal public transportation infrastructure, so getting around is difficult. The main transportation options are taxis and mini-buses. If the places you want to visit are too far to walk, by all means take the taxi. Ask the price before you get in, but most likely you won't bother negotiating since they were quite cheap, in my opinion. Avoid the mini-buses since they're slower and you won't be familiar with their routes.



Photo taken by Macchu Picchu Tour Guide

Believe it or not, vendors at Macchu Picchu were selling Patent File Wrapper (PFW) mouse pads as souvenirs. Rich Lowe, Manager of the Program Management Group Portfolio Management Division, is shown here with his souvenir.

The lack of a strong tourist industry in Lima is immediately evident at the airport, as there are no tourist information booths where you can pick up city maps or tourist brochures, so I'd advise that you do your homework, plan out what you want to see, and buy your city map before leaving the United States. In contrast, you can pick up a lot of information at the airport in Cusco (sometimes spelled Cuzco) before you even make your way from the airplane to the luggage carousel. Cusco's economy is much more tourist oriented as it's the main kickoff point for the things that Peru is known for -- Macchu Picchu, the Sacred Valley, and other Inca sights.

To really understand a foreign land, you have to understand its origins, its people, and the various circumstances that caused it to end up where it is in today's global picture. So it is with Peru. It is common knowledge that the country was once part of the vast Inca Empire, but less well known is the fact that the Incas were the last of a series of ancient civilizations in Peru. We know more about the Incas only because the Spaniards wrote about them during the course of their efforts to conquer, plunder and subjugate the locals during their march across South America.

The tour companies in Cusco generally steer tourists towards spending the first day or two on local sightseeing trips in or just outside Cusco, and with good reason since they're trying to get you acclimated to the high altitude before you go tackling the more strenuous activities such as at Macchu Picchu. As a result, you'll visit some excavated Inca buildings in Qorikancha, where you can marvel at the precisely fitted stonework. The ancient Egyptians and their pyramids at Giza don't have a monopoly on this type of engineering. The churches in the city square feature a local rendition of The Last Supper illustrating the local delicacy of Cuy.

The train ride to Macchu Picchu is the no-frills, Backpacker Express from Cusco, but you can also take the more expensive and more comfortable VistaDome train from Ollantaytambo. It will take you about 45 minutes by car from Cusco to get to the VistaDome train. The Backpacker Express is recommended if you enjoy the experience of mingling with the other tourists from various countries, which I do. The downside is that it's a long, crowded ride, and it can sometimes feel like you're in an episode of the Twilight Zone and stuck on a never-ending train ride to hell. It leaves Cusco early in the morning and arrives at Aguas Calientes around 10 a.m. This is followed by a 30-minute bus ride up to the ruins. To traverse your way around Macchu Picchu, I recommend taking a guided tour where you can get the detailed explanations and ask questions. You'll then have a few hours to explore on your own, prior to getting back on the bus to Aguas Calientes. For some tourists this is a day trip, so they head back to Cusco right away, while others stay overnight or longer in Aguas Calientes. My plan was to stay overnight and climb Huayna Picchu, which I did the next day.

Several travel notes on Macchu Picchu:

- 1 Lima was devoid of mosquitoes, horse flies and other biting insects, but that's because they all seem to congregate in Macchu Picchu. Even worse, they're small, fast and light, so you don't feel them landing on you. You won't know you've been bitten until a few seconds later you start to itch and notice that you're bleeding and by then, the chances are that you've already been fed on multiple times. Insect repellent is a must.
- 2 The sun tends to be a lot stronger at high altitudes, so sunblock is also a must. I would also recommend wearing a hat and sunglasses.
- 3 There is a daily fee for Macchu Picchu that you can pay for at the entrance, which closes at 5 p.m., or at the information center in Aguas Calientes, which closes around 8 p.m.
- 4 There is also a fee for the bus ride from Aguas Calientes to the site and back. You can walk, but it takes a while and you'll be competing with the buses for use of the dusty dirt road. If you decide to walk, make sure you give yourself enough time to catch the train back to Cusco.
- 5 To climb Huayna Picchu, there is a separate entrance inside Macchu Picchu, but only 400 people are allowed per day and all climbers must be out by 4 p.m. The park rangers confirm this by requiring you to sign in and out. Climbers are allowed in at 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., and during the busy season it's possible that you won't be one of the lucky 400, so you should try and save as much time as possible by purchasing your entrance ticket and bus fare in Aguas Calientes the night before.
- 6 Finally, Aguas Calientes means "Hot Waters" in English, due to the hot springs. If you want to try the baths / spas and neglected to bring your swimwear, you can rent (yuck?) swimwear from various stores as you get closer to the entrance on the edge of town.



Photo by Richard P.F. Lowe.

Rich Lowe visited one of the three historic churches in Cusco's main square during his trip to Peru. The name of the church is Compañía de Jesús.

Cusco and Aguas Calientes are the places to try the local cuisine, such as recoto relleno, alpaca, trucha and cuy (if you're brave enough). The alpaca tastes a bit gamey like deer, and cuy does not taste like chicken! While the meat has the same texture, it has its own different flavor that's also a bit gamey, but milder. Peruvian food isn't anywhere as spicy as Mexican food can be, and to that end I was disappointed. It was nevertheless quite good and a culinary adventure (I'll leave it up to you to find out what cuy is). Instead of Coca-Cola® try the Inca Cola, which is Peru's indigenous lemongrass-based soft drink. For liquor you can try the pisco anywhere in Peru, but your best opportunities for trying the chicha (home-distilled, from corn) or cañeso (from sugar cane) will be from the areas around Cusco.

After Macchu Picchu came the most challenging part of my vacation, but which was also the main purpose for my trip hiking to the ruins of Choquequirao. Archaeological evidence suggests these ruins could be even bigger than Macchu Picchu when fully restored. Macchu Picchu was discovered in the early 1900s, while Choquequirao wasn't uncovered until 1980, with restoration starting in 1990. In addition, the Incas abandoned Macchu Picchu before construction was completed, while Choquequirao was already an established administration center for the Inca Empire by the time the Spanish arrived. Choquequirao is in the middle of a large national park and there is no transportation infrastructure in place to support a large scale tourist industry so the site remains relatively undisturbed and unknown to the outside world, accessible only by hiking the Inca Trail.

I started my hike the very next day after my return to Cusco from Macchu Picchu. I got a bit more than I was expecting, in that the package I paid for included a guide / translator, a porter and two pack mules. I was surprised to learn that I was also getting a cook, especially when I realized the mules would be carrying supplies that amounted to the equivalent of a small expeditionary force. This included a small propane tank, a gas grill, a portable table and chairs, tents, tarpaulins, a full set of cooking equipment, and enough food to feed a delicious, hot meal four times a day – breakfast, lunch, late afternoon tea, and dinner. They then loaded my own camping gear on to the mules so all I needed to carry in my small daypack were –two to three bottles of water, sunscreen, insect repellent, and some fruit and candy (oh yeah, and the requisite roll of toilet paper).

The separation of social classes was evident here, at times reminiscent of a colonial viceroy leading a caravan of followers and supplies. For example, the cook and porter would race ahead with the pack mules and have lunch ready in time for my arrival at a predetermined resting point. After the guide and I continued, on the cook and porter would then clean up, load up the mules, and rush past us on the way to the campsite, where the afternoon tea would be ready and the tents set up by the time I got there.

After meeting up with the guide and cook in Cusco early in the morning, we drove about three hours to the actual starting point in Cachora at

9,500 feet altitude. We met up with the porter and loaded up the pack mules, finally starting the trek around 10 a.m. The first half of the day was easy on flat terrain, but in the afternoon we started the descent down a ravine to our campsite at 5,000 feet, by the Apurimac River. This descent was fine at first but quickly got somewhat arduous due to the steepness of the climb and the trail conditions of large rocks to step over or around, combined with lots of loose gravel and soil. Contributing to the difficulty of the descent was my own negligence in wearing sneakers instead of hiking boots and not bringing a hiking stick. The campsite was a welcome sight after having covered 21 kilometers.

Day two of the hike was a totally different story. By far it was the toughest, as we crossed the river and immediately started on a constant, steep uphill climb sometimes up to a 45-degree incline for over seven kilometers. I found myself gasping for oxygen at increasing altitudes where the air got progressively thinner.

The Inca trail is a well-traveled hiking trail that has seen extensive use since the days of the Incas, as it's a network of trails that was the primary means of getting to and from the various communities of the Empire, which used to stretch throughout a large portion of South America. Archaeologists have counted more than 440,000 such connecting trails. It has been hiked in various parts by thousands of people, so parts of it are well-worn. At these altitudes the air is a lot drier, and also a lot dustier.

While the cook and porter quickly overtook us with the mules, I had to pause frequently during the uphill trek. The only thing that kept me moving along were the mosquitoes, since standing in one place longer than a few seconds is an invitation for them to swarm all over you. I finally got to the second campsite where lunch was ready and waiting, but what should have taken five hours actually took six hours, 40 minutes. This was a spectacular campsite, as it was high up and there was an unobstructed view of the valley below as well as the sky above. At night there were a zillion stars to marvel at.

Day three was the highlight, with a final four to five kilometer hike to a very uncrowded and unhurried tour of the ruins at 10,000 feet. Since the ruins are still in the early stages of restoration, there wasn't much reason to hang around and explore for any length of time so we decided to cut the hike short, from five days to four.

The return to Lima was followed immediately by a seven-hour bus ride from Lima to fly over the famous and mysterious lines of Nazca. These lines were carved out of the ground and mountainside by the Nazca civilization, which pre-dated the Incas by about 600 years, for reasons not yet known. At ground-level these lines go all over in a seemingly random manner, but when viewed from the air they can be recognized as forming various animals and other figures. While good to experience, the trip was a bit of a disappointment as the 45-minute flyover was good for viewing but not for taking photographs.

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Photo by Richard P.F. Lowe

The abandoned city of Macchu Picchu in the Andes region of Peru has been designated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations. Archeologists believe that a large portion of Macchu Picchu still remains to be unearthed.

# Everything's coming up roses!

***Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, directed by Rebecca Bayla Taichman at the Sidney Harmon Hall**

Four things strike one about the Shakespeare Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night*: the extremes of color, the excellence of the Ted van Griethuysen's interpretation of Malvolio and Floyd King's Feste, the image of Cupid and Psyche hovering over the events, and roses.

Roses are everywhere. They are the scenery. Red petals fall from the heavens whenever someone's emotions turn toward the euphoric, festive, joyous, or romantic; black when more lachrymously focused. Roses represent love, both lost and gained – and also *Twelfth Night* itself.

*Twelfth Night, or What You Will* is considered by many critics as William Shakespeare's most perfect comedy. It is based on a tale called "Of Apollonius and Silla" originally crafted by Matteo Bandello, from whom Shakespeare also derived the story of his most famous tragedy of love gone wrong, *Romeo and Juliet*. Set in an imagined and allegorical Illyria, it is a land where the impossible might be true, and where twain might meet. It is a land where confusion reigns and forbidden love, as Psyche's love was for the immortal Cupid, runs rampant, as described by Wikipedia.

This allegorical setting should not be confused with historical Illyria, the Roman Illyricum. In Shakespeare's day, Illyria was known for piracy and in part ruled by the Venetian Republic, the Ottoman Empire, and the Habsburgs. Today Dalmatia comprises the greater part of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.



The colorful mural interpretation of John Singer Sargent's *El Jaleo* at the Jaleo Restaurant (7th St, NW, Washington, DC).

Christmas was marked by feasting and merrymaking. Each day during the 12 days of Christmas commemorates either a saint or a specific action affecting the life of Christ. In Christian iconography, the rose represents St. Mary as the Mother of God (Theotokos) and the Queen of Heaven (Regina Coeli). The rose is considered the "queen of flowers" and represents the universal symbol of perfect love according to the book "Mary's Flowers, Women for Faith and Family."

As a subtle bit of humor, the scenery roses were as a nod at the local Washingtonian audiences in that the roses in question tie directly to the rose depicted in the mural of the theatre's neighboring watering hole, Jaleo's. The mural is a copy of artist John Singer Sargent's famous painting *El Jaleo*, which depicts the Spanish dance of passion, the flamenco. The linkage with Sargent's *El Jaleo* was further emphasized at several points during the play when the actors danced the flamenco and all of the women held roses between their teeth as they danced across the stage.

The play opened quite dramatically as Viola and Sebastian are torn asunder and tossed away during a violent sea storm, Olivia in full mourning crosses (black dress and veil) in front of the scrim from stage left to right. The train of her dress extended a full six feet behind her. Interestingly, while the style of Olivia's dress does not change during the play, the color changes from black through purple to bright red over the course of the play – reflecting her evolving moods.

As Act II opens with the arrival of Viola (in her Cesario impersonation), an image of Antonio Canova's Cupid and Psyche descended from the heavens and hovered above all action for the play's remainder, as a reminder of unrequited and forbidden love. While the ancient story of Cupid/Eros and Psyche involved forbidden love, it more importantly involved the impossible love between an immortal and a mortal. Cupid fell for Psycho as Viola does for Orsino, and Olivia for Viola's alter-ego Cesario.

The play truly began, however, only with the arrival of Feste, Olivia's (Veanne Cox) fool, well-acted by the irrepressible Floyd King. Feste is to light in this play what Olivia's steward Malvolio (Ted van Griethuysen) is to darkness. Griethuysen, in a form-fitting cutaway and an air of utter disdain for mere mortals, plays the martinet Malvolio for all the pomposity and self-righteousness that the role allows. Of course, the martinet suffers as the butt of probably the cruelest and most elaborate joke ever drafted by Shakespeare when Feste and Olivia's poisonous uncle Tony Belch (Rick Foucheux) convinces Malvolio to appear before his mistress cross-gartered and in yellow stockings, spouting idiocies of love. Olivia thinks him mad and orders her uncle to imprison him.

After Viola's/Cesario's (Samantha Soule) performance at Olivia's home at the behest of the Duke Orsino (Christopher Innvar), Sebastian (Peter Katona) arrives on the scene accompanied by his rescuer Antonio (Michael Sharon) who wishes to protect him, but has a price on his head within Orsino's lands. They separate and Sebastian meets Olivia. Although Viola/

## Plot Synopsis

In the play, the Duke Orsino of Illyria courts the Countess Olivia, who has sworn off all love to mourn the death of her brother. Meanwhile, a shipwreck occurs on the coast that separates the young Viola from her twin brother Sebastian. In fear of her safety and alone in a foreign land, Viola disguises herself as the youth Cesario and secures a position within the household of the duke, who soon sends her/him as emissary to Olivia.

In a twisted subplot, Olivia's uncle, the foul Tony Belch, disrupts her mourning despite the best efforts of her servant Maria. To finance his excesses, the uncle has recruited the excessively wealthy, but dim-witted Sir Andrew Aguecheek to woo his niece, in hopes of splitting the fortune. Feste, Olivia's fool, has also returned to her home and disrupts her mourning – much to the disapproval of her faithful steward, Malvolio. Malvolio himself would like to win Olivia – and her fortune. After Malvolio threatens to expel Belch and Aguecheek; they, with the connivance of Maria, plot to embarrass him in the eyes of his mistress by convincing him to dress and act in ways that cause Olivia to think him mad. The plot twist is probably the most wicked in all of Shakespeare's plays. Malvolio does not forgive them.

Viola/Cesario arrives at the home of Olivia, who is immediately love struck. Olivia gives "Cesario" a ring as a ploy to get him to return the next day. Viola realizes that Olivia has fallen for her alter-ego "Cesario"; while Viola has fallen for the duke. Of course the duke is confused because he thinks "she" is a "he". Meanwhile, Sebastian has surfaced in Illyria – thinking that his twin sister is dead. As the play develops, Olivia marries Sebastian (thinking Sebastian is 'Cesario'). "Cesario" is mistaken for Sebastian, and vice versa. Eventually all ends well as Olivia marries Sebastian and Viola likewise wins Orsino.

*Twelfth Night's* plot involves many thematic elements present in other Shakespearean plays: mistaken identity, twins, confused noblemen, a wealthy heiress plagued by unsuitable suitors, conniving relatives, and pompous fools and righteous jesters. However, the plot also indirectly involves references to an element less common in his plays – religion. Shakespeare's mother was a member of the recusant Arden family, which clung to the old faith, namely Roman Catholicism, for several generations after the break between the Anglican Church and Rome.

The play was commissioned in 1601 for the royal Twelfth Night festivities that marked the end of the Christmas holidays with the arrival of the Magi, namely the night of January 5; receiving its first public viewing on Candlemas on February 2, 1602. In the Elizabethan era, the festival of



"El Jaleo", a painting by John Singer Sargent

The John Singer Sargent original of *El Jaleo* at the Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts.

Cesario has wooed Olivia, she pines for Orsino and has tried to discourage Olivia's advances to her. Consequently when Sebastian (who fell in love with Olivia on sight) agrees to marry her, Olivia is happily overwhelmed.

Unfortunately Belch, who wants to have his "friend" Aguecheek marry his niece for financial reasons, realizes that his niece loves Cesario. Therefore while Sebastian is actually marrying Olivia, Belch orchestrates a duel between "Cesario" and Aguecheek; which goes haywire when Antonio thinks "Cesario" is Sebastian. "Cesario," who does not know Antonio, thanks him for his aid, but does not help him when he is arrested and hauled before Orsino. Olivia arrives and states that "Cesario" is her husband (when in fact Sebastian is). "Cesario" denies the marriage, because of course Cesario is actually Viola. Then Sebastian arrives and everyone realizes that they are twins.



Antonio Canova's sculpture depicting Cupid's revival kiss of Psyche at the Louvre, Paris.

A peculiar subtext within this play, which this writer believes was overemphasized by the director Rebecca Taichman, is Viola's professions of love for Orsino (while impersonating Cesario), which the duke receives in a confused state, and Antonio's professions of love for Sebastian – which definitely cross the forbidden line. As some words have changed meaning between the time when they were written and today, the overtness of Antonio's expressed feelings may not be what Shakespeare intended, but the feeling of homoeroticism was latent in the air. The director played that latency for all it was worth; both in how they related to each other and how they were attired. Overall the play was beautifully done, a fine way to spend *Twelfth Night*.

## Conclusions / Recommendations / Tips:

- A solo trip to a strange new land isn't for everyone. It all depends on your level of comfort getting around in an environment where the culture, food, and customs are foreign, as well as your ability to speak the language, especially in the rural areas where the locals may not speak a word of English. Some people would hate it, others would revel in it. You **MUST** be able to function outside your comfort zone, be open to new experiences while at the same being respectful of the local people.
- If you need one, cell phones can be rented on arrival at the Lima airport. I didn't get one so I can't tell you the rates, but you'll be able to get a signal almost anywhere except in the remote areas such as at the ruins.
- Since the Inca Trail is a network of interconnecting trails all over South America, a 10-day hike from Cachora through Choquequirao to Macchu Picchu is available, taking you at times up to 14,000 feet altitude. You'll have to be in good shape to recover quickly from any altitude sickness you may experience.
- Drink lots of water! I can't emphasize this enough, as you dehydrate quickly at the higher altitudes where the air is drier, the sun is stronger and you're physically exerting yourself more than you're accustomed to. Proper hydration is also key to delaying the onset of any altitude sickness and to the recovery afterwards.
- Mules are pretty ornery animals. Be sure not to startle one from behind or you risk a swift kick that can cause serious injury. Trust me -- I found out the hard way, although I got off easy.
- When hiking, keep in mind that you're in remote areas and medical help can be far away if you get into trouble. As such, always exercise care and watch where you put your hands and feet as you make your way along the trails, while at the same time remaining aware of the overall surroundings. During the four days on the trail we encountered bears twice, poisonous spiders four times (Peruvian tarantulas), and a venomous snake once – and our first aid kit was with the mule pack way ahead of us!
- Hiking stick highly recommended, especially going down the steep slopes.
- For all its charm and the huge responsibility as the guardian of some of the world's most fascinating and appealing archaeological treasures, Peru is still a desperately poor country and the citizens have virtually no opportunities for making their way out of the abject poverty into which most of them are born. It breaks your heart when little kids approach and ask you (in relatively good English) to buy rag dolls or finger puppets that their mothers made by hand and you find it very hard to resist.
- With Peru stamped into my passport, I thought I could look forward to finding other exotic areas of the world to explore. However, I wonder if I was being too impulsive, as just a few days ago I heard of a newly discovered site above the clouds (and above 14,000 feet), that of the mysterious "Cloud People". So now maybe I'll be back in Peru sooner than I initially thought. Stay tuned!

SKIP KEATS, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

RICHARD P.F. LOWE, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

# Skiing on two sticks of death down the trail of broken bones

I haven't been skiing for that long, but I wanted to share my first few ski trip experiences with those who might be thinking about taking up the sport. It was the winter of 2006 when I decided to give this sport a second try. I had gone to Liberty Ski Resort a few years earlier and that was pretty ugly, so I was reluctant to try this again. However, I had a friend who insisted I could learn to ski if I just focused and didn't quit.

My first experience with skiing was at Liberty in Pennsylvania. That extensive ski trip was a full half-day of skiing, which consisted of my falling off the ski chair, slipping on the skis, trying to stand up, and sliding down the bunny trails hopelessly out of control. People have told me I should have gotten some pointers or lessons from a ski instructor. Well, that was with instructions. I have painted this shameful background of my skiing skill in hopes that you will understand my resistance to try skiing again. However, my friend does not care how much pain he inflicts on his friends so long as they have fun, and I am about the dumbest friend he has, so I was an easy target. Besides, he assured me he could



Photo by Robert Miller

Patrick Perez demonstrates a spectacular wipe out at the beginning of the 2007 ski season at Timberline 4 Season Resort in West Virginia. He was on a blue trail called "Upper Almost Heaven" Perez said that although he'd gained enough confidence to try a blue slope, he "seriously lacked the skills to be there."

show me the fine points of stuff like, putting ski boots on, and standing up on skis, and that most difficult task of all, dismounting from the chair lifts. Yes, I knew this trip was going to be different, much better than my first trip. What was there to worry about? After all, my friend would be right there for me!

My son, Brian, was supportive too with comments like, "You are going to try and ski again? Do you remember the last time you tried this? You have some sick leave saved up just in case, right?" However, these glimpses of realities were not going to stop me. No, this was going to be better. My son is a pretty good snowboarder, and this would be a chance for us to bond, so the trip was on.

The day before I was planning to drive to the ski lodge in West Virginia my buddy called me and informed me that he wasn't going to be able to work with me first thing in the morning because he had to help with the ski team. He said, "Don't worry, my wife can show you what to do." In the background I could hear his wife saying, "I can't show him what to do," but my friend insisted that she could help me. Now she is a competent skier, and able to ski the blue trails, so hey, what the heck, she would help me. As an extra precaution, I went out online to "Ask Jeeves" to see what type of online training they had. All I had to type is a question like, "Teach me not to die during the nightmare called skiing?" In an instant, I had dozens of Web sites including a group of real good doctors. I'm just kidding about the doctors; that required a different search. I printed a number of pages and started reading the stuff. I had topics like, "If you're heading for trees at high rates of speed don't think about Sonny Bono," and "What's better to run into, hard objects or nice soft people?" and "effective screaming for clearing a path." This was important information. I even had a page with pictures and step-by-step illustrations on turning.

So, armed with these helpful instructions, I headed to West Virginia to tackle my new sport. Brian and I didn't see any snow until we started climbing into the mountains, when suddenly we hit a snow line and were in the midst of a snowstorm, which was cool. Now it felt as if we were going on a ski trip. We made it to the lodge and sat around talking about ski stuff as we prepared for the next day.

The next morning, we hit the mountain by 8 a.m. I was the first in line to get my lift ticket and ski rental, and I was ready to hit the slopes. We made our way to the beginners slope, and here the adventure started. As we traveled up the slope we were enveloped in a deep cold fog, which made the mountain invisible to us, and people skiing down the slope looked like mysterious shadows coming at you, as they silently glided down the trails. I was thinking, "Wow, they sure make it look easy." All the limbs of trees held coatings of ice and snow and gave me the impression I was in an ice cave. It was magical to see. The whole mountain was so quiet and tranquil it was hard to believe in just a few short hours this place would be a madhouse of skiers.

I had read about dismounting from the ski lift, so I was ready. As the chair moved across the dismount point I expertly set my skis and shifted my weight onto them, and they immediately flew out from under me. In the blink of an eye, I was being beaten in the back of the head by the lift chair. Wow, was that embarrassing, but hey that was my first try. The attendant told me to be more careful, because I was scaring the hell out of the other beginners. I got to my feet fast and down that breakneck two-foot dismount hill in front of the chair.

Now I faced this monstrous cliff they call the "Bunny Hill." Again I had read my printed instructions and was ready for this, so what do you think I did? Well, I looked down that slope, and set my skis in the wedge position and then fell again. After struggling to stand up with skis on, I finally got to my feet with the help of about six people. I am kidding; it only took Brian and my buddy's wife a few short minutes to get me up on these two sticks of death. The next trip I managed to get off the lift okay, but then fell down, and on the third trip I made it off the lift and did not fall. Therefore, I was really started to get the hang of this ski thing.

For the next few hours, I kept going up and down the bunny trail, which I called Mt. Everest. That sounds much manlier than the Bunny Hill. By about 11 a.m. I had been up and down Mt. Everest about 20 times and had not fallen at all. Well, not that much anyway. In fact, my son was rather impressed with my progress, so with his prompting it was time to try a green trail. What the heck, I had mastered everything to do with skiing. As we stood in the line for the top of the mountain, I told Brian I thought I was going to buy a cool ski cap with dreadlocks on it. Brian told me that when you wear gear like that you really need to be good, because

people watch people like that. I listened to what he said, but thought a cool ski cap surely would help me ski better.

You know, when you are brand new at skiing, anyone else would question the wisdom of going to the top of the mountain to ski down, even on a green trail. Unfortunately, I lack a lot of common wisdom or I would have thought twice about this decision. As we climbed into the stratosphere on the chairlift leaving the Bunny Hill far behind, it dawned on me that perhaps I had acted a little impulsively, but I was too far gone now to turn back, so I was going to try. I managed to get off the lift, but spun around backwards and fell down. After taking my skis off to stand up, I started my downhill adventure.

The first part was okay; I had managed to make it the first 30 feet or so, when suddenly I found myself building speed. On Mt. Everest, I was at the bottom of the hill by the time I was going this fast, but as I looked down the mountain I realized I was only still at the top and had two and a half miles to go! Suddenly wedging and going back and forth to slow my speed was out the window and I was sizing up people for sudden impact. It was at that point that I took my first big crash, and let me tell you I didn't fall cool. In fact, I didn't know my arms and legs could bend in the directions they did. Brian came up beside me and admitted he was amazed at me. I said, "Why, because I could stop?" and he said, "No, because most people break something when they fall like that." This father-son bonding thing was starting to sound like a really stupid idea, along with the idea to ski down this mountain. Brian said he couldn't watch this and took off after that.

As I lay on this cliff alone, I started wondering if I could hitch a ride on a mountain goat, because they were the only creatures that had any business being up here. For the next 20 minutes, I fell and walked down the mountain until I got within sight of the lodge, and decided I could make it down this part, or so I thought. Anyway, I bravely put my skis on and started down. I came closer and closer to the bottom of the mountain, and built up more and more speed. Faster and faster I went as the bottom loomed ahead. As my snowsuit super heated to red hot during the reentry into the atmosphere, I again forgot all the web-based training;

I didn't care about the wedge, or about turning, and I wished I had written some tender last words for my wife like, "Why did you let me go on this insane trip?"

It was at that point that I understood the true use of ski poles. They are used to stab yourself to death before you wipe out in a twisted and mangled heap at the bottom of the mountain. Without warning, I went into a slow motion and most spectacular twisted crash landing as I slammed into the trail with a bone jarring collision. I remember wondering what had happened to the nice fluffy snow that had been on the trail. Somehow during my descent back to earth it had been replaced by white concrete. Pain shot through my knee, leg, shoulder and back upon impact with the trail. My ski poles, and goggles had flown in different directions, and one ski was gone. As my pile of human rubble came to a slow stop just in front of a group of skiers, I just laid there thanking god for delivering me back to earth.

A man just looked down at me and asked, "Are you okay?" I looked up at him, gathered what little dignity I had left and said, "I'll be just fine, just a little fall." About that time my missing ski slid down the hill and came to rest beside me. It took me a couple of minutes to gather my wits before I could get off the ground. I limped back to the lodge, and turned to survey the mountain, and swore I would get even with my friend for this. I was in a lot of pain, but I managed to ski down Mt. Everest about a dozen more times just to prove I could make it before my day came to an end.

Despite this bumpy, broken, twisted, and painful start, I planned to go back and practice, but I decided to stick to what I can do, and not get ahead of myself. I had every intension of going back, but was going to make sure I got some instructions before going back to the green trail or as I have named it, "The Trail of Broken Bones."

Oh yeah, I also decided to take Brian's advice and wait on buying my Dreadlock ski cap for the time being.

PATRICK PEREZ, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



## Happy Chinese New Year!

### The Year of the Ox:

The Ox is considered diligent, stable, and possesses a strong sense of purpose. The Year of the Ox 2009 represents a year of hard work, productivity, and steady progress.

# February

# March

1 | Start of Black History Month  
Super Bowl Sunday

1 | Start of Women's History Month

2 | Groundhog Day

8 | Daylight Savings Time Begins

12 | Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

14 | Valentine's Day

17 | St. Patrick's Day

16 | President's Day,  
Holiday for Federal Employees

20 | First Day of Spring

22 | George Washington's Birthday

# February/March 2009

## December/January Comings and Goings

In the last two months, we welcomed the following individuals to the OCIO:

- Adam Sampson to the Systems Development and Maintenance Group.
- Chris Longe and Maureen Brown to the Quality Management Group.
- Medhi Taeb was selected for a position and promotion in the Systems Development and Maintenance Group.

The following individuals retired from USPTO at the end of 2008:

- Laura Edelen
- Shirley Harris
- Pat Brecht

The following individuals left OCIO for new opportunities:

- Karen Wright
- David Larsen
- Allen Melson
- Bernice Littlejohn
- Israel Chand
- Renee Clement
- Pamela Mosley